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Facebook, Political Narrative, and Political Change:
A Case Study of Palestinian Youth

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Amanda M. Kenderes

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Facebook, Political Narrative, and Political Change:
A Case Study of Palestinian Youth

by

Amanda Kenderes

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Val D. Rust, Chair

In this dissertation I aim to advance political narrative theory by exploring the use of political narrative on Facebook and the possibility for Facebook to be used among Palestinian youth for political change. To examine the concepts of political narrative and political change, I developed a model for political change based on the changing political narratives which in part prompted the 2011 Egyptian revolution. The model, Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs), identifies individual and reported collective beliefs regarding the relationship and responsibilities associated with government and citizenry, and may be used to track political change as a byproduct of changing beliefs. To explore this model within the Palestinian context, I conducted a multiple-case case study in which I followed the Facebook activity of 14 Palestinian youth (7 male, 7 female; aged 18-27) for one year (January 1—December 31, 2011), coding 10 percent of their Facebook posts (N=1,371 of 13,710 posts) using content analysis. I combine this research with interviews to contextualize the content analysis. The youth participants of this study were

selected for their similarity on several measures to the Egyptian youth leaders who spearheaded political change efforts on Facebook: 1) university-educated, 2) of the Millennial generation, 3) internationally traveled, 4) politically concerned, and 5) fluent in English.

The Facebook posts were coded and analyzed according to type, content and language as well as by the four PNPs which I outline in this dissertation: External State Political Narrative (ESPN), Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN) and Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN). PNPs were analyzed initially through what I have termed “direct” PNP use: participants post political opinion comments about Palestine on their Facebook wall which reflected a PNP. Following this, I conducted a secondary analysis in which I analyzed posts according to what I have termed (1) “indirect” and (2) “passive” political narrative perspectives; that is, (1) participants posted Palestine-related news stories on their Facebook wall which reflected a PNP, or (2) participants posted content on their Facebook wall unrelated to Palestine which reflected a PNP.

The results of this study indicate that PNPs in total comprised 15.3 percent of all participants’ Facebook posts. The remainder (84.7 percent) of Facebook post content reflected topics such as hobbies, music, technology, literature/quotes, religion, relationships, and personal stories and anecdotes, suggesting that these youth in many ways use Facebook like other youth their age. While 15.3 percent may seem a relatively low number of PNPs for politically-concerned participants, 86 percent of participants noted that they felt restricted on Facebook, most notably by the Israeli and Palestinian authorities (which monitor and at times punish for certain Facebook content), but also by family and friends and by religious and social mores. Without these

restrictions, 64 percent of participants stated they would critique Israel, 57 percent of participants stated they would critique the Palestinian government, and 49 percent stated they would critique Palestinian society.

The prospects for using Facebook for political change in Palestine, as in Egypt, seem relatively dim given the perceived and actual restrictions that Palestinians encounter when using Facebook. The prospects for change seem dimmer still when we consider that Egyptian citizens faced one governing oppressor—the Mubarak regime—while Palestinians face political and social oppression from both the Palestinian government (whether by the Palestinian Authority (PA) or Hamas) and a U.S.-backed Israeli authority. The PNPs do offer some hope, however, as well as help to shed light on the political change process. Unlike in Egypt, where an initial change in Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), a secondary change in External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN) and a tertiary change in Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN) ultimately resulted in a change in External State Political Narrative (ESPN), in Palestine, it appears the opposite direction would be most effective to bring political change. In other words, in Palestine, it appears the External State Political Narrative (ESPN) would do well to change first, resulting in a subsequent change in Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN), and Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN). It appears the moral image which Palestinians appear to use to win the war for comparative moral high ground with Israel may indeed be hindering them from achieving political change. While these results offer potential insights into possibilities, the Political Narrative Perspective (PNP) model will need further testing and development through future research.

The dissertation of Amanda Kenderes is approved.

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank several people who contributed to the shaping and informing of this dissertation. First, I would like to thank Val D. Rust, chair of my dissertation committee and chair of the Social Sciences and Comparative Education (SSCE) division within the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (GSE&IS) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), for his mentorship, encouragement, feedback and direction. I would also like to thank each of my committee members for their comments, suggestions, and support: Douglas Kellner, Edith Mukudi Omwami, and Leah Lievrouw.

I would like to thank my colleague and friend Amy Pojar, who through her feedback has helped me to improve my dissertation, especially with regard to my data analysis. The concepts of “indirect” and “passive” political narrative perspectives are both attributable to her.

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I. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

For over half a century, Palestinians have faced Israeli oppression, expulsion and military occupation. Volumes have been written on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, some calling it the “key to peace in the Middle East” and some have speculated about when political change might occur (e.g., Halper, 2010). Regarding the Middle East revolutions, a phrase soon made its way around Arab circles: “The Palestinian winter gave birth to the Arab Spring” (LeVine, 2011). This is not only a poetic way of taking some credit for the successful uprisings within the Arab World. In the last half century, Palestinians did resist oppressive leadership in ways which were unprecedented in much of the Arab World—most notably the Palestinian intifadas (1987-1993 and 2000-2005). For some (e.g., Eisle, 2012), one of the first hints of an Arab Spring derived from Palestinian actions. It occurred in December of 2010, when a new movement, “Gaza Youth Breaks Out,” or GYBO, driven by young people in Gaza, published their now (in)famous manifesto which began with a scream: “F*** Hamas. F***Fatah. F*** UN. F***UNWRA.¹ F*** USA!” Despite its torrential beginning, the declaration ended with a plea for peace: “We do not want to hate, we do not want to feel all these feelings, we do not want to be victims anymore.”

If the Palestinian winter in any way gave birth to the Tunisian or Egyptian spring, I wanted to explore how it might give birth to its own spring. Thus, to better understand the change that occurred in order that I might consider its applicability to Palestine, I took a closer look at the Egyptian revolution. I chose this revolution not only for its close proximity to Palestine (itself

¹ UNWRA is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in the Near East.

sharing a border with the Gaza Strip) but because much had been published with regards to the process which took place behind the scenes of the revolution. Though many details were notable with regard to the Egyptian revolution in my investigation, the power of political narrative appeared supremely important.

I found that there were four main political narratives perspectives (or PNPs) at work which informed political power in Egypt. As Figure 1.0 shows on the following page, these are: 1) External State Political Narrative (ESPN), or that which the government wishes the world to believe about itself; 2) Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), or that which the government wishes its people to believe about itself; 3) External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN), or that which is socially appropriate to believe about the government; and 4) Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), or that which the people actually believe about the government.

Figure 1.0 Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

	State	Citizen/Civilian
External	<p>External State Political Narrative (ESPN)</p> <p>"What the government wishes the world to believe is true about itself"</p>	<p>External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN)</p> <p>"What is socially appropriate to believe about the government"</p>
Internal	<p>Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN)</p> <p>"What the government wishes its people to believe is true about itself"</p>	<p>Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)</p> <p>"What the people actually believe about the government"</p>

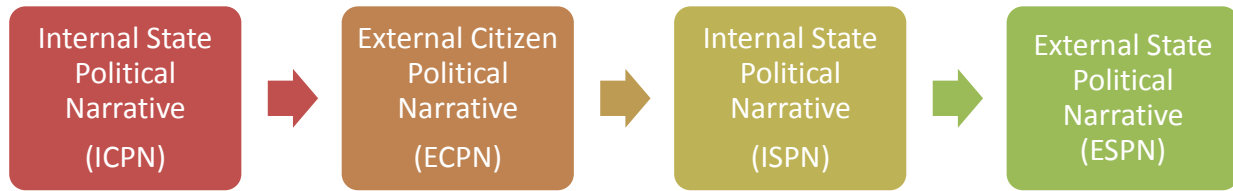
In the case of Egypt under the Mubarak regime, the PNPs functioned in the following ways: As Egypt was reliant on tourism for over 10 percent of its national income (Jones, 2011), the image the Egyptian government presented to the world (its External State Political Narrative, or ESPN) was that of a rising democracy (Ghonim, 2012). At the same time, internally, Egyptian citizens

knew the regime was hardly democratic, and many had personally been impacted by its brutality. To temper the incongruence, the Egyptian government presented the regime to its own people as all-powerful and impenetrable (its Internal State Political Narrative, or ISPN), thus discouraging resistance. Though many of Egypt's citizens did not give credence to its External State Political Narrative (ESPN), or the image of Egypt as a rising democracy, many believed the Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), or the idea that the Egyptian government was all-powerful and impenetrable. After all, many Egyptians had heard stories of dire—sometimes even fatal—consequences for opposing or resisting the Mubarak regime. The Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), or what the people actually believe about the government, reflected this: individuals believed the government and its agents were impenetrable. The External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN) reflected this: Egyptian citizens bought into the Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN) and feared the government to the extent to which they were most of the time unwilling to even discuss politics in public, instead drinking tea or coffee and watching the football game at the local café or hookah lounge as if there were no political concerns (Ghonim, 2012). Before the revolution, it certainly was not socially appropriate to speak of the government being brought down; this was a dangerous—and foolish—assertion.

In Egypt under the Mubarak regime, it was not the state political narratives, but the civilian political narratives, which were first to change, and which ultimately made revolution possible. As is outlined in Figure 1.1, it was a change in Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), from belief that the regime was all-powerful to belief that it is a façade, which transformed the External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN) from the perspective that resistance is socially inappropriate (and, thus, at times punitive measures are merited) to the perspective that

resistance is merited, even socially honorable, and that it is the government, not the people, which must be corrected.

Figure 1.1 Direction and Content of Political Narrative Perspective (PNP) Change for 2011 Egyptian Revolution



	Initial Belief	New Belief
ICPN	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> The Egyptian government is all-powerful and impenetrable.	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> The Egyptian government is not all-powerful. It is penetrable and someone must penetrate it.
ECPN	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> Egyptian politics should not be discussed or critiqued. It is foolish to critique the government.	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> Egyptian politics must be discussed and critiqued. It is honorable to critique the government and we must critique the government and stand firm and united in that critique as a people.
ISPN	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> The Egyptian government is all-powerful and impenetrable.	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> The Egyptian government is not all-powerful and impenetrable, as evidenced by the early street protests which occurred with no governmental arrests or violence.
ESPN	<i>Believed by much of the international community:</i> Egypt, despite modest corruption, is a rising democracy.	<i>Believed by much of the international community:</i> Egypt is ruled by a thoroughly corrupt and brutal dictatorship, as evidenced by the violent response of the regime to continued street protests and revolution efforts.

After identifying this Political Narrative Perspective (PNP) model as the underpinnings of political change in Egypt under the Mubarak regime in 2011, I was interested to apply this model to the context of Palestine to see, with respect to the model, where Palestinians appeared on the road to political change. To do so, I conducted a case study aimed at part in exploring this query. For participants, I selected a group of Palestinians which mirrored in many ways the group of Egyptian activists who led many of the resistance efforts for Egypt.

Though the contexts are far from identical, there are many similarities between the sociopolitical context of Egyptians living under the Mubarak regime and contemporary Palestinians. Externally, Israel is often viewed by the West as ‘the only democracy in the Middle East,’ and yet internally, like Egypt under the Mubarak regime, Israeli authorities restrict Palestinians’ free speech, freedom of the press, the right to peacefully assemble, and other democratic values. Internally, Internally, within Palestine, as in Egypt during the Mubarak regime, Israeli authorities and the Israeli military is presented as all-powerful and impenetrable, and not democratic at all. Isolated attempts to test this internal political narrative reinforce the narrative: Palestinians who resist the narrative may be harassed or intimidated, monitored, imprisoned, beaten, raped, tortured, subject to character assassination or visa or permit denials, or even killed. Such responses to activism and resistance reinforce Israel’s internal political narrative of might and impenetrability; yet they run counter to Israel’s external political narrative of being the ‘only democracy in the Middle East.’ Like Egyptians under the Mubarak regime, Palestinians endure emergency law (created during the British Mandate for Palestine in 1923 and not since lifted), police and military brutality, corruption among governmental officials, restrictions on free speech and the press, and poor living and economic conditions. Despite the severe hardship,

much like Egyptian youth, many Palestinian youth are active on the internet and use new media forums. As of December of 2011, in the West Bank alone there were 1.5 million internet users and three quarters of a million Facebook users (Miniwatts, 2012). Given the popularity and widespread use of Facebook among Palestinian youth, along with Palestine's many similarities to its Egyptian neighbors, it is worth exploring the way PNP's are used among Palestinian youth on Facebook.

As resistance efforts in Egypt first appeared on Facebook and Twitter among university-educated, internationally traveled, English-speaking politically concerned Egyptian youth before they ever appeared among the masses and on the streets (Ghonim, 2012), I sought to explore the Facebook posts of university-educated, internationally experienced, politically concerned, English-speaking Palestinian youth.² Certainly, in Egypt, many youth met these criteria and were not spearheading political change campaigns online; however, once the online campaigns for change began, they "went viral," spreading like wildfire, first online to people of similar backgrounds and beliefs, and then to the masses (Ghonim, 2012). If there was an online movement ablaze in Palestine, I recognized I might not be analyzing the posts of those spearheading the efforts, but, if such a movement existed, I was confident that it would be visible on the Facebook walls of the Palestinian youth selected for this study.

For the purposes of this study, I drew from case study methodology and employed content analysis to explore the Facebook wall posts of 14 Palestinian youth (7 male and 7 female, aged 18-27). These youth were selected for their similarity on several measures to the Egyptian youth

² As the 3G network needed to use Twitter on one's phone was not readily available at the time of my research, I limited my research to the use of Facebook.

leaders who spearheaded political change efforts on Facebook: 1) university-educated, 2) of the Millennial generation, 3) internationally traveled, 4) politically concerned, and 5) fluent in English. While spearheading or involvement in political change efforts in Palestine is by no means restricted to individuals who meet these criteria, I chose these criteria as a point of departure because these points formed the profiles of so many of the youth leaders who contributed to successfully bringing political change to Egypt.

1.2 Significance of the Problem

While select studies have explored the political narratives of Israelis (e.g., Oppenheimer, 1999; Al-Asmar, 1986; Gover, 1986; Bargad, 1977), few, if any, have examined Palestinian political narratives, and none have used the concept of Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPS) to assess readiness for political change. Furthermore, no study of which I am aware has explored the content of Palestinian youths' Facebook posts. We now know that Facebook holds potential as a significant tool for political change—even revolution, as was the case for Egyptians living under the Mubarak regime. Together, an exploration of Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) with insight into how select Palestinian youth are using Facebook could offer insights into Palestinians' prospects for political change.

1.3 Research Design

In this dissertation in which I explore the use of political narrative among Palestinian youth, I ask two broad questions:

- 1) To what extent are Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) (i.e., External State Political Narrative (ESPN), Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), External Citizen

Political Narrative (ECPN) and Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)) used on the Facebook walls of the 14 Palestinian youth participants of this study?

2) What might participants' PNP use suggest with regard to Palestine and the road to political change?

To address these questions, I identify Palestine's PNPs and then situate them against an historical backdrop of a changing and developing Israeli External State Political Narrative (ESPN). I then conducted my case study of 14 university educated, English-speaking, politically concerned, internationally traveled Palestinian youth of the Millennial generation (7 male, 7 female; aged 18-27), coding 10 percent of their Facebook posts (N=1371 of 13,710 posts) for one year (January 1—December 31, 2011). I determined if individuals met these criteria by setting up an initial interview in English in which I asked about their education level, age, international experience and political interest. If individuals had attended or were attending a college or university, I considered this 'university-educated' for the purposes of this dissertation. With regard to age, the Millennial generation has been identified as those persons aged 15-29 in the year 2010 (Tyler & Keeter, 2010); for the purposes of my study, as I wanted to work with adults, not minors, the individuals I studied were at or within the ages of 18-29 at the time of interview.³ The screening interviews were conducted in English; accordingly, English speaking ability was determined by the ability to engage in the interview without significant communication struggle. I determined political concern by asking individuals certain questions regarding political issues (e.g., What is your ideal solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? What do you think of the Oslo agreement?) to see if these individuals expressed interest in politics. Interest in politics was

³ I did not want to work with minors in addition to adults because minors would require additional considerations with regard to the structure and implementation of study amounting to, as I saw it, two studies.

determined by individuals being informed on issues, by expressing a degree of passion, not apathy, and by elaborating on answers, as opposed to brief or unqualified answers (e.g., “it’s bad” or “I don’t know”). Additionally, I asked individuals if they had any experience traveling or living abroad, and if they had lived or traveled abroad at the time of interview, I considered them internationally experienced. Finally, with regard to the Facebook posts, these were then analyzed using content analysis and were further contextualized through interviews. Facebook was selected for exploration in this study as it is the most popular social media forum among youth in the West Bank (Miniwatts, 2012).

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“It is not a strange phenomenon for morality to be the object of contestation. Competing groups often battle for the moral high ground when presenting their case to the outside world in a customary appeal for support. Far from being an exception to this rule, Israelis and Palestinians are its standard bearers, constantly providing their accounts for the entire world to see, hear, and sympathize. The tragedy is that this game has been played for so long, with arguments crafted in such minute detail, that reality has been reduced to the level of “competing narratives,”—each given its equal weight and legitimacy—as if that is what the conflict is all about.”

-Omar Rahman

2.1 Introduction

Narrative, or the stories and images which shape our understanding of the world, has long been important in war and peace. Pointing to the importance and power of narrative, centuries-old myths and legends have survived regarding the power of perception in shaping political and military outcomes.⁴ In their most basic form, narratives are stories which make meaning of the relationships, events and countless stimuli which make up people’s lives. As Barthes (1977, p. 79) points out:

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting, stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversations. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind [sic] and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives...narrative is international, transcultural: It is simply there, like life itself.

Narratives form the framework through which we understand ourselves and our world (Isacoff, 2005). They provide the explanation for the occurrences of events and sometimes explanations

⁴ An example is the Battle of Thermopylae, the story of the battle of which was made into a Hollywood film, *300*, directed by Zack Snyder and produced by Mark Canton, Bernie Goldmann, Gianni Nunnari and Jeffrey Silver).

for motivations behind events—whether those are scientific, religious, liberal, conservative, multicultural or monolithic. Narrative explains why some issues become “controversial,” as each contending side accepts a different interpretation of reality. As such, it is easy to see how stories from people’s lives can quickly become politicized. It is easy to see how the personal is very much the political (Hanisch, 1969).

Narrative research has gained popularity and along with it, legitimacy, particularly within the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences (e.g., Buthe, 2002; Cornog, 2004; Ezrahi, 1997; Ku, 1999; Lieblich et al., 1998; Roe, 1994; Shenhav, 2004 & 2005). Grounding for the study of the narrative is found in psychological research, which has affirmed that people think, perceive, imagine, and carry out moral decisions on the basis of narrative structures (e.g., Sarbin, 1986). Research has found the narrative to be a crucial tool for the study of human thought (Chafe, 1990) and meaning-making (Mishler, 1995), as well as for the shaping of political identity, perspective, and ideology (e.g., Cornog, 2004; Shenhav, 2004 & 2005). Narrative helps us explore a society’s “common denominators” (Biton, 2006) including a shared identity (Devine-Wright, 2003; Bruner, 1990). Narrative has also been instrumental in unpacking a society’s beliefs about conflict and its collective adversary/ies (Bar-Tal, 2000; Salomon, 2004). Though narratives have long existed, it is only recently that they have been studied at any length within Western academia. With the advent of postmodernity, the voices of individuals themselves, as opposed to the voices of outsiders interpreting the lives of insiders, have become increasingly valued. While a variety of narratives have been identified (such as personal, group, or organizational narratives), for the purposes of this dissertation I will focus on the political narrative.

2.2 Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

To explore political narrative and the potential for political change in this dissertation, I explore the concept of Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs), a model designed for this dissertation research. As reshown in Figure 2.0, these are: 1) External State Political Narrative (ESPN), or what the government wishes the world to believe about itself; Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN) or what the government wishes its people to believe about itself; External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN), or what is socially appropriate to believe about the government; and Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), or what the people actually believe about the government.

Figure 2.0 Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

	State	Citizen/Civilian
External	<p>External State Political Narrative (ESPN)</p> <p>"What the government wishes the world to believe is true about itself"</p>	<p>External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN)</p> <p>"What is socially appropriate to believe about the government"</p>
Internal	<p>Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN)</p> <p>"What the government wishes its people to believe is true about itself"</p>	<p>Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)</p> <p>"What the people actually believe about the government"</p>

In Egypt, PNPs impacted both oppression and liberation, and they also influenced global perceptions. A superficial view of the United States would show that while many American citizens are increasingly disenfranchised with the state of political and economic affairs within the United States (Internal Citizen Political Narrative, or ICPN), the U.S. still represents itself internationally as the land of opportunity (External State Political Narrative, or ESPN), and many immigrants continue to move to the U.S. each year due, in part, to that narrative. The U.S. also

presents itself to its citizens as concerned globally with democracy, peace, justice and freedom (Internal State Political Narrative, or ISPN), and while some Americans believe these ideas drive decisions in the Oval Office (External Citizen Political Narrative, or ECPN), others are more skeptical and see the United States as more profit—than ideal—driven (Internal Citizen Political Narrative, or ICPN).⁵

2.3 Egypt under the Mubarak Regime: PNPs and Political Change

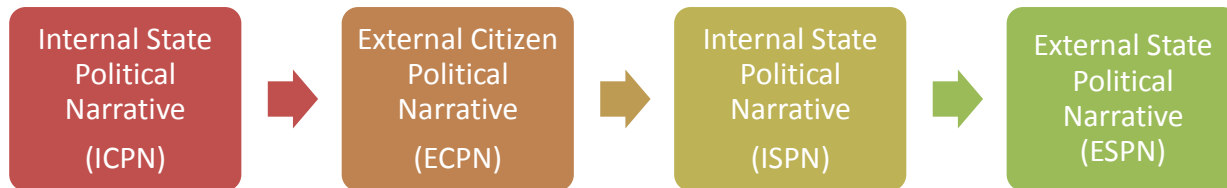
In Egypt under the Mubarak regime, PNPs influenced both the power of oppression and the strength of revolution. Mubarak’s External State Political Narrative (ESPN) presented Egypt to the world as a rising democracy, promoting public relations and tourism. Internally, the Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN) presented the regime as all-powerful and impenetrable, thus discouraging resistance and active internal scrutiny. Egypt’s Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN) mirrored its Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN) in that citizens largely internalized the notion that the Egyptian government was all-powerful, impenetrable, and unchallengeable. It was thus socially inappropriate to challenge the Mubarak regime, as the challenger was deemed more foolish than heroic (Ghonim, 2012).

Change occurred (see Figure 2.1 for the direction of PNP change) when Wael Ghonim and others (e.g., Asmaa Mahfouz, Sharif Abdel Kouddous) kindled a change in ICPN, from the belief that the Mubarak regime was all-powerful to the belief that, while the regime did hold significant power, the amount of power that it held was actually a façade. Acceptance of the idea that the

⁵ While I have used ICPN to show two views (increased disenfranchisement with the state of political and economic affairs in the United States, and that the U.S. is more profit than ideal driven) it is important to note that any PNP may have a number of “points” which categorize the perspective; they may not necessarily be summed up by one descriptor or idea. That said, the two ideas I mention here as an example of American ICPN are not, upon closer inspection, in conflict.

Mubarak regime was not as powerful as previously understood allowed people to “break the fear barrier” (Ghonim, 2012) and take to the streets. When Egyptian citizens took to the streets in protest and were unharmed, the External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN) quickly transformed from the perspective that resistance is socially inappropriate—even foolish—to the perspective that resistance is merited, even socially honorable, and that it is the government, not the people, which deserves to be chastised and corrected (see Figure 2.1 on the following page).

Figure 2.1 Direction and Content of Political Narrative Perspective (PNP) Change for 2011 Egyptian Revolution



	Initial Belief	New Belief
ICPN	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> The Egyptian government is all-powerful and impenetrable.	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> The Egyptian government is not all-powerful. It is penetrable and someone must penetrate it.
ECPN	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> Egyptian politics should not be discussed or critiqued. It is foolish to critique the government.	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> Egyptian politics must be discussed and critiqued. It is honorable to critique the government and we must critique the government and stand firm and united in that critique as a people.
ISPN	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> The Egyptian government is all-powerful and impenetrable.	<i>Believed by many Egyptian citizens:</i> The Egyptian government is not all-powerful and impenetrable, as evidenced by the early street protests which occurred with no governmental arrests or violence.
ESPN	<i>Believed by much of the international community:</i> Egypt, despite modest corruption, is a rising democracy.	<i>Believed by much of the international community:</i> Egypt is ruled by a thoroughly corrupt and brutal dictatorship, as evidenced by the violent response of the regime to continued street protests and revolution efforts.

2.4 PNPs: Pedagogy and Propaganda

As demonstrated, political narrative acts as a pedagogy, schooling individuals on how to think and act in ways that are socially acceptable or desirable (e.g., Langeveld, 1958). As it is a pedagogy, many have recognized the power of political narrative as propaganda. Political propaganda is often categorized into two broad types: propaganda of integration and propaganda of agitation. Jacques Ellul (1973) calls propaganda of agitation that which is designed to incite

revolution or to undermine existing regimes. Propaganda of integration, on the other hand, is used to promote acceptance and support among its citizenry. When political narrative has been effectively internalized or accepted, it becomes part of what Bar-Tal (2001) calls a society's "collective emotion." Bar-Tal (2001, p. 608) identifies collective emotion in a society by the following criteria:

1. Society members widely experience the emotion.
2. The emotion appears frequently in the society's public discourse: It is expressed and discussed often in public debates by societal channels of communication.
3. The beliefs that evoke the particular emotion are widely shared by society members and are expressed by society's communication channels. Beliefs that imply potential threats and dangers, triggering fear, can serve as an example.
4. Cultural products, such as books, films, or theatrical plays, express the particular emotion and the beliefs that trigger it.
5. The educational system, through school textbooks, ceremonies, and teachers, transmits beliefs that evoke the particular emotion.
6. The emotion and the beliefs that evoke it are embedded in the society's collective memory.
7. Beliefs evoking the particular emotion are used for decision-making by society's institutions, and influence policy or course of action.

When political narrative has effectively schooled individuals to certain believe certain PNPs, individuals can begin to hold deep-rooted beliefs that are not necessarily their own, though they may not recognize the fact that these are not their own beliefs or values and may not know where the beliefs originated from (Jhally, 2010). This is particularly important with regard to PNPs

because it can make PNPs difficult to change. If PNPs become part of a society's collective emotion and help to make up individuals' deeply held beliefs, changing one's view of a political narrative perspective may be akin to changing one's cultural norms and values.

2.5 A Word on Objectivity and Limitations

I aim to explore Palestinian PNPs within this literature review so that I may explore their use on Facebook among 14 Palestinian youth. Before I do however, I would like to provide a word on objectivity and limitations:

A word about balance and objectivity. The Palestine-Israel conflict generates suspicion about bias like none other. Accusations fly and tempers flare over the slightest indication of a person or piece of writing leaning one way or the other....I suggest making every effort to keep an open mind, avoid this trap of polarity, and read critically....This conflict is not a sporting event where people pick a side and root accordingly (though many do). It is a political conflict over which life is lost...."Objectivity" is a word that has almost lost its meaning, and has frequently come to suggest imposing symmetry where things aren't necessarily symmetrical, thus distorting the actual situation. (Harms, 2008, p. xv).

Like Harms (2008) and other scholars who write on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I must wrestle with questions of objectivity and bias, not only because, in exploring PNPs I am reviewing the "story" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but particularly because in my literature review I explore the "story behind the story," or the aims to moralize that story for political advantage.

Given the morally subjective nature and complexity of the narrative, I do not claim absolute objectivity while exploring subjectivity. Indeed, there is no way for me to take subjective texts and arrange them in certain objective order; admittedly, my understanding of these narratives is itself a narrative. But this is not necessarily a limitation. As Roy (2007, p. 55) discusses, subjective analysis may be precisely what is needed for honest scholarship:

According to some, the relationship between humanistic scholarship and politics in writing about the Middle East must be based upon some immutable (and to my knowledge, yet to be agreed upon) standard of objectivity, which mandates deference to balance, neutrality, dispassion, even indifference. In the absence of these criteria, the critique maintains, lies advocacy rather than scholarship. This argument lies at the heart of the long debate on intellectual responsibility and how it is exercised.

Yet, a review of the literature reveals something quite different. It reveals an argument that calls for individual judgment and imagination in the conduct of research and exposes the inadequacy of detachment, objectivity, and essentialism and exclusive moral goals. Indeed, it embraces the subjective as an essential component in scholarship, rejecting what Northrop Frye refers to as the ‘naive ferocity of abstraction.’

Scholars such as Roy (2007, p. 55) do not dispute the importance of “detachment,” or a certain degree of it, as a “precondition for knowledge,” but argue that would should not be detached to the point where one becomes indifferent to the consequences and unable to engage in “a range of imaginative sympathy.” It is here, in this perhaps tenuous balance, in which I hope to approach my work. I attempt enough objectivity to see clearly and enough subjectivity to remain human.

That said, I wish also to note the obvious limitation that I speak neither Arabic nor Hebrew. This, in turn, limits my ability to explore historical developments of PNPs in literature and scholarship which was not originally published in English or which has not been translated to English. Certainly, future studies of this topic would do well to be conducted by Arabic and Hebrew speakers. This study uses the resources I have at my disposal, but I would encourage future studies which could build upon the present study.

2.6 Palestinian Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

In the summer of 2011, a few months after the Egyptian revolution, I traveled to Palestine (the West Bank), Israel and Egypt. I rented a house in Bethlehem and stayed for one month. I spoke with Palestinians and Israelis about political narrative in Palestine and Israel in an effort to identify Palestine's PNPs. I then explored some of the historic underpinnings to these PNPs by examining Jewish and Israeli literature and the development of the Israeli ESPN, out of which the Palestinian ESPN emerged in part as a response. Before I explore the Palestinian PNPs in detail, I first outline the historical development of the Israeli ESPN.

2.5 Historical Underpinnings of the Israeli External State Political Narrative (ESPN)

In a study of Jewish history or literature, one readily finds that Jews have experienced discrimination for centuries. Stereotypes have depicted Jewish women as sexual and overbearing and men as powerless (Kigner, 2011), and described Jews as Christ-killers, swindlers and buffoons. The stereotypes have been perpetuated in a variety of means, from secular texts and oral narrative to religious texts such as the Bible (Lefkovitz, 2011). This mistreatment and these

stereotypes were, in part, a reason for the awakening of the “slumbering idea” of Zionism (Harms & Ferry, 2008, p. 51), through which Jews began to contemplate, and then to organize for, a permanent safe haven. When the World Zionist Organization (WZO)—which had taken it upon itself to choose the safe haven—suggested Palestine, it sent Theodor Herzl as an ambassador to secure the location. As Palestine was at that time still under Ottoman rule, Herzl traveled to Constantinople to offer the Sultan, Abdul Hamid, assistance with the Empire’s debt in return for his permission to establish Zionist settlements in Palestine. When the Sultan refused, Herzl turned to the British in 1903, who offered him what at that time was called Uganda, (the area that would later become Kenya). Herzl considered the offer, if for nothing else than to not jeopardize his relationship with the British. When word of the offer spread to the World Zionist Organization, it caused a rift, dividing the organization into two factions—those that favored practicality (the Uganda option) versus those that were holding out for idealism (Palestine) (Harms & Ferry, 2008). As we know from history, the choice to establish Palestine as the Jewish homeland eventually won out.

Between 1882 and 1903 the first large wave of Jewish immigration (called the “First Aliyah,” or Ascent) into Palestine occurred, bringing 25,000 Jews into Palestine. Relatively few of these Jews were motivated by Zionism; most were fleeing the harsh conditions faced in Russia and Eastern Europe and were simply looking to live in cities as opposed to rural outposts (Harms & Ferry, 2008). The Second Aliyah (1904-1914) brought with it approximately 40,000 Jews, mostly from Russia and Yemen. The Third Aliyah (1919-1923) brought another 40,000 Jews. The Fourth Aliyah (1934-1928), driven more strongly by Zionist motives, brought with it some

80,000 Jewish immigrants. The Fifth, and final, Aliyah (1929-1939), brought with it some 266,000 Jewish immigrants; this Aliyah ended with the beginning of World War II.

When these Jews arrived in Palestine, they encountered great variability; these individuals had come from all over the world, their families having lived in these various locations often for generations. With very few exceptions, these families had never stepped foot in this land before. They were thus unfamiliar with the land and climate were uncertain of how to interact culturally and linguistically with the Palestinian Arabs living on the land.

For many Palestinians, Jewish immigration was not initially threatening to their Palestinian identity. Part of this was owed to the fact that Palestinians living in greater Syria under Ottoman rule during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often showed greater allegiances to village, city, or regional units than they did to religious or national loyalties, rendering national Palestinian unity less relevant. This makes some sense, especially considering that long-distance travel was far less common (and also less feasible) and that these Palestinian Arabs were subject to Ottoman control, and not a central or federal Palestinian leadership. Due to there being no Palestinian “state” and due to the autonomous nature of Palestinian cities and villages, national identity was, in many ways, irrelevant. Localism was reinforced through regional markets and distinct recognizable dialects (Harms & Ferry, 2008), and saw its zenith under the system of *iltizam* (tax farming) through the rule of Ottoman *mashayikh* and village potentates (Tamari, 1999). Palestinians were largely horticulturalists, and for many of them, having lived for many years off of the land, were quite connected to the land and skilled at tending it.

As immigrant Jews and Palestinian Arabs interacted, stereotypes began both to dispel and to develop, and political narratives began to form. Much of the changing narrative is reflected in Hebrew literature of the time (Moragh, 1986, p. 147-8):

Critical studies of the Arab theme in Israeli fiction have taken a diachronic approach. They have sought to correlate the changing representations of the Arab with the changing nature of Israeli history by establishing clear typological distinctions between the images of Arabs that appear in the fiction written during each period. There is a large measure of agreement among these typologies.

The corpus of narrative literature written during the first four decades of Jewish settlement in Israel addresses many aspects of this historic transition. It captures much of its drama and explores a wide range of personal, cultural and ideological problems experienced by the Jewish settlers in their encounter with the realities of the new land.

In the following few pages, I draw from early Jewish and Israeli literature to discuss the changing Israeli ESPN with regards to Palestinians.⁶ Though there is some disagreement on dates and terms, early Hebrew literature is often divided into three generations: (1) early Hebrew literature (early Palestinian Mandate, or 1920s-1930s); (2) the Palmach Generation (1930s-1940s); and the (3) Statehood Generation (1950s-1960s). The first significant piece of literature to shape the political narrative of Palestinians, however, would have to be Theodor Hertzl's⁷ own

⁶ As I do, I wish to note two qualifications: (1) the publication dates of the literature do not reliably reflect the time in which a work was written, as publication houses were limited in pre-1948 Israel, and as some writers' works were published much later, or posthumously (Ramras-Rauch, 1989) (In this case, authors' names are a much more useful means of categorizing early Jewish literature. Scholars of Hebrew literature (such as Ramras-Rauch, 1989 & Gover, 1986) have grouped authors by time period, and, where possible, I use these to guide this review of Jewish literature); Secondly, I wish to note that (2) these works of writing, in which political narratives are reflected, are, of course, not the only works produced at the time; Jewish literature which breaks from the narrative or challenges it in some way are discussed in the "Breaking from Narrative" section of this dissertation.

⁷ Theodor Hertzl is considered the "father" of Zionism.

Altneuland (or Oldnewland) (1902), in which he presents his own vision of a new society in which “all human needs are satisfied, all human potentialities fulfilled, and all human weaknesses mitigated.” This vision is fulfilled, of course, through the transformation of Palestine from an “entirely negative,” impoverished place, to a Jewish utopia (Ramras-Rauch, 1989, p. 7). Hertzl’s utopia reflects “an integrative idealism in reard to the Arab-Jewish confrontation...[that] is supported by nineteenth-century positivism combining a faith in the redemptive power of scientific advancement and the myth of the perfectability of a man” (Ramras-Rauch, 1989, p. 8).

2.6.1.1. The Noble Savage

When Diaspora Jews arrived in Palestine, there was no central unifying culture or system of identification with which they might connect with one another. They had emigrated from a host of countries, and lacked no unifying national culture but a shared heritage and a sense that they were strangers in a new land. While Diaspora Jews were themselves culturally diverse, interacting with “the Arab” was something they all had in common. As Moragh (1986, p. 148) states:

In the settlement period the image of the Arab is seen as an idealized correlative to the yearnings of the Jewish settlers to discard the enervating heritage of the diaspora and create a vigorous new identity. The repeated characterizations of the Arab as a true native, deeply rooted in the land and fully at ease in its recalcitrant terrain signify a desirable antithesis to the uprooted, urbanized Jewish settlers who struggled to overcome their sense of loneliness, alienation and overwhelming inadequacy.

As Bargad (1977, p. 56) states, “[f]or the Jew of the Palestinian Mandate,” the Arab represented "wishful possibilities of his own self-renewal as a de-ghettoized, liberated, natural human being."

For the children of Diaspora Jewish immigrants, known as Sabras, many sought to turn those “wishful possibilities” into a reality. The rooted Palestinian Arab, diametrically opposed to the Diaspora Jew, served as inspiration for these Jews (Netiva Ben-Yehuda in Even-Zohar, 1980, p. 174-75):

To us, they, the Arabs, were great heroes. Frightening, threatening, courageous, dominant, instilling terror and awe. We envied them, we surely envied them. We were dying to be like them ever since the Shomer and until the Palmach⁸ were founded. We were only concerned about one thing: to talk like them, to walk like them, to act like them... We imitated them in everything. To us they were the model of natives of the country, while we—we may not have been anything specific, but we were definitely not ‘Diaspora Jews.’ So what does a native of the country, a ‘non-Diaspora Jew,’ look like? Like an Arab. Anyone who could chat in Arabic was held in great honor, and if he had Arab friends, he was a king.

A photograph of a Jewish immigrant and her Palestinian companion is shown below. One can see a trade of influences; she is wearing the Palestinian keffiyeh and he is wearing a Western hat and Jewish scarf.

⁸ The Shomer was a Jewish guard organization founded in Palestine in 1909 whose aim was to defend Jewish settlement and newly purchased land. (Shapira, Anna (1992). *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948*. Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA. p. 421). The Palmach, or “strike force,” was the elite fighting force of the Haganah, or Jewish underground army, during the British Mandate of Palestine.



(From Almog, Oz (2000). Haim Watzman (Trans.). The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.)

As can be seen in this photo, the desire to dress as a "non-Jew" popularized the kaffiyeh and the rubashka (a Russian tunic); these were the options that “an adjacent, accessible culture provided” (Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, 1990, p. 181). The Institute (1990, p. 181) goes on to note, “[a]ccessibility alone could not have determined the selection. For example, constituents belonging to the English culture were at the time gradually becoming accessible in Palestine, but they were not adopted by the local Hebrew culture.”

In addition to clothing, Jewish admiration of Palestinians was reflected in language and literature. Oppenheimer (1999) describes the depictions of the Arab of this time as a “noble savage” figure:

[T]he figure of the Arab is stereotypical, following a characteristic pattern that can be found even in extra-literary descriptions of the Arab in that period. . . . There is certainly no political conflict [depicted]; rather, the situations described deal with daily routine, society and its customs, and local culture. [T]he Arab...symbolized the very cultural values that were opposite to the Jewish experience of the Diaspora: his rootedness and his attachment to the land through agricultural labor, his cruelty and belligerence, his vital existence, unspoiled by modernity....The Arab played the stereotypical role of the noble savage.

Positive representations of Palestinian Arabs are accordingly found in Hebrew literature. Moragh (1986, p. 148) comments that “many of the [early Jewish] writers share[d] a romantic fascination with the mystique of Arab primitivism and a genuine curiosity about the customs and traditions of Arab society.” As El-Asmar (1986) states, “Some authors went to great lengths in order to describe aspects of Palestinian life, clothes, and social customs,” suggesting positive regard. One author describes a Bedouin abaya (cloak), and its importance in the life of a Bedouin, or nomadic Arab farmer (Nadel, 1974, p. 96):

“An abaya is an excellent way to dress,” said Nati, in enthusiastic defense of the traditional Bedouin garb. “It is suitable for both summer and winter. It is comfortable for walking and sitting; you can even sleep in it. In winter the Bedouin wraps himself in his abaya, which can be wrapped twice around the body, thus keeping him warm. The abaya protects him from rain. The Bedouin wears his

abaya with the hair-covered side of the fabric closer to the body, and then it is impossible for rain to penetrate the cloth, gliding instead over its surface as if it were slickened with oil. . . In short, the abaya has innumerable benefits."

2.6.1.2. *The Destined and the Bedouin*

Toward the end of World War II, Zionist political aims were drawing close to realization. As the prospects of actualizing the Zionist agenda of securing a Jewish homeland appeared more probable, the narrative was compelled to change. The slogan, "a land without a people for a people without a land" was gaining traction with Zionists as a powerful slogan with which to present Palestine as the ideal solution for a Jewish safe haven.⁹ The slogan emerged as Zionists geared up for political possession of the land. The slogan, "a people without a land for a land without a people," positioned Palestine as an ideal homeland for Diaspora Jews. However, this slogan would not work alongside the narrative of the noble savage; the Arab could not be deeply rooted in the land if the land contained no people. Thus, compelled to change, the narrative began to: (1) emphasize a Jewish connection to the land, and (2) deemphasize a Palestinian connection to the land. The image of Palestinians serving as a key to understanding and cultivating the land was replaced with the narrative of Jews as "the destined"—masters of the land—even as its only truly responsible caretakers—and Palestinians were increasingly portrayed as Bedouins, having little to no connection to the land.¹⁰

⁹ The slogan was first spoken by British statesman and social reformer Lord Shaftesbury in 1853. Shaftesbury wrote to Foreign Minister George Hamilton Gordon that Greater Syria was "a country without a nation" in need of "a nation without a country" "Is there such a thing?" He asks. "To be sure there is: the ancient and rightful lords of the soil, the Jews!" In Garfinkle, Adam M. (1991, Oct). On the origin, meaning, use and abuse of a phrase. *Middle Eastern Studies*: 539-550.

¹⁰ Though Bedouin Arabs existed, they comprised only a small fraction of Palestinian Arabs.

2.6.1.3. *The Destined*

As the Zionist political narrative changed, images of Palestinians in Hebrew literature began to reflect those changes. This comes as little surprise when we consider that Diaspora Jews of the time tended to believe that literature should serve as nationalist pedagogy (Gover, 1986):

The 'Parent Generation' maintained that literature had a social duty: to promulgate moral values and to articulate Zionist achievements, which in their view are synonymous with universal humanism. The role of the writer, in this regard, is to serve as a prophet and a teacher....Literature has to be optimistic and to portray reality as it is-an optimistic, national reality. It has to depict our revival-to reflect the return of the people to [their] homeland.

The concept of the "destined" is depicted in Hebrew literature, such as in the following story (Gurvitz & Navon, 1953, p. 128-134):

Joseph and some of his men thus crossed the land [Palestine] on foot, until they reached Galilee. They climbed mountains, beautiful but empty mountains, where nobody lived. . . . Joseph said, "We want to establish this kibbutz and conquer this emptiness. We shall call this place Tel Hai [Living Hill]. . . . The land is empty; its children have deserted it [the reference is to Jews]. They are dispersed and no longer tend it. No one protects or tends the land now.

El-Asmar (1986, p. 84) notes that the maxim that "the land belongs to he who tills and tends it," was also used to claim the land, as evidenced below (Dani, 1958, p. 13-14):

The Arabs, who had occupied our land 1,300 years ago, lived on the land and looked at it as their homeland but never did anything to protect it from ruin. . . While our land was occupied by aliens, it

was also turning into a wasteland. The children of Israel lived in diaspora with their eyes fixed on their land, for they wanted to return to the land of Israel, their beloved homeland.

Some works of literature conveyed the idea that Palestinians had given up the land of their own accord. In some instances, Palestinian investors sold their land to Jews willingly and for a profit, but more often Palestinians were tricked into or forced into signing the deeds over to their properties to cover increased taxes and fees they could no longer pay (Harms & Ferry, 2008). Within Zionist children's literature, some characters complain that they had to buy the land from the Jews when they in fact already "owned" it; excerpts from two stories, detailed below, depict Palestinians as agreeing that the land belonged to the Jews (Talmi, 1954, p. 103 & Semoli, 1946, p. 24):

"The effendi sold the land. It is my land, but he sold it to a Jewish effendi with long hair. What was his name? I remember one name only . . . Israel."

The [Arab] shaykhs looked at each other and said, "Godspeed, khawaja. Welcome. This land is not our land. We heard it belongs to the Jews."

At times, symbols are used to represent the idea of Jews as "destined" to the land. In one example of this (Semoli, 1946, p. 12), a Jewish man went in search of another place to live, walking through a Palestine that was "empty of people," crossing mountains and valleys until he reached an area that was "one of the most beautiful places . . . ever seen." He then told his family, "This is where we shall live." Subsequently, he built a small cottage and started exploring the surrounding lands. Then,

he saw a big stone. He went to look closer, and found some markings on it. He said to himself that this stone was a relic of an ancient Jewish village. We shall plant our roots here, and bring this Jewish village back to life. He called to his son and said, "Here on this hill we shall live. Do you see these stones? They are the remainders of an ancient Jewish village. Let us collect some of these stones and build our new village."

While digging the foundation of the home, the man's son unearthed a tablet with the help of his father and after cleaning it found on it a drawing of a menorah. The father then began to brag that this piece of marble had remained in the land for the past two thousand years and that no one had touched the land since then, thus enabling them to find it upon their return.

2.6.1.4 The Bedouin

Early Hebrew literature also shifted to change the narrative of the Palestinian, drawing attention from a fixed and rooted Arab to the transient Bedouin Arab. The focus on the nomadic Bedouin supported the Zionist contention that Palestine belonged to no one, and was an especially salient justification for land possession, after some Jews who had been misdirected realized that Palestine was not, in fact, a land without a people (El-Asmar, 1986, p. 88):

Zionism has used the fact that Bedouin are not usually tied to a specific plot of land to prove that they are mere transients in Palestine. A Bedouin living in northern Palestine today may move to the south tomorrow, and after that to Egypt, Syria, or another neighboring country.

Some Palestinians were indeed Bedouin, yet Zionism often gave the impression, if it mentioned Palestinians at all, that *all* the inhabitants of Palestine were Bedouin. With virtually all of its inhabitants labeled as transient, the Zionist narrative could position Jews as “original” or “valid” caretakers of the land (Nadel, 1974, p. 97):

"A Bedouin sees only black sheep," mused Nati, who used to spend most of his time in the library of Mr. Eron, reading everything related to the land of Israel and its inhabitants. He wanted to be able to distinguish easily the original inhabitants.

The common depiction of Palestinians as Bedouins renders by comparison even more obvious the lack of the Palestinian farmer (El-Asmar, 1986, p. 93):

Absent [in Jewish literature of this time] is the Palestinian farmer. Nowhere in this literature does one encounter such a character. And the absence is not accidental, any more than the attention paid the character of the Bedouin in children's literature is accidental: while the Bedouin is not attached to the land, the farmer is vitally linked to it. He loves his land, respects it, and would never sacrifice it, whatever the cost. The only Arab farmers mentioned in these children's stories are those who worked the lands of rich Arabs and who were later evicted from the land after the Jewish *effendi* bought it from the Arab *effendi*.¹¹

Not only are there virtually no mention of Palestinian farmers in Hebrew literature of the time, but there is virtually no mention of other aspects of Palestinian culture or modernizing Palestinian society (El-Asmar, 1986):

¹¹ The term “effendi” was used in the Ottoman Empire as a title of respect used to address men of nobility, learning or social standing.

Nor is mention made of any aspect of Palestinian culture: architecture and the arts, embroidery and crafts, cuisine, olive and citrus cultivation, or growing Palestinian urbanization. Such factors would indicate the existence of an Arab culture and the existence of a settled Arab people—a fact which Zionism has sought to suppress or negate.

The narrative shift from rooted Palestinian farmer to transient Bedouin Arab was not enough. Zionists at this time were lobbying with such pressure for a United Nations partitioning of the land that President Truman remarked: “I do not think I ever had as much pressure and propaganda aimed at the White House as I had in this instance” (Wawro, 2010). If Zionists were to secure some land for themselves, as backed by the United Nations, violence would surely break out; if Jewish leaders declared statehood and expelled Palestinians from their homes, more violence would surely erupt. Certain of their aims and certain enough of the consequences to these aims, Zionists needed a way to deal with the international public relations damage the violence of partition, statehood, and expulsion would likely cause. The narrative was once again compelled to change—the nomadic Arab was now not enough; Palestinian Arabs would need to be vilified.

Zureik (1974, p. 99) identifies this shift in socially appropriate thinking about a group (wherein one is vilified, and the other, by comparison or by design, is glorified) as one of the hallmarks of “settler regime”:

[A] settler regime implies the following characteristics: First, it creates in the public eye a mythology which dehumanizes the culture and way of life of the native people. Thus, the native is masked with a

negative stereotypical image which is utilized to justify his exploitation...An entire folklore emerges to reinforce the negative stereotyping of members of the subordinate group.

It did not appear to be difficult to convince Western audiences of a shift in narrative; much of the West had no trouble subscribing to the image the Bedouin (El-Asmar, 1986, p. 88):

Zionism did not need to exert great efforts to convince international, and particularly European, public opinion of this logic. The image of the Bedouin was well-known, owing to long-standing contacts between East and West in the form of relations between colonizer and colonized. Moreover, it was easy for Zionism to highlight the Jewish character in contrast to that of the Bedouin. Jews were Europeans; they dressed like Europeans and conversed in European languages; their food, life-style, and social habits were to a large degree European. The Bedouin, obviously, were otherwise.

Western audiences had been able to subscribe to images of the Palestinian Arab as Bedouin, owing largely to “long-standing contacts between East and West in the form of relations between colonizer and colonized” (El-Asmar, 1986, p. 88). In keeping with this strategy, Zionists needed a new image with which Western audiences could identify. Zionists would not need to turn far. Negative images and stereotypes of Arabs date back to Western colonization. Cohen (1972, p. 64-74) describes how French colonizers in Algeria used the tactics of a settler regime to dehumanize the native Arab and to defend French colonial actions:

[C]olonization has created a stereotype to which the name ‘Arab’ has been given. What is an Arab? The descendants of the famous conquerors of the Middle Ages? Not at all; he is merely the strange creature clad in tattered *djellabah* and filthy head cloth. His wife is swathed in a white robe and his

children go barefoot. There is no mistaking him. Everything about him, both physical and moral, testifies to his essentially ‘Arab’ qualities...Not only is he dirty, but he is also a liar, thief, lazy and aggressive...Don’t entrust him with any difficult task, since he has neither the inclination nor the ability to carry it out; he would only make ‘an Arab’s job’ of it.

Much of the same mythology, from the Arab’s personal hygiene to Arab women’s oppression, has been used in the Israeli narrative regarding Palestinians, in part, because it had worked in the past, and also as the West often judges the Arab world by the status of its women (Abu-Lughod 2002); this new image of the Palestinian would vilify both Arab men and women. The emergent narrative would soon be accepted by many Diaspora Jewish immigrants; the Hebrew expression *avoda araviet* is almost a literal translation of “an Arab’s job” and has been used among Jews as a derogatory statement to describe incompetence and lack of skill in the performance of tasks (Zureik, 1974, p. 99). With regards to the narrative, Zureik (1974) makes sure to point out, whether these attributes are factually true is irrelevant; what matters is what people *think* to be true.

2.6.1.5 The Ignoble Savage and the Hebrew

A new feature was thus added to the Zionist narrative—Arab vilification—in order to prepare for political movement called for by the Zionist agenda. The Palestinian shifted from “noble savage” and “Bedouin” to “ignoble savage.” In addition, the Jewish narrative altered its own appearance. The new Jew could not admire Arabs, as had the Sabra. The new Jew would be independent, strong and masculine; he was referred to as a “Hebrew.”

2.6.1.5.1 The Ignoble Savage

In accordance with the shift in narrative, Arabs began to be described negatively (El-Asmar, 1986):

The Arab appears as a criminal who relishes murder for its own sake. Thus one should never "turn one's back" on an Arab. An Arab also kills for the least reason and appears to have no appreciation for the value of human life. An Arab is a thief; he steals because theft is part of his nature, especially theft from Jews because of his "envy." An Arab is a swindler who would cheat even his own family. He is base, ready to sell himself, his honor, and his people cheaply. An Arab is a vagabond for whom material things have no value. He is a coward who cannot fight and who, therefore, is cunning. An Arab is an idiot who does not know how to converse and believes whatever he hears; he cannot win even at running or swimming. Arabs prefer that non-Arabs tell him what to do. He is a liar whose word cannot be trusted and whose promises should not be taken seriously. An Arab is dirty in mind as well as body; he does not wash, and the "teacher" always warns the children not to come too close to an Arab lest they catch some dreadful disease.

The once-admired Palestinian Bedouin is now seen as filthy, disgusting, and even as a thief and kidnapper. The image of the Arab is "presented in such a way as to undermine any positive relationship between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. The...reader is educated through this literature to avoid the Arabs. He or she is warned not to approach the Arabs because they are physically filthy and diseased, because they steal, because they cannot be trusted, because they swear constantly, and because they are corrupt (Margalit, 1959, p. 18, & Chernowitz, 1960):

"Let us see how the Bedouin live in their tents," Nadav said with disgust. "They are dirty, they smell foul."

Then suddenly we heard a voice saying, "Allahumma." We felt strong hands holding us immobile, tying us up. Two ghosts in black robes appeared before us. They were two Bedouin thieves. What we had heard was no practical joke, no childish game, or a scene out of the movies. It was real. The two ghosts were real thieves who had captured us and planned to hold us for ransom.

Palestinians were also portrayed as murderers. In the story *Hirbet Hiz'ah*, the soldiers go out on a "clear and magnificent winter morning.... in a light spirit ... like a bunch of kids chirping like sparrows." Once they get to the point where they can see the village from a distance, their corporal tells them (Gover, 1986, p. 34):

All these groves and the fields of this village and its plentiful water, its good soil and its excellent growth are almost as famous as its inhabitants are infamous...[they] are villains and assist the enemy. They are open to all evil, whenever the opportunity arises. For, if Jews come their way, you may be sure they are going to finish them off with venom-that's the way they are and that's their nature.

As El-Asmar (1986) sees it, there is only one "good" Arab: that is one who betrays his homeland (p. 86-87):

It was mentioned above that there exists a "positive" image of a certain Arab character, he who betrays his people and helps the Zionist movement realize its goals in Palestine (i.e. one who spies on other Arabs and recognizes an unqualified Jewish right to the land). There is another "positive" image which is slightly different. Consider the following story ["Fire in the Mountains" by Yehudah Salu]. A group of Jewish boys took a car on their way to "liberate" Jerusalem from the Arabs. Near Bab al-Wad, close to Jerusalem, they suddenly came under fire from the surrounding hills. All but one passenger were killed. Cloaked in darkness, the surviving boy began to climb the nearby mountain.

He reached the top by morning, utterly exhausted from a bleeding wound. He then saw a beautiful, well-kept garden. He told himself this must be a Jewish area. He went to the garden and was surprised to meet an Arab youth.

The Arab asked the Jewish boy to return to his people or the criminal Arabs would kill him. The boy could not move, so the Arab youth took him away and looked after him until he brought him back to the Jewish area. In the process, the Arab lied repeatedly to Arab fighters, telling them the boy was a deaf-mute orphan, because, as he put it, "I cannot hand you over to these people. They do not take prisoners and do not tend the injured. They are murderous beasts."

Before he returned the boy to his Jewish people, the Arab youth revealed the secret that had led him to help: "I had met a Jewish youth called Girshon who taught me the meaning of life. He was my teacher and my friend at the same time. That is why I am different from these murderers."

As much of the Western world had accepted the narrative of Palestinian Arabs as Bedouins, the West also began to accept the narrative of Palestinians as ignoble savages. Scores of Hollywood films of the time feature Arabs as incapable, stumbling over themselves, and prone to mockery from more well-respected characters. Examples include (Shaheen, 2001): Will Rogers in *Business and Pleasure* (1931); Laurel and Hardy in *Beau Hunks* (1931); Bob Hope and Bing Crosby in *Road to Morocco* (1942); the Marx Brothers in *A Night in Casablanca* (1946).

2.6.1.5.2 *The Hebrew*

At the same time they were working to change sentiments towards Palestinians, Zionist also wished to strengthen the image of the Jews. While the Jewish narrative was working to portray Jews as "destined," it simultaneously had to work against negative stereotypes of Jews which

had developed over the years. This new Jew would be a “Hebrew,” and, since “‘a Hebrew from head to foot’ was nowhere to be found, he had to be invented *ex nihilo*” (Gover, 1986, p. 60).

Jabotinsky (1980, p. 12) describes this new image by comparison:

Because the Zid is ugly, sickly, and lacks decorum, we shall endow the ideal image of the Hebrew with masculine beauty, tall stature, mighty shoulders, vigorous movement, radiance of colors and complexion. The Zid is trodden upon and easily frightened and, therefore, the Hebrew ought to be proud and independent. The Zid is despised by all and, therefore, the Hebrew has to charm all. The Zid has accepted submission and, therefore, the Hebrew ought to learn how to command. The Zid likes to hide himself, with bated breath, from strangers and, therefore, the Hebrew has to step with valour and greatness toward the whole world, and to look the world straight in the eye, to wave his banner in front of them and declare: "I am a Hebrew!"

Evidence for the “Hebrew” can be found in Jewish literature, particularly that of the Palmach Generation, which grew out of a direct result of the Palestinian civil insurrection against British government policies during the years of 1936-39 (Gover, 1986). An Arab attack on Jewish settlements at that time was part of the resistance movement; the Palmach was formed in direct response to these attacks. Members of this generation internalized the Zionist narrative of Jews as “destined” as they “felt themselves to be the true inheritors of the land,” and as such acted as a “Zionist-Socialist avant-garde” (Gover, 1986).

In juxtaposition to the negative portrayal of the Arab, the hero of Palmach Generation literature was necessarily a positive character; and, in comparison to the evil of the portrayal of the Arab,

the new “Hebrew” would have to be good. While the old Jew was feminine and ineffectual, the new Hebrew would be masculine and heroic (Gover, 1986, p. 62):

The male hero represents the public sphere. His strength represents the strength of the collective. He is resourceful, courageous, and decisive. He has to emerge victorious from impossible missions which had previously failed. It is incumbent on the hero to establish positive social standards embodied in the narrator. If the hero does deviate from these standards, he repents and corrects his course before the story's end. And if the hero persists in his "wrong doing" he is punished.

In Palmach Generation Literature there are almost no female leading roles, and when present, she usually represents private concerns: she wants to love, to bear children, to protect them, and to cherish family life. However, she is usually opportunistic, distracting her lover (or husband) from his national (social) duties. She is engaged with money matters, career (for her man), and gossip.

During the Second World War, The Palmach had prepared itself to be the last defense against a Nazi invasion of Palestine. Because the war never actually reached Palestine, they could only take pride in the “illusion” that they could have withstood a Nazi offensive (Gover, 1986). Their illusory sense of strength coupled with their heroic idealism suggests an internalization of the “Hebrew” narrative. A poll taken at the time reveals supremacy in their self-concept (Gover, 1986):

This sense of power was articulated by 73 percent of those polled who maintained that 'we are better than other peoples.' Such psychological indications were nicely illustrated in the literary image of the Palmach protagonist and his heroic action (Gertz, 1983, p. 55).

The “Hebrew” could be found not only in literature, but in Jewish cinema of the time (Gertz, 2002, p. 157-8):

Early Israeli cinema had eradicated the dynamism and differences in the Hebrew culture of its time by creating a hierarchy meant to support a homogenous view of the new Hebrew identity. The character stationed at the top of this hierarchy in these films...was the Hebrew-speaking Israeli male, who controlled space with his actions and gaze and dominated all dimensions: length, breadth, and height. This male was not in truth a coherent, stable identity, but rather a product of literary and cinematic discourse: a negotiation of the feminine Jew rejected by Zionism. In essence, he was merely an imitation of the fanciful ideal of perfect Hebrew masculinity, dominating an empty, submissive space. ...It was through him that “Hebrewness” in general was defined. The geography that unfolded beneath his feet and gaze denoted his connection with the homeland and his power to control it, and this power was shaped and aggrandized by the camera and cinematic language. ...This hero...defined the space he controlled, a space from which all others were excused, or within which they were made subordinate.

2.6.1.6 UN Partition and Israeli Statehood

As narratives of the Jews as “destined Hebrews” and Palestinians as Bedouins and ignoble savages were circulating, the political front of the Zionist efforts was working to translate its agenda into real estate. This agenda came at a time of real opportunity for the Jews, as the United Nations (UN) had recently been founded, affording some governments special privileges to make decisions on the behalf of others. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) spent five weeks in Palestine and returned with two proposed solutions—a majority report, submitted by Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and

Uruguay (Australia abstained); and a minority report, submitted by Iran, India and Yugoslavia (Harms & Ferry, 2008). The majority report called for the division of Palestine into two states, Jewish and Arab, with Jerusalem existing as an international entity. The minority report called for singular Palestinian nationality and citizenship, within which an Arab and a Jewish state would exist. The Arabs rejected both of the UNSCOP solutions. Tessler (1994, p. 259) sums up the Palestinian response:

They adhered to their long held position that Palestine was an integral part of the Arab world and that from the beginning its indigenous inhabitants has opposed the creation in their country of a Jewish national home. They also insisted that the United Nations, a body created and controlled by the United States and Europe, had no right to grant the Zionists any portion of their territory. In what was to become a familiar Arab charge, they insisted that the Western world was seeking to salve its conscience for the atrocities of the war and was paying its own debt to the Jewish people with someone else's land.

Zionists cautiously approved the majority proposal and began to lobby for the support of the General Assembly. The vote for majority partition as proposed in the UNSCOP report was held on November 29, 1947, with 33 nations in favor, 13 against, and 10 abstentions, thus passing UN Resolution 181. The land allotted to Zionist comprised of 56 percent of Palestine, despite the fact that Jews, even after heavy waves of immigration, comprised about 30 percent of the population. After the passing of this resolution, war broke out. Israel declared statehood in 1948, and began forcibly removing Palestinians from their homes, farms and towns. As the narrative positioned Jews as “destined” and Arabs as evil and transient, it set the stage for sympathies for Israel when

violence against Jewish expulsion occurred.

As Jewish soldiers began to evict Palestinians from their homes, both fleeing and violent resistance ensued. Against the backdrop of the constructed narrative, Palestinian fighting was not honored as resistance against an aggressor; it was portrayed as murder and gang violence due to a "criminal gang war" by Arabs who were violently envious of Jewish accomplishments (Dani, 1958, p. 95; Meitiv, 1972, p. 73; Offeq, 1969, p. 90):

The Arab gangs conspired at the time to destroy all the achievements of the pioneering Jewish generation. And when the bloody events in the land of Israel started, Shaykh 'Abdallah Abu Sitta stood at the head of a criminal gang and started organizing attacks on Hebrew roads, bombarding settlements, laying ambushes, and planting mines on the roads.

[F]our or five days ago, I heard Ghassan the guardsman tell my father that the Arabs were organizing gangs to attack Jewish settlements.

Facilitated by these images, Palestinian fighting was not viewed as resistance, but instead viewed as criminal activity; Palestinian fighting was not portrayed defensively, but offensively, as Palestinians were portrayed as instigators and provocateurs. El-Asmar (1986) points out that the reasons for Palestinian provocation are mixed in the literature. Some accounts describe Palestinians as fighting to protect against the threat of loss of land; other accounts describe Palestinians as fighting simply for a "lust for loot and blood," as though the Palestinian fighter did not know what he was fighting for (Dani, 1958, p. 92; Semoli, 1946, p. 127):

Some provocateurs spread among the Arabs and claimed that the Jews were going to steal their land away from them. They provoked Arab masses who then started burning and destroying Jewish property.

Early in May 1921, some Arab provocateurs, having no conscience, started inciting the Arabs of Jaffa, telling them lies about the intentions of the Jews in Tel Aviv. They provoked them to carry out criminal acts against the Jews. Hundreds of porters, sailors, and vagabonds, lusting for loot and blood, carried knives and iron rods and started attacking the Jews.

Furthermore, though the Arab may be full of zeal with which to kill, loot and destroy, he is ultimately a coward. In this example, a grown Arab soldier is frightened away by a few shots in the air from a Jewish boy who does not know what he is doing (Offeq, 1969, p. 62):

The Jewish boy was not aware of what he was doing. He lifted the Uzi and fired some shots in the air. The bullets passed over the head of the Arab soldier. That was more than enough. The Arab, startled, ran away.

By comparison, Jewish fighters are validated as noble soldiers from a legitimate military; they are brave, with noble aims, putting country before self, and willing to invite death should life compromise country (Karmeli, 1973, p. 68):

"So that none of us should remain alive to be interrogated and tortured by the enemy if the aircraft should fall down before reaching target," Mano said, smiling ironically, "we shall be without parachutes. We shall all lose our lives if the plane should fall. The Egyptians will remain forever ignorant of what our target in Sinai was."

Gifriyaho, his commanding officer, said, "We cannot ask you and your men to die if the aircraft is shot down."

"True, it is not what you demand. We demand it of ourselves, with full awareness of what that means. For there is no alternative."

2.6.1.7 Victims and Worthy Victims

Against the backdrop of the narrative, Israelis were able to frame the violence which erupted over the UN Partition and Israeli statehood in a way which was sympathetic to their cause. Jews were framed as victims, and Palestinians as justified victims, or "worthy victims," (as Herman & Chomsky, 2008, have termed it). The polemic of worthy and unworthy victims is dangerous; it implies that the Arabs deserve what comes to them, that their abuse and killing is justified, while the Israeli military invites impunity and discourages international vigilance with regards to its actions.

2.6.1.7.1 Victims

The victim narrative is not new to the Jewish people. Neil Caplan (1999) points to one Jewish holiday observed around the world which exemplifies this: Purim. The story which underpins the holiday is derived from the book of Ester. In this story, the Jew Mordecai, through the intervention of his niece Ester (who has become queen), succeeds at the last minute in overturning a ruling which would have executed all the Jews of the kingdom. Though most historians believe the story is likely not historically true, it has become a routine part of Jewish children's education, and indeed in many respects, as Michael Goldberg (1995, p. 153) points

out, “rings true to Jews’ historical experience. Implicit within the holiday’s very name—Purim, meaning, ‘lots’—is “the notion that the Jewish people’s experience is a dicey thing” (Caplan, 1999, p. 66). Despite its mythology, the story has become one of the defining narratives for Jewish identity, replaced only by historical victimization of the Holocaust (Caplan, 1999, p. 66-67):

[Purim] has become one of the master stories, master narratives, or defining myths and legends for Jewish identity. Most of the history of the Jews in relation to their non-Jewish environment can be understood as variations on the single theme of unrelenting anti-Semitism, expressed in terms of gentile attempts at the conversion, expulsion, or annihilation of the Jews. In the past fifty years, the Purim master story has been replaced by an even more compelling modern legend, the Holocaust, as the touchstone and rationale for Jewish identity and survival...The historical victimization of the Jews has become transformed into Jewish victimhood.

Though victimization and victimhood are rooted in the tragic, there are benefits to be had. Sholom Aleichem’s short story, “Lucky Me, I’m an Orphan” (see Hareven, 1986, p. 148), reports how a victim identity can pay off in the short run.

The narrative of Israel as victim, along with the narrative of the noble soldier and others, has on occasion found its way into academia and positions itself as truth. As Neil Caplan (1999) states, “Israel’s battlefield victories against armies and militias in 1948 and 1949 confirmed the hard-won independence of a state that...[would] ensur[e] a safe haven for all Jews who wished to be ‘ingathered’ there” (p. 69). He frames Israel’s statehood as “the successful rebirth of Israel,” and goes on to say that:

The successful rebirth of Israel was without a doubt a cause for celebration among Jews and brought with it a new pride and self-confidence. But the battlefield victory was not translated into a secure peace, and the young country was forced to grow up in a state of siege. Yet, in spite of its rejection by the surrounding Arab states and the permanent threat of renewed warfare, Israel survived and struggled during the 1950s and 1960s and went on to prosper during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The new state continued to be seen by its supporters and its citizens as a success story, which was all the more heroic when portrayed as tiny David victorious over a mighty Arab Goliath...Following its striking military performances in October 1956 and especially in the June 1967 war, successful, little Israel also became larger, powerful Israel. But while post-1967 Israel has been viewed by most nations of the world as a regional superpower, many Israelis have retained the perception of its as a small and besieged state, ever on the brink of extinction at the hands of its unforgiving Arab neighbors.

In light of the narratives, among other reasons, academic writing such as this seem out of place. Caplan (1999) calls Israel “a young country” but also refers to the “rebirth of Israel,” which relies on it being very old. Furthermore, if the Israelis won their country nobly, what is the need for Arab forgiveness?

Statehood of Israel was not enough to drop “victim” from the Zionist–now Israeli–narrative, turning “victim” into “victor.” Caplan (1999, p. 69) states, “Despite the battlefield victories of its armies and the diplomatic successes of its politicians and spokespeople, the hard-won sovereignty of the young State of Israel did not provide sufficient reason to transform the Jewish self-image as victim into that of victor.” If considered from the perspective of political narrative,

one may surmise that the reason the image of ‘victim’ did not transform into ‘victor’ was perhaps because the image of ‘victim’ was, in part, serving Israel’s agenda.

2.6.1.7.2 Worthy Victims

As Israel was recognized by key Western nations, the Israeli narrative has been, to a point, legitimized. Jews were victims, in need of a homeland, and the land had rightfully been appropriated by a valid international entity. Palestinian resistance could even be said to work in Israel’s favor, as the Zionist narrative had anticipated; violence against Israelis only furthered Israel’s victimhood and Palestinians’ portrayal as aggressors and worthy victims. This is not to say that Jews or Israelis have not been actual victims; they certainly (and regrettably) have. In fact, 1,084 Israelis, including 124 children, have been killed since September 29, 2000 alone; some 9,226 Israelis have been injured since this time (Remember These Children, 2012).¹² And of course, deaths and injuries do not account for all the ways that people have suffered or have been victimized. But my point is that the Israeli narrative positions one victim as more “worthy” of their death or injury than the other; and in truth no one deserves victimization.

In addition to literature, we can see portrayals of Palestinian as worthy victims in film. As the narrative of the Palestinian Bedouin found its way into Hollywood film, so too has the narrative of the Palestinian “worthy victim.” The presence of this narrative in Hollywood film can be explained in part by the presence of select Israeli film producers,¹³ but the popularity of many of

¹² I must also note that 6,430 Palestinians, including 1,463 children, have been killed since September 29, 2000; and 45,041 Palestinians have been injured since this time (Remember These Children, 2012).

¹³ The two most powerful Israeli producers within Hollywood are Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus, Israeli cousins who together formed the company Golan-Globus, also known as Cannon (or Cannon Films, Cannon Group, and Cannon Pictures), and distributed by MGM. They released some 30 films which vilify Arabs and particularly Palestinians (Shaheen, 2001).

the films themselves suggest to some extent an internalization or buy-in of this narrative by the American public.¹⁴ Examples include *Exodus* (1960) in which Palestinians are either invisible or linked with Nazis and perpetrators of horrific acts (rendering Israelis the victims and Palestinians who are retaliated against, the worthy victims); and *Cast a Giant Shadow* (1966) which portrays Israelis as innocent victims of Palestinian violence. Other films which portray Palestinians as worthy victims will be discussed in a future section of this dissertation;¹⁵ these films include: *Death Before Dishonor* (1987) and *True Lies* (1994).

2.6.1.8 *The Terrorist*

Shortly after Israeli statehood, and against the backdrop of Israel's newfound political legitimacy with many of the world's major countries, Palestinian resistance began to be termed "terrorism" El-Asmar (1986, p. 90):

The character of the Palestinian fighter later developed in a more negative direction. After the establishment of the Jewish state, he became an infiltrator who crossed the border back to his home in order to steal and kill. Then he became a saboteur, who not only stole and killed but also blew up electricity poles and bombed homes. Finally he became a terrorist, killing children on kibbutzim, hijacking buses, and planting explosives. This portrayal of the Palestinian fighter is common to all the books examined.

¹⁴ Though several films portraying Palestinians as aggressors have become quite popular (such as *True Lies* (1994) and *Death Before Dishonor* (1987)), many of the films which portray Arabs in general or from non-Palestinian origin are even more popular—arguably the most blatantly discriminatory of which is *Rules of Engagement* (2000), in which we see American marines indiscriminately slaughtering Yemeni civilians below them, including women and children, while the civilians screamed and begged for their lives. The act is questioned as inhumane and investigated by concerned U.S. officials only to discover that the crowd of innocent-looking men, women and children were armed and dangerous; the colonel made the right call when he screamed, "Waste those motherf**s!" the Yemeni civilians deserved to die. Shaheen (2001) notes that this film was number one in its opening week, grossing \$15 million, and that in some theatres viewers cheered as the marines gunned down the Yemeni men, women and children.

¹⁵ I discuss these films within the context of Palestinians as terrorists.

Zulaika (1993, p. 30) describes how the narrative of the Palestinian terrorist was not difficult for Western imaginations, as a precursor to the terrorist, the Wild Man, had already seized our fascinations :

In premodern thought the myth of the Wild Man, with its various archetypal forms and variations, held irrepressible fascination for Western civilization. With 'wildness' we get the closely related notions of 'savagery', 'madness', 'heresy', 'barbarism'. As a testament to its enduring power, the second part of the twentieth century has added a new type to this old myth, a 'monster' that furthers arbitrary evil - namely, 'the terrorist'. Terrorists are admittedly 'the new barbarians'; they are the first ones to be deceived by their own myth of boundless power and they are the first in need of exorcism...He is, we hear and read daily on the news, a Palestinian, a Muslim, an Iranian, an Irishman, a Colombian. We may call this...a 'remythification' of the Wild Man.

Zulaika (1993) asserts that Western civilization possesses its own 'Wild Men,' both in monstrous and heroic form. Yet the narrative of the terrorist disidentifies with our Western 'Wild Men,' creating an "Other" where none had existed:

If 'humanity' is a contested notion, the same happens with its antithesis 'bestiality'. An ambivalent attitude towards the beast can be frequently seen, for we, too, want to have access to the Wild Man within, but without becoming monsters like 'them.' We are unsure as to how to measure our own humanity, but at the very least we can identify utter savagery in them. We may be murderers but they are terrorists. We can explain our violent behavior as the result of gang rivalry, warfare, tragic error - justified by law or vindicated by passion; theirs is sheer inexplicable terror, a kind of 'terminal demonstration of "otherness" ' (Clendinnen 1991, p. 94), unassuageable in its non-translatibility. Ours

is the barbarian within (the Wild Man, the Wild West, Rambo, The Terminator, barbarian within (the Wild Man, the Wild West, Rambo, The Terminator, Dirty Harry), qualitatively different from the terrorist (Monster) without.

Scores of studies which examine Arabs or Palestinians as stereotyped “terrorists” have emerged in recent years (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2001; Oswald, 2006; Merskin, 2004; Shaheen, 1997; Shaheen, 2003; Bushman & Bonacci, 2004; Lind & Danowski, 1998; Abdulla, 2007; Coryn, Beale & Myers, 2004). Unlike the violence of state militaries, violent acts committed by stateless civilians or rebel groups only further Western discrimination and negative attitudes; the question is why? Violence committed by state militaries are legitimized, and the slaughter of civilians, including women and children, is considered “collateral damage,” and not terrorism. Zulaika (1993) describes the importance of statehood with regards to the legitimacy to kill:

The guerrilla fighter or the terrorist brings to the fore the issues of military initiation (Zulaika 1989) and the military right to kill. Industrial countries dispose of large armies in whose ranks anybody may be called upon to serve as a duty entailed by simply being a citizen; the obligation of becoming a soldier implies typically unswerving readiness to kill and die for one's country. There is no question as to the right of any civilized country to engage in armament races and wage wars that will result in thousands of casualties. But do stateless countries or rebel groups have a right to kill?

With Palestinian resistance groups not afforded a legitimate “right to kill,” Palestinian acts of resistance are framed as terrorism with very little questioning. Images of Palestinians as terrorists are rehearsed through the artifacts of Western culture, including Hollywood film, with Western

hegemony invariably reasserting itself in the end.¹⁶ As Eisele (2002, p. 86) describes, the “terrorist” film subcategory born out of the 1960s and 1970s emerged as a response to both terrorist acts and events which threatened the comfort the United States takes for granted. These events included the Palestinian terrorist operations against the Israeli team at the Munich Olympics in 1972, the Arab oil embargo after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and the successful Israeli antiterrorist operation at Entebbe airport in 1976. Each of these events was reflected in at least nine films (whether purportedly historical or fictional) made between 1972 and 1977.

As Eisele (2002) describes, *Black Sunday* (John Frankenheimer, 1977) was the most successful of the early terrorist films, both at the box office and in its technical achievements, and perhaps qualifies it as the “landmark film” about which later reworkings of the subgenre coalesced. In *Black Sunday*, the main antagonist is a disgruntled American blimp pilot, who is hired by a German terrorist working with a Palestinian. The terrorist act that they plan to carry out is to occur not in the Middle East, however, but in the heart of the United States, at perhaps the most centrally defining modern American ritual of the late twentieth century, the Super Bowl. This shift in locale is crucial in that the terrorism does not only occur on “enemy” soil, but is brought to the United States. This film, in effect, heightens Western fear of Palestinians as it positions Palestinians as a threat not only to Israel, but to American, values.

The 1980s and 1990s gave rise to an even greater number of “terrorist” films, due in part to the trauma to the American psyche of having two rounds of hostage taking in the Middle East involving U.S. citizens (the Iranian hostage crisis of 1980-1981 and the Beirut hostage crisis in

¹⁶ The methodology of using film and other social artifacts, “if used judiciously with the tools of history, social theory, and a critical medial/cultural studies,” to, among other things, obtain a pulse on the sociopolitical landscape of an era, is referred to by Doug Kellner as ‘diagnostic critique’ (Kellner, 2010, p. 35).

the mid-1980s) (Eisele, 2002). Perhaps the quintessential Palestinian terrorist film of this era is *True Lies* (1994). This film, to this day, is shown frequently—even daily—on cable television, and is part of our visual heritage (Shaheen, 2001). Not an uncommon occurrence, the film credits thank for their cooperation the Mayor of D.C., the U.S. State Department, and the United States Marine Corps Aviation. The Palestinian terrorists in this film function as “mad murdering machines and blundering dunces” with depictions that are “so remote from reality they give normal viewers the willies” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 500). Ignoring the Arab proverb, “your freedom ends when it trespasses on the freedom of others” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 504), Palestinians in this film, like so many others, are vilified as terrorists at the expense of human dignity, for the entertainment of the global public, and for the sake of ‘othering’ Arabs and Palestinians, which serves to reinforce the Israeli narrative.

2.6.2 Palestinian Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

Up to this point, I have described what developed into the Israeli ESPN, or how Zionists and Israelis have portrayed themselves and Palestinians. At this juncture I wish to speak of Palestinian PNPs, which in part emerged as a response to the Israeli ESPN and its portrayal of Palestinians to the world. The following descriptions are in part derived from literature and other print sources, and some of the descriptions are derived from discussions I had with Palestinians during my stay in Bethlehem, Palestine. I first provide a table (see Figure 2.1) which outlines all four PNPs; following this, I describe each of these PNPs in more detail.

Figure 2.1 Palestinian Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

	State	Civilian
External	<p>External State Political Narrative (ESPN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification with the Palestinian people as strong, moral, fearless, freedom fighters, martyrs and victims who are “on the right track” and are doing all they can to resist a cruel and oppressive Israeli occupation 	<p>External Civilian Political Narrative (ECPN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Palestinian government may have its flaws, but it is doing what it can to bring political change; after all, it, too, is a victim of Israeli aggression. • Israel is the oppressor of Palestinians, not the Palestinian government
Internal	<p>Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political change should be left to the Palestinian government • The Palestinian government will punish those who try to take political change into their own hands 	<p>Internal Civilian Political Narrative (ICPN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Palestinian government is corrupt • Palestinian leadership does not wish to secure political change as much as it wants to secure personal comforts • Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule • Palestinians are not optimistic and have little hope for change • The Palestinian government is not “on the right” track; it is all talk and little action

2.6.2.1 The Palestinian External State Political Narrative (ESPN)

The Palestinian government has long wished the world and the Israeli government to see its people as strong, optimistic, steadfast, fearless freedom fighters and victims of Israeli aggression. The Palestinian ESPN portrays Palestinians as noble and brave and Israelis as cruel and oppressive. All of these components are central to the Palestinian ESPN, and, as such, I will explore them individually.

2.6.2.1.1 The Freedom Fighter

Though the idea of the freedom fighter is very important to many Palestinians, it is especially pronounced within refugee communities within the West Bank and Gaza where more than 650,000 live in spatially segregated, overcrowded, and disproportionately impoverished conditions (Al-Saleh, 2007). Although refugees are symbolically important to the Palestinian struggle, the camps are viewed by many of their Palestinian neighbors as sites of chaos and stagnation, and they are viewed as having a problematic relationship to international aid (Feldman, 2007). Refugees often point out that although they have made many sacrifices for the nation in both the first and second intifadas, they remain marginalized within Palestinian society (Bishara, 2008). Part of the reason for their marginalization among Palestinians is that, however unfairly or even unconsciously, many Palestinians blame refugees for the loss of their land (the implication being, if they had not left, if they had held onto the land, the land might still be under Palestinian control) (personal communication, 2011). On top of this, refugees who have come to other Palestinian cities have placed strain on the already tight space and resources in the occupied territories. To compensate for the guilt many Palestinians feel for having left their land in 1948 (even though many of them were forced out by violence or on threat of death), many

have become committed freedom fighters. For many teenagers from a refugee camp, involvement in party politics and active resistance is both a rite of passage (Peteet, 2000) and a primary mode of sociality (Bishara, 2008).

2.6.2.1.2 *The Martyr*

The *shebab* [Palestinian activist youth] began to throw stones. Then the shooting started. One boy was shot dead...Maha's fiancé picked up the body and started a funeral procession to the cemetery. The soldiers called a curfew, but no one paid attention. They moved in on the procession. Maha told the shebab to flee and tried to slow the encroaching soldiers. She tried to confront them. They backed her into a corner. She began fighting with them hand to hand. They said, "Stop resisting or we'll shoot." "Then shoot me," she said and made a break to escape them. She ran ten meters before they fired and Maha fell.

-Maha Hamdi, 19 years old, martyred December 11, 1987, as told by her brother, September 5, 1991, Nablus, West Bank¹⁷

The narrative of the martyr is very much a part of contemporary Palestinian culture and certainly instrumental in shaping the ESPN; I remember walking through a refugee camp in Bethlehem¹⁸ and seeing the names on the walls of every community member who had been killed in the conflict. These individuals are immortalized, and are considered "martyrs" whether they die for political reasons (e.g., suicide bomb) or are unintentionally killed (e.g., crushed by an Israeli tank while trying to fetch a ball which has wandered into the street). The narrative of the martyr idealizes individuals without qualification; anyone who is Palestinian who dies as a result of the conflict is a martyr. Jean Genet (1992, p. 92) describes the process by which martyrs are immortalized and idealized:

¹⁷ Pitcher, Linda M. (1998, Mar). "The divine impatience": Ritual, narrative, and symbolization in the practice of martyrdom Palestine. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly, New Series, The Embodiment of Violence, 12(1)*, 8-30.

¹⁸ I visited Israel/Palestine, renting a home in Bethlehem as a home base, during the summer of 2011, four months after the Egyptian revolution.

[T]he death of a...*fedayee*¹⁹ made him all the more alive, made us see details about him we'd never noticed before, made him speak to us, answer us with new conviction in his voice. For a short time the life, the one life of the now dead fedayee took on a density it had never had before.

An extraordinary amount of Palestinian poetry and spoken word is available online through blogs and other websites and also on YouTube. Many of these poems and videos describe Palestinians as martyrs. In the poem "The Palestinian Martyr," by Hiyam Naour (2003), for example, Naour draws from the narrative that the Palestinian who dies for his/her country can do no wrong. They are immortalized so their death is not for naught, and the poem ends with a refrain that is commonly spoken by Palestinian freedom fighters: "We will never forgive. We will never forget."

2.6.2.1.3 *The Moralist*

Behind the images of freedom fighter and martyr is that of the moralist. Whether fighting and living for justice and freedom or dying an unjust death, Palestinians present themselves as morally superior to Israelis. Rahman (2012) comments that it is not a strange phenomenon for morality to be the object of contestation. Competing groups often battle for the moral high ground when presenting their case to the outside world in an appeal for support. While this may be true, the appeals are different. Israel presents itself as an innocent victim of Palestinian aggression. Palestinians also portray themselves as victims of Israeli aggression; but the salient difference, as I see it, is that Palestinians often compare Israeli aggression against their own, in an attempt to obtain a position of moral high ground. Israel in many ways cannot afford to

¹⁹ fighter

engage in comparison. Thus, while both Israel and Palestine claims victimhood, Palestinians also claim moral high ground.

2.6.2.2 The Palestinian Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN)

While the Palestinian ESPN presents Palestinians as active freedom fighters who are doing all they can to resist oppression, the Palestinian ISPN presents the idea that political change should be left up to the Palestinian state, or Palestinian authorities, that in fact the Palestinian government will attempt to quell Palestinian resistance. This seeming contradiction is explained by historical contextualization.

Groups such as the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLO) were formed as grass-roots resistance initiatives with a freedom-fighting objective. Until 1994, the Israeli civil administration was in charge of Palestine, but in 1994, pursuant to the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was formed to oversee the civil rule of Palestine. The PA was formed as an agreement between the government of Israel and the PLO, thus making the PA an essentially PLO-run authority. When the PLO obtained authority as the PA, much changed for Palestinians. The PA was largely corrupt, receiving money from the Israeli government and using it for personal gain. In many ways, resistance to Israeli oppression is resistance to the PA. If Palestinians were able to resist the Israeli government and change relations between Israeli authorities and the Palestinian people, such a change would invariably impact the PA who directly benefits from the Israeli government.

In this way, the PA and the Israeli government have much in common. One way both the PA and the Israeli government have worked to keep resistance to a minimum is by monitoring Facebook and other social media forums for resistance efforts or positions which are critical of their policies and positions.

2.6.2.21 Israeli Monitoring

The Jewish Internet Defense Force (JIDF) is one organization whose efforts work toward this aim. The group's website describes the JIDF as a "private, independent, non-violent protest organization representing a collective of activists,"²⁰ although the JIDF has said to engage in "hacktivism" by others (e.g., Hartman, 2011). Lievrouw (2011) describes hacktivism as often referring to "a wide variety of projects that use computing technologies for political and cultural protest and resistance," though she herself prefers the term "alternative computing" (p. 98-99). Though Lievrouw (2011) and others refer to the terms "hacktivism" and "alternative computing" as a means of providing checks and balances against "commercial or governmental interests intent on controlling access to information and information technology" (p. 100), JIDF uses its resources not to increase access to information, but to decrease the amount of information which is ideologically unaligned with its position.

The JIDF has been particularly active on Facebook. The organization forwarded lists of Facebook groups it deemed to promote hatred or violence to the website's administrators, in hopes they would be removed. After Facebook did nothing to remove the pages, JIDF attempted to technically "intercept Facebook groups and make them impossible to access" (Hartman, 2008). In July of 2009, the JIDF was able to remove a Facebook fan page for Hezbollah leader

²⁰ See www.thejidf.org

Hassan Nasrallah. The JIDF website states it deleted the vast majority of the page's 118,000 members. In 2008 JDIF took over the Facebook group "Eliminate Israel from Being" and deleted more than 5,000 members before Facebook management returned control of the site to its administrators (Lungen, 2008).

The JIDF also monitors Wikipedia; its measures include the "reporting [of] Wikipedia editors it claims are anti-Israel, and taking action against entries seen as including one-sided or false accounts of the history of Israel and the Mideast conflict" (Hartman, 2008). The group has sought to have Palestinian villages listed as having been destroyed during the foundation of Israel removed from Google Earth and has campaigned against the description of "Palestine" as a country (Hartman, 2008).

2.6.2.2.2 Palestinian Monitoring

Palestinian authorities also monitor the internet, focusing on new and social media, for comments which are critical of their policies. Abu-Toameh (2012) describes Facebook as a key target:

Facebook has become a dangerous playground for Palestinians living under the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. The US-backed Palestinian Authority security forces belonging to Mahmoud Abbas and Salam Fayyad have been monitoring the activities of Palestinians on Facebook to make sure that no one criticizes them. The Palestinian Authority wants Palestinians to write only nice things about their leaders. Criticism should be directed only against Israel. Those who fail to toe the line will find themselves either behind bars or

without work. The Palestinian leaders are aware of the power of social networking, especially in light of what happened in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. The Palestinian leadership's clampdown on Facebook users is seen as a pre-emptive measure to prevent the "Arab Spring" from infiltrating into the West Bank.

In late March, journalist Jamal Hlaihel was arrested by Palestinian Authority security forces for “comments critical of the PA that he posted on his Facebook page.” A day before this, journalist Tareq Khamis was interrogated by the Palestinian Authority after he posted comments regarding the detention of journalist Ismat Abdul Khaliq on his Facebook page. Khamis said: “The authorities are afraid of journalism...I was questioned on my work as a journalist, and they confiscated the files on my laptop” (Akbar, 2012).

Rami Samara, A Palestinian journalist from Ramallah was interrogated by two different security agencies in the West Bank: Military Intelligence and General Intelligence. Samara was also detained while at work over a comment which criticized he criticized the PLO for holding Israel responsible for the failure of the recent Israeli-Palestinian talks in Jordan. A year before this, Mamdouh Hamarneh, a Bethlehem television producer, was detained for 50 days after comparing Abbas on Facebook to a Syrian actor who portrayed a traitor in a popular Syrian soap opera. A Palestinian woman was also interrogated because of a comment she had posted on her Facebook page. She was interrogated by Preventive Security, a security agency belonging to Abbas and Fayyad (Abu-Toameh, 2012).

2.6.2.3 The Palestinian External Civilian Political Narrative (ECPN)

The Palestinian ECPN, or what is socially appropriate to believe about the government, reflects the idea that the Palestinian government is doing all it can to bring political change to Palestine, and that Israel is the oppressor of Palestinians, not the Palestinian government. Many individuals that I spoke with in Palestine mirrored this sentiment. To speak badly of the PA, especially to a foreigner (in which case, the individual would want the foreigner to believe the ESPN), was certainly frowned upon. To critique the Palestinian government would be to contradict the idea that Palestinians are morally good, are victims not perpetrators, and deserving of international sympathy. To not acknowledge the ECPN was in many ways akin to not accepting the ESPN.

2.6.2.4 The Palestinian Internal Civilian Political Narrative (ICPN)

While staying in Palestine, I spoke with Palestinians about their own viewpoints regarding the Palestinian government and found that many felt disenfranchised, but many also were uncomfortable speaking about it. The ICPN, or what Palestinians actually believe about the Palestinian government included such ideas as: the Palestinian government is corrupt, Palestinian leadership does not wish to secure political change as much as it wants to secure personal comforts, Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule, Palestinian leadership is all talk and little action, and Palestinians are not optimistic and have little hope for change.

2.6.3 Discussion

This literature review has provided a historical backdrop to Palestinian PNPs by exploring the historical development of the Israeli ESPN. While initially the Israeli ESPN viewed Palestinians positively, albeit as noble savages, as history developed, the ESPN changed to include

representations of Palestinians as Bedouins, ignoble savages and worthy victims. By contrast, Israelis represented themselves as destined, as Hebrews, and as noble soldiers.

Palestinian PNPs grew out of these historical developments. The Palestinian ESPN portrayed Palestinians as optimistic, strong, steadfast, moral, fearless freedom fighters who are doing all they can to resist occupation and oppression. By contrast, Israelis are portrayed as cruel and oppressive. The Palestinian ISPN promotes the idea that political change should be left to the Palestinian state and spreads fear among its people as it aims to control people who try and bring this political change upon themselves. Included in its control tactics are monitoring of social media, intimidation, arrest and imprisonment. The ECPN promotes the idea that the Palestinian government is doing all it can to bring political change to Palestine, and that Israel is the oppressor of Palestinians, and not the Palestinian government. Lastly, the Palestinian ICPN includes beliefs that the Palestinian government is corrupt, that Palestinian leadership does not want to secure political change as much as it wants to secure personal comforts, that Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule, that Palestinian leadership all talk and little action, and that Palestinians are not optimistic or have little hope for change.

Chapter IV

PARTICIPANTS

3.1 General Overview of the Participants

Before I present the data analysis, I wish to briefly introduce the backgrounds of the participants in order to contextualize the data. As I have mentioned, for the security and safety of the participants involved, all names and identifying information has been removed. The following information was compiled using data from the interviews. The full interviews are featured in their entirety in the Appendix section of this dissertation.

Participants ranged in age from 18-27. The mean age was 22.5. In terms of parents' educational background, the participants largely came from well-educated families. Of the 14 participants, 4 (or 29 percent) listed one or more parents with graduate degrees; 8 out of 14 participants (or 57 percent) listed one or more parent with some undergraduate university education (associate's to bachelor's degree); and 2 of the 14 participants (or 14 percent) listed (completed or uncompleted) high school as their parents' highest level of education. With the exception of two participants attending UN School for primary school, the participants were evenly distributed in terms of education received. For primary school, 5 attended public, 2 UN, and 7 private school; for secondary school, 7 attended public and 7 attended private. From participant interviews, it appears that one of the most salient differences between Palestinian public and private schools is the English education (with private school offering superior English instruction). Private school is also reported to have better technology and computer resources.

With regards to time spent on Facebook, the participants are also fairly well distributed; 5 participants reported using Facebook between 1 and 2 hours per day, 5 reported using Facebook between 3-5 hours per day, and 3 participants used Facebook for 6 or more hours per day. The

participants in this study have also been using Facebook for some years; all have used Facebook for between 4 and 8 years. Most of the participants also had access to internet at home early in their lives. While one participant never had internet at home growing up, the majority acquired internet access at home between the ages of 11 and 13 years old.

The participants of this study reported using Facebook for the following reasons: (a) all 14 participants reported using Facebook to keep in touch with friends; (b) 11 reported to use Facebook to share their personal thoughts; (c) 9 reported to use Facebook as a tool for social change; (d) 8 reported to use Facebook for entertainment; (e) 6 reported to use Facebook as a tool for political change; and (f) 4 participants reported to use Facebook for “other” reasons. These reasons were: (1) to keep in touch with family; (2) “to judge if a person is worth my friendship in real life;” (3) for work; and (4) for school (university course discussion boards).

The participants of this study were selected for their alignment on several measures to the Egyptian youth leaders who spearheaded political change efforts on Facebook. These measures include: 1) university educated, of the Millennial generation, 3) internationally traveled, 4) politically concerned, and 5) fluent in English. While spearheading or involvement in political change efforts in Palestine is by no means restricted to individuals who meet these criteria, I chose these criteria as a point of departure as these points formed the profiles of so many of the youth leaders who contributed to successfully bringing political change to Egypt. Within this section of the dissertation, I introduce the participants, focusing on these criteria and on other contextualizing background information. For each participant, I use the following format: 1) name, 2) sex, 3) age, 4) country/ies lived in (growing up), 5) country of current residence, 6) life

story (including international travels and political beliefs), 7) education and family's education, 8) background in internet technology and new media, 9) beliefs about the purpose of Facebook and its perceived or actual restrictions, and 10) language use on Facebook. Though the general content contextualizing the participants has not changed, I have changed names and other identifying information to protect the safety of the participants. As much as possible, I have kept the descriptions of the participants in their own words. Though the following descriptions are abbreviated, the profiles may be read in their entirety in the appendix section of this dissertation.

Participant #1

Name: Amal

Sex: Female

Age: 22

Raised in: Kuwait, Bolivia, Gaza

Currently lives in: Qatar

Her life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I am a Palestinian woman currently living in Qatar. I was born Kuwait where my family worked, then we were deported by the Kuwaiti authority in 1992. My family fled to Bolivia then Gaza. I consider myself born and raised in Gaza since I don't have distinct memories in the aforementioned places. When my family moved to Gaza I was 7 years old. I started knowing that where I live is no ordinary place when the second intifada broke out in 2000. Then I came to know what it means to be a Palestinian. I experienced bombings, checkpoints, and closure and constant feeling of terror and danger.

The 2007 Hamas-Fatah division was a key event that made me more involved in politics and more shocked at how complex it is. Proceeded by Israel's imposed collective punishments, the

Hamas—Fatah rift made life in Gaza more difficult. That year, I started blogging about my life in Gaza that was directly affected by these events. I stopped blogging for almost a year when the war on Gaza occurred in 2008-2009. Though I didn't write anything during the assault, after it, I came back to blogging again. The war was the event that changed my views towards the conflict and the world. The more isolated Gaza was the more I wanted to reach out to the world outside me. I felt that it was my duty to tell my story since others may not know it, or may know it from the wrong source.

After the war, I became more aware of the importance to be outspoken about the injustice treatment of Palestinians. I came to know many people from inside and outside Palestine that share with me the same views and passion about the Palestinian cause. My personality, after experiencing the complexities of war, has become courageous and more outspoken. Following that years after the war, I became more aware of the importance of using social media. I become more active on social platforms especially Twitter. Finally, through these social platforms I came to know my husband. Now I am married, and though I've since moved from Palestine, I still seek to blog about what happens there.

Her and her family's education

For school, I attended public school for primary and secondary school. I recently graduated with a bachelor's degree. My mother graduated from high school and my father has a bachelor's degree. My mother is a housewife and my father is a manager at a local charity.

Background in internet technology and new media

Though I started with MySpace, I now actively use Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress, and Tumblr. I've been using Facebook for 5 years. I use it over 5 hours a day. I have internet at home, and we also had internet at home in Gaza when I was growing up. We got internet when I was 13 years old. I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, and as a tool for social and political change. I learned to use the internet outside of school and I feel reasonably comfortable. As long as I use it for the right purposes, and I keep my integrity online, I feel it's the best way to share ideas and thoughts.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

For me, Facebook is a space to portray yourself as you are. I am not there to create an alternative reality for myself. Rather I am there to voice out my ideas and share information which I deem useful. Some Palestinians portray themselves as fearless, but fear is part of everyday life in Palestine, and if you are an honest person online, you'd reflect that. Being on the internet is not meant for people to be escapists, but to be transparent tellers of what's happening around.

Though it is meant for transparency, I feel restricted in what I can post by expectations from family or friends. If I didn't feel restricted, I would post more criticisms of Israel, I would want to critique Palestinian government and society, and I would post different kinds of pictures of myself and others.

Language Use on Facebook

The language I use on Facebook depends on the post. Most of the time I post in English, because it's the language that the majority understands. However, when the post is about something concerning Arabs, I'd use Arabic with Arabic letters. Arabizi²¹ is mainly used to communicate with friends. I'd say I use this mostly for casual and informal posts and conversations.

Participant #2

Name: Nizar

Sex: Male

Age: 25

Raised in: Gaza & Egypt

Currently lives in: Gaza

His life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

My name is Nizar. I live in Al-Shati refugee camp, north of Gaza, I am 25 years old. I was born in the first uprising or "intifada" in 1987. My father was imprisoned in Israeli jails when I was born, so my mother was in charge of the household during my father's jail time. My father was released when I was 6 years old. It was my first year in the UN elementary school in Al-Shati camp. I was top of my class from first grade until 7th grade at the UN school. I was granted a full scholarship to the American International School in Gaza. I matched the criteria for a scholarship to the American International School very well: A+ Student, low income family, and good English skills.

²¹ As described in a later section of this dissertation, Arabizi is Romanized Arabic (i.e., Arabic written in English letters).

My first year at the American school was the toughest. It was my first encounter with foreign teachers and extremely rich classmates. Even though I was looked down upon, I found my way through by studying really hard each day. I was the first student to earn the Student of the Month award. My classmates began to ask me for help in their homework, some of them sent their drivers to pick me up at my place so that I come and tutor them. At 12th grade the American school decided to transfer all of my class to the AIS in Egypt because our school didn't have SAT training programs.

For the first time in my life I lived in an apartment in the fanciest of neighborhoods in Cairo. the first 2 months of the 9 month stay in Cairo were the toughest. New classmates, different system of education and an undoubtedly new social environment. I graduated an honor student from the school and I took my SAT. When I returned to Gaza, I was granted another scholarship to the German University in Cairo from the Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF). I chose Structural Engineering.

The first year was tough, but I managed to pass all my courses except two. The finals of my first year at the GUC coincided with the winning of Hamas in parliamentary elections. I had to postpone the first semester of the 2nd year because the Palestinian investment fund did not have the money to cover my tuition fees. After 4 months of waiting in Egypt, they sent me money to pay for half of the 2nd semester of my 2nd year. At the same time I had no money to eat or live so I moved to a friend's place and I had to work in construction for 17 days so that I could make ends meet. I missed 2 finals because I had no money to pay for the transportation. My scholarship from PIF included accommodation as well as pocket money, but right after the

Hamas elections, I rarely received money to pay tuition and my parents had no money to send me.

Right after the finals of the second year, Hamas took over Gaza Strip and The Palestinian Investment Fund left the Gaza strip. The last payment I received was a day after the takeover. They sent me money to pay for only 1/4th of the tuition, so I decided not to pay because if I did, I would starve and be homeless one more time. Even though they hadn't paid the full amount yet, they promised they would pay university tuition so I felt relieved. It was yet another lie. I waited for 5 months and i missed the first semester one more time. Later on I received an email from my university, stating "You are no longer a student at GUC due to unpaid tuition."

I came back to Gaza in august of 2008 hoping that I would find someone to talk to about the scholarship. The PIF was shut down in Gaza, but I talked to an ex-board member and he promised to help in a week's time. Nothing happened, so I applied for Alazhar University in Gaza. I changed my major to English literature.

During the first year of my study at Alazhar, a war broke out. It was 23 days of ongoing bombardment of houses and areas. My area was among the most targeted, and my house sustained damage from shrapnel of Israeli bombs. I passed all my courses at Alazhar except for the Arabic requirement. Arabic language was almost absent during my study at the AIS in Gaza and Egypt.

My English skills, which were not a problem, suddenly became a problem as my English professors did not tolerate a newcomer whose spoken English was better than the whole class. I had to play dumb in classes so that they wouldn't think of me as a threat. The professors made mistakes that I was aware of during lectures and I didn't correct them, because I was told by everyone that they would fail me if I did.

In 2010 I was accepted to a program to study new media in the United States. These few weeks were the best in my whole life. It was a world I always dreamed of being part of and seeing it come true made me feel so proud of myself. When I came back to Gaza, having the best experience one could get at the US, I decided to engage myself in the problems of the youth in Gaza. I was among 7 members to write a manifesto²² expressing our frustration with every power that has made it difficult for us to live normally. "Gaza Youth Breaks Out" or GYBO was the name of our group. We worked on rallying support for demonstrations.

On the 15th of March, 2011, we demonstrated to protest the division between Fatah and Hamas and to protest the violation of human rights in Gaza specifically. We were beaten up and summoned for interrogation several times and one member was stabbed in the back 3 times. I was beaten up with a metal cord on my head and knees. When I finally found hope I received a police warrant for my arrest. I was interrogated for 7 straight hours and then released.

This year is my last year in college and I decided to quit all political activities because members in my group used the GYBO group to gain money and travel outside. Now, Gaza is suffering the worst power crisis it's had in 30 years. We only get power 6 hours per day. Two weeks ago,

²² This manifesto is available in the Appendix section of this dissertation.

employees of the government and the power plant came to my house and unplugged our cable because we couldn't pay the electricity bill. I argued with one employee and I was attacked by the police instantly. When I hit back they kept on hitting and I almost passed out.

The next day they sent me another police warrant. I thought it was because I argued with them, instead this time they charged me with this: You talk to girls and you chat with them on Twitter and Facebook, and this is prohibited, and if I ever do that again they will put me in jail. They went on by accusing me of having a sexual relationship with a girl I met in a course I used to attend a month ago. Of course I never slept with her, but they knew that a charge of this kind would scare me off because reputation matters so much in Gaza and if I sleep with a girl before marriage I'll be called out all sorts of bad things.

I am currently doing my best to graduate because the only way I can live normally is outside of Gaza.

Background in internet technology and new media

I learned to use the internet and new media at the American school (AIS), which is a private school. At this school, we received courses on how to use the computers and the internet. I Had an email in the year 2000, which is very early. I've been using Facebook 5.5 years now.

Depending on electricity, right now I get 6 hours of power per day. I use Facebook for 2 to 3 hours per day. I have internet at home. I was 16 years old when the internet was introduced to my home.

His family's education

My mother's highest education level is a 2 year diploma after high school. My father also has a two-year diploma from 2 years of college in Iraq. My mother doesn't work, my father is a retired police officer who used to work for the PA. I rarely can find a stable job in Gaza. I once tutored small children for 2 months. I volunteered as a translator for some journalists and foreign delegations and right now am unemployed.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

I use Facebook to stay in touch with friends, and, since December of 2010, as a tool for social change. "Gaza Youth Breaks out" is a Facebook page of 24,000 likes. I update it every once in a while with news, and critical comments on the government. I feel very much myself when I describe the frustration I undergo because of the situation.

People feel weak and helpless over here and words of heroism they relate to themselves would indeed make them feel better about themselves. People might exaggerate their heroism because they want to tell the others that they won't surrender to the Israelis no matter how tough the situation gets. I won't portray myself in any way like this because being afraid, worried, helpless, maybe even defeated is something I fail to hide.

I feel restricted on Facebook because the government asks for Facebook passwords and they check the inbox and statuses. I feel restricted Because my family won't tolerate a picture of me standing next to a girl. I try to avoid familial confrontations because most of the time they end up

with me getting kicked out of the house.

If I didn't feel restricted, I would like to overtly criticize Hamas and Israel on Facebook. I would also like to post the pictures I like on Facebook without anyone telling me how inappropriate it is to pose in front of a camera next to a girl.

Language Use on Facebook

When I write on Facebook I mostly choose English, because the majority of my friends speak English very well. I write in Arabic so that my friends in Gaza understand—that's if they don't speak English. Arabizi is not widely understood but it saves effort when I feel I can explain myself better in Arabic. I use Arabic rarely because I want to feel part of this community but the same time Arabic doesn't seem to serve me very well because I don't write it very well. English helps me spread news on Facebook and Twitter, but it doesn't reach the people in Gaza and many times I've been misquoted and misinterpreted by my family.

Participant #3

Name: Hedi

Sex: Male

Age: 27

Raised in: UAE and Gaza

Currently lives in: Austria

His life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I was born in Abu Dhabi, UAE, and raised there for about 18 years, until after high school, and then I moved with my Family to Gaza, Palestine, to continue our life there, since my father had

built a house there for us there. My life in Abu Dhabi was easier and more beautiful; only the last year was hard there after we learned that my father had decided to move us to Gaza.

I've lived in Gaza for about 6 years, and they have been the hardest years in my life. The first 3 months was the intifada and that was something new for us: the war atmosphere, the sound of jets and bombs, plus the new culture and new people to meet and make friends with. I learnt many positive things in Gaza—especially how to communicate with others. But I can't forget the war on Gaza and how it affected the people, even the loss to the families and the aftermath of this war. The biggest event though, that affected me and others, is the Hamas takeover.

Everybody was shocked what happened and I started to hate life here more and more, even what they do now. Now I live in Austria. I want to further my life here, including study and marriage.

His and his family's education

The schools I attended in Abu Dhabi were public. My mother and father both graduated from high school. My father has a shop for house materials and my mother is a chef for cooking. Right now, I am looking for a job.

Background in internet technology and new media

I use Facebook and Twitter more because they are blue. I don't like writing so much. My thoughts are too collapsed and they are also collapsed on Facebook and Twitter. I learned to use new media by myself because I wanted to discover this digital world and what's new on it, but I thank a program I participated in on new media which opened my eyes to many new things.

I think I'm the first one in my family to use Facebook; I've been using it about 8 years. It depends on the day, but I am on Facebook about 10 hours a day. I definitely have Facebook at home! I've had internet at home since I was ten years old.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

I use Facebook for entertainment, to keep in touch with friends and to share my personal thoughts. I don't like to have many faces anywhere, so in Facebook you can find the real me. Nothing changes, and I feel there is no need to make other personalities in order to get the attention from others that you seek. It's like 'Hello guys this is me whether you like it or not'.

For Palestinians who can't speak in the real world, they find Facebook as a world which they could express themselves so freely and could find people around the world who understand them and find solutions for their own problems. For me I don't like posting pictures which hurt or annoy anyone about anything— religion, political party...etc. Nothing forbids me to do it but this is not me and I have friends from everywhere and I care about their feelings.

If I wouldn't hurt other people's feelings, I would want to critique Israel, the Palestinian government and Palestinian society. I see caricature pictures or political cartoons as best to use for this purpose as it criticizes the situations in a very funny way and people don't feel threatened by it. Some would love it and understand it, others would laugh at it having no idea what it means, and on the other hand, the people who are upset by it still generally like this kind of critique and accept it as part of the art form of political cartoon, with no danger on me, and everybody is happy.

Language Use on Facebook

As far as language I used on Facebook, I give every language its right. If what I say should be in Arabic then I use the Arabic alphabet, and if it's in English I use the English one. Some people don't understand English and they deserve to know what I write and to get my message but I think every language and every thought should have its own right and its own language so the people to whom you send the message will understand it.

Participant #4

Name: Mohammad

Sex: Male

Age: 19

Raised in: Hebron, West Bank

Currently lives in: the United States

His life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I grew up in the city of Hebron, which is divided into two parts: one under Israeli control, and the other under Palestinian Authority control. I spent the first ten years of my life in the tense part, in the part with the Israeli army control. We were playing in the streets and realizing that at some points we were unable to live our right of freedom, to play as children. We had to run away from curfews, we had to hide, and at a young age we had to open our eyes to issues that were older than our age. We had to question our freedom to play safe and to have fun. As a result, I felt the need to find my voice at an early age.

I think the turning point in my life was when I was inspired by the Palestinian journalist Mazan Dana who was working for Reuters in Hebron, and I was really amazed by his bravery and by

the way he struggled on a daily basis to show by his camera to show the world what was going on in Hebron. He made me feel someone is telling my story.

When I was 12, he was killed in Iraq covering news there for Reuters, shot dead by a U.S. soldier beside Abu Graib prison in Baghdad. I was 12. He was 42. I asked to see his face to make a farewell when his body arrived in Hebron. At that time I decided to start taking action and to believe in my voice. And I started a magazine at my school where I published Israeli and Palestinian news alike and initiated debates with students about our position as youth toward the conflict we are living in. We were challenging our teachers who opposed us on some points, having some discussions on controversial topics, but I was really happy that I was generating that voice that grew up inside me.

I decided to become a journalist at the age 15. It was the first time I took a picture of soldiers in Hebron. I remember my hands shaking at that time. I still have the photo of the soldier asking me why I was taking a picture of him. I have other photos that remind me of those days. I was very young, Sometimes when I ask myself today why I was doing this, I can't believe that I was doing this because I didn't pay any attention to the level of danger that I was putting myself in.

I want to study political science. I struggled for three years applying, as I had this dream to study abroad in the United States. I had to keep applying for three years, until I was able to get a scholarship to study in the United States. I didn't get a scholarship to study for political science, but I got something close: a scholarship to study communications. And, after I shared my interest

in politics with my advisor, she said she's going to help me to make a minor in political science and international relations.

I'm really happy that today I'm starting a new chapter, a new level, in my life, a new era, a new period that I need really to be careful about. And one other point that's important to share is, and I don't share this a lot, is that one of the hardest things I face is the controversial discussions I have between me and myself is my position towards Israel. I refused to go with the flow, and refused to do what the rest of my community did, and I decided to take another path, but that put me in a hard position in front of my people. I believe it is the biggest challenge in my life. It is bigger than any other challenge because of the way some members of my community perceive what I am doing and perceive my beliefs for the future of my country. That's hard and sometimes I revise myself. I say I might be wrong. But I remind myself that if I flow with the wind, I'm losing who I am.

Actually, the Arabs are really divided. We Palestinians are divided, and that's I believe our real problem. Many Palestinians believe this, but few would say this. Many Palestinians would prefer to be under the Israeli civil administration than the under the corrupt Palestinian authority. My parents keep telling me that they had better lives when the Israeli civil administration was in control of the West Bank and Gaza. Not only my parents. My grandparents, and many others. Because we receive funds. Where does it go? Ramallah is the center of all the development. You see villas, good places in Ramallah. Where does this money go? We receive these funds so that officials can have villas and so that their sons can go to the best universities in the world? When these officials came into power, they didn't even have clothes from abroad from exile. They had

nothing. Family members gave them clothes. Coaches came to their houses. They had nothing. And now they live in the best neighborhoods in Ramallah, they have the best clothes, they drive the best cars, their children go to the best colleges in the world. Some of their children have foreign citizenship. And what about the millions of other Palestinians the normal citizens who pay this price, who are suffering, who are not educated, suffer for the sake of the elite corrupt political power players, some of whom are not even educated. That is why many Palestinians would prefer to go back to the Israeli civil administration which ended in 1994 when the PA took over. Well, the Israelis paid money. I'm sorry to say this. I respect Yasser Arafat as a leader, and as someone who represented the Palestinians, but let's be honest. The Israelis paid money to Yasser Arafat in 1994. Where did this money go?

The situation has been changing in the last three years since Fayad took office as prime minister. He's educated and he's not corrupt. He's trying to resist corruption. But before, we received money enough to have better development and a better situation than the one we have right now. But people were really misled. It was a better life, people were enjoying their lives. It's a big issue. Our leadership misled us. They could have stayed abroad and not made any resolution, but to accept less than what was offered?

Let me put this another way. You know King Hussein of Jordan. Thirty years of secret negotiations in which he refused all Israeli offers which excluded one centimeter of the West Bank and Gaza strip. He said no, you have to give it all back. Palestinian leadership opposed Hussein's leadership, putting obstacles in front of any resolution, and they began secret negotiations with the Israelis to put obstacles in front of him. He didn't know about those

negotiations and agreements. And then they accepted the Gaza Jericho solution. And now we have a lot less than what we could be offered. You know why? Because we follow our emotions. And unfortunately we have a very kind, nice nation, that's very simple, following its emotions, and believed Yasser Arafat and his people. And look how we are living today.

There are different aspects to not being authentic. First, this is not only a Palestinian problem. This is an Arabic problem. We've never gotten to the point where we have decided to come the serious table to define our problems and admit our mistakes. We continue to perceive ourselves as being on the right track and we will continue to be on the right track. This is the problem on the Palestinian side or with any other Arabic country. Now it's changing in some countries, but the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian politicians have made mistakes over decades. Everybody is looking for its own interests. Now Fatah and Hamas. If you, as an American, look at Fatah and Hamas, how could you support the Palestinians to get a state? When the Israeli authorities left Gaza, see what Hamas has done. That makes me and a lot of other Palestinians think that if we really get a state our next problem is going to be a civil war. Let's not lie to ourselves. Many Palestinians would never say this, but that's our next problem. When you were in Hebron I showed you the South and the North. No one speaks about that.

People don't speak of the refugees and the people of the cities. The refugees are perceived really in a bad way. It's really rare when a man from a refugee camp goes to ask for a marriage to a lady from the city that he's accepted. Let's own our problems. Let's admit them.

Let's look to the Israelis. Israel is one of the best countries in manufacturing agricultural machines. Israel is one of the best countries from a military perspective. Great education. Great colleges. Strong economy as well. Strong politics. A united community, despite all the differences. They came from all different parts of the world. From the East and the West, black and white, Russians, and all these differences. But when it comes to politics and the destiny of Israel they are all united. That's what we don't have. But no Palestinian would be brave enough to go on the Palestinian TV and speak to his people and tell them, this is the reality and like this, this is how far we can go for the next ten years.

We are lying to ourselves. And this is why I am taking the position that we should admit the other side. Let's take into consideration the concerns of the other side because that's ability our right now. You know, we can't go for a fight right now about anything. We need to define who we really are. We need to be honest about who we are pretending to be and change it.

You know it's not a Palestinian issue, but it's an Arabic habit not to show who we really are. You know, in Arab culture, we would rather be proud than to admit certain things. You can look to Saddam Hussein's example. See how he was speaking on TV when the U.S. wanted to come to Iraq. I totally don't agree with what happened in Iraq, the attack there, but he knew that his military abilities couldn't stand up against the Americans. But he preferred the dignity. He preferred to pretend to have abilities that he didn't have. Bush said that the Americans were coming to Iraq. He said, I know. But he wouldn't step down. And then he was arrested. But he preferred it that way. He did what any other Arab leader would do. We don't identify with

reality. It's like we're living in another world. If you read King Abdullah's book, *The Last Best Chance*, he speaks about this with reference to the second Gulf War.

I think we need a great leader to admit all these things and to speak honestly to his nation.

Because in actuality we will not lose our dignity when we identify who we really are and open the door to new possibilities. No. On the contrary, we are saving our dignity. Because if we open the door to possibilities, we are in actuality "saving the water off our face," as we say in Arabic. It means keeping your dignity.

Of course there is a lot of criticism every time I say these things, and I personally get used to this. I get used to this. But that's how it is when you come to change something. Of course you will be criticized. And sometimes you pay for this change with your life. But if you want to make a change and be who you are and be a true leader, this is how it is. And yes, there is always criticisms, especially when you are in an Arabic environment. But that will change. People think more about other people than they think about themselves in the Arabic world. You saw this when you came to Palestine. Everyone wanted to know who you are and who are your neighbors. We can change this.

His and his family's education

I attended private school for four years, the first four grades, and then I moved to public school for the rest of my education. That's actually another challenge. At the public school there wasn't good English education. And it was a personal matter that I had to learn English by myself, with the support of my parents, since I dreamed early to study in the United States. I remember in the

7th grade, I wasn't speaking English very well. I was getting low grades in English, so over five years it was a struggle to speak English really well, and to be able to go for it when I wanted to apply for studying abroad. Because not many people who come to the U.S. for study are graduates of public schools if they are Palestinian.

My mother has been working as a mathematics teacher (3rd-10th) for 19 years and my father (1st-12) worked as a sports teacher at school for eleven years, then he finished his license as a driving teacher, and then resigned and became a driving teacher. They both have associates degrees.

Background in internet technology and new media

Public schools also have better equipment and technology. I remember we started to learn computers when I was in 3rd grade. There was no Windows Millennium yet. We had to go through different processes to open a computer. Private schools have computers and they have everything.

I use Facebook and Twitter, I have a website and I also use YouTube sometimes. I started to use the internet when I was 12 years old. I was just using messenger to communicate with family from Gaza. The funny thing is, and the sad thing, is that Gaza is 45 minutes from now, and yet the only Gazans I've met are those I meet outside of Palestine: in America, in Europe, in Germany, France, Ireland, but not in any Arabic country—45 minutes away and I can't see them. This has become my principle: admit the other side's concerns, and then speak about your rights.

I have been using Facebook for six years now. You ask how often I am on Facebook; I think you should ask how often am I not on Facebook! If I'm not on the computer, in the U.S. there is the 3G, so I can get internet on my phone, so anytime I am somewhere and someone sends me a message it's maximum 24 hours that I will respond to them. Maximum. If more than this, then I am ignoring them.

I grew up with internet at home. And since I moved to the U.S., my mom has gotten a Facebook account and a Skype account. So we keep in touch through Skype and Facebook. My mother's comments on Facebook are really special to me.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

When you have a small number of friends, Facebook is for personal use. Facebook is more to stay in touch. When you start to have more friends, you have to think more about your message because you have a wider audience every time you post something. So, right now I use it for both—staying in touch, because with some people I'm only in touch through Facebook, and to post about my work, to post opinions, to exchange opinions, to make discussions. And you'll notice a lot of people when they start to use Facebook, they start out by using it personally, but then it develops. They start to use it for work, for sharing your opinions. Now a 10-year old kid who has Facebook can share an article he read and can share his opinion and can post a comment for a Prime Minister. It's changing the world. If you say, tell me one word about Facebook, I'll say it's my world. I can't perceive the world without Facebook. I can't perceive my life, even. It's your gate to the world I feel isolated when I'm not on it for a long time.

Facebook is both a place to be authentic and to escape from reality. It depends on what you post—how far can you go to reflect who you are? You can't post certain issues about Palestine, because as you know Facebook is watched. What I try to do is to be as inoffensive as possible. For me, it's not about restriction as much as it is trying to be balanced. It's not only in Facebook.

Sometimes in life I can't say something as a Palestinian. Palestinians ask me why I am posting certain things online and I tell them if you don't like it, don't look at it. But my point is that this puts me in a hard position in front of everyone. Among Palestinians, they want you to be on their side or the other side. You know, moderation is offensive to everyone. A polarized position is the only acceptable one it seems, on Facebook yes, and even in real life. This is what puts me in such a difficult position because to not be moderate and to recognize both sides is to turn my back on who I am.

I do feel worried about the Israeli authorities monitoring my Facebook, especially now that I am in the United States. But you get to a certain point where you realize that you turn your back on the truth if you try to make everyone feel good. And if the Israelis are upset that Palestinians are angry about what they are doing, they shouldn't be doing it. I can post things, and if the Israeli authorities feel bad about that, they can simply tell the army and police not to do that. The thing that needs to change is the thing that people are criticizing, not to silence the criticism. If they don't like criticism, stop doing things that call for criticism.

Of course I think about retaliation and punishment, and what happened in February, my arrest, was a true example. They knew who I was, I believe, according to my lawyer. Actually, my lawyer contacted me after I was released and said please, keep your head down. It was

intentional, what happened. And that's why I decided to lay low for a little while. But you know, when you get used to speaking out, speaking freely not being silent and taking action, you can't be but like this. At least I should do what I can possibly do. I am away from journalism, from writing, from photography right now, but at least I can post some articles, some pictures. I feel it's good because the world needs to know and I need to tell them in the best way that I can. But yes, I feel worried sometimes. But not just from the Israelis.

Last month I published an article in a Palestinian magazine criticizing Fayad's government and Hamas's government in Gaza and criticizing the Palestinian authorities. And my mother was talking to me on Skype and said, don't come back unless you have foreign citizenship. Because she said she feels the U.S. is giving me a longer tongue. But I told her, they can't play with the destinies of the nations indefinitely. People have to know and people have to speak out.

Language Use on Facebook

I use all three of these languages. If I'm speaking with my sister or my friends, I would use Arabizi. If I'm talking with you of course I will use English. If I'm speaking on a formal platform then I will use formal Arabic or formal English. Arabizi is easier to write than Arabic. I don't have to change the keyboard. You know, Arabic is a complicated language. Arabizi is very quick, very easy, and very common as well. Arabizi was born out of an online media culture. It is the result of all these platforms—messenger, Facebook, and all these forums.

Participant #5

Name: Reem

Sex: Female

Age: 23

Raised in: Ramallah, West Bank

Currently lives in: Ramallah, West Bank

Her life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

My name is Reem, and I have three older brothers. When I was 7 months old in my mother's womb, my dad got arrested by Israeli soldiers as were so many Palestinian during the first Palestinian uprising (first Intifada). I lived the first five years of my life with my mother and my brothers without having my dad living with us, because he was arrested, and my mom had to go out and work during these five years.

I don't remember the details but I still remember the day my father was released I didn't know him that time, and I thought he was one of our family friends. I used to visit him very often while he was in prison and he used to tell me every time I visit him that he feels hurt and pain because he can't hug me during all that time and I used to see him from behind the bars.

After that I lived with all my family members, including my dad, and I have amazing parents; they always encourage us in to be involved in issues of social work and social justice and to get good grades in our classes. When I was in the ninth grade, I joined a radio program that served kids from my age, and then I was chosen to present a TV program, the program name was "Youth Studio", and after I graduated high school, I majored in media and journalism and I worked in several areas within that field, and now, after I graduated, I still work in the same field.

Her and her family's education

I attended private school for primary and secondary school. I learned internet both from school and from outside of school. Both of my parents have bachelor's degrees. My mother is a project manager in a women's organization called Palestinian Working Women, which promotes women and societal development. My father is an Arabic teacher for a Quaker Boys School.

For the last 6 months I've been working on program called the Palestinian documentation project. I used to work with Palestinian refugees in Jordan. We made seven documentaries about Palestinian youth in refugee camps there. Since we finished that project, I am now working for a new satellite TV station in Palestine called "Flastinyeh" and for this job I prepare and present for the show.

Background in internet technology and new media

I've been using Facebook for four years. I use it about one hour per day. I had internet at home growing up. We got internet at home since I was in school starting from 7th grade. I use Facebook because it's entertaining, to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, and as a tool for social and political change.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

Facebook is not meant to be a space where you pretend to be another person. For me, it is a space where I can reflect on what I have and share my personality. I do present myself and write and

share ideas related to who I am in reality. And note: all my friends on Facebook are people that I know. I never add or accept someone I don't know.

As for me, I post on Facebook the things that reflect who I really am. I want to appear who I really am and talk about the things I really believe in, whatever they are. One of the things I really believe in is the campaign for rights in Palestine, as Palestinians, and as women in particular. Some say that Palestinians present themselves as different than they really are. I think the reality of the Palestinian situation is that Palestinians are brave and strong and believe in freedom. They don't just try to show this, they actually *are* strong.

I don't blame anyone for what is happening and has happened in Palestine. I just tell stories of what I see and hear. If people don't like the stories, they could blame whoever the story is about, but that is not what I do personally. I won't hide the story, but I won't blame, either. Why do I need to blame? If the story is negative, the story will speak for itself.

Language Use on Facebook

Many of us are used to writing in Arabizi, but a lot of youth reject that. We encourage each other to write either in Arabic using Arabic characters, or English using English characters. If I am writing something to my friends about something related to our community, I will use Arabic. But if I'm writing something I want my friends from the whole world to know I will write in English. But most of the time I write in Arabic.

Participant #6

Name: Haifa

Sex: Female

Age: 24

Raised in: Nablus and Ramallah, West Bank

Currently lives in: Ramallah, West Bank

Her life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I was born in 1988 in the city of Nablus, Palestine, and now I live in the city of Ramallah. I consider the main turning point in my life to be when I volunteered for the Palestinian governmental TV. I started volunteering there in 2007 and I continued to volunteer until the beginning of 2012. This really shaped my skills as a journalist.

Her and her family's education

I got my bachelor's degree in 2010 and majored in media. I volunteered in many governmental and civil institutions and foundations that specialize in media, theater, and arts for youth and now I'm a producer and a news broadcaster for a Palestinian TV channel.

In elementary schools I attended a public school and in high school I attended a private school. I got married about a year ago and I'm trying to get a scholarship to get my master's degree from Britain this year.

My mom has her master's degree and my father has his Ph.D. My mom works as the head of schools administrations in the Ministry of Education in Palestine and my dad is a professor in Al-

Quds University. As I mentioned, I am a broadcaster and a producer and I'm also a TA at Bir-Zeit University.

Background in internet technology and new media

I use Google blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. I learned internet both inside school and outside of school. I took extra technology courses outside of school while I was taking technology courses in school at the same time. In Palestine, we keep up with new technology as it comes in, and so we don't have problems using the internet or learning any new technology.

I started using Facebook 5 years ago. I don't know exactly how much time I spend, but I'm on the internet all the time as well as Facebook, maybe around 5 hours a day. We had internet at home when I was growing up. We got internet when I was 15.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

I use Facebook because it's entertaining, to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, and as a tool for social change. I don't change my personality over Facebook and I post my ideas without hesitating. I portray my real self online, for I'm a journalist and I write blogs and I submit them on Facebook or wherever medium through my everyday writing and I also use political cartoons to express myself.

Many Palestinians present themselves as fearless freedom fighters simply because the world views Palestinians as powerless and doesn't stand with them and doesn't protect their lives.

That's why. The Palestinians are stubborn people and want to show the world the best of the Palestinian people.

Language Use on Facebook

What language I use depends on the topic and the content of the subject.. Sometimes I like to use English proverbs that if I translated into Arabic, they would lose their meaning and vice versa, so I post those in their original language. And sometimes I just quote Arab or English writers, so again I would post those as they are. Sometimes I quote from my own blogs which are in Arabic. I prefer to use Arabic.

If I want to speak colloquial Arabic, I can still write colloquial Arabic using the Arabic characters. I never use Arabizi except for when it's necessary, like when I need to respond to some friends who use it.

I like to use the English language if I post about something political that happened in Palestine, such as when the occupation violates our human rights. I do this so my English speaking friends will understand what I wrote.

Participant #7

Name: Qamar

Sex: Female

Age: 21

Raised in: Bethlehem, West Bank

Currently lives in: Abu Dis, West Bank

Her life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

To tell my life story, I guess there are a lot of things that shaped me into who I am. I would start with my first day at school. On the way to school, my mom said—remember said what we talked about, it will be fun, you will learn a lot. I held my mom's hand, and then she said it's time, so all the parents had to leave. I was the only one who said okay, and continued to sit on the floor. All the other kids were crying and sticking to their moms. My mom had told me that I was different and that I was smart and that I was going to do fine. And I did. I liked that. My mom helped to make me feel special from the very beginning.

Another thing that really shaped me as a person was when I was chosen by my teacher to go to Germany with some 200 other people. I asked him how come because the minimum age was 15, and I was 12. He said, I know you're young but you can do it. And I realized through this that I can do things and that I was brave. It was a camp in Germany with over 4,000 people and I was the youngest there. It was so intimidating, but I loved it.

Another event that shaped me was the intifada that happened in 2000. We didn't really think it would, but it did. As I saw the soldiers I kept thinking, how am I going to be good to these people? I wanted to treat them differently so they would think that we're human. But then they

kept killing and intimidating and threatening us and it didn't matter what I did. So I ended up thinking, what the hell am I doing? This was life changing. I saw a lot of people and some friends who were shot, who were injured. People were taken to prison for no reason.

A couple of years after the intifada things started to cool down a little bit. My mom was in Ramallah, outside of Bethlehem, and my dad was out of the country for a little while. He was a reporter, so he had to travel. And at some point they invaded Bethlehem and the Israeli military had come in and took a siege on Bethlehem and my parents did not know this. And when they found out they could not even come back home. They didn't know how to get to us. It was just me and my little sister. She was about 10 at the time and I was 13. We were stuck and we didn't know what to do.

We used to live on the fifth floor of an apartment building in Bethlehem at that time, which was considered to be very high. And right across from our house the presidential airport for the PA was right there, for the Palestinian Authority, and all of the Israeli military used it for them and their tanks to shoot from. One day I remember seeing this huge, ginormous thing pointing right at our building. We freaked out. We had no idea if they were going to bomb us. We called our brother and we told him we were scared and we didn't know what to do. There was a siege outside and there was a curfew so we couldn't leave. He came somehow, I don't know how. We had to pack just a few things in a backpack, all of our important things, whatever we could carry—you know, our legal documents, our money, mom's gold, the emergency kit, things like that. And for the first time in my life I realized the seriousness of it all. Up to this point I never

got how dangerous it was. We were hiding behind trucks, garbage containers, going through allies, but my heart never stopped beating, not for a second.

I was freaking out, but through the entire intifada, I was not as affected as a lot of others because the intifada didn't really enter where we were in Bethlehem. Also, we were not in an area that did not suffer as much as other areas, and also my parents are really moderate when it comes to politics. We did not march outside, we did not throw stones, we did not do any of those things. But when this happened I suddenly understood how others could be affected during the intifada.

Her and her family's education

I attended private school my entire life. During the kindergarten and first school, I attended a private school for orphans. It was close to home and mom thought it would be a great way to learn and see how other privileged I am.

My mom has her Ph.D. in psychology and my dad has is bachelor's in social work. My mom works at a university just outside Bethlehem and my dad is the director for a democracy non-profit in Bethlehem.

Background in internet technology and new media

We talked about computers, new media and the internet in school, but we really learned it outside of school. I've been using Facebook from 2008 until now. I don't use Facebook every day, but on average I'd say I spend about 2-3 hours a day on Facebook, but some days not at all if I don't have time. I recently started using WordPress blogs in addition to Facebook. We have

internet at home now, but we didn't always have internet at home growing up. In Bethlehem it was very expensive and it came a little late. In 1996 when I was 6 years old we got our first computer. But internet we got in 2001 or 2002.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

I use Facebook for entertainment a little bit, but rarely. I use it a lot to keep in touch with friends and to share my personal thoughts and opinions. I also use it as a tool for social change. I would say this is my primary use. I don't use Facebook as a tool for political change that often. I also use Facebook for publications. I post my writing and my photography on it. I also use it for class. We use Facebook in the university also. We have a group or page. We all share our ideas and we comment. It really varies, but we use it for class, too.

Facebook is middle ground for me. It's a space where I can be myself, but it's also a space where I can't be completely myself because I know there are consequences. For instance, my political ideas or the political change I want to see. If you post these kind of ideas, you'll get a lot of reactions against you, especially since my political ideas are very liberal, open-minded and advanced for a Palestinian and very forgiving and accepting of the other side.

Both of these ideas have gotten me in trouble before. I had friends on Facebook who are Israeli and Jews around the world. And a lot of times we discuss things, and it shows on my wall. It shows there's something Jewish or Palestinians see Jewish names, and a lot of my Palestinian friends would confront me on this and ask me, How the hell could you do this? And you call

them friends? So that's a consequence for my political life, my social life. It's not easy to show it.

For instance, just a couple of months ago I needed funding for my senior project, and I went to a Palestinian organization to get the funding. And they support you in this organization in one of two ways: equipment or money. They hesitated so I wanted them to know they had funded me in the past. So I mentioned that I had worked with Israelis on one of my former projects, a film, and I could see their face change. They said, "What? You worked with Israelis?" They freaked out, and I know now that I can't do this. I can have my own political opinion, but it has to be kept private.

The thing is that Palestinians believe that if you're a good person and patriotic then you don't show pain or fear. You fight any way, but without showing fear. You should not have that kind of fear. You should not worry about if you're going to die or not die. That makes you weak. That kind of fear weakens your cause.

People here are not so good about giving. It's not like other countries where people say 'I feel your pain or it's okay to be sad. Here people say life's shit, and it's going to continue to be shit. But you move on. There is pain, but you live your life and you don't complain about it. So people here are very strong about that. You can't complain about your life or say I feel pain or I'm scared or whatever.

Freedom fighters and those who are active fighting the Israelis, they feel if you show them fear they will use it against you. And that's what they want. They want fear in us. So you don't show it. If you feel it, you don't show it and you don't talk about it. In prison, when Israeli soldiers talk to you, you don't show your fear.

I heard the story of a woman just the other day on International Women's Day on March 8. She was talking. She was telling her own story. She was a very strong woman. She said when she was in prison, one of the captains told her that the Israeli soldiers were going to have her raped if she didn't give the information they wanted. She said she didn't have the information and she said I don't care if I'm raped. And everyone in the room was like, what the hell is she talking about? How could she not care if she was raped? So I listened more to her story and when the soldiers were threatening her she said, Fine. Rape me. I don't care.

So they brought in an Israeli soldier who was supposed to rape her. He was an Arab. He was an Arab Israeli. He was a Druze. We call them the Druze. It's an Arab minority. Anyway, they brought him in and he said to her I'm going to rape you if you don't tell us the information we want. She said, okay, and she took off her top. She said, I'm ready.

He then said, I can't do this, and he left. And the captain said to her, what kind of woman are you? You're a slut, you're not a woman! And she said, yes, exactly, that's who I was to them. If I said, no, no, then they'd do it and use my fear against me. But if I say I don't care, you'll see me as a slut and you'll leave me alone. And the Israeli soldiers went on questioning her and said, what if they had gone on with it and you had gotten pregnant from your rapist? And she said, I

don't care. I would take my son or daughter and show them to the world and say, "This is what occupation did to me. I'm not afraid of you. And if I am, I'm not going to show you. Ever." This is what she told them, and this is exactly what you do here. Everyone is so freaked out, but you never say it. If you show them, then they've won. They have power over you.

Admitting and talking about your feelings—yes, there is an advantage to this because you basically say I am human and I feel things. To acknowledge your feelings here, what is happening to you, it's very difficult. But when you do this, when you say, I'm not afraid, it takes away part of your own humanity.

When it comes to pictures on Facebook, there are still things I can't do. For example, I posted some pictures of me standing next to one of my best friends. We're not romantically involved. He's younger than me and everything; we're just friends. But everyone was commenting on it and some people even called me on the phone. They said, how could you post pictures of you with this man? Is he your boyfriend? Is he your fiancé? And I said, no, he's just a friend. And they said, why the hell would you post a picture of just a friend? A lot of people just don't understand that. I was really, really annoyed. So I just backed off and took the pictures down because I just don't want this hassle. But a lot of the pictures of me, personal pictures, any pictures of me at a party, standing next to friends, any of these pictures I cannot post. At all. I can't post these pictures because in Palestinian culture that means I've had a lot of men and I get a bad reputation. It depends on the people. Some of my friends thought I looked intimate. Others thought it was inappropriate. It really varied, but generally my friends thought it was not a good thing.

Sometimes I am afraid to post political messages on Facebook, particularly of the Israeli military. One of my international friends posts a lot of political messages on Facebook, and when they interrogated her at the airport they brought up the things she had posted and asked her about them, so they obviously had been monitoring her. Also I have some Palestinian friends who post pictures and comments about Israel and what they did or about the occupation, and some of these friends were arrested. Others were denied permits. I had a friend who was denied a permit, like to go to Jerusalem, and he didn't know why he was denied. And finally they told him. They brought up as evidence things he had written about. Sometimes it is very dangerous, yes.

That's the Israeli government. But as far as the Palestinian government, to tell you the truth, with the Palestinian government, it's not fear, but it's a concern. I don't want to struggle and I don't want to open Pandora's box. In my opinion, they are really terrible people because they have a lot of corruption. Some of the good people, but generally they're not good people. They really use this against women sometimes. If a woman is really aggressive sometimes, this bothers them sometimes. So if I post something, I try to frame it in a way that doesn't come across as so aggressive.

Sometimes the Palestinian government monitors Facebook. For instance, a while back there was a march in Ramallah to protest against what the Israelis were doing. And the Palestinian cops came in and they stopped the march. They prevented people from marching. And my sister was there, and she said, what the hell, are you crazy? We're marching against our enemy. They said, no, Israeli is not our enemy. And they got her angry and she said get out of my way. And they

told her if you don't go home we will arrest you. She said, arrest me. I don't care. So she got into a huge fight with him, he took her to the station, and my dad had to come over and get her. So sometimes they have these stupid things that they do that are very annoying and very terrible.

The thing is, people don't talk about this much, but there is corruption in our government. There are a lot of things that happen that we don't know about and a lot of deals that are made that we don't know about. The Palestinian Authority tries on a certain level to even things up with Israel. They say to the Israeli army, okay, we will tell the kids not to march, but I need you to do something for me. Unfortunately, this happens all the time and it always results in Israel winning and us losing, and the Palestinian authorities getting something out of it. This gets old after awhile. Because Palestinians don't know how to negotiate. And when they do, we're always the weaker party, so they have no leverage.

As far as women are concerned, I remember when Facebook came out and Palestinian girls and women just started to interact with Facebook like a lot of other people were doing. A lot of my friends actually did this, especially back in 2008 when Facebook was not that big. They started posting pictures of themselves on Facebook—not of themselves trying to look sexy or anything, just regular pictures. A lot of comments came from people, especially from their own small communities. People were talking about them. They were telling them things like, how dare you? Or, aren't you afraid? Or, I'm going to take this picture of you and use it against you or against your family. And I didn't believe these people or take these threats seriously until a while later when talking to my friend.

A friend of mine posted a regular picture of herself on Facebook, like of her in a garden or something. And a guy took her photo and used it to try and blackmail her. He took her photo and Photoshopped it and everyone was like, see? That's what happens to you when you post pictures. You shouldn't have done this. You shouldn't have posted these pictures. And they blame the person for posting them. My dad is just like this. It's a very common thing here. Everyone talks about it. Everyone thinks it.

Rarely Palestinian women show their full face on Facebook or they post pictures of themselves from very far away so these pictures can't be used in blackmail. A lot of women post pictures of themselves that couldn't be Photoshopped. Other Palestinian women who are not afraid to show something, they do post pictures, but often they do it in a different way. For instance, if a woman wants to post a picture she would do it with her husband or she would post a picture of her with her kids so also the social judgment would be less.

I remember a friend of my sister posted a picture of herself on Facebook, not a sexual picture, just a normal profile picture. I think she was standing next to some of her friends. This was back in high school. Her dad found out through a friend, his friend, and it was crazy. The very first time she posted something on Facebook, her parents found out. She wasn't even familiar with Facebook herself because it had just come out. But her parents found out and her dad hit her and they forced her to remove it.

My sister told me the story and I was like, what the hell are you talking about? But she said that one of her classmates came into school bruised. And my sister knew the girl, but she wasn't

friends with her. So she went up to her and she talked to her and then they became friends. But she was like, excuse me, your dad hit you because you posted this picture of yourself?

It really happens here. One of my friends here in the university, she posted a picture of herself and some comments on love. She was giving her opinion, on how she felt when she got hurt. And her mom and her older brother hit her so bad, she came to school bruised the next day. In the next two days they forced her to shut down her account, and she did. She had to shut down her account, and then two weeks later she opened another Facebook account, but using an alias.

Religion also plays into our use of Facebook or at least the way a lot of people think about it.

About two years ago some people in Saudi Arabia were investigating Facebook and social media in order to determine Islam's response to it. We call them the Mufti. These are people who study religion or Shari'a, the law, all of it. They use their investigations to start new laws or to change old laws. The Mufti tell Muslims what to do.

Well this guy, one of the Mufti, in Saudi Arabi decided that Facebook was very dangerous. He made a speech on it that basically said, this is very dangerous, you should not be using it. It promotes sex, promiscuity, racism. People of course did not listen to him. Then a few months later you saw that he had a page on Facebook. It was a page for his own beliefs, to promote Islam.

Ever since Facebook became popular there have been tons of groups that have to do with Islam, whether Palestinian or not. There are Facebook pages with the aim of gathering like a million

people who love the prophet Mohammed. There are also people who speak out against Islam and you can see these kinds of Facebook pages from people around the world, but especially here in the Middle East people just want to shut them up and close down the websites and say, how dare you?

There are social consequences more than anything else, but also political consequences, for posting things that go against Islam. If you want to join a political party for instance, or do political work, you can't if you've posted things that go against Islam. For the social consequences, you will get the judgment of you and your beliefs and your opinions. People will say to you, "So...you're not a believer, are you?" Or, you're a sinner or something, one of those words they call you.

My parents don't mind what I post on Facebook. Well, my mother doesn't mind. They object, but they know that these are my opinions and this is my own space . My mom thinks I should not post a lot of personal opinions or ideas that are very radical—radical to society—like homosexuality or bisexuality or sexuality. Or talking about my opinion towards Israelis, or about women and men. All these ideas which are considered controversial to society, she's like, you don't have to discuss them with someone on Facebook. Discuss them in real life. Why the hell should you post them on Facebook? So that's just an opinion that she gives me, but then she says, you know what? It's your opinion, it's your problem. Fine. You solve it. If you have any issues, don't come back to me crying.

For my dad, especially lately, due to our conflicted and bad relationship, this is a problem. My dad does not want me to post anything on Facebook other than to show I am a good citizen, to be diplomatic, politically moderate, and so on. For instance, awhile back he tried to add me on Facebook as a friend and I said that I don't want to, and he said why not. And I said I don't want to, you're not one of my friends. And he said, what is that supposed to mean? And I said, you're my dad. I don't want you anywhere near my Facebook. And then he said, but I want to read what you post and I said, that's private. It has nothing to do with you and it's not something I want to share with you. Of course this turned into a huge fight in the family over it.

He went on Facebook and he just saw my profile picture and my nickname and said what the hell is that? I said it is a nickname. He said why do you have a nickname? Just put your name and remove that picture. My picture was like me leaning on a tree with my hair on the side, and he said that is an inappropriate picture. And I said, why is that inappropriate? And then he said you don't look official and you don't look serious. And I said, how is that a bad thing? And he said, remove it. Just put a picture like the ones they have in a passport or an ID. And I said no, I don't want to do that. It was a huge fight. And so I refused and I blocked him and I said, it's none of your business. It went on for like two months, him trying to do this.

A lot of times he asks me what I post. I know that he has very strong, not just opinions, but judgments, toward the things that we post. My sister added him on Facebook. A lot of times he complains about what she posts. The other day she posted something on homosexuality. No, I think it was on God. It was her own opinion. Anyway, she posted something like, God, why are you letting this shit happen down here? If I could, I would go up there right now and talk to you.

And somebody saw this and called my dad. My dad called my sister who was out of the country and then called me to tell her to remove the post. I asked him, what was wrong with that post? He said, she's talking to God. And I said, so? And he said, she needs to promptly remove it, and so on. It was a huge mess. My dad is very, very, very strict when it comes to these things, but we don't give him that space, so I don't feel it.

If I didn't feel restricted on Facebook, one of the first issues I would talk about would be homosexuality, bisexuality, and sexuality in Palestine. It would be women's issues in Palestine. It would be about the relationships between parents and children or fathers and daughters here in Palestine. It would be the laws—stupid, stupid laws in Palestine that are very sexist. I would talk about the occupation and how I'm sick of it. I would talk about the corruption in the government, in our government, the PA.

In my opinion, actually Palestinians won't. They won't win that. They won't fit in the world like that, because in my personal opinion, they are very, very strict when it comes to those new ideas, those modern ideas—the fact that you can accept the other, the fact that you can relate to the other, whoever that person is. In Shari'a law, one of the main foundations of Islam is that you have to accept the other and respect them, even if you have differences. Although that does exist, people are not following it. People are not changing it to fit their own perspectives and beliefs.

Unfortunately, the weight of this falls on those who are homosexual, bisexual, open-minded, anarchists, secularists, whatever—all those who are different from the mainstream are suffering because the government is not changing, the beliefs are not changing, society is not moving

forward. Stories that were happening forty, fifty years ago to my mom were just happening to my friends a few months ago. And I'm thinking, excuse me—that hasn't changed yet?

And at the same time I look at pictures, my family pictures, of women one or two generations older than me wearing tank tops or swimwear, and I'm thinking, these are the same people who are telling me to pull back, that I should wear a hijab, and that what I do is inappropriate. I confronted my family with these pictures three weeks ago. I showed them the pictures and I asked them, what do you think? You were wearing the same things as I wear. In fact, in some of the pictures they were wearing less than what I wear. They were the same age as I am. And they said that it was a different time, a different world back then.

So yes, the whole world is moving forward except for the Middle East and my country, Palestine. We are moving back to being very religious and using political Islam and it's very, very radical—not in a good way, very strict and conservative. And unfortunately, that's why Palestinians don't fit in. That's why the entire Western media, especially the U.S. media like Fox News or CNN, you see immediately, as soon as one Palestinian or an Arab shows up having made a faulty decision or having faulty judgment, immediately they're portrayed in the media as a devil, as a terrible thing, especially as a terrorist. And that's why we don't fit in.

If we show that kind of tolerance, that acceptance of difference of the other, that other societies have shown, then all the other countries of the world would see us as just regular people, just the way they are, and they would see the whole thing that's happening to us as wrong. But the problem is that inside themselves and between themselves, many Palestinians don't accept it,

they don't respect or accept homosexuality. They don't accept someone who calls themselves a secularist. When you introduce yourself here in Palestine you say either "I'm a Muslim" or "I'm a Christian." If you're silent, but then someone questions you and says, what is your religion? You have to say, Christian or Muslim. You don't get to say anything else. And if you do there are consequences. Palestinian society has not changed yet. And I have no idea if it will. I don't know if or when it will change, but I know that is why they don't fit in with the world.

If we started to portray ourselves as who we really are, as secularists, or anarchists, or homosexual, or what have you, of course that would make an impact on how the world sees us. Your politics, your diplomacy, your laws, these things define who you are as a government and as a country. You see this in the news. When a government changes its laws on homosexuality, for instance, people are watching. I remember reading an article about the U.S. when one of its states was voting on gay marriage. And the whole world was talking about it.

So the idea is if we start showing our ideas, people will start seeing us as humans. They will see us just as they are. We are a different people who have our differences, but who have those fears, those ideas, those relations of humanity. So when we show this to them, when they see that, instead of seeing this person who they all don't like, we speak gibberish and when we don't like something we get enraged or use violence, and think, let's kill them all! That image of us being terrorists or demons, that will fade. Because other homosexuals will see us and think, oh, they're supporting us. Or, at least, that means I can find homosexuals like me there. Or anyone who is a secularist would think, oh, there are secularists there. Or open-minded people would think, they are not like we thought. They're just like us. That wall of judgment and fear would disappear.

This way we can bridge this huge gap between the world and us.

Language Use on Facebook

About the languages I use on Facebook, I use English mainly because I believe English is the number one language and because I have different people from different backgrounds, different languages, and English tends to gather them together or combines them. Like if I write something in English, almost everyone that I know would understand it—my Palestinian friends and my international friends. Also, more people have access to it, especially if I'm writing on a blog. For instance, if it's in English, any search engine will find it, whereas in Arabic, unfortunately, only a handful of people use Arabic language.

It depends on the audience and what I'm posting. Sometimes I post ideas that I intend only for Palestinian people or at least the Arabic public that I know. And I think those ideas are very important to them so I post in Arabic. Whereas other ideas I want to say, especially about myself, I do them in English. It really depends on what I am posting and who is that targeted audience that I want to reach.

I never use Arabizi. I hate Arabizi. It's not a language. It's a stupid, stupid way to write that people have created. And the other reason is that I really, really cannot read it. I hardly can. I think English is great and Arabic is great. If you want to express yourself well, use one of these languages. You don't have to write the same terms in the same language, same pronunciation, in different letters. It's very confusing around the world, to me and other people. It doesn't make sense.

Participant #8

Name: Sara

Sex: Female

Age: 23

Raised in: Jordan & Nablus, West Bank

Currently lives in: Ramallah, West Bank

Her life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

My name is Sara. I was born in Amman, Jordan, as my family was living there, but when I was 4 years old we came back to Palestine and I grew up there. In Palestine I started to get involved in volunteer work and social work, and I have continued with this work till now. I studied in Birzeit University, majored in journalism and minored in sociology, and graduated in May, 2011. I currently work as training department coordinator and public relations officer in Northern Distribution Electricity Company, Nablus. Beside that I am working in journalism as a freelancer.

Her and her family's education

Both of my parents have bachelor degrees. My mother has been working in the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. My father worked as an accountant in a private company, but when he became 60 years old he retired.

Background in internet technology and new media

I attended public school for primary and secondary school. I use Facebook and I have a blog. I learned to use the computer and internet in a cultural center called "Cultural Children's Center" in Nablus, which is a municipal center. It was created to give the children in Nablus opportunity

to develop their skills and to spend their free time there. I use Facebook about 4 hours a day. I have internet at home, and I had internet at home growing up. My parents got internet when I was about 12 years old.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, and as a tool for social and political change. I am myself on Facebook. Facebook is not a space to lie or to show off, it is a tool that giving me the chance to exchange my real ideas with people, and to make the real good social and political change in the society.

Because we are Palestinian, we respect real freedom fighters who really fight the Israeli occupation and who really defend Palestine. Those who pretend to be freedom fighters want to have same respect from people but they will not have it because our society is very small and we know the real freedom fighters from the fake ones.

I don't feel restricted on Facebook. I critique Israel, the Palestinian government and Palestinian society. I also feel comfortable to post pictures. I can critique anything in the Palestinian government or Palestinian society. For example, last week I posted something in Arabic on my Facebook that critiqued people in Nablus because they don't like to go to cultural events which I see as very important, and I didn't feel restricted even I am living there and the people there will critique me.

Language Use on Facebook

Regarding language, it depends on whom I am writing for. For example, if I am writing for Palestinian people I would write in Arabic because not all of the Palestinians can read or understand English, but if I am writing for the world I would write in English. I would use Arabizi if I am also writing for Arab people.

The pros of English is that your message can be read by most people regardless if they are Arabic or English speakers. But the cons of it, for me I can't explain all my ideas in the English language as I am not an English speaker and as it's my second language. The pro of Arabic is that I can explain everything I want because it's my first language and it's easy to explain my ideas using it. The cons of Arabic are that your message can't be read by many people because people in the world are not familiar with Arabic as the Arabs are familiar with English. As far as Arabizi, in my opinion there are pros of using this type of characters but I think it destroyed the original language.

Participant #9

Name: Zeytouna

Sex: Female

Age: 20

Raised in: East Jerusalem, Israel

Currently lives in: East Jerusalem, Israel

Her life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I grew up in East Jerusalem. I was raised by parents who value independence. They sent me to several schools which were top schools in their own way because they valued my education and getting me to become the best I could be.

I've taken that message to heart and, as part of really being myself, I removed my hijab recently. It was one of the first steps I took to represent myself more authentically. You know it is easier for women here if they want to remove their hijab to do it after marriage. Then they can say that they removed their hijab with permission of their husband or because the husband wanted it. It's more acceptable for those reasons. But I removed my hijab for my own reasons and this has really helped me.

I was really scared my first day back to the university after I decided to remove the hijab. I called a friend and said I can't do this alone. Will you walk with me? And she walked with me to the school even when people were making comments. People said to me, what the hell did you do? What happened to you? And my parents told me things like I am going to hell and how could I do this to God? But at the same time when I removed the hijab I felt so free. I felt this energy about me I can't explain. I felt empowered and confident. It was amazing. And you know, I

hardly even hear the comments that people make about me. At university, people gossip about me and say, “Look there’s the girl that removed her hijab!” as I pass by. And my friends tell me they said this, but I don’t even hear them. I just feel so confident.

At the same time, I recognize the hijab as an important part of my Palestinian culture and identity, so I may choose to put it back on someday. But for now it feels good to have it off. It represents traditional Palestinian culture and conservative values which I don’t feel represent me. I think I have a right to represent myself according to who I understand myself to be. And I believe I should be able to make choices about myself based on my own mind and thinking. At the end of the day, I have to be comfortable with who I am in the mirror.

It was less pushy on my parents because I did it at a time when I was in a relationship because if people asked them why their daughter removed her hijab they could answer that she is in a relationship and may get married soon.

We Palestinians have to face our own issues and problems in the mirror and admit we’ve made mistakes. In this way, we can change anything, anything. It can even fight the occupation. When I reached that point in my life where I was able to come home and look myself in the mirror and be confident that I was being authentic, I found a very powerful energy which surprised me. I use this energy and confidence to keep me going and to make some decisions that were not easy to make. One of these decisions was removing my hijab. I know some other women who want to take off their hijab but they feel they cannot. They are ruled by fear. But when you let that go and

be yourself, accepting your mistakes and your weaknesses, you find a strength you didn't know possible.

If Palestinians were more honest, the international community would view us differently, too. It is the first step, really. But the Arab community is difficult to change. We are very strong, Arabs. We have a lot of pride and a strong sense of honor. But a lot of it is simply false. For instance, in Jordan, so many women are killed for so-called "honor killings," but when investigators look into it they find most of these women are innocent of their accusations.

Her and her family's education

I remember I attended public school from primary or secondary school but my parents sent me to a special school on Sundays for gifted and talented children. I attended this school from 3rd to 10th grade. This school gave us the opportunity to do things we otherwise wouldn't do, like be more involved in the arts and theatre and also to travel, to take field trips, to be involved in conferences and things. This school let me to believe I was different and that I was special. My parents were always supportive and encouraged me to continue and do what I wanted. Feeling special led me to believe that I could make a difference in society. And when I tried things out I was successful and so I thought I could do this.

This school was only available for students from schools controlled by the Israeli ministry of education. Students from Palestinian-controlled schools could not attend. But since I attended schools in East Jerusalem which were controlled by the Israeli educational ministry, I qualified. I had to take a special test and I got one of the highest marks, so I attended.

My mother finished the 10th grade. My dad is certified in auto mechanics. He is retired now, but he used to inspect cars to certify them as road-safe.

Background in internet technology and new media

I learned the internet and computers in school. I've been using Facebook since 2005. I use Facebook about 5-6 hours a day. I do have internet at home. I use Facebook, Twitter, a blog, and I also have a YouTube channel. When I originally started using new media, I tried some blog-type thing but then I got some emails from people saying, you shouldn't do that. It doesn't suit you. So I stopped. I didn't like it much anyway. My blog is more than a blog to me. It feels like something real to me. It is a space where I can be myself.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

I use Facebook to some extent for entertainment, but more often I use it to share my personal thoughts and to keep in touch with friends. I use it less for social change and never as a tool for political change. I use Facebook to inform friends about events and things, so in this sense I use it socially for social awareness and things. But I don't ever use it for political reasons. Not at all. It is too dangerous to use Facebook for that.

Just a week ago a friend of mine was arrested by the Israeli authorities for posting something on Facebook related to politics. Twitter is much better for politics. You only have 140 characters, so you can only say so much. Plus, people can't read your personal information, see your photos, see who your family and friends are, and so on. People can't learn much about you from Twitter.

But on Facebook it's much more dangerous. You have a lot more information available for people to read and learn about you, but you also have your IP address, so someone can know what computer you're using.

A lot of people fake who they are on Facebook. This is common. And as far as Palestinians portraying themselves as freedom fighters or strong, this is common among Palestinians but I don't trust it. I think if you're really strong and brave and care about Palestine you won't go around bragging about it. In fact, I think those who are really strong don't talk about their strength; they just do it. For instance, I knew one of the guys was in the flotilla to Gaza. He bragged about his activism every day on Facebook, but when the flotilla was grounded, he got off the ship and just went on living his life. He didn't carry with him that kind of freedom fighter posture unless he was engaging in activism at the time. He acted like he was so devout to the cause, but if he was, how could he so easily give it up?

A lot of people show the "Palestinian face" to show the Israelis that they don't care so they can appear strong and not let the Israelis win their will, even if they have won much of our land. Other Palestinians do it for other Palestinians. Like if there is a guy who likes a girl and he knows she feels strongly about Palestine, he will post all sorts of things on Facebook in order to get her to like him.

People post these kinds of things on Facebook for attention. But actually the Palestinian government is against this. The Palestinian government does not want revolutionaries in Palestine. It feels revolutionaries work against its mission and lower its leverage for diplomatic

efforts and statehood. So actually there is a special section of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian government, which monitors Facebook. Not only Facebook, but all social media used by Palestinians. They monitor the internet. I have two friends who have been arrested by Palestinians, not by Israelis, for the political messages they posted on Facebook. And of course there is corruption in the government. So on the one hand the PA says they want peace and don't want us to do anything to jeopardize it, but on the other hand they accept bribes from the Israelis which ends up preventing peace. There is a lot of corruption in the Palestinian authority, not to mention that Mahmoud Abbas is an asshole.

Sometimes this strength actually helps us and it's not a show. Like the two recent prisoners held by Israel on administrative detention—their strength got them international attention. Shalabi was one of them and when Israel and Palestine did a prisoner exchange, she was one of the ones released. She was supposed to be in there for 20 years for shooting an Israeli guard in the stomach, but she was released after 5 years.

Two friends of mine were arrested for posting political content on Facebook. One was female and the other was male. But I have heard five or six stories of this from other people. The man was arrested for posting some comment on his Facebook account saying something about negotiations with the Palestinians and the Israelis. Only 40 minutes after he posted this he was arrested by Palestinian authorities in Ramallah.

I am very careful when I post anything critical because of all these arrests. I also don't want to jeopardize my future or my career. If I'm arrested by a Palestinian, they can't do anything to me

because I have an Israeli ID as a resident of East Jerusalem. So they could hold me for a day and that's it. It would be much worse for me if I were arrested by Israelis. It's not just arrest. A lot of my friends in the West Bank have been denied visas or permits to travel to Jerusalem, for instance, based on their Facebook or new media use. The Israelis have even told them this. When my friends ask why they were denied, sometimes the Israelis will even show you the post or posts which made them deny you.

So I am really careful about this. You never want to post something alone. If you are just part of a group or going with the flow or something it's harder for them to catch you or to single you out, but if you post a comment and then it gets a lot of likes and attention and people start talking about it, you are the one to blame for it, and you may pay the consequences.

So, yeah, it's not just the Israelis who are monitoring our Facebook and internet usage. The Palestinian Authority is, too. And for many Palestinians, to get arrested by them is much worse. I know some Palestinians who have gone to Palestinian jail and they say it is worse than Israeli jail because the Palestinian soldiers and officers use the Palestinian prisoners as a way to take out some of their anger, to change how they feel from being a powerless victim to something powerful. They often treat their own people really badly so they feel like they have more control over their own situation.

Palestinian society is modernizing. So it depends on the circle you are in as to how free you are to post something on Facebook without family or friends giving you a hard time for it. For certain issues on Facebook, such as sexuality, there are certain things you don't talk about

because they are controversial. If you are polite, you don't post things that offend people. But some people post controversial things and don't have a problem. I think roles have something to do with it. People like to categorize you as one thing or another and they like it if you fit into and stay in this role. If you are a really polite person and then you post something controversial or politically challenging, it will come across as really weird, and people will even tell you not to do that, because it's not like you. But if you are used to doing that, then people don't get worried. Still, I think Palestinians should respect each other's opinions. People tell me not to post certain things, but I tell them if they don't like it, don't read it.

Language Use on Facebook

As far as the languages I use, I use English and Arabic. I hate Arabizi, really. It's really difficult to understand. I feel much more comfortable using Arabic. I can express myself better as well.

Participant #10

Name: Amelia

Sex: Female

Age: 18

Raised in: Bethlehem, West Bank

Currently lives in: Baden Württemberg, Germany

Her life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I was born in Jerusalem in 1993 to revolutionary parents. I was raised in Bethlehem, but having close relations with my extended family allowed me to also be raised and influenced by the refugee camp my mother's family lived in and the agricultural returned village that my father's family lived in. I was able to witness both the Oslo Truce and the Second Intifada in 2000 and be

influenced by them both. Growing up, I participated mostly in political and social resistance activities and I still do.

I currently live in Baden Württemberg, Germany, because I was given an opportunity to volunteer for a year abroad to expand my horizon and learn more about the so-called "adult world." I believe I am quite a strong person because of all the things that I went through. It wasn't easy surviving war or social injustice and prejudice. It wasn't easy standing by as my family's stability fell apart. It wasn't easy growing up with hardly any friends. It wasn't easy being poor and having almost no food at all for a year. I try to remain positive about it and use it to my advantage. There are many times now, when I am feeling down and hopeless that I just look at my past and remind myself that I made it.

Her and her family's education

I attended a private Evangelical school in Beit Jala from 1st grade until 11th grade. This means that I basically got all of my education at that private school, but then I transferred to Bethlehem High-School for Girls in my senior year. This is a public school.

My mother has a PhD. I don't know what in because I am too lazy to understand. My father has a Bachelor's degree because he is the type to get too preoccupied with his job to finish his Master's studies.

Background in internet technology and new media

I regularly use Facebook (twice daily), YouTube (quite frequently), and a blog (as frequent as I can. It is unfortunately very time consuming). I have been using Facebook since December the 25th of 2007. I use it for about 4 hours daily. I have Internet at home. My family had internet at home since as far as I can remember.

I think that school plays a big role in learning to use the internet, but I wouldn't say that if it wasn't for school, I wouldn't have been able to use the Internet. There are, of course, things that I learned at school, but only things that made it easier to use the Internet—not how to use it at all. For example: how to search with Google with the most efficiency, how to protect one's privacy online, useful programmes for different tasks, how the internet works, etc.

The idea of the internet itself, however, wasn't new to me. I was used to having internet because I grew up around it. My family always used it, but not as much as today. That's why, it was very normal for me to get used to it after time. When I became old enough to be able to type and move the mouse around and understand computers and the internet, I just explored the different possibilities on my own. As I got older, and developed different interests, I started searching the web for different things. The internet is something that I grew up with.

The concept of new media is, I'd say, new to me. I was always somewhat of a lurker and not much of a participant. I was very hesitant about joining this world of sharing news and adding information to the database and to the world. Actually, I still am, but I was forced to do it by the masses. Most of earth's population has Facebook, and so I got Facebook. From there, it became

really easy to just join different websites and to understand them because, after all, it's all the same.

I use Facebook for entertainment, to keep in touch with friends, to express my personal and political thoughts, and as a tool for political and social change. I also use it to judge if a person is worth my friendship in real life. Their Facebook page and what they share is alternately what they believe in or think is amusing and so on. If I see that someone has shared something that I strongly disapprove with, and then I discuss it with them. If I see that there is no way to change this person's opinion, then that person shouldn't be my friend in real life. Yes, I respect different opinions, but I prefer to share some sort of basic belief system with my friends or the people who are close to me.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

Facebook is as much of a real environment, to me, as the real world is. I don't hide behind a computer and share things that don't represent me. My Facebook page should be as real as my diary for example. Maybe not as detailed and informative, but still. Facebook is a tool for people to share what they believe in and what they are thinking about with people they know. If I lied on Facebook, then I might as well lie all the time. I try to keep my image as authentic on Facebook as I can. If I didn't, then I would be lying to myself and everyone I know.

The cultural image of Palestinians, in general, is a strong fearless fighter, who is not afraid of war or pain or death. This is because we are, mostly all, children of war taught to not fear and not cry because there is a fight going on that we need to win. Many families teach their children that

there is a battle going on and therefore, there is no time for emotions and sentiment. We are taught that the battle must be won, at all costs. Our strength, as Palestinians, is part of pride and our pride is sometimes all we have. It's just an image that reminds us of what we could have been if we fought more and were more active, in my opinion. The Palestinian population, in general, is a population in love with words and speeches and the image of a tough person that will vanquish all. Therefore, it is a natural result for us to think that if we were that person, we would be popular. And the recipients of this image, in return, glorify that person because of our misled and deformed ideas on leadership. I am, in this case, not one of those, who respect emotionless and passionless strength. I believe that, especially at times of war, emotion is crucial. I would never follow a ruthless leader who can't express emotion in front of the masses. That leader is not human and a leader must be human. I wouldn't, therefore, portray myself, at all, as one of those people. I may have had my moments when I would have given up my life for my country, but I wasn't going to go around bragging about it. We are all human. We all fear. We all cry. We all want to live. I guess, there are times, when we are motivated to the point that we are careless to the consequences of our actions. We have all had those moments, but in the end, we will all cry when our friends are shot or when we, ourselves, are shot. Yes, there are those who really have no fear and who would give it all up for the sake of the cause, but, in my opinion, most of them are just influenced by those who truly have no fear.

I don't know what to answer here because I am not necessarily afraid, but I do censor myself in a way that isn't too much for the minds of the people around me. Yes, I do share whatever I want to share, but I know that there are dangerous lines that I don't cross. I don't much care about the way my community perceives me. I care more about my life and my future. I don't want to be

blacklisted in a way that would make it hard for me to have a career or a family. I also care, slightly, about the feelings of my parents. Yes, they understand me, but it would be hard for them to explain the sexual orientation of their daughter to their families. I just keep mine a secret, but I still defend the right to whatever sexual orientation one has. I don't feel yet safe enough to share my personal sexual orientation, but I will work for it and make sure that whoever I have on Facebook understands what I believe in. I do all the options in question 18 without fear, but rather consideration. I respect the fact that my community might not be ready to accept my revolutionary, and maybe radical, ideas.

Language Use on Facebook

When I use Arabic, it is usually if I am quoting something or saying something in Fussha.²³ It has a better effect and a slightly humorous ripple. I wouldn't use Arabizi for anything except if I'm talking to an Arabic Speaker in English and a something is easier or shorter to say in Arabic. I find Arabic very attractive and melodic and if I'm saying something that an Arabic audience would be interested in or is more likely to understand, then I will write it in Arabic. I would write in English if something is a general note or observation or if I would like to receive comments. English speakers are more likely to comment back on something than the Arabic Speakers would.

The pros and cons of using English is that it is something universal that all of my International friends understand. The pros of using Arabic are simply its beauty and the importance of preserving it and not forgetting its extremely difficult grammar. Pros of alphanumeric Arabic are that it's easy and fast. It doesn't need any grammar and it's just translating the dialect into English

²³ Modern Standard Arabic

letters and numbers. English is faster to type with. The cons of using English and Arabizi is forgetting the original Arabic which is already fading out in the Arabic community. Also, with Arabizi, the chance for error is high. Someone might write something different to how I would write it and we would have ourselves a misunderstanding. The cons of using Arabic is that it's hard and needs time to write and that it's senseless to translate using any internet-tool.

Participant #11

Name: Mehedi

Sex: Male

Age: 26

Raised in: Ohio, California & Beit Safafa and Ramallah, West Bank

Currently lives in: Ramallah, West Bank

His life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. Then we moved to Los Angeles and we left from there to Jerusalem when I was about eight years old. When we came here, my dad's Jerusalem ID was revoked, and it's been a sixteen or seventeen year battle with the Israeli legal system, trying to get our ID back. The Israelis have a policy that if you stay outside of the country for seven years without renewing your ID, they automatically revoke the ID. My dad was one of some 400 cases at the time that didn't get their ID back.

We're from Jerusalem, but we could no longer live there. I am never allowed to go to Jerusalem again. My dad, because he has a paper that explains that he has a court case pending, has a little more lenience, but even then, it is unlikely he would be granted permission while the court is proceeding. But me, I'm pretty much stuck in the Ramallah area. I'm not even allowed to go into other Palestinian towns. I haven't seen another area besides the Ramallah area for eight years

now. The reason is that because the court case is still going on, there's no decision yet, and until there is a decision I personally don't have any ID. And without an ID, I'm considered an illegal resident traveling on an American passport with no visa. I've renewed my passport, but Israel won't give me a visa because my dad doesn't have an Israeli ID.

I'm a very liberal Muslim. Actually, my dad is from a really conservative Muslim family here in Palestine, and my mom is from a really conservative Christian family in the States. My dad went to study for his master's and Ph.D. in the States, and he met my mom there. My mom was "pure American," which is to say, as pure as Americans come: an Irish-Scottish mix. They met there. My dad wanted us to get back to Palestine, for us to learn a little bit about the culture, the language, religion, and stuff like that, and he wanted to start a business here. So he moved us all here and he started his business. And ever since, we haven't really gone back.

When my parents told me that we were moving to Palestine, I had almost no clue what that meant or what to expect. All I saw was on the TV every once in a while, kids throwing rocks, so that's all I knew about it really.

My mother speaks English and very little Arabic. We all speak English in the house. My mom actually converted to Islam. She was interested in Islam before she met my father and it kind of grew with my father and when they got married she decided to convert.

So we moved to a city between Bethlehem and Jerusalem called Beit Safafa because it was easiest to get around on both sides, and plus it gave us the opportunity to move around since we

don't have an ID and Israelis could actually count us illegal in the country. Beit Safafa is considered part of the UN Buffer Zone, so it's neither Palestinian nor Israeli territory. Neither government has much effect there. So pretty much I lived most of my life there.

Society here is more liberal in Palestine because of the internet. Much more liberal. And the information spreads easier. People know that there are cultural events, compared to before. I remember my first couple years in university we had to ask certain people, Is there a concert this week or not? Now it's all online, and it helps to keep us culturally involved in society more than before. This all began to change about six years ago.

This change was brought about by a bunch of factors, as I see it. But social media had a big influence in Palestinian society. More people are using it, more people are developing stuff through social media that wasn't available before. Advertising is part of it, but also educational things. There are a lot of educational benefits from social media. The spread of information now is so fast. It's just more efficient than it used to be to share information and ideas. Somebody could post something in China and suddenly someone in Palestine is reading it and all his friends are reading it, whereas before if you weren't following that particular person's blog, you really didn't know how to get there. You wouldn't find that information as well. Social media helps to spread information worth sharing.

I consider myself an activist in my own personal way. Most people go for the direct approach like demonstrations, boycotting, stuff like that. I'm pro-boycotting, but that isn't the only way that I consider myself an activist. I count myself as an economic activist as much as I do a

political activist. I try to get as many people as I know to support the Palestinian economy. The internet has helped that quite a bit. The fact that you can influence people online through media—it's easier than TV because most people who watch TV will be looking through the channels and if they find something like a documentary, they'll skip that, they'll say, ok, it's a documentary, I'm going to skip that I'm going to go watch American Idol or something—which is actually popular here. Now you can send out a “Cause” on Facebook about boycotting this certain product because it directly supports the Israeli military. It now gets a larger amount of people than it used to.

Since the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, the youth here have started to rely more on Facebook to get things organized—which is interesting, but at the same time, I don't think it's the best way. As for activists, political activists who go out on the streets, it was always part of the Palestinian culture. The Arab World just realized what the Palestinians have been doing all their lives. Anyone my age who lived through the second intifada knows what protests are. The Arab World didn't know about it as much as they do now. And I do think some of the ideas that they got and some of the protesting that they do can be related to the Palestinian causes. It's the only Arab situation where we're in constant conflict (or occupation) compared to the rest of the Arab World which is pretty peaceful.

The demonstrations and the protests in Egypt—it's not, to be honest, something new to us. The younger generations do think it's new, but it isn't. Palestinian society: the different age groups do and go through different things and there has been a divide between the people who were raised during the first intifada, the second intifada, and the current generation. The first intifada

there was no Palestinian government whatsoever during the uprising. During the second intifada there was a Palestinian government and it was very different compared to the first intifada, and the youth of that time saw a different face to the conflict than people in the first intifada. The youth these days, since it's relatively peaceful, much more peaceful, much, much more peaceful, than the first or second intifada or the period in between it, protests aren't a common occurrence. So the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt reminded the Palestinians that we have been going through this before. Maybe we could go out and protest again.

The Palestinians today, to be honest, a lot of people hate me for this, but they're pretty laid back—my generation and the generation before it—to the occupation. The fact that there's a Palestinian government and a peace process, they're very hopeful for the peace process and the idea that the government will actually do something. From before, we used to think of the peace process as just something for those politicians to do and the normal people went out and protested it or did something. I have a lack of faith to this day in the peace process. It's just what I've seen throughout my life.

Quite a bit of youth today do have faith in the peace process, though. There is some renewed hope in the peace process given that there have been certain limits and lines that Israel hasn't been able to cross. It's been four years since there was an Israeli incursion into the Ramallah area when it was something like almost every other night during the second intifada, if not more. I mean, there was a period time when they reoccupied Ramallah and had tanks at different corners and there's quite a lot of footage on YouTube about it. Israeli tanks were caught going over Palestinian cars just for fun. These were cars parked along the side of the road, including

ambulances. There were many cases where ambulances were crushed. There was an exhibit during 2004 which showed the cars which were actually crushed during this time.

But the youth now are not as active because basic life in Ramallah is pretty good compared to how it was during the second intifada.

I don't think there is an ideal solution to this conflict, to be honest. There will always be a sector to the Palestinian people who won't give up certain things and the same is true of certain sectors of Israeli society that won't give up certain things. For me, I will not give up the right for me to go to Jerusalem, where my family's homes are or where my grandparents are buried—which, the Israelis have preventing me from going to their funerals. So this is one of the things that I would really like to do one day. No peace plan is going to stop that hope for me.

His and his family's education

I'm a graphics designer. I have my BA in business administration. I attended elementary school partly in the U.S., in Los Angeles. Then I finished my education, up to university, here in Palestine. I attended Birzeit University.

My dad is a business owner; he has a Ph.D. in political sociology. My mom is a stay-at-home mom and she has her BA in business.

As far as elementary school, it was the largest shock to me when we first moved here. In elementary schools in the States, you have toys, you have different designated stations, like the

play area, the reading area, the science area, and so forth. And here they just had white walls and chairs and tables. It was a big culture shock for me then. As far as high school, I thought our high school was not the best, because I had read about how high schools are in the States, and high school here doesn't give you as much freedom as it would in the States.

In the States, in elementary school, we would go once a week to the computer labs to learn how to use them. In my schools here, we had computers in school, but computers weren't used in the same way as they were in the States. In the States, computers were used for educational purposes. Here, teachers didn't have enough background on how to teach young students about computers so they pretty much gave us a bunch of games and we ended up playing games all day. We had computers in elementary school all the way to high school. My high school had internet, although we never got access to it. The school that I went to didn't really focus on computers or computer-related subjects. I think this was due to an inability to find good English speaking teachers to teach the class because it was a Palestinian school that taught in English. I attended English speaking schools here from elementary through high school. There are about four schools here in Ramallah which educate elementary through high school fully in English. I attended one of those. These are private schools.

We got our first computer at home when I was in seventh grade and we got internet at home a couple of years after that. It was an old dial-up line. About seven years ago we got a high speed line, a DSL line.

Background in internet technology and new media

When it comes to Facebook and Twitter, I started using those pretty recently. Before this, I used Yahoo Messenger, MSN Messenger, stuff like this, when we first got our internet, but I got into Facebook when I was in college. It was two years after the release of Facebook itself, so that was about five or six years ago for me. I use Facebook, I also have a G+ account, Twitter, Blogger, quite a few others, I'm very interested in online social media so I pay attention to what's new and try it out.

I started using new media and social media to keep in touch with friends. In college, at first it was a bunch of us guys in college. We used it to contact each other. I have a test tomorrow, I need help with my homework, why don't you come over, stuff like that, or just plain hanging out over the summer over the internet when everybody's in a different town. This developed into something I use to keep in touch with all my friends who went back to the States. I use it to connect to family in the States, people I used to know nothing about, so it's a good way to contact and keep in touch with them. And I also used it to reconnect with a bunch of friends I used to know back in elementary school in the U.S.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

On Facebook, I share things that I'm interested in, which isn't always the best thing. My American family in the States doesn't quite get the political thing like Palestinians here do, and so they're not that appreciative of it, you know, especially since my family is also pretty "military" and Republican if you know what I mean. They don't like seeing videos about how U.S. tax money is used to fund the Israeli occupation. They don't like that at all. I post these

things, I post music, stuff like that. I also use Facebook for entertainment, for the applications and games.

I have a Twitter account, but I don't use it that much. I use it mostly for business reasons. I'm in charge of a small magazine that we produce online that's distributed free for artists. We interview artists for it and stuff like that. So I pretty much promote the magazine through Twitter and talk about new articles, tell people, this artist just uploaded a new piece of artwork online, stuff like that. I used to blog quite a bit. Recently, I haven't blogged as much. I used to blog about personal things. I try to keep away from the political as much as possible due to my situation. The Israelis don't like people with no ID to be ranting about them. I don't want to attract attention to my already difficult situation.

It's not like I don't like to focus on politics. I'm very into politics. The thing is that I try to keep my politics to a certain level for personal security reasons. The Israelis have really rough laws against illegals. A few years ago the law was you would be imprisoned, 10,000 shekel fee, plus one shekel for every day you overstay your visa, and if you don't have the money you pay it out three and a half shekels a day in prison. They renewed that law. They count illegals as so-called "terrorists." We're infiltrators into the Israeli country. Now the policy is even stricter, where there's imprisonment, the fines are even higher, and they will deport you and tell you never to return. They have a policy preventing you, your children, and even your children's children from ever returning to visit, as a way to make people forget the existence of Palestine and their family history.

After I explain my situation to people, a lot of people don't understand why I'm here, especially Americans, since I am a U.S. passport holder. To be honest, I like this country. I like it more than the memories I have of the States. This is where I was raised. This is where I know how the system works. If I go to the States, if I cross the road where there's no crosswalk, I'm, you know, jaywalking; here I just do it all the time out of habit. So, I'm just used to it here. I like it here better. And to be honest, I don't think I would fit in as much as I would like to in the States, fit in as much as I do here—even though I am counted as a foreigner to most Palestinians. Even though Palestinians see me as a foreigner here, I'm still Palestinian. And, after 9/11, if you're a foreigner, you're pretty much one of a long list of negative things that would be ascribed to you even though you're not into those things.

So for me, my national and cultural identity outweighs my security. That's why I continue to live here, and don't move back to the States. But I am not going to be foolish about my security. This is why I am careful not to post political things on Facebook or the internet. Yes, there have been hard times, and to be honest, pride, by itself, this is my country, this is my land, my family owns land, my family has ties to Palestine, I do not want to leave.

I don't have a different identity online than I do in person. Social media nowadays has become an extended personality, an extension of their identity. So online you might be a little more comfortable, but at the same time you're the same person. Something you might not want to say to someone in person, for fear of their reaction, you might say online. But it doesn't mean you're not the same person, you're not thinking the same. Also, it actually makes me feel comfortable. For example, ten years ago a Palestinian kid who stayed all day on the computer was looked at as

kind of weird, he's not social. Nowadays someone who is on Facebook 12 hours a day is pretty much normal. So social media does make you feel more positive if you think about it, because you're more accepted, not considered that weird guy who just sits at his computer, which sucks anywhere.

As far as if I feel I can express myself more or less freely online, it depends on what I'm going to say. Politically, I'm more willing to say something in person than on the internet. On the internet, nothing is ever lost. And Facebook, Google, they are more powerful than most governments with the information about us. To share personal things, I'm equally comfortable online and in person.

Language Use on Facebook

I use predominately English on Facebook. I'm a Palestinian raised in the Arab World but speaking English, and my Arabic to this day is still not that great.

Participant #12

Name: Kader

Sex: Male

Age: 21

Raised in: Hebron, West Bank, Palestine & New Mexico

Currently lives in: Chicago, Illinois

His life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I was born in 1991 in Ramallah. I have lived all of my life in the same building in Hijra Street in Hebron. The building contained apartments where my family, my uncles' families, and my

grandparents lived. Living with my uncles, cousins and my grandparents was unique. It had its advantages, because I consider my cousins to be my siblings but it also had its disadvantages, because extended family issues erupted a lot.

Going back to my life, I had a bit of a fancy childhood. My grandfather was the mayor of the city of Hebron at that time (my grandfather is definitely a huge source of inspiration for me) and since there was no official Palestinian leadership at that time, he was working for both the Israelis and the Jordanians. Anyway, that meant I could travel around Palestine (Historic Palestine) and visit many cities, but I don't remember most of that stuff.

Before the year 2000, we used to go to Jerusalem many times. Life was normal, at least to me, but in 2001 everything changed. It was my first encounter as a kid to experience the conflict when Israel invaded the West Bank and Gaza. I remember seeing the military everywhere: tanks, guns and helicopters. We didn't have school for months which made me happy to be honest. We also had curfew for months, and we were really short on food. There were some militants hiding in the mosque right next to my house and we used to give them food and water. I remember every night the helicopters and airplanes were shooting all the time. The streets were closed and blocked to cars, so my cousins and I used to ride our bicycles and play soccer in the streets. An incident that I will never forget was when I was riding my bicycle downhill heading towards a road block, I was sure there would be no one there, but then all of a sudden a tank comes up. I was really scared so I abandoned my bicycle and hid behind a building while the tank ran over my bicycle.

I remember my cousins and I used to have small radios so we could tune in and listen about what was going on outside. I remember the music that the channels played right before they announced the death of many people in an airstrike or the bombing of a house.

I later left to go to a college-prep high school in the United States but then I came back. After some time at home, I started seeing things differently. I realized that there is so much more about Palestine to advocate about than occupation: such as history, culture, religion and many other things. Once I realized this, I started developing my own theory about things in life. I have realized that I understood things differently, and that was a turning point in my life. Then I left to the US again, to start life at a new college. I am doing well academically, there are many interesting people, and better yet, my UWC (high school) alumni are closer to me

His and his family's education

From kindergarten to 6th grade, I was at a private school. From 6th to 11th grade I moved to a public school. Then I attended United World College (UWC) which is a private high school, college level.

I went to kindergarten earlier than most students. I remember I was eager to do that. Unlike most children, I didn't cry and I enjoyed it. For my 1st grade till 6th grade, I went to a private school. Private schools were not very expensive (ranges from \$400 to \$600 a year). I got a good education at the private school. That also that meant I could study English beginning in 1st grade, whereas public schools start teaching English from the 5th grade. The private school gave

me many opportunities such as taking school trips to many places. I also had many friends, some of whom are still my good friends today.

I did well academically. My grades were high; my parents have helped a lot in doing that. My father for instance, used to tell me many stories about life and general knowledge. He is the reason why I love airplanes for example. My mother used to write practice exams for my brother and me. Her hand is very weak these days, because of all the exams she wrote for us, so my parents definitely knew how to plant the love for education in me. I have always had the passion for general knowledge about many things, and that exists in me even today, I like knowing about many things. I remember I used to have a competition with one of my relatives who was a college student about names of the capitals of the world's countries.

After my 6th grade, I went to a public school; it was a completely different experience: more people, different teachers and different environment, but I still managed to do well and make new friendships, and honestly, I liked it a lot. Months before starting my 6th grade, my father had some problems at work and had to quit. Our economic situation went down massively. I remember I used to go to school with only one shekel in my pocket, and that could only buy me a Falafel sandwich. I remember the hot summer days in Ramadan where I used to have rides on the back of a donkey cart on the way back from school with my friends—great moments in rough times, unforgettable.

When I was done with my 9th grade, my English teacher motivated me to apply to an intensive 2- year English course funded by the US Department of State called AMIDEAST. I had to take

an exam to pass, and I passed with a high grade that got me placed in the highest ranking. The English course that I took has taught me a lot, it improved my English, I never had to worry about studying English for school anymore.

Going back to 10th grade, that year was when Hamas was elected to lead the government. The world, except some countries, like Iran, turned their backs on us. Hamas's government had a good potential to do reforms, and it did some good things in the beginning, for instance: lowering school expenses and increasing the police presence. But because the government didn't have money, the public employees including teachers didn't get money, so they did a strike. We didn't go to school for over 2 months. At that time, it was good to stay at home, but I felt bad that I was missing education, so I signed up as a temporary student at a religious Islamic private school. In 2 weeks, I was able to continue classes, meet new people and see how an Islamic school works. One of the best moments is when the whole school gathers to pray the Dhuhur prayer (2nd prayer of the day). All the students stand side by side and pray.

After the strike was over, I went back to the same school I was in before. Then I transferred to high school. While I expected a good time because high school was a new experience, with new people and new teachers, my year there was unforgettable, it was fantastic. I met new people, the school was more demanding and I remember, we had many long days because students were mad about Israel's siege on Gaza, so they would go out and protest.

Most students who do well academically are known to be quiet, polite, honest and education loving. Well, I was like that, but at the same time, I was still a student, so I used to have fun in

the class, or gather in front of school with my friends to tell others not to go in to class so we could leave. Surprisingly, my school principal nominated me to attend a 2 year school program called United World College (UWC). He nominated 5 people, but I was the only one to apply among them. A day before I left to the US for my student exchange program, I received a call telling me that I was accepted to attend the UWC at New Mexico.

The summer before UWC was all about preparing the visa and waiting for a package which took 2 months to arrive. At this time, I also graduated from AMIDEAST by fulfilling the requirements. I also won a \$100 prize for an essay that best describes the US. I used the \$100 to pay for my visa expenses, so I took the money from the American consulate as a prize but I paid it back for the visa– ironic.

My mother has an associate's degree in business. My father has a bachelor's degree in engineering. My mother stays at home and my father is an electrical engineer, working independently now. I am a student at the moment but I work as a networking and internet administrator and also as Arabic instructor.

Background in internet technology and new media

I've been using Facebook since 2007. I am on Facebook maybe 1-2 hours a day, sometimes more if I have free time and sometimes less if I don't have an internet access. We had a dial-up connection up to 2005 I think, but we used it frequently and then we switched to a DSL connection in which we had a constant internet connection and we pay monthly. So we had a proper internet connection that many people didn't have at that time.

We're a technologically literate family. My father knew how to use the internet well even in the old times. We had our first computer in 1996, so I had decent knowledge of computers. I think we had internet for a long time, but I first started using the internet frequently since 2002 or 2003. I was in 5th grade when that happened. I used it to help me with school research and then I had an email and other stuff.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

Personally I use Facebook mostly to keep in touch with friends and to share my personal thoughts. I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends because I have friends from all over the world and I must stay in touch with them so I use Facebook for that, which is very helpful. In addition, I post many opinions and thoughts that I'd like people to know about. I also share interesting articles and topics. By sharing those, I also hope to inspire others for change. I am also a co-admin of the UWC Arab Students Organization, a group created by my friend.

I believe I portray myself on Facebook authentically. The ideas and the thoughts that I share truly reflect my personality. I also share things that I believe they are interesting and things that I actually like so in general I am honest. I believe this happens even when I get in an argument. On Facebook, I have time to think and answer well, while in real life I might not.

A lot of Palestinians portray themselves as freedom fighters on Facebook. I have an issue with this. I believe most of these people are not very authentic. I used to be like that myself, but now I don't do this because I want to show the truth about myself and people. We are not all

revolutionaries. I believe that this trend develops naturally because they want to show a message about their home. I respect that, but we must be honest at the same time.

I used to be like that, where everything was about Palestine, but now I am not, because I try to show the truth. I also am trying to grow from being a revolutionary to developing a theory that this revolution can be based on, you know. I still show Palestine as my picture on Facebook and Twitter, but that is because I believe they are artistic and have a deeper meaning that resembles what I feel.

I do feel restricted on Facebook. Mostly by Israel, the Palestinian government, and expectations from family and friends. When I am in Palestine, I am monitored by the Palestinian government, Israel and even others such as Jordan. For example, if I oppose the government on Facebook, that will not be liked by them and same with Israel. But mostly, my fear is friends. I have friends from various backgrounds: Fatah, Hamas, Israel, homosexuals, liberal, and conservatives. So I try to be careful on what I post so I don't harm them. I had once an incident when I posted a picture of Israel with Nazi sign in the middle, my Israeli friends didn't like that. I apologized and I understood why. Family does have an effect on what I post, but that is only when I am home and when they see what I post. When I post things that are political, they get scared and feel feared because of that.

If I felt less restricted on Facebook, I might criticize Israel, mostly the government. I used to do that a lot, but now I don't do it frequently, because my message has already been delivered, and

also I should change things instead of just criticizing. For example, when Netanyahu gave his speech at the UN meeting last year, I criticized that because it was really annoying.

I would also like to criticize the Palestinian government. I do that when I am in the US. They do many things badly and I think I should share what I believe. Yes, I also believe that Palestinian society is collapsing, the society is doing many wrong things and shouldn't be done.

Though I don't talk about sexuality much, I welcome everyone whether heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual.

I think right now I share pictures that I believe are appropriate. I don't feel restricted, because I know how to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong.

Language Use on Facebook

I use different languages depending on the context. If I would want to share an opinion with everyone, I do it in English, which is most often the case. When I criticize Palestinian society for instance, I do it in Arabic. I use Arabizi when I chat with friends, because sadly, I write faster in English than Arabic, because I am used to writing papers and researching in English. I personally would like to see more Arabic on Facebook. I dislike it when I write to people in Arabic and they answer in English (that is for Arabic speakers of course). Arabic sometimes expresses things better, so I write Arabic to express some opinions and I try to post it in English as well, but most of my use on Facebook is in English.

Participant #13

Name: Hamza

Sex: Male

Age: 25

Raised in: California and Ramallah, West Bank, Palestine

Currently lives in: West Bank

His life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

I was born in the California, USA, in 1987. In 1994 my parents went back to their homeland of Palestine, where I was subsequently raised. I never gave much thought to politics whether inter-Palestinian or globally, but then with the eruption of the second intifada I found myself participating in the protests. As I grew older however I began to place this "resistance" in the backseat. Graduating in 2005 I entered Al-Quds University to study information technology. I dropped out of college 3 years later, becoming a common laborer trying to save money and emigrate until one day I met a friend telling me about the paradise we can build. Looking back at my life, I went back to school in 2009 to study journalism as there is no filmmaking studies in Palestine, which is what I really wanted to study. I also became much more active in the fields of politics and non-violent resistance. In 2011 I was in touch with several groups of youth among them the March 15/GYBO group, the independent youth movement, the Free Palestinian Youth, and others, bringing my activism to an apex.

His and his family's education

I went to a public school for kindergarten and 1st grade while in the U.S. After that I was sent to a private school that taught better English when I arrived back in Palestine. From that point forward, I attended a private school, which I graduated from in 2005.

My mother has a high school diploma, and my father holds a high school diploma along with two years of studying at Riverside. My father is a farmer, he raises sheep to make dairy products, and my mother is unemployed though she also helps with the family business. I am a project coordinator at a human rights and democracy non-profit organization in Ramallah.

Background in internet technology and new media

I use Facebook on a daily basis. As for Twitter I have recently began to use it, especially when I cannot reach a computer, though I do use it when there is a hot topic in the local news. I also use it to scout for news. I learned how to use the internet and new media on my own as I felt the interfaces were simple, and easy to understand.

I have been on Facebook since around 2006-2007 so about 6-7 years I would say. I use Facebook practically every day, I would say 1-2 hours depending on my time, however if there is something urgent in the news I can be expected to use twitter indefinitely in that case. I have internet at home, and I was around 13-14 when my father brought internet to our home growing up.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, and as a tool for social and political change. In my opinion, Facebook is a place to express yourself, and how you express yourself, whether differently than you are or the same way you see yourself in society. I try to be as authentic as

possible on Facebook. My friends know this, and I know this. I do not try to imitate anyone else other than myself.

I think that some people would like to live the old days of yore when the PLO was more of a resistance front rather than a bureaucratic collective. These people want to be fearless and strong and such. However I doubt all of them would actually be considered freedom fighters. There are those who as of yet they do not usually try to portray themselves as anything other than "Palestinians refusing to stand down."

I don't portray myself as being fearless because I get shit terrified whenever I go down to Nilin, Bilin, or Nabi Saleh. I view the cost of life as a grave one that I would hate to see myself or any of my friends pay. And I do not believe any one of those young people at the protests or sit-ins are fearless, they have merely learned to stare their fears in the eyes.

I do feel restricted on Facebook. I feel social expectations from Palestinian society, expectations from Islam, and expectations from family and friends. If I didn't feel restricted, I would want to critique the Palestinian government and Palestinian society. I would want to talk about sexuality and to be more free to post pictures on Facebook.

One of the things that people here have to hide due to pressure from society and family is any kind of non-platonic pre-marital relationship. This would keep a person from being straightforward when talking about whom he/she is with, and preventing one from posting pictures of them together. The second thing I do not feel comfortable talking about on Facebook,

is my drinking habits, due to pressures from society and/or family I wouldn't talk about my drinking habits nor would I post photos of me drinking. There are many more examples, but the pressure would always come from family and society, with religion being the fulcrum of that.

Language Use on Facebook

What language I use relies on what is being written. When I write I usually write so that the local community can understand me, so I use Arabic. When I want to speak to a larger audience I will use English. However, I never use Arabizi for the simple reason being it is difficult to understand the words sometimes.

Participant #14

Name: Yousef

Sex: Male

Age: 21

Raised in: Hebron & Bethlehem, West Bank & London, UK

Currently lives in: Bethlehem, West Bank

His life story (including international travels and political beliefs)

My Name is Yousef. I am 21 years old. I was born in Hebron and raised in Bethlehem. I grew up in a refugee camp.

His and his family's education

I attended a UN school for refugees until I went to the 4th grade and then I went to a public school. I stayed in public school through secondary school and then I had a chance to go to London for an exchange program.

I'm currently working as a presenter or MC for a radio station. I'm also a rapper. I have a few songs and work with kids and youth in a project to help the youth in their life.

I live in Bethlehem now. I went to the UK to study over there and after I saw the world around me I wanted to be a messenger. That's why I choose to work in radio cause I love radio and I always want to bring the truth to people around me and that's why the last thing I always say on radio before I leave my show is "Be yourself and always smile." I feel I'm helping people and it makes me smile.

My mother's highest education level is 7th grade and my father is 9th grade. My dad is a driver, and my mum doesn't have a job.

Background in internet technology and new media

The only new media I use is Facebook. I learned to use the internet and new media outside of school with my friends. I also took a course.

Purpose of and Restrictions on Facebook

I've been using Facebook almost 5 years. I use it about 4-5 hours a day. I don't have internet at home, nor did I have it at home growing up. I use Facebook for entertainment, to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, as a tool for social and political change, and also for my work, to get in touch with my listeners.

On Facebook you try to be yourself, but it seems you are more open and free when you use Facebook than you are in real life. But most of the time I'm being myself on Facebook.

We live in a place where we have always been fighting for our freedom and we never felt that we are free, but on Facebook we feel a 'lil bit free even though many Palestinians have been sent to prison over things they wrote on Facebook. I do portray myself as a freedom fighter, not through killing but through education.

Yes, we are restricted from posting what we want on Facebook. We are restricted by Israel, by the Palestinian government, by social expectations from Palestinian society, from expectations from Islam, and expectations from friends and family. But on top of all this, there are expectations from my radio station that effect what I say on Facebook, and if I don't follow the expectations it will affect my career. I can't always write what I feel because that will affect my job and our station.

If I could talk more freely, I would want to critique Israel and the Palestinian government. I would want to see freedom and human rights in my community. I want to be free to live in my

country the way I deserve. I would want to change my government, especially as I am a youth who is paid so cheap and things are way too expensive.

Language Use on Facebook

If I'm working on radio or speaking to my friends who are from the West I write in English. Or if I want to speak about our country and the assault that we go through so I can send a message, I use English. If I'm speaking to a friend who only speaks Arabic I write in Arabic and if I'm doing the news headlines on our page its in Arabic. But if I'm talking to my friends (my mates) I will write in Arabizi.

Chapter IV

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Despite their ubiquity, exploration of Palestinian and Israeli political narratives have until recently been largely passed over for study in favor of simpler, more straightforward queries. After all, political narrative is both myth and reality, both individual and collective, both obvious and insidious; it is not at all an easy subject matter for data collection or analysis. Franzosi (1998) suggests part of the reason for the relative inattention to narrative may be that social scientists are often more comfortable working with numbers than with words. Franzosi (1998, p. 518) writes, “we are more at ease in the artificial (wo)man-made world of statistics than in the more natural world of language and words; after all, a course in statistics is part and parcel of any social science graduate program, but a course in narrative or discourse analysis is not.” Even when using numbers, an opportunity awaits for studying the narrative and bringing the study from the limited but “powerful simplicity of reduction” to the “tenuous complexity of actual analysis” (Chatman, 1978, p. 94). Franzosi’s remarks grow out of the idea that until recently, qualitative analysis itself was largely dismissed by the social sciences which in many ways looked to the natural sciences for direction to shape their legitimacy (Rust & Kenderes, 2012). But social science must deal squarely with issues which the hard sciences may avoid. Franzosi (1998, p. 518) asks us to consider the following passage:

As soon as the water went down, I began to work digging the bodies out of the debris. I worked for eight days after the flood looking for bodies, and I recovered twenty-two of them. The last one I found was a little five-year-old boy. It reminded me so much of my own little boy that I could not take any more. That is when I went to pieces.... (Erickson, 1976, p. 165).

Franzosi (1998, p. 518) asks: “As social scientists, what should we get out of this passage? Does the passage contain data of any interest to us? What are we to make of it? How are we to analyze it, to test hypotheses, to draw inferences?” The social sciences must reckon with data that do not fit nicely in established molds, which may be uncomfortable to analyze and at times inappropriate to categorize. With regard to the present study, I also must deal with data that may not fit squarely into a particular paradigm or form. However, case study methodology provides a framework with which to begin to approach complex data or subject matters.

4.2 Case Study Methodology

The case study methodology involves an in-depth, contextualized investigation of a “case” such as an individual, group, or event. It is particularly useful for synthesizing large or complex issues, bringing description, understanding, and/or explanation to a subject or series of subjects. According to Yin (2003, p. 4), a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) you want to research contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; and/or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

A case study is well-suited to the purposes of my study in that I am seeking to explore not only what occurs, but why, it occurs. Furthermore, I do not wish to manipulate participants’ behavior; on the contrary, I wish to explore participants’ behavior within the context of their natural, not artificial or contrived, environment. I also seek to explore Palestinians’ Facebook usage within the context of political narrative; in this case, the boundaries are not clear between phenomenon

and context, but may be clarified through case study research. Before speaking further about the particulars of my case study methods, however, I wish to provide some background to case study methodology

4.2.1 Historical Background of Case Study Methodology

The history of case study research is marked by periods of intense use and also by periods of disuse (Tellis, 1997). The earliest use of the case study can be traced to Europe, where it was predominately used in France. Within the United States, case study methodology emerged at the turn of the twentieth century and was used primarily in the department of sociology at the University of Chicago. The methodology lent itself well to issues of poverty, unemployment, and immigration, which were particularly salient to the time and place of major use. As the case study rose in popularity it also grew under attack, which coincided with advances made by the department of sociology to make the methodology more “scientific”—that is, to add quantitative measures to the design and analysis of case study research. However, as the strengths of the Chicago School were its qualitative field studies approaches, its attempts to quantify case studies met with serious attacks on the School’s primacy, in particular by faculty specializing in quantitative studies at Columbia University. In 1935, after public debates between the two universities, Columbia University’s quantitative approach proved favored as a legitimate research methodology. As Hamel, Dufour & Fortin (1993) point out, it is important not to accept the criticisms of case study methodology as poorly founded when they were made in the midst of ontological and epistemological debates. Notwithstanding, it is partly this dispute, which carried huge ramifications at the time for the reputation of qualitative research, which prompted the exacting of case study methodology. Taken in context, the tone of these debates not surprisingly

reversed when in the 1960s researchers became concerned about the limitations of quantitative methods. A renewed interest in the case study ensued, followed by Strauss & Glasser's (1967) development of "grounded theory," in which case study methodology is used to build, in addition to test, theories. Today, a variety of approaches to case study methodology are considered valid and appropriate; each approach is replete with its own protocols for rigor and design.

4.2.2 The Exploratory Case Study

The particular case study methodology I draw from is the exploratory case study. The exploratory case study is one which is particularly useful and appropriate for queries which have not previously been investigated. Often, exploratory studies do not use random sampling to obtain participants nor are their sample sizes sufficiently large to generalize back to a population; this is appropriate within an exploratory case study. As Yin (2003) describes, generalizability to a population is not the strength (nor the object) of a case study. Instead, exploratory case studies are often used to generalize findings to theory (Scholz & Tietje, 2001; Yin, 1994). Questions relating a sample back to a population may be further developed in future studies devoted to theory testing. For my purposes, I am studying not necessarily what is probable, but what is possible. Since no studies on narrative and Facebook use among Palestinian youth have yet been conducted, an exploratory study is now appropriate, with future studies focusing on predictability (if so desired) once content and context have been more thoroughly explored.

4.2.3 Cases and Units of Analysis

When conducting case study research, it is helpful to distinguish between cases as a whole and cases that consist of various levels or components (De Vaus, 2001, p. 220). If, for instance, a

school is studied as a “case” it may take into consideration the various levels or components involved in the school—such as teaching staff and administrative staff (at differing levels of seniority and experience), students (at different grade levels and achievement levels), and so on. Studied this way, the school would be considered an “embedded” case study (Yin, 1989), as it takes into consideration as many of the features which make the school unique as possible (provided it is relevant to the line of inquiry or contextual development). A school may also be conceived at the ‘holistic’ level (De Vaus, 2001, p. 220) where the focus is placed on characteristics of the school that apply to that level. Indeed, the school itself exists as an entity and contains school level characteristics such as size, type of school, location, rules, structure, system of management, and so on). A study of this sort is known as a “holistic” case study (Yin, 1989). A full picture of the school in all its complexity would only be obtained if information was collected from a wide range of the constituent (or embedded) elements of the larger unit (De Vaus, 2001, p. 220), but obtaining a full picture of a “case” is not always the object of the research. In my research, I am interested in developing as “full” pictures of what and why the Palestinian youth of my study are posting on Facebook as possible. An explanation of what is meant by “cases” as well as “units of analysis” may help explain how my questions will be explored

4.2.3 Cases and Units of Analysis

The cases in my study are 14 Palestinian youths (7 male, 7 female). My units of analysis are the individual Facebook posts which participants have posted over the course of one year (January 1, 2011-December 31, 2011). As the total number of posts varies by month and by participant, I have chosen to code ten percent of these posts in order to obtain a more stable sample (as

participants' Facebook activity fluctuates by participant and by number of posts per month). The total number of posts for 2011 among these 14 youth is 13,710; I have thus coded 1,371 posts.

4.3 Definitions

In this section, I provide some working definitions to some basic parameters which I use in this dissertation.

4.3.1 Palestinian

For the purposes of this study, "Palestinian" is defined as an individual who identifies as Palestinian, speaks Arabic, and has spent a portion of his/her developmental years (i.e., at least two years between the ages of 7 and 21) living in the West Bank, Gaza, or Israel. I did not want to define "Palestinian" so specifically that Palestinians who are, or have become, refugees to be excluded from the study.

4.3.2 Youth

Within this study, I use the term "youth" to refer to young people aged 18-29. As mentioned in the literature review, I define youth in this way because those aged 18-29 are considered part of the "Millennial" generation. Technology sets this generation apart from generations past and this generation has outpaced older generations in technology use (Taylor & Keeter, 2010). As this study seeks to explore individuals' Facebook usage, it is appropriate that individuals from the Millennial generation are selected, as technology is considered part of their cultural identity and practice more than it is for any other generation. Furthermore, within the Arab World, individuals between the ages of 15 and 29 constitute the largest age group, representing more

than one third of the region's total inhabitants (Aswad, 2011). If Palestinians are using Facebook, and demographic surveys indicate that they are (Miniwatts, 2012), this age group is not only appropriate but ideal. Facebook is my chosen social media category for the content analysis of these youth because Facebook is the most popular social media type among 'Millennials,' or individuals associated with the Millennial generation (Taylor & Keeter, 2010). Facebook is also shown to be the most popular social media forum in Palestine, with nearly three quarters of a million users in the West Bank alone as of December 2011 (Miniwatts, 2012).

4.3.3 Wall Posts

As far as the Facebook terminology used in this dissertation, Facebook "wall posts" may be defined as any activity or information originating from the individual that appears on the individual's Facebook wall. These posts may include: comments, links, pictures and photos, "apps" (applications) or "tweets" (or duplicate Twitter messages which are redirected to Facebook from Twitter). The Facebook "wall" is the space where Facebook friends may comment on or "like" each other's' posts, engage in discussion, or share links and information. The Facebook wall is a semi-public forum in the sense that, unless a user has specifically limited or blocked a Facebook "friend" from viewing his or her wall, the wall may be openly viewed by all Facebook "friends."

4.4 A Note on Translation

As some of the Facebook material involved in this study was posted in Arabic or Arabizi (Romanized Arabic), I have worked with a Palestinian translator, Salma Abulebda, a Palestinian woman, also of the Millennial generation, who recently graduated with a Bachelor's of Science

from UCLA. It was important to me that the translator I work with also be a member of this age generation as she would likely be more familiar with the language or culture shared by this generation (and thus the generation of the respondents) than someone outside of these generational brackets. Salma translated all Facebook coded posts written in Arabic and Arabizi. I also arranged for Salma to translate other documents, such as the interview protocol, enabling participants to respond in Arabic if they so desired. Any interview responses which were written in Arabic were also translated by Salma Abulebda.

4.5 Research Questions

The present study asks the following research questions of my 14 Palestinian youth participants:

- (1) To what extent are Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) (i.e., ESPN, ISPN, ECPN and ICPN) used on the Facebook walls of the 14 Palestinian youth participants of this study?
- (2) What might participants' PNP use suggest with regard to Palestine and the road to political change?

To answer these questions, my case study draws from two specific methodologies: content analysis and interviews. To address the first research question I used content analysis and to explore the second question I drew from interview methodology. As this is an exploratory case study whose research topic has not been previously explored, I made sure within my content analysis and interview protocol to code for and to ask questions regarding content which is outside of these research questions. That is to say, if the youth on my study did not post PNPs on

Facebook, I wanted to be able to account for what they *were* posting, and to be able to contextualize *why* they were posting what they posted.

4.6 Content Analysis

Content analysis focuses on the frequency with which words or concepts occur in or across texts (Carley, 1993). Content analysis is useful as a research method because it is inexpensive, unobtrusive, and does not require contact with people. It has been noted, however, for its limitations, especially that it is purely descriptive. It describes what is there but may not reveal the underlying motives for the observed pattern (i.e., ‘what’ but not ‘why’) (Sommer, 2011). However, these limitations are minimized and can become negligible when content analysis is combined with other research methods, especially ones which can address the question of ‘why’ an observation may be occurring (Sommer, 2011). In this dissertation, I use content analysis in combination with interviews in order to minimize any limitations and in order to better contextualize and understand what is occurring on Facebook and why it is occurring. For these reasons, I begin by using content analysis to explore the Facebook wall posts of the 14 youth participants of my study, but I follow the use of this method with interviews, in which I explore questions which contextualize the findings of the content analysis.

4.6.1 Content Analysis: Primary and Secondary Analysis

Content analysis often begins with a list of concepts and a set of texts which are then tabulated according to the number of times the concept occurs in each text. For this dissertation, I have used Carley’s (1986) definition of “concept” as a single idea, regardless of whether it is represented by a single word or a phrase. For the content analysis involved in this dissertation, I

began by identifying several concepts. In addition to coding for PNPs, I coded for other content, such as music, hobby, and personal, so that I could arrive at as full a picture as possible regarding the participants Facebook wall posts. I coded for the initial concepts, using the parameters I had specified, but found that PNPs appeared to occur within only 12 percent of the data (N=1371 posts). Considering the possibility that I might have missed something in the original analysis, I coded the original data a second time, this time looking for “indirect” and “passive” PNPs.²⁴ The following few pages detail this process, defining the concepts, and outlining the concepts and concept parameters which I used for the primary and secondary analysis. I begin with the concepts which were coded for in my original analysis.

²⁴ These terms are defined in this section of the dissertation.

Figure 4.1. Content Analysis Concepts and Corresponding Possibilities

Content Analysis Concepts and Corresponding Possibilities		
	Concept	Corresponding Possibilities
Type-related	Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ comment ▪ link ▪ picture/photo ▪ app ▪ tweet
Content-related	Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English ▪ Arabic ▪ Blended (one or more languages used within the same post) ▪ Alphanumeric (or Romanized) Arabic ▪ other (e.g., Spanish, German, Italian, French)
	Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political ▪ Non-political
	Palestine-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Palestine-related ▪ Non-Palestine-related
	Subject matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ geo-political news ▪ geo-political opinion ▪ action ▪ technology ▪ music ▪ quote/literature ▪ relationships ▪ religion ▪ personal ▪ other

Parameters for Coding Concepts

To ensure construct validity (see Yin, 2008, p. 40), I have established operational measures with which to code concepts. The following are parameters which I have used to guide my coding process:

Figure 4.2. Content Analysis Concepts, Possibilities, Parameters and Examples

Concept	Concept Possibility	Parameters	Example
Post	<i>Comment</i>	Must be a non-tweet word-only post (unless using symbols or emoticons), but containing no links or photo	My dear friends: I LOVE THEE! Thank you for giving me hope! :D :D :D
	<i>Link</i>	Must be able to click on the words and be rerouted to a website, blog, or other internet page	Link to YouTube video "At My Wedding Twittering and Facebooking at the Altar," Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VskT5XykJzo
	<i>Picture/Photo</i>	Must be a photograph or picture which is directly posted onto, not linked onto, the Facebook wall	For an example of a picture, see image B
	<i>app</i>	Must be a Facebook application; a Facebook application uses software which links to one's Facebook information	Astrology app: This application delivers a daily horoscope to one's Facebook wall
	<i>tweet</i>	Will appear like a comment on the Facebook wall, except that it will be accompanied by the Twitter logo, indicating it is a tweet, and not a comment	For an example of a Facebook Tweet, see image B.

Figure 4.2 Content Analysis Concepts, Possibilities, Parameters and Examples, Continued

Concept	Concept Possibility	Parameters	Example
Language	<i>English</i>	Contains only English words or phrases	Good morning, world!
	<i>Arabic</i>	Contains only Arabic words or phrases	صباح الخير
	<i>Blended</i>	Contains one or more languages within the same post (i.e., any combination of two or more of the following: English, Arabic, Romanized Arabic, Other)	Have one blessed Friday, ya'll... Alhamdulillah :-)
	<i>Arabizi (Romanized Arabic)</i>	Contains Arabic words or phrases, but written in alphanumeric characters instead of Arabic script	kol sane w nto salmeeen 3ashan 3eed el ad7a
	<i>Other</i>	Any language which is not English, Arabic, Romanized Arabic, or a combination of these	French, Spanish, Italian, German, etc.

Concept	Concept Possibility	Parameters	Example
Political	<i>Political</i>	Contains content related to governments (international, national, local, or otherwise), their staff, and their relations	<p><i>Link:</i> [CNN] With Kim Jung Il dead, South Korea on high alert</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> It takes more than a click to create change</p> <p><i>Comment:</i> We should remember all those who have sacrificed their lives while fighting Al-Qaddafi regime by their cameras and true words: Rest in Peace</p>
	<i>Non-political</i>	Contains no content related to governments (international, national, local, or otherwise), their staff, and their relations	<p>1) Ouch ouch...my teeth</p> <p>2) SNOWWW!!! =) usually i'd be like Yaayy .. Now I'm like Nooooooooooo!!</p>
Palestine-related	<i>Palestine-related</i>	Contains content related to Palestine, whether political or non-political	<p><i>Political:</i></p> <p>1) There are so many idiots in this country...Wherever you go, even the people who want to change the way things are in Palestine...these people think they're right and the rest of the people are wrong.</p> <p>2) [Electronic Intifada] Gazan Christians denied exit from Gaza to spend Christmas in Bethlehem</p> <p><i>Non-political:</i></p> <p>1) Photos of the beautiful Gazan sky from out the window</p>
	<i>Non-Palestine-related</i>	Contains no content related to Palestine, whether political or non-political	<p>1) Happy Women's Day, Afghanistan!</p> <p>2) Brazil court approves building of Amazon dam</p> <p>3) Coldplay music video link to YouTube</p>

Figure 4.2 Content Analysis Concepts, Possibilities, Parameters and Examples, Continued

Concept	Concept Possibility	Parameters	Example
Subject matter	<i>geo-political news</i>	News or informational update, whether provided by outside source or by self-as-source	<p><i>By outside source:</i></p> <p>1) [Aljazeera English] Saudi prince buys 300 billion in Twitter stock</p> <p><i>By self-as-source:</i></p> <p>2) Huge explosion north of Gaza, looks like we're replacing the window one more time :(</p> <p>3) Do you remember the guy who was hit by a train in Jerusalem? He died today from a hemorrhage</p>
	<i>geo-political opinion</i>	Personal perspective offered with regards to news or information, whether provided by outside source or self-as-source	<p><i>By outside source:</i></p> <p>1) [alquds.co.uk] Link to a blog about how Palestinians have lost their voice and how they should use Facebook for change like others have done</p> <p><i>By self-as-source:</i></p> <p>What are we going to say to our kids? People treat Palestine like a candy. All the young generation cares about now is Facebook and entertainment. They don't care about or do anything for the country. Stop wasting your time! When are you going to wake up?</p>
	<i>action</i>	A call to action or a comment that one attended a call to action, whether through a Facebook group/event or other method	<p>1) Facebook group: "Palestinian youth against normalization"</p> <p>2) Lecture: "Property and its role in the economic empowerment of women"</p>
	<i>technology</i>	Content of post is related to technology (e.g., computers, internet, phone, application)	<p>1) I've got Google+! YAS! Heheeh</p> <p>2) Twitter hates Google integration</p> <p>3) Dear Facebook, wish ur stalking abilities were as half good as ur lame photo viewer.</p> <p>4) I think my neighbor just caught me stealing his Wi-Fi internet.</p>
	<i>music</i>	Content of post is related to music (e.g., YouTube videos, interviews with musicians, etc.)	<p>1) Fairuz music video</p> <p>2) Interview with rapper Lowkey</p>
	<i>quote/literature</i>	A saying or a quote/excerpt from literature	"Love looks not with the eyes but with the mind." - Shakespeare
	<i>relationships</i>	Content related to romantic relationships	<p>1) Stupid in love</p> <p>2) ok guys relationship!! we all been there or we are there now going out and all so here is the Q, how far can you go before marriage???? holding hand, kissing, and guys be honest do you think its wrong to kiss before marriage?????</p> <p>3) It took 3 very heavy tears sliding down my cheeks but I am over you now.</p>
	<i>religion</i>	Content related to Islam or other religion	<p>1) This Ramadan, make sure you utilize the Faithbook (the Quran) where we can CONNECT to Allah, TAG our hearts to the Sunnah, LIKE doing good deeds, ADD prayers and fasting, IGNORE our desires, UNTAG sins, SHARE wealth through charity (for indeed charity does not decrease wealth!), POKE our conscience, and CONFIRM our love for Allah and His Messenger (SAW)</p> <p>2) Happy Easter!</p> <p>3) Annual feast dinner with family, in the city of nativity . Thanks God for the bless of family :D :D</p>
	<i>personal</i>	Content related to the needs, interests and activities of the self (which are not covered by any of the above categories)	<p>1) talk to me guys when u see me online on facebook .. need to know something!!</p> <p>2) Before 2011 ends, you can ask me any question and I'll answer it truthfully... Ask your question and I will answer it, Inbox me!!</p> <p>3) Guys, I lost my JAWWAL sim card, will get a new one very soon. Sorry!</p> <p>4) The worst thing that could happen to a teacher is to have the flu and lose their voice which is pretty much what is happening to me</p>
	<i>other</i>	Any other content not covered by the above categories	<p>Hobby: I WANT TO BE AT COMIC CON!!!!</p> <p>Sports: attended soccer game</p> <p>Art: Link to friend's homemade jewelry</p> <p>Food: Recipe for cappuccino muffins</p>

4.6.2 Concept Parameters for Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs): Initial and Secondary Analysis

Up to this point, I have focused on concept parameters for concepts such as language, subject matter, and type of post. From these parameters, I am able to both generate data on the type of post (e.g., comment, link, tweet) and content of posts (e.g. political, Palestine-related, hobby, personal) among participants. However, to code for Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs), more concept parameters need to be outlined.

I began my study with one set of concept parameters for PNPs, and, upon coding the data for those parameters, found that, using those parameters, I was only looking at 12 percent of the original data.²⁵ I thus added two concepts, which I explain in following paragraphs: indirect PNPs and passive PNPs. After defining these two concepts and creating concept parameters for each, I returned to the original data and coded the data using the two new concepts: indirect PNPs and passive PNPs. With two new PNP concepts, I qualified the first PNP concept; where I originally referred to PNPs simply as “PNPs,” in comparison with the other two types of PNPs (indirect and passive), I refer to the original PNP concept as “direct PNPs.” In the following paragraphs, I explain these new PNP types (indirect and passive) and provide concept parameters for each.

4.6.3 Indirect and Passive Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

After I coded the data and took some preliminary analyses, I noticed that off all the Facebook posts (N=1371) I was only analyzing some 12 percent of the data. In other words, only 12 percent of the data satisfied the three criteria I had established as necessary for an analysis of

²⁵ This is explained in more detail in the results and analysis sections of this dissertation.

Palestinian PNPs: 1) Palestine-related, 2) political in nature, and 3) reflecting a Political Narrative Perspective (PNP). Recognizing that 88 percent of the data would be unaccounted for with this approach, I considered two possibilities: (1) the participants of the study posted PNPs as 12 percent of all posts, or (2) the participants posted PNPs in other forms than I had initially coded. If the PNPs might take on other forms than comments, what form might they take? I reviewed the Facebook posts I had coded as well as the interviews I had conducted. Two interview comments led me to narrow down this query. The first involved a participant speaking of her Facebook posting habits. She states:

I don't blame anyone on Facebook for what is happening and has happened in Palestine. I just tell stories of what I see and hear. If people don't like the stories, they could blame whoever wrote the story or whoever the story is about.

This participant's comment led me to question whether PNPs might be embedded in news articles about Palestine. If participants feel restricted on Facebook, and my initial coding revealed that they do (79 percent of all participants feel restricted on Facebook), it would make sense that PNPs only comprised 12 percent of all posts. If the ideas behind these PNPs could be posted, however, without the individual participant having to take responsibility for the post, more information could be safely transmitted on Facebook. I decided to recode for this construct, which I called "indirect PNPs."

A second interview comment caused me to question another type of PNP I may have originally been missing. In the following statement, the participant described how one never wants to be singled out as the originator of an idea in a Facebook comment:

I am really careful about this. You never want to post something alone. If you are just part of a group or going with the flow or something it's harder for them to catch you or to single you out, but if you post a comment and then it gets a lot of likes and attention and people start talking about it, you are the one to blame for it, and you may pay the consequences.

This statement prompted me to think more about how the type of post, in addition to the content, might play a role in the posting of PNPs on Facebook. While my initial coding of PNPs (what I since refer to as direct PNPs) focused only on Palestine-related comments posted by the participant, and passive PNPs focused on Palestine-related news links which originated from a news organization or blog or Palestine-related participatory journalism which originated from the participant, I wondered if there might be a third type of PNP: passive PNPs. In this new category, passive PNPs, I considered the possibility that PNPs might take any form (e.g., comment, link, tweet) and might be derived from any content (e.g., music lyrics, quotes/literature, Facebook group invitations) so long as the meaning of the content might be read as a proxy for a direct PNP. Using symbolic content as a proxy for forbidden content is not uncommon in Palestine. In early Palestinian publications, images with symbolic meaning were often used to fill the huge gaps remaining in an article after Israeli censorship efforts were applied (Henry, 1983). In this way, I wondered if the Palestinian youth participants of my study might be using other means to

articulate some of the ideas behind the Palestinian PNPs. The table below details initial type of PNP for which I coded (direct PNPs), along with the subsequent two PNP types of the secondary analysis (indirect PNPs and passive PNPs).

Figure 4.3 Direct, Indirect and Passive Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) Compared

	Palestine-related?	Origin	Form
Direct PNPs	Yes	Individual participant	Comment
Indirect PNPs	Yes	News organization, blog, participatory journalism	Any form (e.g., comment, link, tweet)
Passive PNPs	No	Any origin (e.g., music lyrics, literature, Facebook group invitations)	Any form (e.g., comment, link, tweet)

With all three PNP types now explored as concepts, I wish to explore the concept parameters with which I used to code the data. The following tables outline the coding parameters for direct, indirect, and passive PNPs.

Figure 4.4 Concept Parameters for Direct Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

Concept	Parameters	Examples
Direct External State Political Narrative (ESPN)	Palestine-related political opinion comment posted by the participant which reflects the Palestinian ESPN (i.e., The Palestinian government seeks identification with the Palestinian people; Palestinians are strong, fearless, freedom fighters, martyrs, and victims who are doing all they can to resist a cruel and oppressive Israeli occupation, and thus the Palestinian gov't is, too).	<p><i>We're staying strong and steadfast...stones are on your chest whether you like it or not, and just like stones we'll stay strong.</i></p> <p><i>We shall overcome!</i></p>
Direct Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN)	Palestine-related political opinion comment posted by the participant which reflects the Palestinian ISPN (i.e., Political change should be left to the Palestinian state and those Palestinians who try to bring change themselves will be punished).	<p><i>(Hypothetical) We trust our government will bring us the change we need!</i></p> <p><i>(Hypothetical) Why should we risk our lives or our reputations to bring political change to Palestine with the PA will do it for us?</i></p>
External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN)	Palestine-related political opinion comment posted by the participant which reflects the Palestinian ECPN (i.e., the Palestinian government may have its flaws, but is doing all it can to bring political change to Palestine, and it is Israel, not the Palestinian government, that is the oppressor of Palestinians).	<p><i>(Hypothetical) Can everyone just get off the PA's back? Yes, it has its problems, but what government doesn't?</i></p> <p><i>(Hypothetical) Stop blaming Hamas for everything. When we blame Hamas, we forget our real oppressors: Israel.</i></p>
Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)	Palestine-related political opinion comment posted by the participant which reflects the Palestinian ICPN (i.e., the Palestinian government is corrupt and does not wish to secure political change as much as it wants to secure personal comforts; Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule; Palestinian leadership is all talk and little action; Palestinians are not optimistic and have little hope for change).	<p><i>Power off for 12 hours now. :-@ The hell with Hamas and its government</i></p> <p><i>Let the revolution come to our lap...to celebrate and sing with it and then to let it slowly sink until it dies.</i></p>

Figure 4.5 Concept Parameters for Indirect Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

Concept	Parameters	Examples
<p>Indirect External State Political Narrative (ESPN)</p>	<p>Palestine-related political news links posted by the participant which reflects the Palestinian ESPN (i.e., The Palestinian government seeks identification with the Palestinian people; Palestinians are strong, fearless, freedom fighters, martyrs, and victims who are doing all they can to resist a cruel and oppressive Israeli occupation, and thus the Palestinian gov't is, too).</p>	<p><i>Gazan Christians can't exit Gaza to spend Christmas in Bethlehem</i> [Electronic Intifada]</p> <p><i>Apple removes Intifada app after Israeli request</i> [Reuters]</p> <p><i>Available Now: The Goldstone Report: The Legacy of the Landmark Investigation of the Gaza Conflict, which is an abridged copy of the UN report accompanied by a dozen essays, exploring the political, legal and social legacy of the report and the Israeli attack on Gaza.</i> [mondoweiss.net]</p>
<p>Indirect Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN)</p>	<p>Palestine-related political news links posted by the participant which reflects the Palestinian ISPN (i.e., Political change should be left to the Palestinian state and those Palestinians who try to bring change themselves will be punished).</p>	<p><i>(Hypothetical) 3 Palestinian activists jailed by Palestinian Authority</i> [Hypothetical Press]</p>
<p>Indirect External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN)</p>	<p>Palestine-related political news links posted by the participant which reflects the Palestinian ECPN (i.e., the Palestinian government may have its flaws, but is doing all it can to bring political change to Palestine, and it is Israel, not the Palestinian government, that is the oppressor of Palestinians).</p>	<p><i>The real situation facing women in Gaza: Israeli occupation, not Hamas, is the primary agent depriving the people of rights</i> [Al-Jazeera English]</p>
<p>Indirect Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)</p>	<p>Palestine-related political news links posted by the participant which reflects the Palestinian ICPN (i.e., the Palestinian government is corrupt and does not wish to secure political change as much as it wants to secure personal comforts; Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule; Palestinian leadership is all talk and little action; Palestinians are not optimistic and have little hope for change).</p>	<p><i>"Al Jazeera will show at 20 GMT secret documents on Palestinian Israeli negotiations" #aljazeera</i></p>

Figure 4.6 Concept Parameters for Passive Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs)

Concept	Parameters	Examples
<p>Passive External State Political Narrative (ESPN)</p>	<p>Post which may be read as a proxy for political opinion, is posted by the participant, and reflects the ideas of the Palestinian ESPN (i.e., The Palestinian government seeks identification with the Palestinian people; Palestinians are strong, fearless, freedom fighters, martyrs, and victims who are doing all they can to resist a cruel and oppressive Israeli occupation, and thus the Palestinian gov't is, too).</p>	<p><i>Down with Big Brother</i></p> <p><i>Sarkozy is saying "moral duty." lol I saw everything in my life!</i></p> <p><i>In English literature, when the colonized revolt, the colonizer calls it a 'mutiny.'</i></p>
<p>Passive Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN)</p>	<p>Post which may be read as a proxy for political opinion, is posted by the participant, and reflects the ideas of the Palestinian ISPN. (i.e., Political change should be left to the Palestinian state and those Palestinians who try to bring change themselves will be punished).</p>	<p><i>(Hypothetical) How can a state be late? A state can't be late/It can only be great/ So let a state negotiate! [Hypothetical song lyrics]</i></p>
<p>Passive External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN)</p>	<p>Post which may be read as a proxy for political opinion, is posted by the participant, and reflects the ideas of the Palestinian ECPN (i.e., the Palestinian government may have its flaws, but is doing all it can to bring political change to Palestine, and it is Israel, not the Palestinian government, that is the oppressor of Palestinians).</p>	<p><i>(Hypothetical) Join my Facebook group, "Palestinians against Israelis, not other Palestinians!" [Hypothetical Facebook group]</i></p>
<p>Passive Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)</p>	<p>Post which may be read as a proxy for political opinion, is posted by the participant, and reflects the ideas of the Palestinian ICPN (i.e., the Palestinian government is corrupt and does not wish to secure political change as much as it wants to secure personal comforts; Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule; Palestinian leadership is all talk and little action; Palestinians are not optimistic and have little hope for change).</p>	<p><i>Today's wisdom: God doesn't throw stones on people; he throws boulders.</i></p> <p><i>A word of advice: Be rebellious.</i></p> <p><i>"Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. 'Reality control,' they called it, in Newspeak, 'doublethink'."</i></p> <p><i>RT: Hosni Mubarak only Egyptian obeying curfew #jan25 #egypt #pharaoh indeed!</i></p>

4.7 Interviews

As mentioned, to explore the Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) in more detail and to discuss political change in Palestine I have used interviews in addition to content analysis. Interviews are particularly useful for more open-ended inquiry as interviews can help with issues related to context (McNamara, 1999). To initially gather information regarding the narrative strands, I spoke informally with Palestinians in a month-long visit to Palestine. Subsequent to this, following the conducting of the content analysis, I interviewed the 14 Palestinian youth of my study, asking biographical questions as well as questions regarding the purpose and characteristics of Facebook (e.g., as a kind of space that is (un)intended for authenticity, or whether Facebook is (un)intended for sociopolitical change). As the participants differed in their comfort level with spoken and written English, I offered the participants the choice of either responding to the interview questions via private Facebook message or through a Skype internet phone call. Due to time and ease of format, for many of those with whom I spoke with over the phone I was able to ask further questions, based on their answers to previous questions. The following interview protocol was thus used as the standard base to which all participants responded, yet many participants engaged in much more dialogue with me than was immediately prompted by this protocol. The interview responses are discussed in the data analysis section of this dissertation.²⁶

²⁶ See Appendix for English and Arabic versions of interview protocol.

Chapter V

RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

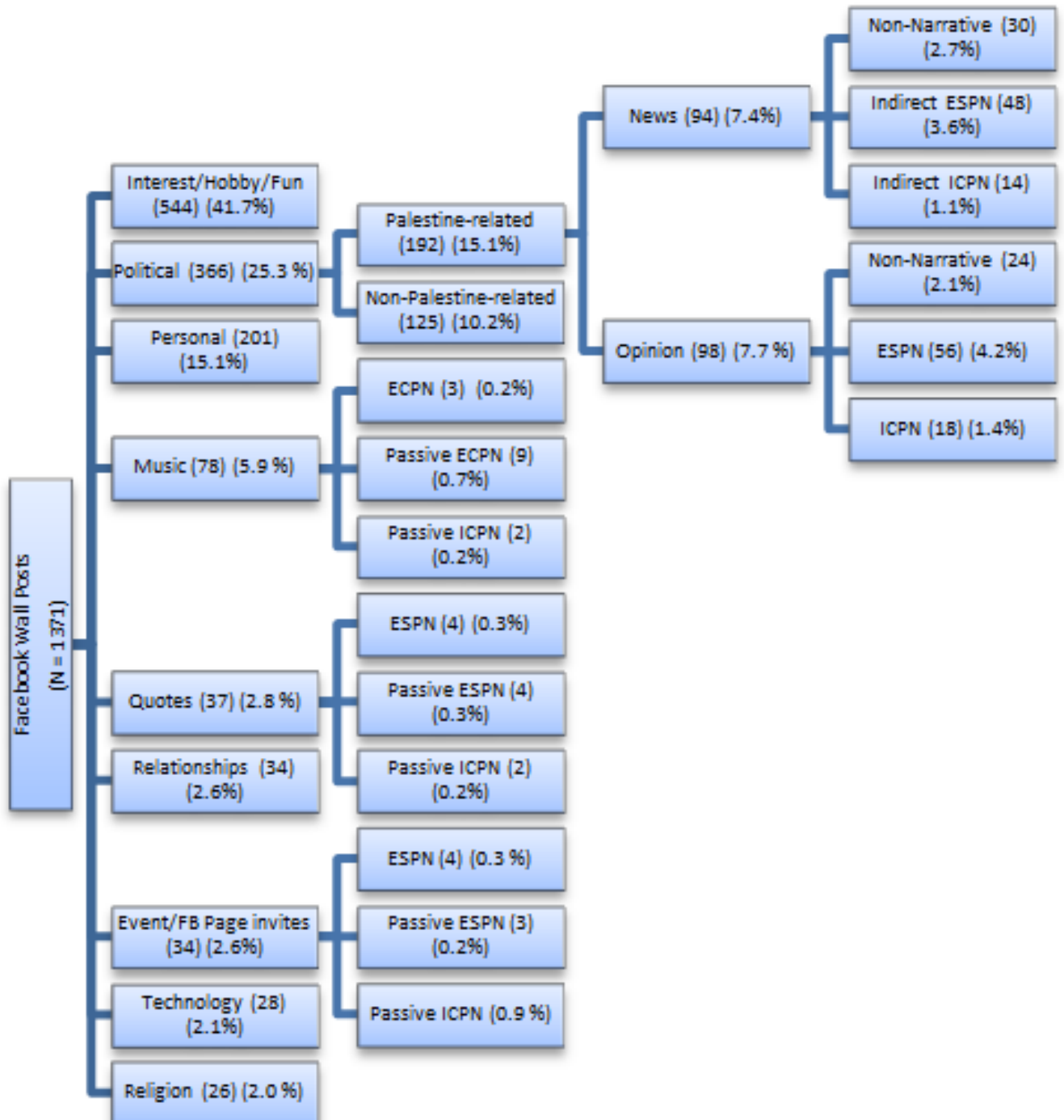
Within this dissertation, I sought to explore the following questions:

- (1) To what extent are Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) (i.e., ESPN, ISPN, ECPN and ICPN) used on the Facebook walls of the 14 Palestinian youth participants of this study?
- (2) What might participants' PNP use suggest with regard to Palestine and the road to political change?

5.2 Facebook Posts by Type and General Content

To begin, I coded the participants' Facebook wall posts for content (see figure below). My findings revealed that, largely (42 percent of all posts), these young people were using Facebook for fun. This category included such items as links to video games, cooking blogs and comedians on YouTube, as well as computer applications ("apps") for dating, astrology, friendship and more. In this way, these youth participants are very much like other, non-war torn youth who use Facebook for sharing and entertainment (Pew Research Center, 2011). In addition to these youths' use of Facebook for fun, a full 25 percent of all posts were political in content.

Figure 4.7 Facebook Posts by Content (N=1371)



5.3 Palestinian Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) as Facebook Posts

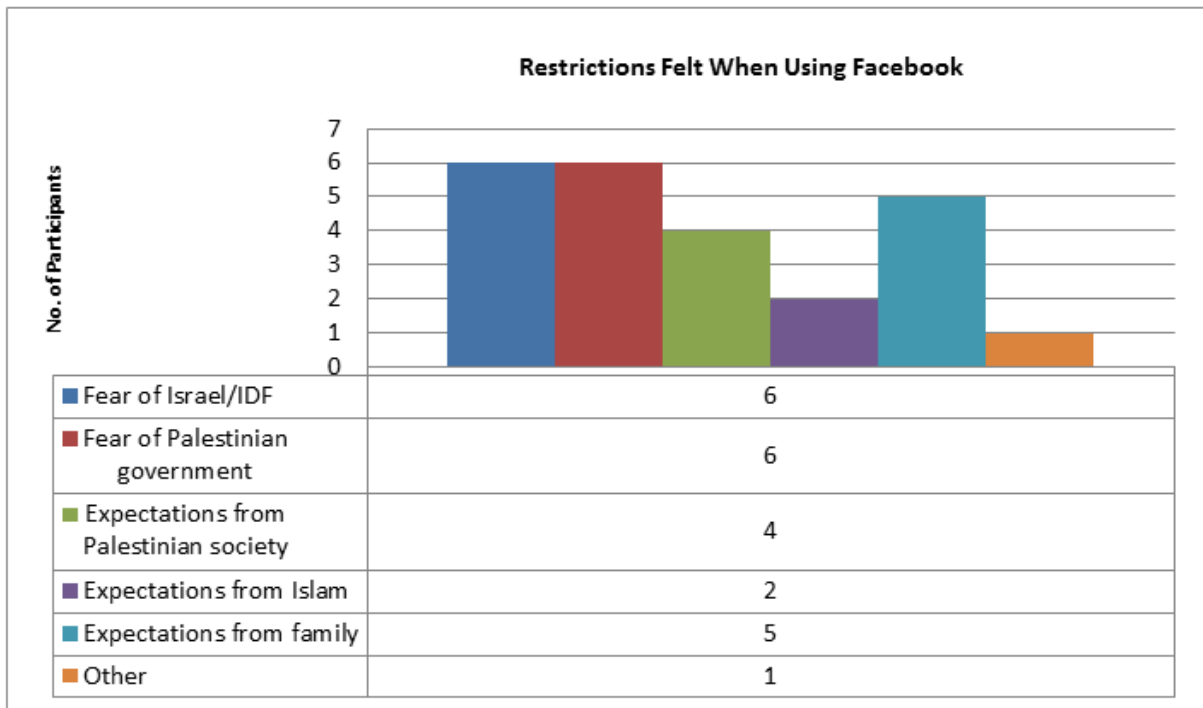
As I was interested in Palestinian PNPs, I initially focused my analysis on the expressly political content which was posted on the Facebook walls of the youth in my study. Of the 25 percent of posts which were political in nature, 15 percent of these were Palestine-related (the remaining 10 percent covered topics of world news unrelated to Palestine). Of this 15 percent, roughly half (7.7 percent) were Palestine-related political opinions; the remaining half (7.3 percent) were links to Palestine-related news articles, blogs and YouTube videos.

The numbers themselves do not tell us much. We know that Facebook users tend to be more politically active than non-Facebook users and users of other social media (Pew Research Center, 2011) but no study of which I am aware has derived percentages for content which I might use as basis for comparison. While a full one-quarter of all participants' posts are political in nature, only 15 percent of posts are political and Palestine-related. This number could be large—with no basis for comparison we are unsure—but the number might also be small. To test for this, I asked participants if they felt restricted to post on Facebook. If so, I asked by whom did they feel restricted and to address what they might post on Facebook if they did not feel restricted.

Of the 14 participants, 11 (79 percent) reported feeling restricted on Facebook (although one participant who reported not feeling restricted on Facebook later answered how he would post differently on Facebook if he did not feel restricted; if included, it would bring the percentage of those feeling restricted to 86 percent). With regards to whom they felt

restricted by, the Israeli and Palestinian governments were equally feared (see figure below). Other reasons for not posting what one might want to post on Facebook included expectations from Palestinian society, expectations from Islam, expectations from family, and expectations from work (one participant used Facebook for both his work as a radio DJ and his personal use).²⁷

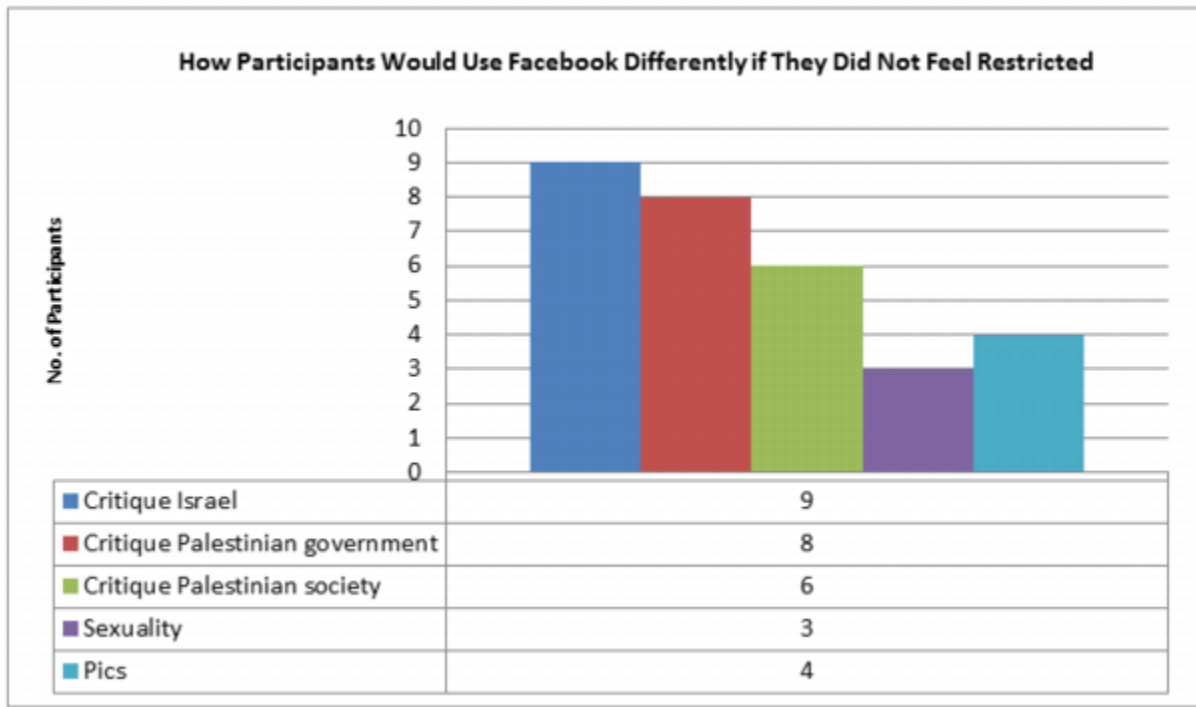
Figure 4.8 Restrictions Felt When Using Facebook



When asked about how they would post differently if they did not feel restricted, participants indicated they would post more political content and more critical content, among other things (see figure 4.9).

²⁷ This is labeled as “other” in the figure.

Figure 4.9 How Participants Would Use Facebook Differently If They Did Not Feel Restricted



As shown in the figure above, 9 participants reported that they would critique Israel, 8 reported that they would critique the Palestinian government, 6 reported that they would critique Palestinian society, 3 reported that they would express their sexuality more (e.g., through talking about being bisexual or through talking about boyfriends/girlfriends), and 4 reported that they would post different pictures of themselves or others (e.g., some participants complained that it was not socially acceptable to post pictures of themselves standing next to a member of the opposite sex, even if the two were not dating, but were “just friends”). Though provided the option, no participant chose “other” and wrote in a response. Given that the majority of participants felt restricted on Facebook and would post differently if they did not feel restricted, it appears that the figure of 25 percent of all posts as political

and 15 percent of all posts as political and Palestine-related is more conservative than it might be.

For many Palestinians, feeling restricted on Facebook is merited; one participant mentioned that due to their Facebook posts, some Palestinians have been “blacklisted,” impacting their ability to obtain a visa or travel permit. Palestinians have been interrogated, arrested, and imprisoned for their Facebook posts, and reputations have been destroyed. One Gazan participant stated that he is required by Hamas to give his Facebook password to Hamas so that they might monitor him directly. Another participant mentioned that she fears being blacklisted by the Israeli or Palestinian government in a “way that makes it difficult to have a career or family,” as reputation is “everything” in Palestine. The comment below illustrates some of these concerns:

I have some Palestinian friends who post pictures and comments about Israel and what they did or about the occupation, and some of these friends have been arrested. Others were denied permits. I had a friend who was denied a permit, like to go to Jerusalem, and he didn't know why he was denied. And finally they told him. They brought up as evidence things he had written about. Sometimes it is very dangerous, yes.

One Gazan participant talks about how Facebook is used as a leveraging point for intimidation:

Now Gaza is suffering the worst power crisis it's had in 30 years. We only get power 6 hours per day. Two weeks ago, employees of the government and the power plant came to my house and

unplugged our cable because we couldn't pay the electricity bill. I argued with one employee and I was attacked by the police instantly. When I hit back they kept on hitting and I almost passed out.

The next day they sent me another police warrant. I thought it was because I argued with them, but instead this time they charged me with this: You talk to girls and you chat with them on Twitter and Facebook. This is prohibited, they reminded me, and if I ever do that again they will put me in jail. They went on by accusing me of having a sexual relationship with a girl I met in a course I used to attend a month ago. Of course I never slept with her, but they knew that a charge of this kind would scare me off because reputation matters so much in Gaza and if I sleep with a girl before marriage I'll be called out all sorts of bad things.

Though many of the participants reported the desire to post more or differently if they did not feel restricted, it is worth exploring what participants did post, despite their perceived (or actual) restrictions. Earlier (see Figure 4.2) we examined the breakdown of these youths' Facebook posts by content, showing, among other content areas, that these youth use Facebook approximately 25 percent of the time to share political news or opinion (15.1 percent are Palestine-related). As I am interested particularly in political narrative, I examined the political posts for PNPs; I was looking specifically for comments which reflected a particular PNP.

To review comments only, I separated political news posts from political opinion posts, as I was interested in whether PNPs were reflected in the individuals' opinions. Of all the Palestine-related political content, there were 94 political news posts (7.4 percent of all posts)

and 98 political opinion posts (7.7 percent of all posts). Of the 98 Palestine-related political posts which revealed opinion, I identified 56 of them (4.1 percent of all posts) as ESPN, and 18 of them (1.4 percent of all posts) as ICPN. There were no occurrences (0 percent) of ISPN or ECPN.

As mentioned, the Palestinian External State Political Narrative (ESPN) reflects what the Palestinian government would like the world to believe about Palestinians: Palestinians are optimistic, strong, steadfast, moral, fearless freedom fighters and victims who are doing all they can to resist occupation and oppression; by contrast, Israelis are cruel and oppressive. The ESPN may reflect acceptable ways of protesting Israel or the occupation. Examples of ESPN as reflected in political opinion posts are as follows:

Ending this surreal day [Egyptian revolution] by saying that the everyday Palestinian remains the victim, the one who will wake up occupied, betrayed and alone.

I'm thinking of writing "Free Palestine" on the back of my [graduation] gown.

We're staying strong and steadfast...stones are on your chest whether you like it or not, and just like stones we'll stay strong.

We shall overcome!

We know what it is like to be the underdog.

We live and die, and the wheels of the bus go round and round

International Solidarity Day with Palestine calls for an end to occupation

Evidence of ISPN was less frequent, at 1.4 percent of all posts (as contrasted with ESPN, at 4.1 percent). ISPN, as discussed, reflects what Palestinians actually believe about the Palestinian government. The ISPN may include ideas that the Palestinian government is corrupt, that Palestinian government does not wish to secure political change as much as it

wishes to secure personal comforts, that Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule, that Palestinian leadership is mostly talk and little action, that Palestinians are not optimistic, not moral, or have little hope for change. Examples of ISPN within the Facebook posts include:

It takes more than a click to create change.

Where are the men in Palestine?

Power off for 12 hours now. :-@ The hell with Hamas and its government

God damn Palestine.

Guys, depression and low self-esteem is in the air. Where are the leaders in this country to renovate our hearts? They've spent money on the infrastructure of the country but as much as they care about the streets they need to care about our hearts and well-being so as not to be depressed by this life!

Do you know the prophet Mohammad supports Fatah???

Let the revolution come to our lap...to celebrate and sing with it and then to let it slowly sink until it dies.

There are so many idiots in this country. Wherever you go, even the people who want to change the way things are in Palestine...these people think they're right and the rest of the people are wrong.

What are we going to say to our kids? Palestine is like a candy. This person is busy with Facebook and that person is busy with Twitter. When are you going to wake up? All the younger generation cares about now is Facebook. They don't care or do anything for the country. They are wasting their time.

I'm concerned about the younger generation. They blame the government for everything...all the political parties...they always identify with a political party and then they blame the government. The government has played a role in our problems, yes, but the last thing the government cares about is our opinion. The parties, like the government, will also do whatever they want regardless of who's supporting them. They will find a way to do what they want anyway. The young people don't realize but they are blindly supporting their political party even if the parties don't care about the young people who support them. Statehood won't do anything. Everything is impotent. The UN, the government, and all these political parties...they will put on a show without us.

While ESPN and ICPN were reflected on many participants' Facebook walls, no (0 percent) ISPN or ECPN was reflected in the participants' Facebook posts. ISPN, or “what the

Palestinian government wants its people to believe about them,” includes the idea that political change should be left to the Palestinian state. ECPN, or “what is socially appropriate to believe about the government,” includes the idea that the Palestinian government is not perfect, but is trying and has been trying to bring political change to Palestine, and that Israel, not the Palestinian government, is the oppressor of Palestinians. The fact that neither of these PNPs were reflected in the participants’ posts suggests that the youth participants may not subscribe to these ideas.

Still, though the ESPN and ICPN were reflected on participants’ Facebook posts, they comprised only 4.1 and 1.4 percent (together: 5.5 percent) of all posts. As discussed, of the Palestine-related political posts, 7.4 percent are excerpts from or links to news articles, and 7.7 percent are opinion. Thus, while 7.4 percent of Palestine-related political posts share news stories, 5.5 percent reflect a PNP, and 2.2 percent do not reflect a PNP. This finding itself is interesting, as it shows that Palestine-related political comments are over two times more likely to reflect a PNP than to not reflect a PNP (5.5 percent compared to 2.2 percent). As the ESPN (4.1 percent) often reflects positions of fortitude or victimhood and the ICPN (1.4 percent) often criticizes the government, we might draw the conclusion that these youth believe the narrative of Palestinian fortitude and victimhood more than they believe that the Palestinian government has failed them. We might conclude, however, that it is not surprising that the ESPN appeared more often than did the ICPN, as an external political narrative is by definition a more socially acceptable position with which to identify or support than an internal political narrative.

Considering the idea that an internal narrative perspective might be less socially acceptable (and, by extension, less likely to appear on Facebook despite one’s actual belief in it), I sought to explore ways in which PNPs might appear in areas other than Palestine-related political opinion comments. To explore this, two new constructs were created: indirect political narrative and passive political narrative (wherein the PNPs discussed throughout this dissertation are referred to as “direct PNPs”). These two constructs could serve as proxies for direct PNPs without the risks associated with being the originator of the comment. In addition to this, exploring indirect and passive PNPs allowed me to explore political narrative in other portions of the participants’ Facebook posts besides their comments only. With these constructs, I was able to explore the bulk of all participants’ Facebook posts. Opening the search from direct PNPs to indirect and passive PNPs brought the PNP total from 5.5 percent of all posts to 12.5 percent of all posts. Interestingly, despite the type of PNP (i.e., direct, indirect or passive), only the ESPN and ICPN occurred (see Figure 5.0 below).²⁸

²⁸ One might assume that the ISPN and ECPN were perhaps conceived in error, for one might expect if they were correct that they would occur. While this is certainly possible, I asked the participants to individually review the PNPs, requesting they change items as they see fit, and, instead of suggesting changes, participants affirmed the PNPs as they were. While future research would do well to conduct a larger scale study with the purposes of testing the PNP model alone, for the purposes of this study, the participants have seen the model and have affirmed its validity for them individually. Thus, for this study, I have gone ahead with the idea that the lack of ISPN and ECPN suggests something other than an error in the model.

Figure 5.0 Frequency of Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) By Type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non-PCP	1161	84.7	87.5	87.5
	ESPN	54	3.9	4.1	91.6
	ICPN	18	1.3	1.4	92.9
	Indirect ESPN	48	3.5	3.6	96.5
	Indirect ICPN	14	1.0	1.1	97.6
	Passive ESPN	16	1.2	1.2	98.8
	Passive ICPN	16	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	1327	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	44	3.2		
Total		1371	100.0		

5.3.1 Indirect External State Political Narrative (ESPN)

Unlike direct ESPN, in which individuals post their own comments portraying Palestinians as strong, steadfast, or victims of Israeli aggression, in indirect ESPN, participants post an excerpt from or link to a news article which portrays Palestinians in a way that reflects the ESPN.

Examples include the following:

Gazan Christians can't exit Gaza to spend Christmas in Bethlehem [Electronic Intifada]

Apple removes Intifada app after Israeli request [Reuters]

In Gaza, border opening brings little relief. "If you are a citizen who wishes to leave Gaza, you are forced to wait for many hours, sometimes even days, with no clear explanation," he said. "I don't know who to blame anymore. I blame my luck that I am a resident of Gaza." [CBS]

Israeli War Crimes: Pirates of the Mediterranean [Salem-News.com]

5.3.2 *Indirect Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)*

Much like the relationship between indirect ESPN and direct ESPN, indirect ICPN originates from a news source or blog and refers to content which reflects the ICPN. The indirect narrative may also be derived from self-as-news source, or “participatory journalism,” (Lievrouw, 2011), in which posts may suggest one’s own beliefs regarding an event or issue, but are at lower risk for governmental consequences, as it may appear the individual is only reporting news. Some examples of indirect ICPN include the following:

*"Al Jazeera will show at 20 GMT secret documents on Palestinian Israeli negotiations"
#aljazeera*

*Israeli settler News Agency Arutz Sheva has referred to the 1967 borders which Pres. Obama said should form the borders of a new Palestinian state, with “mutually agreed land swaps” in his speech to the Middle East on May 19th as “Auschwitz Borders.”
[askthebigone.wordpress.com]*

Curfew in Gaza from 6 pm (GMT+2) to 7 am #Jan25

5.3.3 *Passive External State Political Narrative (ESPN) and Passive Internal Citizen Narrative (ICPN)*

Similar to indirect political narrative, passive political narrative reflects the narrative positions of ESPN and ICPN, but derives from non-inherently-political sources, such as music, Facebook groups, and literature. Also different from indirect PNPs, passive ESPN and ICPN are not inherently Palestine-related. These posts offer the potential to speak as a proxy for issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They clue us in as to the kinds of topics and themes the participants are interested in.

5.3.3.1 Passive External State Political Narrative (ESPN)

Some examples of passive ESPN include the following:

Down with Big Brother

In English literature, when the colonized revolt, the colonizer calls it a 'mutany.'

Lupe Fiasco: on how Obama is a terrorist.

I have learned and deconstructed all the words to construct a single one: home. –Mahmoud Darwish

Sarkozy is saying "moral duty." lol I saw everything in my life!

"I'm a part of the problem, my problem is I'm peaceful and I believe in the people." [Lupe Fiasco lyrics]

Long live the Tunisian people!

What a strange coincidence. I lost my ID on Nakba Day.

5.3.3.2 Passive Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)

While passive ESPN focused on ideas that mirror direct ESPN (e.g., powerless people against a powerful government; the people revolting; re-thinking stereotypes) passive ICPN focuses on criticism of government and corruption and the idea of pretending to be something one is not or to believe in something one does not believe in. Some examples of passive ICPN include the following:

"And thus I clothe my naked villainy with old odd ends, stolen forth of holy writ; and seem a saint, when most I play the devil." [William Shakespeare]

Today's wisdom: God doesn't throw stones on people; he throws boulders.

A word of advice: Be rebellious.

Our dreams are diminishing and our responsibilities are increasing.

"Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. 'Reality control,' they called it, in Newspeak, 'doublethink'."

As mentioned, though we do not know that these uses of passive PNPs were intended at any level to serve as a proxy for Palestinian issues and concerns, we can note that the themes that appear in passive PNPs reflect those of direct PNPs. We see evidenced a desire for rebelliousness, or going against the grain. At the same time, we see pessimism and fatalism and the recognition of a dualism in speech and persona.

My final point of exploration with this data was to crosstabulate the PNPs with the language used. Considering all of the posts for the year 2011 (N=1371), English was used for 68.2 percent of all posts, Arabic for 24.7 percent of all posts, Arabizi for 1.7 percent of all posts, mixed use of language (i.e., two or more languages in one post) occurred 5.2 percent of the time, and languages other than the ones mentioned occurred 0.2 percent of the time. I asked participants about their language use in interviews and most stated that their language choice is content and audience driven. That is, if they wish their message to be delivered to the widest possible audience, they will use English. If they are speaking of local concerns, they will use Arabic, and Arabizi is often used among friends.

The language I use on Facebook depends on the post. Most of the time I post in English, because it's the language that the majority understands. However, when the post is about something concerning Arabs, I'd use Arabic with Arabic letters. Arabizi is mainly used to communicate with friends. I'd say I use this mostly for casual and informal posts and conversations.

Considering their language use was reported largely to be intentional, I analyzed the participants' posts by language. I found that for direct and indirect PNPs, English was used more frequently

(6.4 percent of all posts compared to 3.1 percent of all posts), but for passive PNPs, Arabic was used more frequently (8.5 percent of all posts compared to 5.2 percent of all posts).

While the meaning of this is debatable, there are some plausible explanations. The more frequent posting of ESPN in English may suggest that the participants are looking to perpetuate the external political narrative. It may suggest that the participants of this study wish for an international audience to view them a particular way, which is by definition the aim of an external state political narrative—participants may wish for the international community to view Palestinians as optimistic, strong, fearless freedom fighters and activists, as victims of Israeli oppression, and so on. Alternatively, participants may have internalized the ESPN to the point where they do not view it as a narrative, but view it as reality. For instance, one participant stated:

I think the reality of the Palestinian situation is that Palestinians are brave and strong and believe in freedom. They don't just try to show this...they actually are strong.

From the examples above, we can see evidence of direct, indirect and passive PNPs. What themes carry through them and what does this (along with the interviews) suggest about the readiness of Palestine on the road to political change? We don't know what it will look like to bring political change to Palestine, particularly because it is not only the Palestinian government but the U.S.-backed Israeli government which Palestinians must reckon with. But it appears that the narrative has much to do with political change, and if this is so, Palestinians would do well to begin with admitting weakness or corruption in the Palestinian government.

CHAPTER VI
ANALYSIS

6.1 Palestinian Political Narrative Perspective (PNPs): An Analysis

As mentioned, the External State Political Narrative (ESPN) assists the international community in arriving at a favorable impression of the nation-state or governing party. In the case of Palestine, that good impression, which is in part a sense of moral high ground, serves to leverage against acts of Israeli aggression. Interestingly, with regard to its ESPN, the Palestinian government wishes to be seen as represented by the Palestinian people, not the other way around. It derives its moral image by identification with representations of Palestinians as strong, steadfast, moral, fearless freedom fighters and victims who are doing all they can to resist occupation and oppression from cruel or oppressive Israelis. The Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), or the message the Palestinian government tells its people and wishes for them to believe, includes the idea that political change should be left to the Palestinian authorities, and that there will be negative consequences for those who try and circumvent the Palestinian government in bringing political change to Palestine.²⁹ The External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN), or that which is socially appropriate to believe or speak publicly about with regard to the Palestinian government, is that though the government is not perfect, it is and has been trying to bring political change to Palestine, that it is Israel and its supporters, not the Palestinian government, which has prevented political change in Palestine, and that Israel, not the Palestinian government, is the oppressor of Palestinians. Lastly, the Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), or what Palestinians actually believe about the Palestinian government but often cannot say publically, includes such ideas as the following: Palestinian government is corrupt; Palestinian leadership does not want to secure political change as much as it wants to

²⁹ As mentioned, by “Palestinian government” or “Palestinian authorities,” I am referring to the Palestinian Authority (PA), broadly, because the bulk of my participants are from the West Bank, although my Gazan participants have noted that these PNPs apply to their context as well, in which case, we would not be referring to the PA, but to Hamas. Future studies would do well to study these two governing bodies separately to see what similarities and differences exist with regard to PNPs.

secure personal comforts; Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule; Palestinian leadership all talk and little action; Palestinians are not optimistic or have little hope for change or unity.

Before I analyze the use of these PNPs among participants, I wish to note that while a study of the Facebook posts of fourteen Palestinian youth will not lead us to conclusions about the Facebook habits of all Palestinian youth nor to conclusions about what is necessary to bring political change to Palestine, the study is far from negligible. In fact, an advantage of an exploratory case study is that it often leads to developments in theory (Yin, 2008). The theories that emerge from exploratory case studies may then be tested and further explored. In the case of this dissertation, my study has led to the development of a theoretical understanding of some of the elements that may be instrumental in bringing political change to Palestine, including the use of PNPs and Facebook. While these conclusions are not a prognosis and need testing and further development, they shed light on a series of possibilities that without the exploratory case study may not have been realized. With that said, I now turn to the use of PNPs on Facebook among the participants of my study and to discussion regarding their possible theoretical implications.

6.2 Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) and Their Theoretical Implications

As mentioned, findings revealed that of all the PNP types, only ESPN and ICPN surfaced on Facebook, whether in direct, indirect or passive form (see Figure 3 below). By contrast, there were no occurrences of ISPN or ECPN.

Figure 6.0 Frequency of PNPs Among Participants by Type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Non-PCP	1161	84.7	87.5	87.5
	ESPN	54	3.9	4.1	91.6
	ICPN	18	1.3	1.4	92.9
	Indirect ESPN	48	3.5	3.6	96.5
	Indirect ICPN	14	1.0	1.1	97.6
	Passive ESPN	16	1.2	1.2	98.8
	Passive ICPN	16	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	1327	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	44	3.2		
Total		1371	100.0		

This itself is interesting; the fact that ESPN and ICPN occurred while ISPN and ECPN did not occur directs us to several possibilities. The first possibility is that the ISPN and ECPN are incorrect in the Palestinian model, and that it is the incorrectness which leads to their absence. While the PNP model would certainly do well to be tested in future research, this position also assumes that, if correct, all PNPs will occur on Facebook posts, and this is not necessarily true. While without further testing we cannot categorically state that the ISPN or ECPN are correct in this model, they have been confirmed as true by several Palestinian informants, and we must consider the possibility that they are more or less correct in order to arrive at theoretical possibilities about the data. One such possibility is that the views purported by the ISPN and ECPN are not espoused by the participants, rendering them un-posted on Facebook. The ISPN, or that which the government wishes its people to believe, purports that political change should be left to the Palestinian government and that there will be consequences to those who try and circumvent the Palestinian government in their efforts to bring political change. The ECPN, or what is socially appropriate to believe about the government, is that the Palestinian government

has been trying to bring political change to Palestine, and that Israel, not the Palestinian government, is the oppressor of Palestinians. One way to explore whether the ISPN and ECPN are at all rejected by participants is to note the extent to which the ISPN or ECPN (or counter-ISPN or ECON) appears in ICPN posts on Facebook or in interviews. This query will be further addressed when the ISPN is explored. Before considering what is not there, however, I wish to examine what PNPs did appear on Facebook.

As mentioned, of all four PNPs, only two occurred on Facebook: the ESPN and ICPN. The ESPN served as the most commonly occurring PNP among all the Facebook posts, at 8.9 percent of all posts, while the ICPN represented 3.6 percent of all posts. It is interesting that the most frequent PNP to occur on Facebook was the ESPN, a state political narrative. Interestingly, in many of the participants' interviews, we could see that the participants were not pleased or satisfied with the Palestinian government. Yet, espousing and perpetuating a state narrative would seem to be doing the state a favor—something one would not be expected to want to do if disenfranchised with the government. Thus, it seems to indicate that the participants are not posting ESPN for the government, but for themselves. The high percentage of ESPN seems to indicate that the participants have either internalized a state-derived narrative, or, more likely, that the image of Palestinians the ESPN projects is one that has long existed and which the Palestinian government co-opted for the sake of its own benefit. In fact, the concept of Palestinian *sumud*, or steadfastness,³⁰ which largely characterizes the ESPN, was derived in response to the Six Day War (wherein the West Bank and Gaza were separated), a war that pre-dates the Palestinian Authority. Considering the content of the ESPN appears to long pre-date the

³⁰ *Sumud* is characterized by two types: static *sumud*, which is the attempt to stay put despite Israeli uprooting, and resistance *sumud*, which are active means of resisting or undermining Israeli occupation and oppression.

state use of the ESPN, it appears the Palestinian government is using the character of its people to bolster its own image. If the government is largely corrupt and in cooperation with the Israeli authorities for personal gain, as some of the participants have indicated, it would serve the government's interests to hide behind the strength and steadfastness of its people—many of whom have resisted bravely if only to be victims of Israeli aggression. In such a case, if the Palestinian government acts in its own interests and fails the Palestinian people, it, too, can claim victimhood and powerlessness as opposed to admitting corruption or failure. Individual Palestinians do not speak much of Palestinian governmental corruption:

The thing is, people don't talk about this much, but there is corruption in our government. There are a lot of things that happen that we don't know about and a lot of deals that are made that we don't know about. The Palestinian Authority tries on a certain level to even things up with Israel. They say to the Israeli army, okay, we will tell the kids not to march, but I need you to do something for me. Unfortunately, this happens all the time and it always results in Israel winning and us losing, and the Palestinian authorities getting something out of it. This gets old after a while. Because Palestinians don't know how to negotiate. And when they do, we're always the weaker party, so they have no leverage.

Representations within the Palestinian ESPN include the idea that the Palestinian people are doing all they can to bring about political change. Using its people as a proxy, the Palestinian government also appears to be attempting to portray itself as a victim of Israeli oppression, to be projecting an image to the world that the Palestinian government is doing all it can to bring political change to Palestine. However, despite its image, in reality the Palestinian government is keeping Palestinian civilians from doing all they can to bring political change to Palestine. In the

West Bank, a participant speaks of a time when her sister was protesting the Israeli occupation in Ramallah and the Palestinian police came to dissolve the protest.

A while back there was a march in Ramallah to protest against what the Israelis were doing. And the Palestinian cops came in and they stopped the march. They prevented people from marching. And my sister was there, and she said, what the hell, are you crazy? We're marching against our enemy. They said, no, Israeli is not our enemy. And they got her angry and she said get out of my way. And they told her if you don't go home we will arrest you. She said, arrest me. I don't care. So she got into a huge fight with them, they took her to the station, and my dad had to come over and get her.

In Gaza, under Hamas rule, another participant—a founding member of Gaza Youth Breaks Out (GYBO)—was beaten for resistance efforts. His reputation was then threatened and his Facebook activity used as a proxy to intimidate him from further resistance activity:

On the 15th of March 2011, we demonstrated to protest the division between Fatah and Hamas and to protest the violation of human rights in Gaza specifically. We were beaten up by Hamas authorities and summoned for interrogation several times and one GYBO member was stabbed in the back 3 times. I was beaten up with a metal cord on my head and knees. When I finally found hope I received a police warrant for my arrest. I was interrogated for 7 straight hours and then released.

The next day they sent me another police warrant. I thought it was because I argued with them, instead this time they charged me with this: You talk to girls and you chat with them on Twitter and Facebook, and this is prohibited, and if I ever do that again they will put me in jail. They

went on by accusing me of having a sexual relationship with a girl I met in a course I used to attend a month ago. Of course I never slept with her, but they knew that a charge of this kind would scare me off because reputation matters so much in Gaza and if I sleep with a girl before marriage I'll be called out all sorts of bad things.

While the Palestinian government (in this case, the PA and Hamas) seems to hide behind its people with regard to its ESPN, or projected image to the world of freedom fighters who are doing all they can to resist occupation and oppression, when that resistance is actually demonstrated, it is often thwarted. Thus, there appear to be two types of resistance: that which is accepted by the government and poses little to no risk of consequences, and that which is not accepted by the government and does pose risk of consequences. In other words, the Palestinian government appears to look like it desires political change more than it actually does desire political change. Though the Palestinian government espouses the ESPN, when an individual acts on the resistance element of that ESPN, the ESPN enforces it; that is, the government reinforces the idea that it is the Palestinian government, not the Palestinian people, who should bring political change to Palestine and that there will be consequences for individuals who attempt to bring political change on their own. The Palestinian government appears to be sending mixed signals to its people, and there are indeed consequences for acting on the ESPN. The restrictions are felt and were reflected back by participants in this study.

When I asked if participants felt restricted on Facebook, 11 participants (or 70 percent) reported feeling restricted in their Facebook use. Several participants mentioned government monitoring of their Facebook use as reasons for their restriction on Facebook; a Gazan participant mentioned that he is required to give Hamas authorities his Facebook password directly so they may

monitor his use. The remaining three participants (or 21 percent) reported feeling no restriction (although one of the participants who reported to feel no restriction answers later how he would use Facebook differently if he did not feel restricted). With that said, for those who did report feeling restricted (79 percent), a variety of responses were provided (see table below). Of the supplied responses, the Israeli and Palestinian governments were equally feared. Expectations from family, and then Palestinian society, followed. Only one participant, the radio DJ, used the “other” category, noting that he feels restricted on what he can post on Facebook because he uses Facebook for work.

I asked participants what types of things they might talk about or post on Facebook if they did not feel restricted. The two highest scoring responses were, respectively, to critique Israel and to critique the Palestinian government. Interestingly, participants felt equally restricted on Facebook by Israeli and Palestinian authorities, and only one less participant stated that s/he would critique the Palestinian government as would critique Israel (if s/he did not feel restricted on Facebook). Clearly, many of the participants are frustrated with the Palestinian government as well as fear it, but the Palestinian government would have the international public believing the direction of frustration and fear is directed only at Israelis. It seems the Palestinian government is intimidating its people through its ISPN because, like Egypt under the Mubarak regime, it has something to lose. Considering this, along with the previous data, it seems the Palestinian government holds two contradicting positions on resistance. That is, it does not punish all forms of resistance; it only seems to punish those which appear to hold the potential for political change (in the case of political change, the Palestinian government would likely lose power). This would explain why, of all the Facebook posts, participants may have felt comfortable to

post (2.6 percent of all posts) about action opportunities which promote Palestinian resistance on and off Facebook (e.g., lectures, hunger strikes, cultural events). The restriction felt by participants, and their subsequent responses on how they would use Facebook differently if they did not feel restricted, indicate that many of the participants did not feel completely free to post what they might have liked on Facebook and that the data derived from these participants may reflect more what participants felt comfortable to post than what they actually believe. When I spoke with individuals in interviews, this seems to be the case.

Interestingly, the people seem to be policing themselves for the government. These youth are restricted on Facebook by Palestinian officials for posting certain political content, but they are socially restricted from posting other content on Facebook. For instance, participants have spoken about photographs:

I do feel restricted on Facebook. One of the things that people here have to hide due to pressure from society and family is any kind of non-platonic pre-marital relationship. This would keep a person from being straightforward when talking about whom he/she is with, and preventing one from posting pictures of them together.

When it comes to pictures on Facebook, there are still things I can't do. For example, I posted some pictures of me standing next to one of my best friends. We're not romantically involved. He's younger than me and everything; We're just friends. But everyone was commenting on it and some people even called me on the phone. They said, how could you post pictures of you with this man? Is he your boyfriend? Is he your fiancé? And I said, no, he's just a friend. And they said, why the hell would you post a picture of just a friend? A lot

of people just don't understand that. I was really, really annoyed. So I just backed off and took the pictures down because I just don't want this hassle. But a lot of the pictures of me, personal pictures, any pictures of me at a party, standing next to friends, any of these pictures I cannot post. At all. I can't post these pictures because in Palestinian culture that means I've had a lot of men and I get a bad reputation. It depends on the people. Some of my friends thought I looked intimate. Others thought it was inappropriate. It really varied, but generally my friends thought it was not a good thing.

Another mentioned drinking habits:

The second thing I do not feel comfortable talking about on Facebook is my drinking habits. Due to pressures from society and/or family I wouldn't talk about my drinking habits nor would I post photos of me drinking.

Another participant mentioned that she cannot share her personal sexual orientation as a bisexual woman:

There are dangerous lines that I don't cross. I don't much care about the way my community perceives me. I care more about my life and my future. I don't want to be blacklisted in a way that would make it hard for me to have a career or a family. I also care, slightly, about the feelings of my parents. Yes, they understand me, but it would be hard for them to explain the sexual orientation of their daughter to their families. I just keep mine a secret, but I still defend the right to whatever sexual orientation one has. I don't feel yet safe enough to share my personal sexual orientation, but I will work for it and make sure that whoever I have on Facebook understands what I believe in.

Among these youth, it appears that individual Palestinians police the ESPN. Though most likely unintentional, it appears the image of the strong, moral Palestinian is one that both individual Palestinians and the Palestinian government are attracted to and likely wish to use to their benefit. The difference is that if we ask what the Palestinian government stands to gain from the image behind the ESPN we could answer that, in presenting the government as renegade individuals who wish for change and yet are powerless to achieve it, government officials remain in power in comfortable relationship with Israeli power—it is the image of trying and doing one's best to achieve change that keeps status quo. Individuals, on the other hand, receive social recognition and a good reputation. But what is the cost of the ESPN? The cost of the government using the ESPN to their advantage is perpetual corruption and Palestinian political and social oppression of the Palestinian people. Examples include:

Sometimes I am afraid to post political messages on Facebook, particularly of the Israeli military. One of my international friends posts a lot of political messages on Facebook, and when they interrogated her at the airport they brought up the things she had posted and asked her about them, so they obviously had been monitoring her. Also I have some Palestinian friends who post pictures and comments about Israel and what they did or about the occupation, and some of these friends were arrested. Others were denied permits. I had a friend who was denied a permit, like to go to Jerusalem, and he didn't know why he was denied. And finally they told him. They brought up as evidence things he had written about. Sometimes it is very dangerous, yes.

Here, a participant mentions how the Palestinian government polices social behavior to protect the ESPN:

That's the Israeli government. But as far as the Palestinian government, to tell you the truth, with the Palestinian government, it's not fear, but it's a concern. I don't want to struggle and I don't want to open Pandora's box. In my opinion, they are really terrible people because they have a lot of corruption. Some of the good people, but generally they're not good people. They really use this against women sometimes. If a woman is really aggressive sometimes, this bothers them sometimes. So if I post something, I try to frame it in a way that doesn't come across as so aggressive.

The cost of the policing of the ESPN among individuals can be dire. Participants mentioned blackmail and the destruction of reputations as one consequence, particularly for women, of posting photos of themselves on Facebook.

As far as women are concerned, I remember when Facebook came out and Palestinian girls and women just started to interact with Facebook like a lot of other people were doing. A lot of my friends did this, especially back in 2008 when Facebook was not that big. They started posting pictures of themselves on Facebook—not of themselves trying to look sexy or anything, just regular pictures. A lot of comments came from people, especially from their own small communities. People were talking about them. They were telling them things like, how dare you? Or, aren't you afraid? Or, I'm going to take this picture of you and use it against you or against your family. A friend of mine posted a

regular picture of herself on Facebook, like of her in a garden or something. And a guy took her photo and used it to try and blackmail her. He took her photo and Photoshopped it and everyone was like, see? That's what happens to you when you post pictures. You shouldn't have done this. You shouldn't have posted these pictures. And they blame the person for posting them. It's a very common thing here. Everyone talks about it. Everyone thinks it.

One participant mentioned the way many Palestinian women often post on Facebook to avoid consequences. These consequences may include violence.

Rarely Palestinian women show their full face on Facebook or they post pictures of themselves from very far away so these pictures can't be used in blackmail. A lot of women post pictures of themselves that couldn't be Photoshopped. Other Palestinian women who are not afraid to show something, they do post pictures, but often they do it in a different way. For instance, if a woman wants to post a picture she would do it with her husband or she would post a picture of her with her kids so also the social judgment would be less.

One of my friends here in the university posted a picture of herself and some comments on love. She was giving her opinion, on how she felt when she got hurt. And her mom and her older brother hit her so bad, she came to school bruised the next day. In the next two days they forced her to shut down her account, and she did. She had to shut down her account, and then two weeks later she opened another Facebook account, but using an alias.

The idea that Facebook may not be the freest space for individuals to uninhibitedly post their thoughts and feelings may have some bearing on the role of Facebook and political change in Palestine. While some may see this as an impediment, it could also be taken as an opportunity. After all, if the Palestinian government is, in effect, hiding behind the moral image of its people, if Palestinians post material on Facebook that the government finds threatening and the government acts on this, the façade of the Palestinian government as moral as the Palestinian people would be exposed and, like in Egypt, the façade would be forced to drop. As the façade helps perpetuate power, when it falls, power also falls with it.

One may ask what good it would do if the Palestinian government lost power. Would it even help, as the Palestinian government is not autonomous, but remains at the mercy of the Israeli authorities? The answer, I believe, is that it would help for a number of reasons. For one reason, the Palestinian government, if cozy or comfortable with the Israeli government, is in many senses oppressing its own people. If they were removed from power, the blame for oppression could only reasonably fall on Israel, as the Palestinian people, if seeking resistance and freedom, would unlikely be blamed for their own oppression. As of now, the Palestinian government, and its corruption, works in Israel's interests as well, for if the Palestinian government is indeed ineffectual, it would imply that Palestine is not ready for autonomous control. And, if the Palestinian government is corruptible, even if is the Israeli government which is offering this corruptibility, it undermines Palestinians' position of moral high ground.

If a direction of change were to be suggested for Palestine, it would be the opposite of what occurred in Egypt. In Egypt, of all the PNPs, the ICPN was first to change. The Egyptian ICPN changed from belief that the Mubarak regime was all-powerful and impenetrable to belief that many of the claims were not legitimate, but posturing. This change in perspective worked to transform the ECPN from the belief that resistance is socially inappropriate, even foolish, to the perspective that resistance is merited, even socially honorable, and that it is the government, not the people, which must be corrected. A change in public opinion about the constitution of the government and a corresponding change in public attitude about resisting that government resulted in a very powerful momentum. The momentum resulted in people actually taking to the streets; what may have started on Facebook was at this point taken to the streets. When citizens took to the streets and others saw that the police did little to nothing to stop them, the ISPN (the idea that the Mubarak regime is all-powerful and impenetrable), which at this point had only been surmised to be posturing, was actually tested and in fact proved to be posturing. This shift, from belief to proof, did much for the Egyptian people; the shift caused the ISPN to crumble, and without that ISPN, the Egyptian government could do little to control the Egyptian people. It had been, largely, the ISPN which had kept its people “in line” and without citizens’ belief in that narrative, the government was essentially rendered impotent—though they tried to reinforce the ISPN through continued acts of violence. At this point, as the ISPN was proven a façade, citizens took to the streets to demonstrate in large numbers. The regime, in a desperate attempt to reinstate its ISPN, engaged in sometimes horrific acts of violence against its own citizens. This choice led to two outcomes: (1) the continued reinforcement of the ISPN as a façade (because if the ISPN were true, the regime would not in fact have trouble controlling the people), and (2) the ESPN (the idea that Egypt is a rising democracy) dissolved. As protesters were shot, beaten, run

down and terrorized, global audiences took note and saw the regime as totalitarian and brutal, and not democratic or rule-governed in nature. Without its ESPN intact, Egypt would see trouble with tourism and trade; at this point, Hosni Mubarak stepped down from power. As Figure 6.1 below illustrates, the direction of change for Egypt during the 2011 revolution began with a change in ICPN and ended with a change in ESPN. By contrast, the imagined direction of Political Narrative Perspective (PNP) change for Palestine begins with a change in ESPN and ends with a change in ICPN (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.1 Direction of PNP Change for 2011 Egyptian Revolution

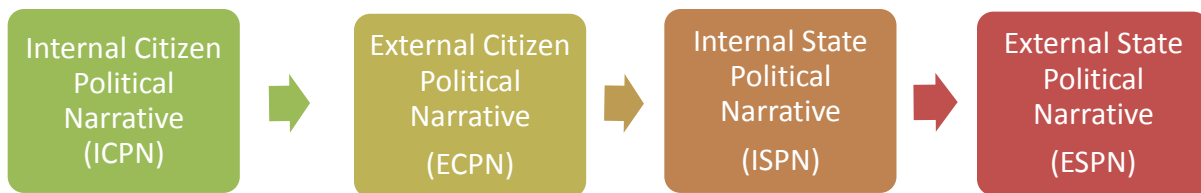
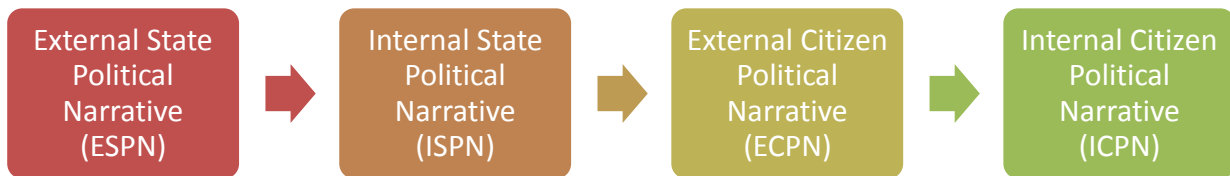


Figure 6.2 Imagined Direction of PNP Change for Palestine



I have elaborated on the imagined direction for Palestinian political change in the following figure (see Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Imagined Direction for Palestinian Political Narrative Perspective (PNP) Change



	Current Belief	Imagined Future Belief
ESPN	<p>Believed by much of the international community: The Palestinian government is not perfect, but it can claim moral high ground compared to the Israeli government.</p> <p>To maintain this belief, many Palestinian civilians believe: We need to be “good Palestinians” (e.g., moral, steadfast) for the sake of our political reputation (e.g., so we are sympathized with internationally).</p>	<p>Imagined future belief for many Palestinian civilians: The Palestinian government is using our “goodness” as a cover for its own corruption; if we show that our value is not earned but inherent (e.g., by accepting diversity of thought and practice), we will be sympathized with more, not less, internationally.</p>
ISPN	<p>Believed by many Palestinian civilians: Political change should be left to the Palestinian state; if we try to take political change into our own hands, it delegitimizes our own government, which we’ve fought for decades to secure.</p>	<p>Imagined future belief for many Palestinian civilians: As is, the Palestinian government is incapable of bringing political change to the Palestinian people. We can only change the government by working ‘backwards’ and taking political change into our own hands.</p>
ECPN	<p>Believed by many Palestinian civilians: The Palestinian government is and has been trying to bring political change to Palestine, and, like the Palestinian people, it, too, is a victim of Israeli oppression.</p>	<p>Imagined future belief for many Palestinian civilians: The Palestinian and Israeli governments are <i>both</i> oppressors; it is not anti-Palestinian to talk about this; it is anti-Palestinian to <i>not</i> talk about it.</p>
ICPN	<p>Believed by many Palestinian civilians: Many of us were better off under Israeli rule; we are pessimistic about the possibility for political change.</p>	<p>Imagined future belief for many Palestinian civilians: It is possible for Palestinians to be better off under their own rule; Changing the definition of what it means to be a “good Palestinian” can bring both hope/optimism and real political change.</p>

As shown in Figure 6.3, in Palestine, the imagined direction of PNP change appears different. As it is now, the Palestinian government appears to be hiding behind its people to establish its ESPN, or image of itself it wishes to project to the world. If the people were to change to represent something the Palestinian government would not wish to hide behind, the ESPN would be forced to change and the world may see the Palestinian government as distinct from the Palestinian people. This would be furthered if the Palestinian government committed oppressive acts against its own people in an attempt to keep change from occurring. In such a case, the ISPN, or the idea that change should be left to the Palestinian state, would be forced to change, as people would see the Palestinian government as hostile and incapable of bringing justice and peace to the Palestinian people. The ECPN (or the idea that the Palestinian government is and has been trying to bring political change to Palestine and that Israel, not the Palestinian government, is the oppressors of Palestinians) would also be forced to change, as people would see the Palestinian government as oppressors of the Palestinian people and would feel more comfortable to talk about this. Finally, the ICPN, which is largely pessimistic due to the (largely un-critiqued Palestinian government) could change to a largely optimistic viewpoint, as the Palestinian people are free to be themselves and take change into their own hands (without internal social policing from peers).

Interestingly, it seems the ICPN often contradicts the ESPN. With Palestinians, it seems it is a battle of the ICPN over the ESPN. On Facebook, too, these are the ones that are battling, and the ESPN is winning. Palestinians may have to realize the ESPN is a state-sponsored narrative and that furthering these ideas hurts, not helps, their cause. The only way to dismantle the ESPN is to

not perpetuate it anymore. The Palestinian government uses its people to promote the ESPN; it hides behind the bravery, morality and steadfastness of its people. It punishes people who do not comply (ISPN) by arresting them from a protest or getting upset because a woman is being aggressive (gender policing). But the Palestinian people have internalized this narrative and are policing each other (e.g., Facebook posts and getting beaten, or not being able to post pictures of one another). Those who are policing are not protecting actual morality, but the image of morality, and that is all the Palestinian government cares about. If Palestinians refuse to stop policing it and doing the work of a government who does not have their best interests at heart, the ESPN would be forced to change—the Palestinian government would no longer be able to hide behind it. It has to be okay to voice these views (such as: the Pal govt also oppresses Palestinians, not only Israel, or the Pal govt does not always have the interests of Palestine at heart). Palestinian people need to say, I'm not going to limit my life so the lives of governing officials are unlimited. I'm going to dismantle the ESPN so that the Pal govt cannot hide behind it anymore. And if they cannot hide behind it, they (cannot use it to their advantage) will be exposed as corrupt. If they are exposed as corrupt, the Palestinian people may draw international sympathies as real victims, not as opportunists, individuals who blindly stand behind corrupt leaders. The world sees that Palestinian leaders are corrupt, and so the world is reluctant to give power to them (as Mahmoud points out). But if they show they are victims of both the Israelis and their own governments, they establish a sort of trust with the international public that is difficult to ignore.

If the ESPN is to be redefined by the Palestinian people, it may mean reinventing what it means to be a morally “good” Palestinian. Palestinians, I believe, could win a war of “moral high

ground” but they cannot do it while restricting one another’s freedom and expression; this undermines their moral authority. One participant mentions how she is pessimistic that this policing of one another will stop in Palestine, but she is hopeful of how it would change Palestine’s global positionality if it did:

In my opinion, actually Palestinians won't. They won't win that. They won't fit in the world like that, because in my personal opinion, they are very, very strict when it comes to those new ideas, those modern ideas—the fact that you can accept the other, the fact that you can relate to the other, whoever that person is. In Shari'a law, one of the main foundations of Islam is that you have to accept the other and respect them, even if you have differences. Although that does exist, people are not following it. People are not changing it to fit their own perspectives and beliefs.

Unfortunately, the weight of this falls on those who are homosexual, bisexual, open-minded, anarchists, secularists, whatever—all those who are different from the mainstream are suffering because the government is not changing, the beliefs are not changing, society is not moving forward. Stories that were happening forty, fifty years ago to my mom were just happening to my friends a few months ago. And I'm thinking, excuse me—that hasn't changed yet?

And at the same time I look at pictures, my family pictures, of women one or two generations older than me wearing tank tops or swimwear, and I'm thinking, these are the same people who are telling me to pull back, that I should wear a hijab, and that what I do is inappropriate. I confronted my family with these pictures three weeks ago. I showed them the pictures and I asked them, what do you think? You were wearing the same things as I wear. In fact, in some of the pictures they were wearing less than what I wear. They were the same age as I am. And they said that it was a different time, a different world back then.

So yes, the whole world is moving forward except for the Middle East and my country, Palestine. We are moving back to being very religious and using political Islam and it's very, very radical—not in a good way, very strict and conservative. And unfortunately, that's why Palestinians don't fit in. That's why the entire Western media, especially the U.S. media like Fox News or CNN, you see immediately, as soon as one Palestinian or an Arab shows up having made a faulty decision or having faulty judgment, immediately they're portrayed in the media as a devil, as a terrible thing, especially as a terrorist. And that's why we don't fit in.

If we show that kind of tolerance, that acceptance of difference of the other, that other societies have shown, then all the other countries of the world would see us as just regular people, just the way they are, and they would see the whole thing that's happening to us as wrong. But the problem is that inside themselves and between themselves, many Palestinians don't accept it, they don't respect or accept homosexuality. They don't accept someone who calls themselves a secularist. When you introduce yourself here in Palestine you say either "I'm a Muslim" or "I'm a Christian." If you're silent, but then someone questions you and says, what is your religion? You have to say, Christian or Muslim. You don't get to say anything else. And if you do there are consequences. Palestinian society has not changed yet. And I have no idea if it will. I don't know if or when it will change, but I know that is why they don't fit in with the world.

If we started to portray ourselves as who we really are, as secularists, or anarchists, or homosexual, or what have you, of course that would make an impact on how the world sees us. Your politics, your diplomacy, your laws, these things define who you are as a government and as a country. You see this in the news. When a government changes its laws on homosexuality, for instance, people are watching. I remember reading an article about the U.S. when one of its states was voting on gay marriage. And the whole world was talking about it.

So the idea is if we start showing our ideas, people will start seeing us as humans. They will see us just as they are. We are a different people who have our differences, but who have those fears, those ideas, those relations of humanity. So when we show this to them, when they see that, instead of seeing this person who they all don't like, we speak gibberish and when we don't like something we get enraged or use violence, and think, let's kill them all! That image of us being terrorists or demons, that will fade. Because other homosexuals will see us and think, oh, they're supporting us. Or, at least, that means I can find homosexuals like me there. Or anyone who is a secularist would think, oh, there are secularists there. Or open-minded people would think, they are not like we thought. They're just like us. That wall of judgment and fear would disappear. This way we can bridge this huge gap between the world and us.

CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

Palestine has been called “the key to peace in the Middle East;” it has also been said that “the Palestinian winter gave birth to the Arab Spring” (LeVine, 2011). Using case study methodology, I sought to explore ways in which Palestine might give birth to its own spring. One of the advantages of an exploratory case study is that it may lead to advancements in theory (Yin, 2008). Within the present study, I aimed to advance political narrative theory by creating a model for political change and then exploring that model within the context of Facebook posts among Palestinian youth, the model and conclusions of which might be tested and further developed in future studies. This model, Political Narrative Perspectives, or PNPs, helps to shed light on the process of political change. I developed the model through examination of the events which led to the 2011 Egyptian revolution; I then sought to explore this model within the Palestinian context. To do so, I drew from case study and interview methodology and employed content analysis to explore the Facebook wall posts (N=1371) of 14 Palestinian youth (7 male and 7 female, aged 18-27) for one year (January 1-December 31, 2011). For the purposes of this dissertation, I asked two research questions: (1) To what extent are Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) (i.e., External State Political Narrative (ESPN), Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN) and Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN)) used on the Facebook walls of the 14 Palestinian youth participants of this study?, and (2) What might participants’ PNP use suggest with regard to Palestine and the road to political change? The youth participants of this study were selected for their similarity on several measures to the Egyptian youth leaders who spearheaded political change efforts on Facebook: 1) university-educated, 2) of the Millennial generation, 3) internationally traveled, 4) politically concerned, and 5) fluent in English. Before I conducted the content analysis research, I traveled to and throughout Palestine, staying in Bethlehem for one month, discussing

Palestinian Political Narrative Perspectives (PNPs) with Palestinian individuals. I then conducted a literature review in which I explored the historical development of Jewish and Israeli representations of themselves and Palestinians as immigration to Palestine and Israeli statehood developed and out of which Palestinian PNPs in part emerged. I then identified Palestinian PNPs as follows: The External State Political Narrative (ESPN) assists the international community in arriving at a favorable impression of the nation-state or governing party. In the case of Palestine, that favorable impression, which is in part a sense of moral high ground, serves to leverage against acts of Israeli aggression. Interestingly, with regard to its ESPN, the Palestinian government wishes to be seen as represented by the Palestinian people, not the other way around. It derives its moral image by identification with representations of Palestinians as strong, steadfast, moral, fearless freedom fighters and victims who are doing all they can to resist occupation and oppression from cruel or oppressive Israelis. In identification with moral and justice-seeking Palestinians, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is able to deflect criticism for its own corruption, including the privileging of personal over political gains. The Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), or the message the Palestinian government tells its people and wishes for them to believe, includes the idea that political change should be left to the Palestinian authorities, and that there will be negative consequences for those who try and circumvent the Palestinian government in bringing political change to Palestine.³¹ The External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN), or that which is socially appropriate to believe or speak publicly about with regard to the Palestinian government, reflects the idea that though the government is not perfect, it is and has been trying to bring political change to Palestine. The Palestinian ECPN includes the idea

³¹ As mentioned, by “Palestinian government” or “Palestinian authorities,” I am referring to the Palestinian Authority (PA), broadly, because the bulk of my participants are from the West Bank, although my Gazan participants have noted that these PNPs apply to their context as well, in which case, we would not be referring to the PA, but to Hamas. Future studies would do well to study these two governing bodies separately to see what similarities and differences exist with regard to PNPs.

that it is Israel and its supporters, and not in any way the Palestinian government, which has prevented political change in Palestine, and that it is Israel, and not in any way the Palestinian government, which is the oppressor of Palestinians. Lastly, the Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), or that which Palestinians actually believe about the Palestinian government but often cannot say publically, includes the following ideas: the Palestinian government is corrupt; Palestinian leadership does not want to secure political change as much as it wants to secure personal comforts; Palestinians were better off under Israeli rule; Palestinian leadership is all talk and little action; Palestinians are not optimistic or have little hope for change or unity.

Following their identification, I explored the use of PNPs among participants on Facebook. I coded for three types of PNPs: direct (a Palestine-related political opinion posted by the participant which reflects a PNP), indirect (a Palestine-related political news story posted by the participant which reflects a PNP), and passive (a non-Palestine-related post posted by the participant which could serve as a proxy to reflect a PNP). I found that PNPs were used by participants for 12.5 percent of all posts. ESPN was used for 8.9 percent of all posts, while ICPN was used for 3.6 percent of all posts. ISPN and ECPN were not used at all among participants on Facebook. Participants indicated (11 of 14, or 79 percent of participants) that they would post more criticisms of Israel and Palestine if they did not feel restricted on Facebook.

It appears from the participants' Facebook posts and interviews that the Palestinian people and the Palestinian government may both be attempting to use the image of Palestinians as strong, fearless freedom fighters and victims to claim comparative legitimacy (with Israel) or moral high ground. The Palestinian government appears to use the image of its people as its External State

Political Narrative (ESPN), while the participants appear to use this image both for international appeal and for local respect and reputation. The Palestinian government polices for perceived threats to political and social status quo, and many Palestinian civilians also police for perceived threats to social status quo. While the Palestinian government identifies with the image of its people as freedom fighters, it appears to wish its citizens not actually act on that image and potentially bring political change to Palestine. It appears there are two types of political resistance with regard to the Palestinian government and its people: acceptable, or that which is not perceived as a threat to the status quo, and unacceptable, or that which is perceived as a threat to the status quo. The Palestinian government does not appear as interested in bringing political change to the Palestinian people as it appears interested in securing personal comforts.

While the majority of the participants believe the government is corrupt (ideas that align with the Palestinian Internal Citizen Political Narrative, or ICPN), the majority also hold onto the image of Palestinians as strong freedom fighters and victims (ideas that align with the Palestinian External State Political Narrative, or ESPN). If a largely corrupt government is using an image of Palestinians to its benefit, one might expect that the image itself would then be suspect; interestingly, it appears is not; in fact, the image of the strong Palestinian freedom fighter and victim (reflecting the ESPN) is largely identified with and perpetuated among the participants of this study. This idea suggests that the image holds some benefit for Palestinian civilians as well as it does for the Palestinian government. One potential benefit is psychological; as one participant put it, “This [image] is all we have.” Another potential benefit is social. One participant mentioned that Palestinians are socially rewarded (e.g., dating/relationships, respect) for aligning themselves with the Palestinian External State Political Narrative (ESPN). Another

potential benefit is political. Participants of this study indicated that they believe they must uphold the image of the Palestinian in order to influence international opinion and to present themselves as having the moral high ground, in comparison with Israel. It appears this is in part attempted through language. English was reported to be used by participants to communicate with the largest possible audience. English was also used more frequently (6.4 percent compared to 3.1 percent), for direct and indirect PNPs (i.e., political opinions and news articles) while Arabic was used more frequently for passive PNPs (8.5 percent compared to 5.2 percent). The fact that English is used to convey a particular representation of Palestinians to a broad, largely non-Palestinian audience suggests that the image holds hope for Palestinians of comparative legitimacy; by contrast, the passive Arabic PNP posts may suggest local restriction.

While the image associated with the Palestinian External State Political Narrative (ESPN) may hold potential benefits for the Palestinian government and its people, it comes at the cost of freedom and potentially at the cost of political change. Already restricted by Israeli military occupation and Palestinian governmental oppression, it appears Palestinians are restricting their freedoms further by creating strict social structures to follow in partial attempt to win international approval and the war of moral authority. In this way, Palestinian women are often socially discouraged from posting close-up or casual pictures of themselves on Facebook and both sexes are not socially permitted to post pictures of themselves appearing next to a member of the opposite sex unless engaged to be married or married. If, through a plea for comparative moral legitimacy, Palestinians are lobbying for support to a largely Western audience, it is a curious approach, as the aforementioned restrictions are not morally questionable to a Western audience. These social mores may thus point more to Palestinian *sumud*, or steadfastness, than

they do a quest for international sympathy. While *sumud* began as political resistance, it may have spread to include social resistance, with the maintaining of social mores akin to resisting outside influences on Palestinian culture, pride and will. But the costs of maintaining and policing many of these social mores are high; these include beatings, imprisonment, “honor killings,” shame and ostracization, and restrictions of basic freedoms such as girls being allowed to ride a bike or walk or talk in the streets, or adolescent boys and girls interacting with one another or posting pictures of one another on Facebook. A people which are lobbying for international sympathy on the basis of moral high ground and the desire for freedom would do well to demonstrate a respect for gender equity and personal freedom and to demonstrate moral congruity with the international community to which they are lobbying. Without these alignments, the Palestinian people may be pitied by the international community but distrusted with issues of human rights. The act of policing social mores works to uphold an image of Palestinians as morally and socially “good” in the Palestinian public eye, but it appears to impede Palestinian social and political change. In order to change, it appears Palestinians need to be willing to admit governmental corruption and to challenge social mores, reinventing the notion of a “good Palestinian.” A reinventing of “good” has indeed been occurring around the world, especially with the advent of postmodernism. Many Western and developed nations operate, at least ostensibly, by the ideas that one can be non-religious, non-heterosexual, non-celibate, and so on, and still be morally “good.” In other words, one’s worth as a human being is based not on one’s alignment to superficial categories, but is based inherently on being a human, despite gender, race, class, religion, sexuality and other dividing issues.

If Palestine is to move toward political change, it appears the next move would be to challenge the External State Political Narrative (ESPN). While in Egypt, the direction of political narrative change mirrored the following: (1) Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), (2) External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN), (3) Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), and (4) External State Political Narrative (ESPN), it appears that Palestine would do well to approach political change from the opposite perspective, resulting in a change in the following direction: (1) External State Political Narrative (ESPN), (2) Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), (3) External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN), and (4) Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN). If the image of Palestinians was reinvented, if what it meant to be a morally “good” Palestinian was redefined, the Palestinian government could no longer hide behind the External State Political Narrative (ESPN) as a front for its own effectiveness and corruption. Instead of the government appearing ineffectual because it is powerless and a victim of Israeli oppression, the government could be actually scrutinized for what it does well and what it does poorly. Once exposed, the Internal State Political Narrative (ISPN), placing the government as the only vehicle for political change in Palestine, would likely crumble, as the people would see the government as unrepresentative of their own interests. The External Citizen Political Narrative (ECPN), or the idea that the government is doing what it can to bring political change, would also likely dissolve, as individuals would see political change as incompatible with the personal interest agenda the government has largely pursued. Finally, the Internal Citizen Political Narrative (ICPN), which is largely negative and pessimistic with regard to change, may take on an optimistic and positive outlook based on the power of the people to tackle political change.

7.1 Suggestions for Future Research

In this dissertation, I aimed to advance political narrative theory by developing a model of political change based on political narrative perspectives and by exploring those narrative perspectives among Palestinian youth on Facebook. While exploratory case studies are useful and often necessary for the development of theory (Yin, 2008) the models and theoretical propositions which arise from such case study research must be tested and analyzed in future research. While the Political Narrative Perspective (PNP) model which was developed for this dissertation is helpful for understanding political change during the 2011 Egyptian revolution and may be useful for considering the path for political change in Palestine, the model must itself be tested before the data may be considered reliable. In addition to testing the model,, future research would do well to build upon the present study. For instance, Palestinians differ from Egyptians in that they are not only oppressed by a government of their own people, but by a U.S.-backed Israeli military occupation. Future studies might consider the PNPs of not only Palestinians, but of Israel and the United States to better determine what might bring about political change for Palestinians. Finally, future studies would do well to be conducted in Arabic and by Palestinians to minimize misunderstanding or miscommunication with respect to language or culture.

CHAPTER VIII

APPENDIX

Participant #1: Amal

Sex: Female

Age: 22

Raised in: Kuwait, Bolivia, Gaza

Currently lives in: Qatar

I am a Palestinian woman currently living in Qatar. I was born Kuwait where my family worked, then we were deported by the Kuwaiti authority in 1992. My family fled to Bolivia then Gaza. I consider myself born and raised in Gaza since I don't have distinctive memories in the formerly mentioned places. When my family moved to Gaza I was 7 years old. I started knowing that where I live is no ordinary place when the second intifada broke out in 2000. Then I came to know what it means to be a Palestinian. I experienced bombings, checkpoints, and closure and constant feeling of terror and danger. The 2007 Hamas Fatah division was a key event that made me more involved in politics and more shocked at how complex it is. Proceeded by Israel's imposed collective punishments, the Hamas and Fatah rift made life in Gaza more difficult. That year, I started blogging about my life in Gaza that was directly affected by these events. I stopped blogging for almost a year when the war on Gaza occurred in 2008-2009. Though I didn't write anything during the assault, after it, I came back to blogging again. The war was the event that changed my views towards the conflict and the world. The more isolated Gaza was the more I wanted to reach out to the world outside me. I found that it was my duty to tell my story since others may not know it, or may know it from the wrong source. After the war, I became more aware of the importance to be outspoken about the injustice treatment of Palestinians. I came to know many people from inside and outside Palestine that share with me the same views

and passion about the Palestinian cause. My personality, after experiencing the complexities of war, has become courageous and more outspoken. Following that years after the war, I became more aware of the importance of using social media. I become more active on social platforms especially Twitter. Finally, through these social platforms I came to know my husband. Now I am married, though I moved from Palestine, I still seek to blog about what happens there.

My mother graduated from high school and my father has a bachelor's degree. I also have a bachelor's degree. My mother is a housewife and my father is a manager at a local charity.

For school, I attended public school for primary and secondary school. Though I started with MySpace, I now actively use Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress, and Tumblr. I learned to use the internet outside of school and I feel reasonably comfortable. As long as I use it for the right purposes, and I keep my integrity online, I feel it's the best way to share ideas and thoughts. I've been using Facebook for 5 years. I use it over 5 hours a day. I have internet at home, and we also had internet at home in Gaza when I was growing up. We got internet when I was 13 years old. I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, and as a tool for social and political change.

For me, Facebook is a space to portray yourself as you are. I am not there to create an alternative reality for myself. Rather I am there to voice out my ideas and share information which I deem useful. Some Palestinians portray themselves as fearless, but fear is part of everyday life in Palestine, and if you are a honest person online, you'd reflect that. Being on the internet is not meant for people to be escapists, but to be transparent tellers of what's happening around.

Though it is meant for transparency, I feel restricted in what I can post by expectations from family or friends. If I didn't feel restricted, I would post more criticisms of Israel, I would want to critique Palestinian government and society, and I would post different kinds of pictures of myself and others.

The language I use on Facebook depends on the post. Most of the time I post in English, because it's the language that the majority understands. However, when the post is about something concerning Arabs, I'd use Arabic with Arabic letters. Arabizi is mainly used to communicate with friends. I'd say I use this mostly for casual and informal posts and conversations.

Participant #2: Nizar

Sex: Male

Age: 25

Raised in: Gaza & Egypt

Currently lives in: Gaza

My name is Nizar. I live in a refugee camp, north of Gaza, I am 25 years old. I was born in the first uprising or "intifada" in 1987. My father was imprisoned in Israeli jails when I was born, so my mother was in charge of the household during my father's jail time. My father was released when I was 6 years old. It was my first year in the UN elementary school in the camp. I was top of my class from first grade until 7th grade at the UN school. I was granted a full scholarship to the American International School in Gaza. I matched the criteria for a scholarship to the

American International School very well: A+ Student, low income family, and good English skills.

My first year at the American school was the toughest. It was my first encounter with foreign teachers and extremely rich classmates. Even though I was looked down upon, I found my way through by studying really hard each day. I was the first student to earn the Student of the Month award. My classmates began to ask me for help in their homework, some of them sent their drivers to pick me up at my place so that I come and tutor them. At 12th grade the American school decided to transfer all of my class to the AIS in Egypt because our school didn't have SAT training programs.

For the first time in my life I lived in an apartment in the fanciest of neighborhoods in Cairo. the first 2 months of the 9 month stay in Cairo were the toughest. New classmates, different system of education and an undoubtedly new social environment. I graduated an honor student from the school and I took my SAT. When I returned to Gaza, I was granted another scholarship to the German University in Cairo from the Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF). I chose Structural Engineering.

The first year was tough , but I managed to pass all my courses except two. The finals of my first year at the GUC coincided with the winning of Hamas in parliamentary elections. I had to postpone the first semester of the 2nd year because the Palestinian investment fund did not have the money to cover my tuition fees. After 4 months of waiting in Egypt, they sent me money to pay for half of the 2nd semester of my 2nd year. At the same time I had no money to eat or live

so I moved to a friend's place and I had to work in construction for 17 days so that I could make ends meet. I missed 2 finals because I had no money to pay for the transportation. My scholarship from PIF included accommodation as well as pocket money, but right after the Hamas elections, I rarely received money to pay tuition and my parents had no money to send me.

Right after the finals of the second year, Hamas took over Gaza Strip and The Palestinian Investment Fund left the Gaza strip. The last payment I received was a day after the takeover. They sent me money to pay for only 1/4th of the tuition, so I decided not to pay because if I did, I would starve and be homeless one more time. Even though they hadn't paid the full amount yet, they promised they would pay university tuition so I felt relieved. It was yet another lie. I waited for 5 months and i missed the first semester one more time. Later on I received an email from my university, stating "You are no longer a student at GUC due to unpaid tuition."

I came back to Gaza in august of 2008 hoping that I would find someone to talk to about the scholarship. The PIF was shut down in Gaza, but I talked to an ex-board member and he promised to help in a week's time. Nothing happened, so I applied for Alazhar University in Gaza. I changed my major to English literature.

During the first year of my study at Alazhar, a war broke out. It was 23 days of ongoing bombardment of houses and areas. My area was among the most targeted, and my house sustained damage from shrapnel of Israeli bombs. I passed all my courses at Alazhar except for

the Arabic requirement. Arabic language was almost absent during my study at the AIS in Gaza and Egypt.

My English skills, which were not a problem, suddenly became a problem as my English professors did not tolerate a newcomer whose spoken English was better than the whole class. I had to play dumb in classes so that they wouldn't think of me as a threat. The professors made mistakes that I was aware of during lectures and I didn't correct them, because I was told by everyone that they would fail me if I did.

In 2010 I was accepted to a program to study new media in the United States. These few weeks were the best in my whole life. It was a world I always dreamed of being part of and seeing it come true made me feel so proud of myself. When I came back to Gaza, having the best experience one could get at the US, I decided to engage myself in the problems of the youth in Gaza. I was among 7 members to write a manifesto³² expressing our frustration with every power that has made it difficult for us to live normally. "The Gaza Youth Breaks Out" or GYBO was the name of our group. We worked on rallying support for demonstrations.

On the 15th of march, 2011, we demonstrated to protest the division between Fatah and Hamas and to protest the violation of human rights in Gaza specifically. We were beaten up and summoned for interrogation several times and one member was stabbed in the back 3 times. I was beaten up with a metal cord on my head and knees. When I finally found hope I received a police warrant for my arrest. I was interrogated for 7 straight hours and then released.

³² This manifesto is available in the Appendix section of this dissertation.

This year is my last year in college and I decided to quit all political activities because members in my group used the GYBO group to gain money and travel outside. Now, Gaza is suffering the worst power crisis it's had in 30 years. We only get power 6 hours per day. Two weeks ago, employees of the government and the power plant came to my house and unplugged our cable because we couldn't pay the electricity bill. I argued with one employee and I was attacked by the police instantly. When I hit back they kept on hitting and I almost passed out.

The next day they sent me another police warrant. I thought it was because I argued with them, instead this time they charged me with this: You talk to girls and you chat with them on Twitter and Facebook, and this is prohibited, and if I ever do that again they will put me in jail. They went on by accusing me of having a sexual relationship with a girl I met in a course I used to attend a month ago. Of course I never slept with her, but they knew that a charge of this kind would scare me off because reputation matters so much in Gaza and if I sleep with a girl before marriage I'll be called out all sorts of bad things.

I am currently doing my best to graduate because the only way I can live normally is outside of Gaza.

I learned to use the internet and new media at the American school (AIS), which is a private school. At this school, we received courses on how to use the computers and the internet. I Had an email in the year 2000, which is very early. My mother's highest education level is a 2 year diploma after high school. My father also has a two-year diploma from 2 years of college in Iraq. My mother doesn't work, my father is a retired police officer who used to work for the PA. I

rarely find a stable job in Gaza. I once tutored small children for 2 months. I volunteered as a translator for some journalists and foreign delegations and right now am unemployed.

I've been using Facebook 5.5 years now. Depending on electricity, right now I get 6 hours of power per day. I use Facebook for 2 to 3 hours per day, and yes, I have internet at home. I was 16 years old when the internet was introduced to my home.) I use Facebook to stay in touch with friends, and, since December of 2010, as a tool for social change. "Gaza Youth Breaks out" is a Facebook page of 24,000 likes. I update it every once in awhile with news, and critical comments on the government. I feel very much myself when I describe the frustration I go under because of the situation.

People feel weak and helpless over here and words of heroism they relate to themselves would indeed make them feel better about themselves. It may also be because they want to tell the others that they won't surrender to the Israelis no matter how tough the situation gets. I won't portray myself in any way like this because being afraid, worried, helpless, maybe even defeated is something I fail to hide.

I feel restricted on Facebook because the government asks for Facebook passwords and they check the inbox and statuses. I feel restricted because my family won't tolerate a picture of me standing next to a girl. I try to avoid familial confrontations because most of the time they end up with me getting kicked out of the house.

If I didn't feel restricted, I would like to overtly criticize Hamas and Israel on Facebook. I would also like to post the pictures I like on Facebook without anyone telling me how inappropriate it is to pose in front of a camera next to a girl.

When I write on Facebook I mostly choose English because the majority of my friends speak English very well. I write in Arabic so that my friends in Gaza understand—that's if they don't speak English. Arabizi is not widely understood but it saves effort when I feel I can explain myself better in Arabic. I use Arabic rarely because I want to feel part of this community but the same time Arabic doesn't seem to serve me very well because I don't write it very well. English helps me spread news on Facebook and Twitter, but it doesn't reach the people in Gaza and many times I've been misquoted and misinterpreted by my family.

Participant #3: Hedi

Sex: Male

Age: 27

Raised in: UAE and Gaza

Currently lives in: Austria

I was born in Abu Dhabi, UAE, and raised there for about 18 years, until after high school, and then I moved with my Family to Gaza, Palestine, to continue our life there, after my father built a house there for us. My life in Abu Dhabi was easier and more beautiful; only the last year was hard there after we learned that my father had decided to move us to Gaza.

I've lived in Gaza for about 6 years, and they have been the hardest years in my life. The first 3 months was the intifada and that was something new for us. The war atmosphere, the sound of jets and bombs, plus the new culture and new people to meet and make friends with. I learnt many positive things in Gaza especially how to communicate with others. But I can't forget the war on Gaza and how it affected the people, even the loss to the families and the aftermath of this war. The biggest event though that affected me and the others is Hamas takeover. Everybody was shocked what happened and I started to hate life here more and more, even what they do now.

Now I live in Austria. I want to further my life here, including study and marriage.

The schools I attended in Abu Dhabi were public. I use Facebook and Twitter more because they are blue. I don't like writing so much my thoughts are too collapsed and they are also with Facebook and Twitter. I learned to use new media by myself because I wanted to discover this digital world and what's new on it, but I thank a program I participated in on new media which opened my eyes to many new things.

My mother and father both graduated from high school. My father has a shop for house materials and my mother is a chef for cooking. Right now, I am looking for a job. I think I'm the first one in my family to use Facebook; I've been using it about 8 years. It depends on the day, but I am on Facebook about 10 hours a day. I definitely have Facebook at home! I've had internet at home since I was ten years old.

I use Facebook for entertainment, to keep in touch with friends and to share my personal thoughts. I don't like to have many faces anywhere, so in Facebook you can find the real me. Nothing changes, and I feel there is no need to make other personalities in order to get the attention from others that you seek. It's like 'Hello guys this is me whether you like it or not'.

For a Palestinian who can't speak in the real world he/she finds Facebook as a world which he/she could express him/herself so freely and could find people around the world who understand them and find solutions for their own problems. For me I don't like posting pictures which hurt or annoy anyone about anything— religion, political party...etc. Nothing forbids me to do it but this is not me and I have friends from everywhere and I care about their feelings.

If I wouldn't hurt other people's feelings, I would want to critique Israel, the Palestinian government and Palestinian society. I see caricature pictures or political cartoons as best to use for this purpose as it criticizes the situations in a very funny way and people don't feel threatened by it. Some would love it and understand it, others would laugh at it having no idea what it means, and on the other hand, the people who are upset by it still generally like this kind of critique and accept it as part of the art form of political cartoon, with no danger on me, and everybody is happy.

As far as language I used on Facebook, I give every language its right. If what I say should be in Arabic then I use the Arabic alphabet, and if it's in English I use the English one. Some people don't understand English and they deserve to know what I write and to get my message but I

think every language and every thought should have its own right and its own language so the people to whom you send the message will understand it.

Participant #4: Mohammad

Sex: Male

Age: 19

Raised in: Hebron, West Bank

Currently lives in: the United States

I grew up in the city of Hebron, which is divided into two parts: one under Israeli control, and the other under Palestinian Authority control. I spent the first ten years of my life in the tense part, in the part with the Israeli army control. We were playing in the streets and realizing that at some points we were unable to live our right of freedom, to play as children. We had to run away from curfews, we had to hide, and we had to open our eyes to issues that were older than our age, at a young age. We had to question our freedom to play safe and to have fun. So I felt the need to find my voice at an early age.

I think the turning point in my life was when I was inspired by the Palestinian journalist Mazan Dana who was working for Reuters in Hebron, and I was really amazed by his braveness and by the way he struggled on a daily basis to show by his camera to show the world what was going on in Hebron. He made me feel someone is telling my story.

When I was 12, he was killed in Iraq covering news there for Reuters, shot dead by a U.S. soldier beside Abu Graib prison in Baghdad. I was 12. He was 42. I asked to see his face to make a farewell when his body arrived in Hebron. At that time I decided to start taking action and to believe in my voice. And I started a magazine at my school where I published Israeli and Palestinian news alike and initiated debates with students about our position as youth toward the conflict we are living in. We were challenging our teachers who opposed us on some points, having some discussions on controversial topics, but I was really happy that I was generating that voice that grew up inside me.

I decided to become a journalist at the age 15. It was the first time I took a picture of soldiers in Hebron. I remember my hands shaking at that time. I still have the photo of the soldier asking me why I was taking a picture of him. I have other photos that remind me of those days. I was very young, Sometimes when I ask myself today why I was doing this, I can't believe that I was doing this because I didn't pay any attention to the level of danger that I was putting myself in.

I want to study political science. I struggled for three years applying, as I had this dream to study abroad in the United States. I had to keep applying for three years, until I was able to get a scholarship to study in the United States. I didn't make it for political science, but I made it close, for something I like, communications. And one good news: I was sharing my interest in politics with my advisor and she's going to help me to make a minor in political science and international relations.

I'm really happy that today I'm starting a new chapter, a new level, in my life, a new era, a new period that I need really to be careful about. And one other point that's important to share is, and I don't share this a lot, is that one of the hardest things I face is the controversial discussions I have between me and myself is my position towards Israel. I refused to go with the flow, and refused to do what the rest of my community did, and I decided to take another path, but that put me in a hard position in front of my people. I believe it is the biggest challenge in my life. It is bigger than any other challenge because of the way some members of my community perceive what I am doing and perceive my beliefs for the future of my country. That's hard and sometimes I revise myself. I say I might be wrong. But I remind myself that if I flow with the wind, I'm losing who I am.

I attended private school for four years, the first four grades, and then I moved to public school for the rest of my education. That's actually another challenge. At the public school there wasn't good English education. And it was a personal matter that I had to learn English by myself, with the support of my parents, since I dreamed early to study in the United States. You know, I remember in the 7th grade, I wasn't speaking English very well. I was getting low grades in English, so over five years it was a struggle to speak English really well, and to be able to go for it when I wanted to apply for studying abroad. Because not many people who come to the U.S. for study are graduates of public schools if they are Palestinian.

Public schools also have better equipment and technology. I remember we started to learn computers when I was in 3rd grade. There was no Windows Millennium yet. We had to go

through different processes to open a computer. Private schools have computers and they have everything.

I use Facebook and Twitter, I have a website and I also use YouTube sometimes. I started to use the internet when I was 12 years old. I was just using messenger to communicate with family from Gaza. The funny thing is, and the sad thing, is that Gaza is 45 minutes from now, and yet the only Gazans I've met are those I meet outside of Palestine: in America, in Europe, in Germany, France, Ireland, but not in any Arabic country—45 minutes away and I can't see them. This has become my principle: admit the other side's concerns, and then speak about your rights.

When you have a small number of friends, Facebook is for personal use. Facebook is more to stay in touch. When you start to have more friends, you have to think more about your message because you have a wider audience every time you post something. So, right now I use it for both—staying in touch, because with some people I'm only in touch through Facebook, and to post about my work, to post opinions, to exchange opinions, to make discussions. And you'll notice a lot of people when they start to use Facebook, they start out by using it personally, but then it develops. They start to use it for work, for sharing your opinions. Now a 10-year old kid who has Facebook can share an article he read and can share his opinion and can post a comment for a Prime Minister. It's changing the world. If you say, tell me one word about Facebook, I'll say it's my world. I can't perceive the world without Facebook. I can't perceive my life, even. It's your gate to the world I feel isolated when I'm not on it for a long time.

My mother has been working as a mathematics teacher (3rd-10th) for 19 years and my father (1st-12) worked as a sports teacher at school for eleven years, then he finished his license as a driving teacher, and then resigned and became a driving teacher. They both have associates degrees.

I have been using Facebook for six years now. You ask how often I am on Facebook; I think you should ask how often am I not on Facebook! If I'm not on the computer, in the U.S. there is the 3G, so I can get internet on my phone, so anytime I am somewhere and someone sends me a message it's maximum 24 hours that I will respond to them. Maximum. If more than this, then I am ignoring them.

I grew up with internet at home and they have it now, too. And since I moved to the U.S., my mom has gotten a Facebook account and a Skype account. So we keep in touch through Skype and Facebook. My mother's comments on Facebook are really special to me.

Facebook is both a place to be authentic and to escape from reality. It depends on what you post—how far can you go to reflect who you are? You can't post certain issues about Palestine, because as you know Facebook is watched. What I try to do is to be as inoffensive as possible. For me, it's not about restriction as much as it is trying to be balanced. It's not only in Facebook.

Sometimes in life I can't say something as a Palestinian. Palestinians ask me why I am posting certain things online and I tell them if they don't like it don't look at it. But my point is that this puts me in a hard position in front of everyone. Among Palestinians, they want you to be on their side or the other side. You know, moderation is offensive to everyone. A polarized position is the only acceptable one it seems, on Facebook yes, and even in real life. This is what puts me in such

a difficult position because to not be moderate and to recognize both sides is to turn my back on who I am.

I do feel worried about the Israeli authorities monitoring my Facebook, especially now that I am in the United States. But you get to a certain point where you realize that you turn your back on the truth if you try to make everyone feel good. And if the Israelis are upset that Palestinians are angry about what they are doing, they shouldn't be doing it. I can post things, and if the Israeli authorities feel bad about that, they can simply tell the army and police not to do that. The thing that needs to change is the thing that people are criticizing, not to silence the criticism. If they don't like criticism, stop doing things that call for criticism.

I am following the Israeli spokesperson on Twitter. I'm also following the Israeli consulate spokesperson of Los Angeles. One of my Facebook friends is the director of external affairs at the Israeli prime minister's office.

Of course I think about retaliation and punishment, and what happened in February, my arrest, was a true example. They knew who I was, I believe, according to my lawyer. Actually, my lawyer contacted me after I was released and said please, keep your head down. It was intentional, what happened. And that's why I decided to lay low for a little while. But you know, when you get used to speaking out, speaking freely not being silent and taking action, you can't be but like this. At least I should do what I can possibly do. I am away from journalism, from writing, from photography right now, but at least I can post some articles, some pictures. I feel

it's good because the world needs to know and I need to tell them in the best way that I can. But yes, I feel worried sometimes. But not just from the Israelis.

Last month I published an article in a Palestinian magazine criticizing Fayad's government and Hamas's government in Gaza and criticizing the Palestinian authorities. And my mother was talking to me on Skype and said, don't come back unless you have foreign citizenship. Because she said she feels the U.S. is giving me a longer tongue. But I told her, they can't play with the destinies of the nations indefinitely. People have to know and people have to speak out.

Actually, the Arabs are really divided. We Palestinians are divided, and that's I believe our real problem. Many Palestinians believe this, but few would say this. Many Palestinians would prefer to be under the Israeli civil administration than the under the corrupt Palestinian authority. My parents keep telling me that they had better lives when the Israeli civil administration was in control of the West Bank and Gaza. Not only my parents. My grandparents, and many others. Because we receive funds. Where does it go? Ramallah is the center of all the development. You see villas, good places in Ramallah. Where does this money go? We receive these funds so that officials can have villas and so that their sons can go to the best universities in the world? When these officials came into power, they didn't even have clothes from abroad from exile. They had nothing. Family members gave them clothes. Coaches came to their houses. They had nothing. And now they live in the best neighborhoods in Ramallah, they have the best clothes, they drive the best cars, their children go to the best colleges in the world. Some of their children have foreign citizenship. And what about the millions of other Palestinians the normal citizens who pay this price, who are suffering, who are not educated, suffer for the sake of the elite corrupt

political power players, some of whom are not even educated. That is why many Palestinians would prefer to go back to the Israeli civil administration which ended in 1994 when the PA took over. Well, the Israelis paid money. I'm sorry to say this. I respect Yasser Arafat as a leader, and as someone who represented the Palestinians, but let's be honest. The Israelis paid money to Yasser Arafat in 1994. Where did this money go?

The situation has been changing in the last three years since Fayad took office as prime minister. He's educated and he's not corrupt. He's trying to resist corruption. But before, we received money enough to have better development and a better situation than the one we have right now. But people were really misled. It was a better life, people were enjoying their lives. It's a big issue. Our leadership misled us. They could have stayed abroad and not made any resolution, but to accept less than what was offered?

Let me put this another way. You know King Hussein of Jordan. Thirty years of secret negotiations in which he refused all Israeli offers which excluded one centimeter of the West Bank and Gaza strip. He said no, you have to give it all back. Palestinian leadership opposed Hussein's leadership, putting obstacles in front of any resolution, and they began secret negotiations with the Israelis to put obstacles in front of him. He didn't know about those negotiations and agreements. And then they accepted the Gaza Jericho solution. And now we have a lot less than what we could be offered. You know why? Because we follow our emotions. And unfortunately we have a very kind, nice nation, that's very simple, following its emotions, and believed Yasser Arafat and his people. And look how we are living today.

There are different aspects to not being authentic. First, this is not only a Palestinian problem. This is an Arabic problem. We've never gotten to the point where we have decided to come the serious table to define our problems and admit our mistakes. We continue to perceive ourselves as being on the right track and we will continue to be on the right track. This is the problem on the Palestinian side or with any other Arabic country. Now it's changing in some countries, but the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian politicians have made mistakes over decades. Everybody is looking for its own interests. Now Fatah and Hamas. If you, as an American, look at Fatah and Hamas, how could you support the Palestinians to get a state? When the Israeli authorities left Gaza, see what Hamas has done. That makes me and a lot of other Palestinians think that if we really get a state our next problem is going to be a civil war. Let's not lie to ourselves. Many Palestinians would never say this, but that's our next problem. When you were in Hebron I showed you the South and the North. No one speaks about that.

People don't speak of the refugees and the people of the cities. The refugees are perceived really in a bad way. It's really rare when a man from a refugee camp goes to ask for a marriage to a lady from the city that he's accepted. Let's own our problems. Let's admit them.

Let's look to the Israelis. Israel is one of the best countries in manufacturing agricultural machines. Israel is one of the best countries from a military perspective. Great education. Great colleges. Strong economy as well. Strong politics. A united community, despite all the differences. They came from all different parts of the world. From the East and the West, black and white, Russians, and all these differences. But when it comes to politics and the destiny of Israel they are all united. That's what we don't have. But no Palestinian would be brave enough

to go on the Palestinian TV and speak to his people and tell them, this is the reality and like this, this is how far we can go for the next ten years.

We are lying to ourselves. And this is why I am taking the position that we should admit the other side. Let's take into consideration the concerns of the other side because that's ability our right now. You know, we can't go for a fight right now about anything. We need to define who we really are. We need to be honest about who we are pretending to be and change it.

You know it's not a Palestinian issue, but it's an Arabic habit not to show who we really are. You know, in Arab culture, we would rather be proud than to admit certain things. You can look to Saddam Hussein's example. See how he was speaking on TV when the U.S. wanted to come to Iraq. I totally don't agree with what happened in Iraq, the attack there, but he knew that his military abilities couldn't stand up against the Americans. But he preferred the dignity. He preferred to pretend to have abilities that he didn't have. Bush said that the Americans were coming to Iraq. He said, I know. But he wouldn't step down. And then he was arrested. But he preferred it that way. He did what any other Arab leader would do. We don't identify with reality. It's like we're living in another world. If you read King Abdullah's book, *The Last Best Chance*, he speaks about this with reference to the second Gulf War.

I think we need a great leader to admit all these things and to speak honestly to his nation. Because in actuality we will not lose our dignity when we identify who we really are and open the door to new possibilities. No. On the contrary, we are saving our dignity. Because if we open

the door to possibilities, we are in actuality “saving the water off our face,” as we say in Arabic. It means keeping your dignity.

Of course there is a lot of criticism every time I say these things, and I personally get used to this. I get used to this. But that’s how it is when you come to change something. Of course you will be criticized. And sometimes you pay for this change with your life. But if you want to make a change and be who you are and be a true leader, this is how it is. And yes, there is always criticisms, especially when you are in an Arabic environment. But that will change. People think more about other people than they think about themselves in the Arabic world. You saw this when you came to Palestine. Everyone wanted to know who you are and who are your neighbors. We can change this.

I use all three of these languages. If I’m speaking with my sister or my friends, I would use Arabizi. If I’m talking with you of course I will use English. If I’m speaking on a formal platform then I will use formal Arabic or formal English. Arabizi is easier to write than Arabic. I don’t have to change the keyboard. You know, Arabic is a complicated language. Arabizi is very quick, very easy, and very common as well. Arabizi was born out of an online media culture. It is the result of all these platforms—messenger, Facebook, and all these forums.

Participant #5: Reem

Sex: Female

Age: 23

Raised in: Ramallah, West Bank

Currently lives in: West Bank

My name is Reem, and I have three older brothers. When I was 7 months old in my mother's womb, my dad got arrested by Israeli soldiers as were so many Palestinian during the first Palestinian uprising (first Intifadah). I lived the first five years of my life with my mother and my brothers without having my dad living with us, because he was arrested, and my mom had to go out and work during these five years.

I don't remember the details but I still remember the day my father was released I didn't know him that time, and I thought he was one of our family friends. I used to visit him very often while he was in prison and he used to tell me every time I visit him that he feels hurt and pain because he can't hug me during all that time and I used to see him from behind the bars.

After that I lived with all my family members, including my dad, and I have amazing parents; they always encourage us in to be involved in issues of social work and social justice and to get good grades in our classes. When I was in the ninth grade, I joined a radio program that served kids from my age, and then I was chosen to present a TV program, the program name was "Youth Studio", and after I graduated high school, I majored in media and journalism and I worked in several areas within that field, and now, after I graduated, I still work in the same field.

I attended private school for primary and secondary school. I learned internet both from school and from outside of school. Both of my parents have bachelor's degrees. My mother is a project manager in a women's organization called Palestinian Working Women, which promotes women and societal development. My father is an Arabic teacher for Friends Boys School for the Quakers.

For the last 6 months I've been working on program called the Palestinian documentation project. I used to work with Palestinian refugees in Jordan. We made seven documentaries about Palestinian youth in refugee camps there.

Since we finished that project, I am now working for a new satellite TV station in Palestine and for this job I prepare and present for the show.

I've been using Facebook for four years. I use it about one hour per day. I had internet at home growing up. We got internet at home since I was in school starting from 7th grade. I use Facebook because it's entertaining, to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, and as a tool for social and political change.

Facebook is not meant to be a space where you pretend to be another person. For me, it is a space where I can reflect on what I have and share my personality. I do present myself and write and share ideas related to who I am in reality. And note: all my friends on Facebook are people that I know. I never add or accept someone I don't know.

I think the reality of the Palestinian situation is that Palestinians are brave and strong and believe in freedom. They don't just try to show this, they actually *are* strong.

As for me, I post on Facebook the things that reflect who I really am. I want to appear who I really am and talk about the things I really believe in, whatever they are. One of the things I really believe in is the campaign for rights in Palestine, as Palestinians, and as women in particular

I don't blame anyone for what is happening and has happened in Palestine. I just tell stories of what I see and hear. If people don't like the stories, they could blame whoever the story is about, but that is not what I do personally. I won't hide the story, but I won't blame, either. Why do I need to blame? If the story is negative, the story will speak for itself.

Many of us are used to writing in Arabizi, but a lot of youth reject that. We encourage each other to write either in Arabic using Arabic characters, or English using English characters. If I am writing something to my friends about something related to our community, I will use Arabic. But if I'm writing something I want my friends from the whole world to know I will write in English. But most of the time I write in Arabic.

Participant #6: Haifa

Sex: Female

Age: 24

Raised in: Nablus and Ramallah, West Bank

Currently lives in: West Bank

I was born in 1988 in the city of Nablus, Palestine, and now I live in the city of Ramallah.. I got my bachelor's degree in 2010 and majored in media. I volunteered in many governmental and civil institutions and foundations that specialize in media, theater, and arts for youth and now I'm a producer and a TV program and news broadcaster for a Palestinian channel.

I consider the main turning point in my life to be when I volunteered for the Palestinian governmental TV. I started volunteering there in 2007 and I continued to volunteer until the beginning of 2012. This really shaped my skills as a journalist.

I got married about a year ago and I'm trying to get a scholarship to get my master's degree from Britain this year.

In elementary schools I attended a public school and in high school I attended a private school. I use Google blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. I learned internet both inside school and outside of school. I took extra technology courses outside of school while I was taking technology courses in school at the same time. In Palestine, we keep up with new technology as it comes in, and so we don't have problems using the internet or learning any new technology.

My mom has her master's degree and my father has his Ph.D. My mom works as the head of schools administrations in the Ministry of Education in Palestine and my dad is a professor in Al-Quds University. As I mentioned, I am a broadcaster and a producer and I'm also a TA at Bir-Zeit University.

I started using Facebook 5 years ago. I don't know exactly how much time I spend, but I'm on the internet all the time as well as Facebook, maybe around 5 hours a day. We had internet at home when I was growing up. We got internet when I was 15. I use Facebook because it's entertaining, to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, and as a tool for social change.

I don't change my personality over Facebook and I post my ideas without hesitating. I portray my real self online, for I'm a journalist and I write blogs and I submit them on Facebook or wherever medium through my everyday writing and I also use political cartoons to express myself.

Many Palestinians present themselves as fearless freedom fighters simply because the world views Palestinians as powerless and doesn't stand with them and doesn't protect their lives. That's why. The Palestinians are stubborn people and want to show the world the best of the Palestinian people.

What language I use depends on the topic and the content of the subject.. Sometimes I like to use English proverbs that if I translated into Arabic, they would lose their meaning and vice versa, so I post those in their original language. And sometimes I just quote Arab or English writers, so

again I would post those as they are. Sometimes I quote from my own blogs which are in Arabic. I prefer to use Arabic.

If I want to speak colloquial Arabic, I can still write colloquial Arabic using the Arabic characters. I never use Arabizi except for when it's necessary, like when I need to respond to some friends who use it.

I like to use the English language if I post about something political that happened in Palestine, such as when the occupation violates our human rights. I do this so my English speaking friends will understand what I wrote.

Participant #7: Qamar

Sex: Female

Age: 21

Raised in: Bethlehem, West Bank

To tell my life story, I guess there are a lot of things that shaped me into who I am. I would start with my first day at school. On the way, my mom said remember said what we talked about, it will be fun, you will learn a lot. I held my mom's hand, and then she said it's time, so all the parents had to leave. I was the only one who said okay, and continued to sit on the floor. All the other kids were crying and sticking to their moms. My mom had told me that I was different and that I was smart and that I was going to do fine. And I did. I liked that. My mom helped to make me feel special from the very beginning.

I was chosen by my teacher to go to Germany with some 200 other people. I asked him how come because the minimum age was 15, and I was 12. He said, I know you're young but you can do it. And I realized through this that I can do things and that I was brave. It was a camp in Germany with over 4,000 people and I was the youngest there. It was so intimidating, but I loved it.

Another event that shaped me was the intifada that happened in 2000. We didn't really think it would, but it did. As I saw the soldiers I kept thinking, how am I going to be good to these people? I wanted to treat them differently so they would think that we're human. But then they kept killing and intimidating and threatening us and it didn't matter what I did. So I ended up

thinking, what the hell am I doing? This was life changing. I saw a lot of people and some friends who were shot, who were injured. People were taken to prison for no reason.

A couple of years after the intifada things started to cool down a little bit. My mom was in Ramallah, outside of Bethlehem, and my dad was out of the country for a little while. He was a reporter, so he had to travel. And at some point they invaded Bethlehem and the Israeli military had come in and took a siege on Bethlehem and my parents did not know this. And when they found out they could not even come back home. They didn't know how to get to us. It was just me and my little sister. She was about 10 at the time and I was 13. We were stuck and we didn't know what to do.

We used to live on the fifth floor of an apartment building in Bethlehem at that time, which was considered to be very high. And right across from our house the presidential airport for the PA was right there, for the Palestinian Authority, and all of the Israeli military used it for them and their tanks to shoot from. One day I remember seeing this huge, ginormous thing pointing right at our building. We freaked out. We had no idea if they were going to bomb us. We called our brother and we told him we were scared and we didn't know what to do. There was a siege outside and there was a curfew so we couldn't leave. He came somehow, I don't know how. We had to pack just a few things in a backpack, all of our important things, whatever we could carry—you know, our legal documents, our money, mom's gold, the emergency kit, things like that. And for the first time in my life I realized the seriousness of it all. Up to this point I never got how dangerous it was. We were hiding behind trucks, garbage containers, going through allies, but my heart never stopped beating, not for a second.

I was freaking out, but through the entire intifada, I was not as affected as a lot of others because the intifada didn't really enter where we were in Bethlehem. Also, we were not in an area that did not suffer as much as other areas, and also my parents are really moderate when it comes to politics. We did not march outside, we did not throw stones, we did not do any of those things. But when this happened I suddenly understood how others could be affected during the intifada.

I attended private school my entire life. During the kindergarten and first school, I attended a private school for orphans. It was close to home and mom thought it would be a great way to learn and see how other privileged I am.

They talked about computers, new media and the internet in school, but we really learned it outside of school. My mom has her Ph.D. in psychology and my dad has his bachelor's in social work. My mom works at a university just outside Bethlehem and my dad is the director for a democracy non-profit in Bethlehem.

I've been using Facebook from 2008 until now. I don't use Facebook every day, but on average I'd say I spend about 2-3 hours a day on Facebook, but some days not at all if I don't have time. I recently started using WordPress blogs in addition to Facebook. We have internet at home now, but we didn't always have internet at home growing up. In Bethlehem it was very expensive and it came a little late. In 1996 when I was 6 years old we got our first computer. But internet we got in 2001 or 2002.

I use Facebook for entertainment a little bit, but rarely. I just use it a lot to keep in touch with friends and to share my personal thoughts and opinions. I also use it as a tool for social change. I would say this is my primary use. I don't use Facebook as a tool for political change that often. I also use Facebook for publications. I post my writing and my photography on it. I also use it for class. We use Facebook in the university also. We have a group or page. We all share our ideas and we comment. It really varies, but we use it for class, too.

Facebook is middle ground for me. It's a space where I can be myself, but it's also a space where I can't be completely myself because I know there are consequences. For instance, my political ideas or the political change I want to see. If you post these kind of ideas, you'll get a lot of reactions against you, especially since my political ideas are very liberal, open-minded and advanced for a Palestinian and very forgiving and accepting of the other side.

Both of these ideas have gotten me in trouble before. I had friends on Facebook who are Israeli and Jews around the world. And a lot of times we discuss things, and it shows on my wall. It shows there's something Jewish or Palestinians see Jewish names, and a lot of my Palestinian friends would confront me on this and ask me, How the hell could you do this? And you call them friends? So that's a consequence for my political life, my social life. It's not easy to show it.

For instance, just a couple of months ago I needed funding for my senior project, and I went to a Palestinian organization to get the funding. And they support you in this organization in one of two ways: equipment or money. They hesitated so I wanted them to know they had funded me in

the past. So I mentioned that I had worked with Israelis on one of my former projects, a film, and I could see their face change. They said, What? You worked with Israelis? They freaked out, and I know now that I can't do this. I can have my own political opinion, but it has to be kept private.

The thing is that Palestinians believe that if you're a good person and patriotic then you don't show pain or fear. You fight any way, but without showing fear. You should not have that kind of fear. You should not worry about if you're going to die or not die. That makes you weak. That kind of fear weakens your cause.

People here are not so good about giving. It's not like other countries where people say 'I feel your pain or it's okay to be sad. Here people say life's shit, and it's going to continue to be shit. But you move on. There is pain, but you live your life and you don't complain about it. So people here are very strong about that. You can't complain about your life or say I feel pain or I'm scared or whatever.

Freedom fighters and those who are active fighting the Israelis, they feel if you show them fear they will use it against you. And that's what they want. They want fear in us. So you don't show it. If you feel it, you don't show it and you don't talk about it. In prison, when Israeli soldiers talk to you, you don't show your fear.

I heard the story of a woman just the other day on International Women's Day on March 8. She was talking. She was telling her own story. She was a very strong woman. She said when she was in prison, one of the captains told her that the Israeli soldiers were going to have her raped if

she didn't give the information they wanted. She said she didn't have the information and she said I don't care if I'm raped. And everyone in the room was like, what the hell is she talking about? How could she not care if she was raped? So I listened more to her story and when the soldiers were threatening her she said, Fine. Rape me. I don't care.

So they brought in an Israeli soldier who was supposed to rape her. He was an Arab. He was an Arab Israeli. He was a Druze. We call them the Druze. It's an Arab minority. Anyway, they brought him in and he said to her I'm going to rape you if you don't tell us the information we want. She said, okay, and she took off her top. She said, I'm ready.

He then said, I can't do this, and he left. And the captain said to her, what kind of woman are you? You're a slut, you're not a woman! And she said, yes, exactly, that's who I was to them. If I said, no, no, then they'd do it and use my fear against me. But if I say I don't care, you'll see me as a slut and you'll leave me alone. And the Israeli soldiers went on questioning her and said, what if they had gone on with it and you had gotten pregnant from your rapist? And she said, I don't care. I would take my son or daughter and show them to the world and say, "This is what occupation did to me. I'm not afraid of you. And if I am, I'm not going to show you. Ever." This is what she told them, and this is exactly what you do here. Everyone is so freaked out, but you never say it. If you show them, then they've won. They have power over you.

Admitting and talking about your feelings—yes, there is an advantage to this because you basically say I am human and I feel things. To acknowledge your feelings here, what is

happening to you, it's very difficult. But when you do this, when you say, I'm not afraid, it takes away part of your own humanity.

When it comes to pictures on Facebook, there are still things I can't do. For example, I posted some pictures of me standing next to one of my best friends. We're not romantically involved. He's younger than me and everything; We're just friends. But everyone was commenting on it and some people even called me on the phone. They said, how could you post pictures of you with this man? Is he your boyfriend? Is he your fiancé? And I said, no, he's just a friend. And they said, why the hell would you post a picture of just a friend? A lot of people just don't understand that. I was really, really annoyed. So I just backed off and took the pictures down because I just don't want this hassle. But a lot of the pictures of me, personal pictures, any pictures of me at a party, standing next to friends, any of these pictures I cannot post. At all. I can't post these pictures because in Palestinian culture that means I've had a lot of men and I get a bad reputation. It depends on the people. Some of my friends thought I looked intimate. Others thought it was inappropriate. It really varied, but generally my friends thought it was not a good thing.

It would still be a big deal if people saw me walking with a man on the street, but it's magnified on Facebook. Because people think if he's that important to you that you'd want to post pictures of him on Facebook, it must be an intimate relationship. This is true especially of the older generation—people in their 30s, 40s and 50s. If you go with someone in person and they see you, even in the middle of the day, they assume you're doing something that you shouldn't be doing.

It's a little unsafe to talk about and also to do. But you know what, I know who I am. I know my parents know who I am, and I don't give a damn.

Sometimes I am afraid to post political messages on Facebook, particularly of the Israeli military. One of my international friends posts a lot of political messages on Facebook, and when they interrogated her at the airport they brought up the things she had posted and asked her about them, so they obviously had been monitoring her. Also I have some Palestinian friends who post pictures and comments about Israel and what they did or about the occupation, and some of these friends were arrested. Others were denied permits. I had a friend who was denied a permit, like to go to Jerusalem, and he didn't know why he was denied. And finally they told him. They brought up as evidence things he had written about. Sometimes it is very dangerous, yes.

That's the Israeli government. But as far as the Palestinian government, to tell you the truth, with the Palestinian government, it's not fear, but it's a concern. I don't want to struggle and I don't want to open Pandora's box. In my opinion, they are really terrible people because they have a lot of corruption. Some of the good people, but generally they're not good people. They really use this against women sometimes. If a woman is really aggressive sometimes, this bothers them sometimes. So if I post something, I try to frame it in a way that doesn't come across as so aggressive.

Sometimes the Palestinian government monitors Facebook. For instance, a while back there was a march in Ramallah to protest against what the Israelis were doing. And the Palestinian cops came in and they stopped the march. They prevented people from marching. And my sister was

there, and she said, what the hell, are you crazy? We're marching against our enemy. They said, no, Israeli is not our enemy. And they got her angry and she said get out of my way. And they told her if you don't go home we will arrest you. She said, arrest me. I don't care. So she got into a huge fight with him, he took her to the station, and my dad had to come over and get her. So sometimes they have these stupid things that they do that are very annoying and very terrible.

The thing is, people don't talk about this much, but there is corruption in our government. There are a lot of things that happen that we don't know about and a lot of deals that are made that we don't know about. The Palestinian Authority tries on a certain level to even things up with Israel. They say to the Israeli army, okay, we will tell the kids not to march, but I need you to do something for me. Unfortunately, this happens all the time and it always results in Israel winning and us losing, and the Palestinian authorities getting something out of it. This gets old after awhile. Because Palestinians don't know how to negotiate. And when they do, we're always the weaker party, so they have no leverage.

As far as women are concerned, I remember when Facebook came out and Palestinian girls and women just started to interact with Facebook like a lot of other people were doing. A lot of my friends actually did this, especially back in 2008 when Facebook was not that big. They started posting pictures of themselves on Facebook—not of themselves trying to look sexy or anything, just regular pictures. A lot of comments came from people, especially from their own small communities. People were talking about them. They were telling them things like, how dare you? Or, aren't you afraid? Or, I'm going to take this picture of you and use it against you or against

your family. And I didn't believe these people or take these threats seriously until a while later when talking to my friend.

A friend of mine posted a regular picture of herself on Facebook, like of her in a garden or something. And a guy took her photo and used it to try and blackmail her. He took her photo and Photoshopped it and everyone was like, see? That's what happens to you when you post pictures. You shouldn't have done this. You shouldn't have posted these pictures. And they blame the person for posting them. My dad is just like this. It's a very common thing here. Everyone talks about it. Everyone thinks it.

Rarely Palestinian women show their full face on Facebook or they post pictures of themselves from very far away so these pictures can't be used in blackmail. A lot of women post pictures of themselves that couldn't be Photoshopped. Other Palestinian women who are not afraid to show something, they do post pictures, but often they do it in a different way. For instance, if a woman wants to post a picture she would do it with her husband or she would post a picture of her with her kids so also the social judgment would be less.

I remember a friend of my sister posted a picture of herself on Facebook, not a sexual picture, just a normal profile picture. I think she was standing next to some of her friends. This was back in high school. Her dad found out through a friend, his friend, and it was crazy. The very first time she posted something on Facebook, her parents found out. She wasn't even familiar with Facebook herself because it had just come out. But her parents found out and her dad hit her and they forced her to remove it.

My sister told me the story and I was like, what the hell are you talking about? But she said that one of her classmates came into school bruised. And my sister knew the girl, but she wasn't friends with her. So she went up to her and she talked to her and then they became friends. But she was like, excuse me, your dad hit you because you posted this picture of yourself?

It really happens here. One of my friends here in the university, she posted a picture of herself and some comments on love. She was giving her opinion, on how she felt when she got hurt. And her mom and her older brother hit her so bad, she came to school bruised the next day. In the next two days they forced her to shut down her account, and she did. She had to shut down her account, and then two weeks later she opened another Facebook account, but using an alias.

Religion also plays into our use of Facebook or at least the way a lot of people think about it. About two years ago some people in Saudi Arabia were investigating Facebook and social media in order to determine Islam's response to it. We call them the Mufti. These are people who study religion or Shari'a, the law, all of it. They use their investigations to start new laws or to change old laws. The Mufti tell Muslims what to do.

Well this guy, one of the Mufti, in Saudi Arabi decided that Facebook was very dangerous. He made a speech on it that basically said, this is very dangerous, you should not be using it. It promotes sex, promiscuity, racism. People of course did not listen to him. Then a few months later you saw that he had a page on Facebook. It was a page for his own beliefs, to promote Islam.

Ever since Facebook became popular there have been tons of groups that have to do with Islam, whether Palestinian or not. There are Facebook pages with the aim of gathering like a million people who love the prophet Mohammed. There are thousands of them, there aren't just one or two. Frankly, they make me sick. But anyway, the point is that a lot of people use Facebook for their own beliefs, and this is true of Islam as well.

There are also people who speak out against Islam and you can see these kinds of Facebook pages from people around the world, but especially here in the Middle East people just want to shut them up and close down the websites and say, how dare you?

There are social consequences more than anything else, but also political consequences, for posting things that go against Islam. If you want to join a political party for instance, or do political work, you can't if you've posted things that go against Islam. For the social consequences, you will get the judgment of you and your beliefs and your opinions. People will say to you, "So...you're not a believer, are you?" Or, you're a sinner or something, one of those words they call you.

My parents don't mind what I post on Facebook. Well, my mother doesn't mind. They object, but they know that these are my opinions and this is my own space . My mom thinks I should not post a lot of personal opinions or ideas that are very radical—radical to society—like homosexuality or bisexuality or sexuality. Or talking about my opinion towards Israelis, or about women and men. All these ideas which are considered controversial to society, she's like, you

don't have to discuss them with someone on Facebook. Discuss them in real life. Why the hell should you post them on Facebook? So that's just an opinion that she gives me, but then she says, you know what? It's your opinion, it's your problem. Fine. You solve it. If you have any issues, don't come back to me crying.

For my dad, especially lately, due to our conflicted and bad relationship, this is a problem. My dad does not want me to post anything on Facebook other than to show I am a good citizen, to be diplomatic, politically moderate, and so on. For instance, awhile back he tried to add me on Facebook as a friend and I said that I don't want to, and he said why not. And I said I don't want to, you're not one of my friends. And he said, what is that supposed to mean? And I said, you're my dad. I don't want you anywhere near my Facebook. And then he said, but I want to read what you post and I said, that's private. It has nothing to do with you and it's not something I want to share with you. Of course this turned into a huge fight in the family over it.

He went on Facebook and he just saw my profile picture and my nickname and said what the hell is that? I said it is a nickname. He said why do you have a nickname? Just put your name and remove that picture. My picture was like me leaning on a tree with my hair on the side, and he said that is an inappropriate picture. And I said, why is that inappropriate? And then he said you don't look official and you don't look serious. And I said, how is that a bad thing? And he said, remove it. Just put a picture like the ones they have in a passport or an ID. And I said no, I don't want to do that. It was a huge fight. And so I refused and I blocked him and I said, it's none of your business. It went on for like two months, him trying to do this.

A lot of times he asks me what I post. I know that he has very strong, not just opinions, but judgments, toward the things that we post. My sister added him on Facebook. A lot of times he complains about what she posts. The other day she posted something on homosexuality. No, I think it was on God. It was her own opinion. Anyway, she posted something like, God, why are you letting this shit happen down here? If I could, I would go up there right now and talk to you. And somebody saw this and called my dad. My dad called my sister who was out of the country and then called me to tell her to remove the post. I asked him, what was wrong with that post? He said, she's talking to God. And I said, so? And he said, she needs to promptly remove it, and so on. It was a huge mess. My dad is very, very, very strict when it comes to these things, but we don't give him that space, so I don't feel it.

If I didn't feel restricted on Facebook, one of the first issues I would talk about would be homosexuality, bisexuality, and sexuality in Palestine. It would be women's issues in Palestine. It would be about the relationships between parents and children or fathers and daughters here in Palestine. It would be the laws—stupid, stupid laws in Palestine that are very sexist. I would talk about the occupation and how I'm sick of it. I would talk about the corruption in the government, in our government, the PA.

In my opinion, actually Palestinians won't. They won't win that. They won't fit in the world like that, because in my personal opinion, they are very, very strict when it comes to those new ideas, those modern ideas—the fact that you can accept the other, the fact that you can relate to the other, whoever that person is. In Shari'a law, one of the main foundations of Islam is that you

have to accept the other and respect them, even if you have differences. Although that does exist, people are not following it. People are not changing it to fit their own perspectives and beliefs.

Unfortunately, the weight of this falls on those who are homosexual, bisexual, open-minded, anarchists, secularists, whatever—all those who are different from the mainstream are suffering because the government is not changing, the beliefs are not changing, society is not moving forward. Stories that were happening forty, fifty years ago to my mom were just happening to my friends a few months ago. And I'm thinking, excuse me—that hasn't changed yet?

And at the same time I look at pictures, my family pictures, of women one or two generations older than me wearing tank tops or swimwear, and I'm thinking, these are the same people who are telling me to pull back, that I should wear a hijab, and that what I do is inappropriate. I confronted my family with these pictures three weeks ago. I showed them the pictures and I asked them, what do you think? You were wearing the same things as I wear. In fact, in some of the pictures they were wearing less than what I wear. They were the same age as I am. And they said that it was a different time, a different world back then.

So yes, the whole world is moving forward except for the Middle East and my country, Palestine. We are moving back to being very religious and using political Islam and it's very, very radical—not in a good way, very strict and conservative. And unfortunately, that's why Palestinians don't fit in. That's why the entire Western media, especially the U.S. media like Fox News or CNN, you see immediately, as soon as one Palestinian or an Arab shows up having

made a faulty decision or having faulty judgment, immediately they're portrayed in the media as a devil, as a terrible thing, especially as a terrorist. And that's why we don't fit in.

If we show that kind of tolerance, that acceptance of difference of the other, that other societies have shown, then all the other countries of the world would see us as just regular people, just the way they are, and they would see the whole thing that's happening to us as wrong. But the problem is that inside themselves and between themselves, many Palestinians don't accept it, they don't respect or accept homosexuality. They don't accept someone who calls themselves a secularist. When you introduce yourself here in Palestine you say either "I'm a Muslim" or "I'm a Christian." If you're silent, but then someone questions you and says, what is your religion? You have to say, Christian or Muslim. You don't get to say anything else. And if you do there are consequences. Palestinian society has not changed yet. And I have no idea if it will. I don't know if or when it will change, but I know that is why they don't fit in with the world.

If we started to portray ourselves as who we really are, as secularists, or anarchists, or homosexual, or what have you, of course that would make an impact on how the world sees us. Your politics, your diplomacy, your laws, these things define who you are as a government and as a country. You see this in the news. When a government changes its laws on homosexuality, for instance, people are watching. I remember reading an article about the U.S. when one of its states was voting on gay marriage. And the whole world was talking about it.

So the idea is if we start showing our ideas, people will start seeing us as humans. They will see us just as they are. We are a different people who have our differences, but who have those fears,

those ideas, those relations of humanity. So when we show this to them, when they see that, instead of seeing this person who they all don't like, we speak gibberish and when we don't like something we get enraged or use violence, and think, let's kill them all! That image of us being terrorists or demons, that will fade. Because other homosexuals will see us and think, oh, they're supporting us. Or, at least, that means I can find homosexuals like me there. Or anyone who is a secularist would think, oh, there are secularists there. Or open-minded people would think, they are not like we thought. They're just like us. That wall of judgment and fear would disappear. This way we can bridge this huge gap between the world and us.

About the languages I use on Facebook, I use English mainly because I believe English is the number one language and because I have different people from different backgrounds, different languages, and English tends to gather them together or combines them. Like if I write something in English, almost everyone that I know would understand it—my Palestinian friends and my international friends. Also, more people have access to it, especially if I'm writing on a blog. For instance, if it's in English, any search engine will find it, whereas in Arabic, unfortunately, only a handful of people use Arabic language.

It depends on the audience and what I'm posting. Sometimes I post ideas that I intend only for Palestinian people or at least the Arabic public that I know. And I think those ideas are very important to them so I post in Arabic. Whereas other ideas I want to say, especially about myself, I do them in English. It really depends on what I am posting and who is that targeted audience that I want to reach.

I never use Arabizi. I hate Arabizi. It's not a language. It's a stupid, stupid way to write that people have created. And the other reason is that I really, really cannot read it. I hardly can. I think English is great and Arabic is great. If you want to express yourself well, use one of these languages. You don't have to write the same terms in the same language, same pronunciation, in different letters. It's very confusing around the world, to me and other people. It doesn't make sense.

Participant #8: Sara

Sex: Female

Age: 23

Raised in: Jordan & Nablus, West Bank

My name is Sara. I was born in Amman, Jordan, as my family was living there but when I was 4 years old we came back to Palestine and I grew up there. In Palestine I started to get involved in volunteer work and social work, and I have continued with this work till now. I studied in Birzeit University, majored in journalism and minored in sociology, and graduated in May, 2011. I currently work as training department coordinator and public relations officer in Northern Distribution Electricity Company, Nablus. Beside that I am working in journalism as a freelancer.

I attended public school for primary and secondary school. I use Facebook and I have a blog. I learned to use the computer and internet in a cultural center called "Cultural Children's Center" in Nablus, which is a municipal center. It was created to give the children in Nablus opportunity

to develop their skills and to spend their free time there. Both of my parents have bachelor degrees. My mother has been working in the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. My father worked as an accountant in a private company, but when he became 60 years old he retired.

I use Facebook about 4 hours a day. I have internet at home, and I had internet at home growing up. My parents got internet when I was about 12 years old. I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, and as a tool for social and political change. I am myself on Facebook. Facebook is not a space to lie or to show off, it is a tool that giving me the chance to exchange my real ideas with people, and to make the real good social and political change in the society.

Because we are Palestinian, we respect real freedom fighters who really fight the Israeli occupation and who really defend Palestine. Those who pretend to be freedom fighters want to have same respect from people but they will not have it because our society is very small and we know the real freedom fighters from the fake ones.

I don't feel restricted on Facebook. I critique Israel, the Palestinian government and Palestinian society. I also feel comfortable to post pictures. I can critique anything in the Palestinian government or Palestinian society. For example, last week I posted something in Arabic on my Facebook that critiqued people in Nablus because they don't like to go to cultural events which I see as very important, and I didn't feel restricted even I am living there and the people there will critique me.

Regarding language, it depends on whom I am writing for. For example, if I am writing for Palestinian people I would write in Arabic because not all of the Palestinians can read or understand English, but If I am writing for the world I would write in English. I would use Arabizi if I am also writing for Arab people.

The pros of English is that your message can be read by most people regardless if they are Arabic or English speakers. But the cons of it, for me I can't explain all my ideas in the English language as I am not an English speaker and as it's my second language. The pro of Arabic is that I can explain everything I want because it's my first language and it's easy to explain my ideas using it. The cons of Arabic are that your message can't be read by many people because people in the world are not familiar with Arabic as the Arabs are familiar with English. As far as Arabizi, in my opinion there are pros of using this type of characters but I think it destroyed the original language.

Participant #9: Zeytouna

Sex: Female

Age: 20

Raised in: East Jerusalem, Israel

I grew up in East Jerusalem. I was raised by parents who value independence. I remember I attended public school from primary or secondary school but my parents sent me to a special school on Sundays for gifted and talented children. I attended this school from 3rd to 10th grade.

This school gave us the opportunity to do things we otherwise wouldn't do, like be more involved in the arts and theatre and also to travel, to take field trips, to be involved in conferences and things. This school let me to believe I was different and that I was special. My parents were always supportive and encouraged me to continue and do what I wanted. Feeling special led me to believe that I could make a difference in society. And when I tried things out I was successful and so I thought I could do this.

This school was only available for students from schools controlled by the Israeli ministry of education. Students from Palestinian-controlled schools could not attend. But since I attended schools in East Jerusalem which were controlled by the Israeli educational ministry, I qualified. I had to take a special test and I got one of the highest marks, so I attended. I learned the internet and computers in school. I've been using Facebook since 2005. I use Facebook about 5-6 hours a day. I do have internet at home.

My mother finished the 10th grade. My dad is certified in auto mechanics. He is retired now, but he used to inspect cars to certify them as road-safe.

I use Facebook, Twitter, a blog, and I also have a YouTube channel. When I originally started using new media, I tried some blog-type thing but then I got some emails from people saying, you shouldn't do that. It doesn't suit you. So I stopped. I didn't like it much anyway. My blog is more than a blog to me. It feels like something real to me. It is a space where I can be myself.

I use Facebook to some extent for entertainment, but more often I use it to share my personal thoughts and to keep in touch with friends. I use it less for social change and never as a tool for political change. I use Facebook to inform friends about events and things, so in this sense I use it socially for social awareness and things. But I don't ever use it for political reasons. Not at all. It is too dangerous to use Facebook for that.

Just a week ago a friend of mine was arrested by the Israeli authorities for posting something on Facebook related to politics. Twitter is much better for politics. You only have 140 characters, so you can only say so much. Plus, people can't read your personal information, see your photos, see who your family and friends are, and so on. People can't learn much about you from Twitter. But on Facebook it's much more dangerous. You have a lot more information available for people to read and learn about you, but you also have your IP address, so someone can know what computer you're using.

A lot of people fake who they are on Facebook. This is common. And as far as Palestinians portraying themselves as freedom fighters or strong, this is common among Palestinians but I don't trust it. I think if you're really strong and brave and care about Palestine you won't go around bragging about it. In fact, I think those who are really strong don't talk about their strength; they just do it. For instance, I knew one of the guys was in the flotilla to Gaza. He bragged about his activism every day on Facebook, but when the flotilla was grounded, he got off the ship and just went on living his life. He didn't carry with him that kind of freedom fighter posture unless he was engaging in activism at the time. He acted like he was so devout to the cause, but if he was, how could he so easily give it up?

A lot of people show the “Palestinian face” to show the Israelis that they don’t care so they can appear strong and not let the Israelis win their will, even if they have won much of our land. Other Palestinians do it for other Palestinians. Like if there is a guy who likes a girl and he knows she feels strongly about Palestine, he will post all sorts of things on Facebook in order to get her to like him.

People post these kinds of things on Facebook for attention. But actually the Palestinian government is against this. The Palestinian government does not want revolutionaries in Palestine. It feels revolutionaries work against its mission and lower its leverage for diplomatic efforts and statehood. So actually there is a special section of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian government, which monitors Facebook. Not only Facebook, but all social media used by Palestinians. They monitor the internet. I have two friends who have been arrested by Palestinians, not by Israelis, for the political messages they posted on Facebook. And of course there is corruption in the government. So on the one hand the PA says they want peace and don’t want us to do anything to jeopardize it, but on the other hand they accept bribes from the Israelis which ends up preventing peace. There is a lot of corruption in the Palestinian authority, not to mention that Mahmoud Abbas is an asshole.

Sometimes this strength actually helps us and it’s not a show. Like the two recent prisoners held by Israel on administrative detention—their strength got them international attention. Shalabi was one of them and when Israel and Palestine did a prisoner exchange, she was one of the ones

released. She was supposed to be in there for 20 years for shooting an Israeli guard in the stomach, but she was released after 5 years.

Two friends of mine were arrested for posting political content on Facebook. One was female and the other was male. But I have heard five or six stories of this from other people. The man was arrested for posting some comment on his Facebook account saying something about negotiations with the Palestinians and the Israelis. Only 40 minutes after he posted this he was arrested by Palestinian authorities in Ramallah.

I am very careful when I post anything critical because of all these arrests. I also don't want to jeopardize my future or my career. If I'm arrested by a Palestinian, they can't do anything to me because I have an Israeli ID as a resident of East Jerusalem. So they could hold me for a day and that's it. It would be much worse for me if I were arrested by Israelis. It's not just arrest. A lot of my friends in the West Bank have been denied visas or permits to travel to Jerusalem, for instance, based on their Facebook or new media use. The Israelis have even told them this. When my friends ask why they were denied, sometimes the Israelis will even show you the post or posts which made them deny you.

So I am really careful about this. You never want to post something alone. If you are just part of a group or going with the flow or something it's harder for them to catch you or to single you out, but if you post a comment and then it gets a lot of likes and attention and people start talking about it, you are the one to blame for it, and you may pay the consequences.

So, yeah, it's not just the Israelis who are monitoring our Facebook and internet usage. The Palestinian Authority is, too. And for many Palestinians, to get arrested by them is much worse. I know some Palestinians who have gone to Palestinian jail and they say it is worse than Israeli jail because the Palestinian soldiers and officers use the Palestinian prisoners as a way to take out some of their anger, to change how they feel from being a powerless victim to something powerful. So often they treat their own people really badly so they feel like they have more control over their own situation.

Palestinian society is modernizing. So it depends on the circle you are in as to how free you are to post something on Facebook without family or friends giving you a hard time for it. For certain issues on Facebook, such as sexuality, there are certain things you don't talk about because they are controversial. If you are polite, you don't post things that offend people. But some people post controversial things and don't have a problem. I think roles have something to do with it. People like to categorize you as one thing or another and they like it if you fit into and stay in this role. If you are a really polite person and then you post something controversial or politically challenging, it will come across as really weird, and people will even tell you not to do that, because it's not like you. But if you are used to doing that, then people don't get worried. Still, I think Palestinians should respect each other's opinions. People tell me not to post certain things, but I tell them if they don't like it, don't read it.

As far as the languages I use, I use English and Arabic. I hate Arabizi, really. It's really difficult to understand. I feel much more comfortable using Arabic. I can express myself better as well.

I removed my hijab recently. It was one of the first steps I took to represent myself more authentically. You know it is easier for women here if they want to remove their hijab to do it after marriage. Then they can say that they removed their hijab with permission of their husband or because the husband wanted it. It's more acceptable for those reasons. But I removed my hijab for my own reasons and this has really helped me.

I was really scared my first day back to the university after I decided to remove the hijab. I called a friend and said I can't do this alone. Will you walk with me? And she walked with me to the school even when people were making comments. People said to me, what the hell did you do? What happened to you? And my parents told me things like I am going to hell and how could I do this to God? But at the same time when I removed the hijab I felt so free. I felt this energy about me I can't explain. I felt empowered and confident. It was amazing. And you know, I hardly even hear the comments that people make about me. At university, people gossip about me and say, look there's the girl that removed her hijab! as I pass by. And my friends tell me they said this, but I don't even hear them. I just feel so confident.

At the same time, I recognize the hijab as an important part of my Palestinian culture and identity, so I may choose to put it back on someday. But for now it feels good to have it off. It represents traditional Palestinian culture and conservative values which I don't feel represent me. I think I have a right to represent myself according to who I understand myself to be. And I believe I should be able to make choices about myself based on my own mind and thinking. At the end of the day, I have to be comfortable with who I am in the mirror.

It was less pushy on my parents because I did it at a time when I was in a relationship because if people asked them why their daughter removed her hijab they could answer that she is in a relationship and may get married soon.

We Palestinians have to face our own issues and problems in the mirror and admit we've made mistakes. In this way, we can change anything, anything. It can even fight the occupation. When I reached that point in my life where I was able to come home and look myself in the mirror and be confident that I was being authentic, I found a very powerful energy which surprised me. I use this energy and confidence to keep me going and to make some decisions that were not easy to make. One of these decisions was removing my hijab. I know some other women who want to take off their hijab but they feel they cannot. They are ruled by fear. But when you let that go and be yourself, accepting your mistakes and your weaknesses, you find a strength you didn't know possible.

If Palestinians were more honest, the international community would view us differently, too. It is the first step, really. But the Arab community is difficult to change. We are very strong, Arabs. We have a lot of pride and a strong sense of honor. But a lot of it is simply false. For instance, in Jordan, so many women are killed for so-called "honor killings," but when investigators look into it they find most of these women are innocent of their accusations.

Participant #10: Amelia

Sex: Female

Age: 18

Raised in: Bethlehem, West Bank

Currently lives in: Germany

I was born in Jerusalem in 1993 to revolutionary parents. I was raised in Bethlehem, but having close relations with my extended family allowed me to also be raised and influenced by the refugee camp my mother's family lived in and the agricultural returned village that my father's family lived in. I was able to witness both the Oslo Truce and the Second Intifada in 2000 and be influenced by them both. Growing up, I participated mostly in political and social resistance activities and I still do.

I currently live in Germany, because I was given an opportunity to volunteer for a year abroad to expand my horizon and learn more about the so-called "adult world". I believe I am quite a strong person because of all the things that I went through. It wasn't easy surviving war or social injustice and prejudice. It wasn't easy standing by as my family's stability fell apart. It wasn't easy growing up with hardly any friends. It wasn't easy being poor and having no food at all for a year. I try to remain positive about it and use it for my advantage. There are many times now, when I am feeling down and hopeless that I just look at my past and remind myself that I made it.

I attended a private Evangelical school in Beit Jala from 1st grade until 11th grade. This means that I basically got all of my education at that private school, but then I transferred to Bethlehem High-School for Girls in my senior year. This is a public school.

I regularly use Facebook (twice daily), YouTube (quite frequently), and a blog (as frequent as I can. It is unfortunately very time consuming).

I think that school plays a big role in learning to use the internet, but I wouldn't say that if it wasn't for school, I wouldn't have been able to use the Internet. There are, of course, things that I learned at school, but only things that made it easier to use the Internet—not how to use it at all. For example: how to search with Google with the most efficiency, how to protect one's privacy online, useful programmes for different tasks, how the internet works, etc.

The idea of the internet itself, however, wasn't new to me. I was used to having internet because I grew up around it. My family always used it, but not as much as today. That's why, it was very normal for me to get used to it after time. When I became old enough to be able to type and move the mouse around and understand computers and the internet, I just explored the different possibilities on my own. As I got older, and developed different interests, I started searching the web for different things. The internet is something that I grew up with.

The concept of new media is, I'd say, new to me. I was always somewhat of a lurker and not much of a participant. I was very hesitant about joining this world of sharing news and adding information to the database and to the world. Actually, I still am, but I was forced to do it by the

masses. Most of earth's population has Facebook, and so I got Facebook. From there, it became really easy to just join different websites and to understand them because, after all, it's all the same.

My mother has a PhD. I don't know what in because I am too lazy to understand. My father has a Bachelor's degree because he is the type to get too preoccupied with his job to finish his Master's studies.

I have been using Facebook since December the 25th of 2007. I use it for about 4 hours daily. I have Internet at home. My family had internet at home since as far as I can remember.

I use Facebook for entertainment, to keep in touch with friends, to express my personal and political thoughts, and as a tool for political and social change. I also use it to judge if a person is worth my friendship in real life. Their Facebook page and what they share is alternately what they believe in or think is amusing and so on. If I see that someone has shared something that I strongly disapprove with, and then I discuss it with them. If I see that there is no way to change this person's opinion, then that person shouldn't be my friend in real life. Yes, I respect different opinions, but I prefer to share some sort of basic belief system with my friends or the people who are close to me.

Facebook is as much of a real environment, to me, as the real world is. I don't hide behind a computer and share things that don't represent me. My Facebook page should be as real as my diary for example. Maybe not as detailed and informative, but still. Facebook is a tool for people

to share what they believe in and what they are thinking about with people they know. If I lied on Facebook, then I might as well lie all the time. I try to keep my image as authentic on Facebook as I can. If I didn't, then I would be lying to myself and everyone I know.

The cultural image of Palestinians, in general, is a strong fearless fighter, who is not afraid of war or pain or death. This is because we are, mostly all, children of war taught to not fear and not cry because there is a fight going on that we need to win. Many families teach their children that there is a battle going on and therefore, there is no time for emotions and sentiment. We are taught that the battle must be won, at all costs. Our strength, as Palestinians, is part of pride and our pride is sometimes all we have. It's just an image that reminds us of what we could have been if we fought more and were more active, in my opinion. The Palestinian population, in general, is a population in love with words and speeches and the image of a tough person that will vanquish all. Therefore, it is a natural result for us to think that if we were that person, we would be popular. And the recipients of this image, in return, glorify that person because of our misled and deformed ideas on leadership. I am, in this case, not one of those, who respect emotionless and passionless strength. I believe that, especially at times of war, emotion is crucial. I would never follow a ruthless emotionless leader who can't cry in front of the masses. That leader is not human and a leader must be human. I wouldn't, therefore, portray myself, at all, as one of those people. I may have had my moments when I would have given up my life for my country, but I wasn't going to go around bragging about it. We are all human. We all fear. We all cry. We all want to live. I guess, there are times, when we are motivated to the point that we are careless to the consequences of our actions. We have all had those moments, but in the end, we will all cry when our friends are shot or when we, ourselves, are shot. Yes, there are those who really have

no fear and who would give it all up for the sake of the cause, but, in my opinion, most of them are just influenced by those who truly have no fear.

I don't know what to answer here because I am not necessarily afraid, but I do censor myself in a way that isn't too much for the minds of the people around me. Yes, I do share whatever I want to share, but I know that there dangerous lines that I don't cross. I don't much care about the way my community perceives me. I care more about my life and my future. I don't want to be blacklisted in a way that would make it hard for me to have a career or a family. I also care, slightly, about the feelings of my parents. Yes, they understand me, but it would be hard for them to explain the sexual orientation of their daughter to their families. I just keep mine a secret, but I still defend the right to whatever sexual orientation one has. I don't feel yet safe enough to share my personal sexual orientation, but I will work for it and make sure that whoever I have on Facebook understands what I believe in. I do all the options in question 18 without fear, but rather consideration. I respect the fact that my community might not be ready to accept my revolutionary, and maybe radical, ideas.

When I use Arabic, it is usually if I am quoting something or saying something in Fuss-ha. It has a better effect and a slightly humorous ripple. I wouldn't use Alphanumeric Arabic for anything except if I'm talking to an Arabic Speaker in English and a something is easier or shorter to say in Arabic. I find Arabic very attractive and melodic and if I'm saying something that an Arabic audience would be interested in or is more likely to understand, then I will write it in Arabic. I would write in English if something is a general note or observation or if I would like to receive comments. English speakers are more likely to comment back on something than the Arabic

Speakers would. The pros and cons of using English is that it is something universal that all of my International friends understand. The pros of using Arabic are simply its beauty and the importance of preserving it and not forgetting its extremely difficult grammar. Pros of alphanumeric Arabic are that it's easy and fast. It doesn't need any grammar and it's just translating the dialect into English letters and numbers. English is faster to type with. The cons of using English and alphanumeric Arabic is forgetting the original Arabic which is already fading out in the Arabic-Community. Also, with alphanumeric Arabic, the chance for error is high. Someone might write something different to how I would write it and we would have ourselves a misunderstanding. The cons of using Arabic is that it's hard and needs time to write and that it's senseless to translate using any internet-tool.

Participant #11: Mehedi

Sex: Male

Age: 26

Raised in: Ohio, California & Beit Safafa and Ramallah, West Bank

Currently lives in: West Bank

I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. Then we moved to Los Angeles and we left from there to Jerusalem when I was about eight years old. When we came here, my dad's Jerusalem ID was revoked, and it's been a sixteen or seventeen year battle with the Israeli legal system, trying to get our ID back. The Israelis have a policy that if you stay outside of the country for seven years

without renewing your ID, they automatically revoke the ID. My dad was one of some 400 cases at the time that didn't get their ID back.

We're from Jerusalem, but we could no longer live there. I am never allowed to go to Jerusalem again. My dad, because he has a paper that explains that he has a court case pending, has a little more lenience, but even that is unlikely he would be granted permission while the court is proceeding. But me, I'm pretty much stuck in the Ramallah area. I'm not even allowed in the other Palestinian towns. I haven't seen another area besides the Ramallah area for eight years now. The reason is that because the court case is still going on, there's no decision yet, and until there is a decision I personally don't have any ID. And without an ID, I'm considered an illegal resident traveling on an American passport with no visa. I've renewed my passport, but Israel won't give me a visa because my dad doesn't have an Israeli ID.

I'm a graphics designer. I have my BA in business administration. My dad is a business owner; he has a Ph.D. in political sociology. My mom is a stay-at-home mom and she has her BA in business. I'm a very liberal Muslim. Actually, my dad is from a really conservative Muslim family here in Palestine, and my mom is from a really conservative Christian family in the States.

My dad went to study for his master's and Ph.D. in the States, and he met my mom there. My mom was "pure American," which is to say, as pure as Americans come: an Irish-Scottish mix. They met there. My dad wanted us to get back to Palestine, for us to learn a little bit about the

culture, the language, religion, and stuff like that, and he wanted to start a business here. So he moved us all here and he started his business. And ever since, we haven't really gone back.

When my parents told me that we were moving to Palestine, I had almost no clue what that meant or what to expect. All I saw was on the TV every once in a while, kids throwing rocks, so that's all I knew about it really.

My mother speaks English and very little Arabic. We all speak English in the house. My mom actually converted to Islam. She was interested in Islam before she met my father and it kind of grew with my father and when they got married she decided to convert.

So we moved to a city between Bethlehem and Jerusalem called Beit Safafa because it was easiest to get around on both sides, and plus it gave us the opportunity to move around since we don't have an ID and Israelis could actually count us illegal in the country. Beit Safafa is considered part of the UN Buffer Zone, so it's neither Palestinian nor Israeli territory. Neither government has much effect there. So pretty much I lived most of my life there.

I attended elementary school partly in the U.S., in Los Angeles. Then I finished my education, up to university, here in Palestine. I attended Birzeit University.

As far as elementary school, it was the largest shock to me when we first moved here. In elementary schools in the States, you have toys, you have different designated stations, like the play area, the reading area, the science area, and so forth. And here they just had white walls and

chairs and tables. It was a big culture shock for me then. As far as high school, I thought our high school was not the best, because I had read about how high schools are in the States, and high school here doesn't give you as much freedom as it would in the States.

In the States, in elementary school, we would go once a week to the computer labs to learn how to use them. In my schools here, we had computers in school, but computers weren't used in the same way as they were in the States. In the States, computers were used for educational purposes. Here, teachers didn't have enough background on how to teach young students about computers so they pretty much gave us a bunch of games and we ended up playing games all day. We had computers in elementary school all the way to high school. My high school had internet, although we never got access to it. The school that I went to didn't really focus on computers or computer-related subjects. I think this was due to an inability to find good English speaking teachers to teach the class because it was a Palestinian school that taught in English. I attended English speaking schools here from elementary through high school. There are about four schools here in Ramallah which educate elementary through high school fully in English. I attended one of those. These are private schools.

We got our first computer at home when I was in seventh grade and we got internet at home a couple of years after that. It was an old dial-up line. About seven years ago we got a high speed line, a DSL line.

When it comes to Facebook and Twitter, I started using those pretty recently. Before this, I used Yahoo Messenger, MSN Messenger, stuff like this, when we first got our internet, but I got into

Facebook when I was in college. It was two years after the release of Facebook itself, so that was about five or six years ago for me. I use Facebook, I also have a G+ account, Twitter, Blogger, quite a few others, I'm very interested in online social media so I pay attention to what's new and try it out.

I started using new media and social media to keep in touch with friends. In college, at first it was a bunch of us guys in college. We used it to contact each other. I have a test tomorrow, I need help with my homework, why don't you come over, stuff like that, or just plain hanging out over the summer over the internet when everybody's in a different town. This developed into something I use to keep in touch with all my friends who went back to the States. I use it to connect to family in the States, people I used to know nothing about, so it's a good way to contact and keep in touch with them. And I also used it to reconnect with a bunch of friends I used to know back in elementary school in the U.S.

On Facebook, I share things that I'm interested in, which isn't always the best thing. My American family in the States doesn't quite get the political thing like Palestinians here do, and so they're not that appreciative of it, you know, especially since my family is also pretty "military" and Republican if you know what I mean. They don't like seeing videos about how U.S. tax money is used to fund the Israeli occupation. They don't like that at all. I post these things, I post music, stuff like that. I also use Facebook for entertainment, for the applications and games.

I have a Twitter account, but I don't use it that much. I use it mostly for business reasons. I'm in charge of a small magazine that we produce online that's distributed free for artists. We interview artists for it and stuff like that. So I pretty much promote the magazine through Twitter and talk about new articles, tell people, this artist just uploaded a new piece of artwork online, stuff like that. I used to blog quite a bit. Recently, I haven't blogged as much. I used to blog about personal things. I try to keep away from the political as much as possible due to my situation. The Israelis don't like people with no ID to be ranting about them. I don't want to attract attention to my already difficult situation.

I also use YouTube to see what's happening all around the world, events and so forth. I've made a few friends on YouTube. I don't personally upload videos onto YouTube but I watch their videos a lot and I comment on their pages. So it's a good way to learn about different places and different aspects of the news, for example. I mean, Palestinians see news in one way, very political, where you can have other people which look at it from a humanitarian view. OK, these people are overboard, you can see what they're doing, there are protests against it, stuff like that.

However, I almost never use YouTube for political reasons. I usually use it to look up things like gaming, music videos, general news, news that's happening in the States that you don't get in international news sources, that don't make headlines. For instance, when the tornadoes struck recently, we heard about it on international news, but we could really see it and experience it on YouTube as people posted their personal stories and videos of it. People posted videos of their neighborhoods and how the tornadoes were so bad in certain areas, and how people actually had

cameras and recorded the tornadoes live as they hit the place that they were in. And it was really interesting to see stuff like that.

It's not like I don't like to focus on politics. I'm very into politics. The thing is that I try to keep my politics to a certain level for personal security reasons. The Israelis have really rough laws against illegals. A few years ago the law was you would be imprisoned, 10,000 shekel fee, plus one shekel for every day you overstay your visa, and if you don't have the money you pay it out three and a half shekels a day in prison. They renewed that law. They count illegals as so-called "terrorists." We're infiltrators into the Israeli country. Now the policy is even stricter, where there's imprisonment, the fines are even higher, and they will deport you and tell you never to return. They have a policy preventing you, your children, and even your children's children from ever returning to visit, as a way to make people forget the existence of Palestine and their family history.

After I explain my situation to people, a lot of people don't understand why I'm here, especially Americans, since I am a U.S. passport holder. To be honest, I like this country. I like it more than the memories I have of the States. This is where I was raised. This is where I know how the system works. If I go to the States, if I cross the road where there's no crosswalk, I'm you know, jaywalking; here I just do it all the time out of habit. So, I'm just used to it here. I like it here better. And to be honest, I don't think I would fit in as much as I would like to in the States, fit in as much as I do here—even though I am counted as a foreigner to most Palestinians. Even though Palestinians see me as a foreigner here, I'm still Palestinian. And, after 9/11, if you're a

foreigner, you're pretty much one of a long list of negative things that would be ascribed to you even though you're not into those things.

So for me, my national and cultural identity outweighs my security. That's why I continue to live here, and don't move back to the States. But I am not going to be foolish about my security. This is why I am careful not to post political things on Facebook or the internet. Yes, there have been hard times, and to be honest, pride, by itself, this is my country, this is my land, my family owns land, my family has ties to Palestine, I do not want to leave.

I don't have a different identity online than I do in person. Social media nowadays has become an extended personality, an extension of their identity. So online you might be a little more comfortable, but at the same time you're the same person. Something you might not want to say to someone in person, for fear of their reaction, you might say online. But it doesn't mean you're not the same person, you're not thinking the same. Also, it actually makes me feel comfortable. For example, ten years ago a Palestinian kid who stayed all day on the computer was looked at as kind of weird, he's not social. Nowadays someone who is on Facebook 12 hours a day is pretty much normal. So social media does make you feel more positive if you think about it, because you're more accepted, not considered that weird guy who just sits at his computer, which sucks anywhere.

As far as if I feel I can express myself more or less freely online, it depends on what I'm going to say. Politically, I'm more willing to say something in person than on the internet. On the internet,

nothing is ever lost. And Facebook, Google, they are more powerful than most governments with the information about us. To share personal things, I'm equally comfortable online and in person.

I'm a Palestinian raised in the Arab World but speaking English, and my Arabic to this day is still not that great. I got used to being on the computer. So now, even as an adult, my personality pretty much came from the online world.

Society here is more liberal in Palestine because of the internet. Much more liberal. And the information spreads easier. People know that there are cultural events, compared to before. I remember my first couple years in university we had to ask certain people, Is there a concert this week or not? Now it's all online, and it helps to keep us culturally involved in society more than before. This all began to change about six years ago.

This change was brought about by a bunch of factors, as I see it. But social media had a big influence in Palestinian society. More people are using it, more people are developing stuff through social media that wasn't available before. Advertising is part of it, but also educational things. There are a lot of educational benefits from social media. The spread of information now is so fast. It's just more efficient than it used to be to share information and ideas. Somebody could post something in China and suddenly someone in Palestine is reading it and all his friends are reading it, whereas before if you weren't following that particular person's blog, you really didn't know how to get there. You wouldn't find that information as well. Social media helps to spread information worth sharing.

I consider myself an activist in my own personal way. Most people go for the direct approach like demonstrations, boycotting, stuff like that. I'm pro-boycotting, but that isn't the only way that I consider myself an activist. I count myself as an economic activist as much as I do a political activist. I try to get as many people as I know to support the Palestinian economy. The internet has helped that quite a bit. The fact that you can influence people online through media—it's easier than TV because most people who watch TV will be looking through the channels and if they find something like a documentary, they'll skip that, they'll say, ok, it's a documentary, I'm going to skip that I'm going to go watch American Idol or something—which is actually popular here. Now you can send out a "Cause" on Facebook about boycotting this certain product because it directly supports the Israeli military. It now gets a larger amount of people than it used to.

Since the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, the youth here have started to rely more on Facebook to get things organized—which is interesting, but at the same time, I don't think it's the best way. As for activists, political activists who go out on the streets, it was always part of the Palestinian culture. The Arab World just realized what the Palestinians have been doing all their lives. Anyone my age who lived through the second intifada knows what protests are. The Arab World didn't know about it as much as they do now. And I do think some of the ideas that they got and some of the protesting that they do can be related to the Palestinian causes. It's the only Arab situation where we're in constant conflict (or occupation) compared to the rest of the Arab World which is pretty peaceful.

The demonstrations and the protests in Egypt—it's not, to be honest, something new to us. The younger generations do think it's new, but it isn't. Palestinian society: the different age groups do and go through different things and there has been a divide between the people who were raised during the first intifada, the second intifada, and the current generation. The first intifada there was no Palestinian government whatsoever during the uprising. During the second intifada there was a Palestinian government and it was very different compared to the first intifada, and the youth of that time saw a different face to the conflict than people in the first intifada. The youth these days, since it's relatively peaceful, much more peaceful, much, much more peaceful, than the first or second intifada or the period in between it, protests aren't a common occurrence. So the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt reminded the Palestinians that we have been going through this before. Maybe we could go out and protest again.

The Palestinians today, to be honest, a lot of people hate me for this, but they're pretty laid back—my generation and the generation before it—to the occupation. The fact that there's a Palestinian government and a peace process, they're very hopeful for the peace process and the idea that the government will actually do something. From before, we used to think of the peace process as just something for those politicians to do and the normal people went out and protested it or did something. I have a lack of faith to this day in the peace process. It's just what I've seen throughout my life.

Quite a bit of youth today do have faith in the peace process, though. There is some renewed hope in the peace process given that there have been certain limits and lines that Israel hasn't been able to cross. It's been four years since there was an Israeli incursion into the Ramallah area

when it was something like almost every other night during the second intifada, if not more. I mean, there was a period time when they reoccupied Ramallah and had tanks at different corners and there's quite a lot of footage on YouTube about it. Israeli tanks were caught going over Palestinian cars just for fun. These were cars parked along the side of the road, including ambulances. There were many cases where ambulances were crushed. There was an exhibit during 2004 which showed the cars which were actually crushed during this time.

But the youth now are not as active because basic life in Ramallah is pretty good compared to how it was during the second intifada.

I don't think there is an ideal solution to this conflict, to be honest. There will always be a sector to the Palestinian people who won't give up certain things and the same is true of certain sectors of Israeli society that won't give up certain things. For me, I will not give up the right for me to go to Jerusalem, where my family's homes are or where my grandparents are buried—which, the Israelis have preventing me from going to their funerals. So this is one of the things that I would really like to do one day. No peace plan is going to stop that hope for me.

Participant #12: Kader

Sex: Male

Age: 21

Raised in: Hebron, West Bank, Palestine & New Mexico

Currently lives in: Chicago, Illinois

I was born in 1991 in Ramallah city. I have lived all of my life in the same building in Hijra Street in Hebron. The building contained apartments where my family, my uncles' families, and my grandparents lived. Living with my uncles, cousins and my grandparents was unique. It had its advantages, because I consider my cousins to be my brothers but it also had its disadvantages, because extended family issues erupted a lot.

Going back to my life, I had a bit of a fancy childhood. My grandfather was the mayor of the city of Hebron at that time (my grandfather is definitely a huge source of inspiration for me) and since there was no Palestinian leadership at that time, he was working for both the Israelis and the Jordanians. Anyway, that meant I could travel around Palestine (Historic Palestine) and visit many cities, but I don't remember most of that stuff.

Our building at that time was among the fanciest in the city. I went to kindergarten earlier than most students. I remember I was eager to do that, Unlike most children, I didn't cry and I enjoyed it. For my 1st grade till 6th grade, I went to a private school. Private schools were not very expensive (ranges from \$400 to \$600 a year). I got a good education at the private school. That also that meant I could study English from 1st grade, since public schools start teaching English

since 5th grade. The private school gave me many opportunities such as taking school trips to many places. I also had many friends, some of whom are still my good friends today.

I did well academically. My grades were high; my parents have helped a lot in doing that. My father for instance, used to tell me many stories about life and general knowledge. He is the reason why I love airplanes for example. My mother used to write practice exams for my brother and I. Her hand is very weak these days, because of all the exams she wrote for us, so my parents definitely knew how to plant the love for education in me. I have always had the passion for general knowledge about many things, and that exists in me even today, I like knowing about many things. I remember I used to have a competition with one of my relatives who was a college student about names of capitals of the world's countries.

Before the year 2000, we use to go to Jerusalem many times. Life was normal, at least to me, but in 2001 everything changed. It was my first encounter as a kid to experience the conflict when Israel invaded the West Bank and Gaza. I remember seeing the military everywhere: tanks, guns and helicopters. We didn't have school for months which made me happy to be honest. We also had curfew for months, and we were really short on food. There were some militants hiding in the mosque right next to my house and we used to give them food and water. I remember every night the helicopters and airplanes were shooting all the time. The streets were closed and blocked to cars, so my cousins and I used to ride our bicycles and play soccer in the streets. An incident that I will never forget was when I was riding my bicycle downhill heading towards a road block, I was sure there will be no one there, but then all of a sudden a tank comes up. I was

really scared so I abandoned my bicycle and hid behind a building while the tank ran over the bicycle.

I remember my cousins and I used to have small radios so we could tune in and listen about what was going on outside. I remember the music that the channels played right before they announced the death of many people in an airstrike or the bombing of a house.

After my 6th grade, I went to a public school; it was a completely different experience: more people, different teachers and different environment, but I still managed to do well and make new friendships, and honestly, I liked it a lot. Months before starting my 6th grade, my father had some problems at work and had to quit. Our economic situation went down massively. I remember I used to go to school with only one shekel in my pocket, and that could only buy me a Falafel sandwich. I remember the hot summer days in Ramadan where I used to have rides on the back of a donkey cart on the way back from school with my friends, great moments in rough times, unforgettable.

At that time, the conflict was still going but at a lower scale. My family was always determined to keep me away from trouble, it is something that I appreciate, but at the same time I would have preferred if they didn't do that, because encountering dangers produces genuine experience that I can share with others.

When I was done with my 9th grade, my English teacher motivated me to apply to an intensive 2- year English course funded by the US Department of State called AMIDEAST. I had to take

an exam to pass, and I passed with a high grade that got me placed in the highest ranking. The English course that I took has taught me a lot, it improved my English, I never had to worry about studying English for school anymore.

Going back to 10th grade, that year was when Hamas was elected to lead the government. The world, except some countries, like Iran, turned their backs on us. Hamas's government had a good potential to do reforms, and it did some good things in the beginning, for instance: lowering school expenses and increasing police presence. But because the government didn't have money, the public employees including teachers didn't get money, so they did a strike. We didn't go to school for over 2 months. At that time, it was good to stay at home, but I felt bad that I was missing education, so I signed up as a temporary student at a religious Islamic private school. In 2 weeks, I was able to continue classes, meet new people and see how an Islamic school works. One of the best moments is when the whole school gathers to pray the Dhuhur prayer (2nd prayer of the day). All the students stand next to each other and pray.

After the strike was over, I went back to the same school I was in before. Then I transferred to high school. While I expected a good time because high school was a new experience, with new people and new teachers, my year there was unforgettable, it was fantastic. I met new people, the school was more demanding and I remember, we had many long days because students were mad about Israel's siege on Gaza, so they would go out and protest.

Most students who do well academically are known to be quiet, polite, honest and education loving. Well, I was like that, but at the same time, I was still a student, so I used to have fun in

the class, or gather in front of school with my friends to tell others not to go in to class so we could leave. Surprisingly, my school principal nominated me to attend a 2 year school program called United World College (UWC). He nominated 5 people, but I was the only one to apply among them. Later, I discovered that my friend Jamal, an old friend from my previous school, also applied independently.

I read a little bit about the UWC program but I didn't know everything. Then I received a call that I should go to Ramallah to have an interview. Jamal and I decided to go together, because apparently we were the only people from the city of Hebron who applied at that time. We left Hebron early, and I am glad we did, because we were stopped on a checkpoint and later our car broke down, so we were late, but we made it, and we both had great interviews.

A day before I left to the US for my student exchange program, I received a call telling me that I was accepted to attend the UWC at New Mexico. Then I felt that all my past came together: my good academic performance, good English and a good resume filled with many activities could help me start the greatest chapter of my life, the UWC one. Unfortunately, Jamal was not admitted because his grades didn't meet the limit. I believe that was unfair, Jamal would have made the perfect UWC student. I hate the fact that grades matter.

The summer before UWC was all about preparing the visa and waiting for a package which took 2 months to arrive. At this time, I also graduated from AMIDEAST by fulfilling the requirements. I also won a \$100 prize for an essay that best describes the US. I used the \$100 to

pay for my visa expenses, so I took the money from the American consulate as a prize but I paid it back for the visa– ironic.

That summer, I tried to see the things that I didn't see before going to UWC. It was only then when I realized living in Palestine is a great thing. Because it gives me a unique experience and also being born Muslim makes me special in the way I deal with people. So after the summer ended I went back to UWC filled with that spirit.

The summer after my graduation from UWC, I had many plans and things to do. I wanted to make a documentary about Palestine, mainly about a guy (me) who smuggles himself illegally into Israel and starts discovering the lost heritage of Palestine. I believe that Palestine is not only about the occupation, it has more meaning than this, and I was hoping the film would deliver the message. But the idea failed due to many issues in funding and filming.

After some time at home, I started seeing things differently. I realized that there is so much more about Palestine to advocate about than occupation: such as history, culture, religion and many other things. Once I realized this, I started developing my own theory about things in life. I have realized that I understood things differently, and that was a turning point in my life. Then I left to the US again, to start life at a new college. I am doing well academically, there are many interesting people, and better yet, my UWC alumni are closer to me.

From kindergarten to 6th grade, I was at a private school. From 6th to 11th grade I moved to a public school. Then I attended United World College which is a private high school, college

level. My mother has an associate's degree in business. My father has a bachelor's degree in engineering. My mother stays at home and my father is an electrical engineer, working independently now. I am a student at the moment but I work as a networking and internet administrator and also as Arabic instructor.

I've been using Facebook since 2007. I am on Facebook maybe 1-2 hours a day, sometimes more if I have free time and sometimes less if I don't have an internet access. We had a dial-up connection up to 2005 I think, but we used it frequently and then we switched to a DSL connection in which we had a constant internet connection and we pay monthly. So we had a proper internet connection that many people didn't have at that time.

We're a technologically literate family. My father knew how to use the internet well even in the old times. We had our first computer in 1996, so I had decent knowledge of computers. I think we had internet for a long time, but I first started using the internet frequently since 2002 or 2003. I was in 5th grade when that happened. I used it to help me with school research and then I had an email and other stuff.

Personally I use Facebook mostly to keep in touch with friends and to share my personal thoughts. I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends because I have friends from all over the world and I must stay in touch with them so I use Facebook for that, which is very helpful. In addition, I post many opinions and thoughts that I'd like people to know about. I also share interesting articles and topics. By sharing those, I also hope to inspire others for change. I am also a co-admin of the UWC Arab Students Organization, a group created by my friend.

I believe I portray myself on Facebook authentically. The ideas and the thoughts that I share truly reflect my personality. I also share things that I believe they are interesting and things that I actually like so in general I am honest. I believe this happens even when I get in an argument. On Facebook, I have time to think and answer well, while in real life I might not.

A lot of Palestinians portray themselves as freedom fighters on Facebook. I have an issue with this. I believe most of these people are not very authentic. I used to be like that myself, but now I don't do this because I want to show the truth about myself and people. We are not all revolutionaries. I believe that this trend develops naturally because they want to show a message about their home. I respect that, but we must be honest at the same time.

I used to be like that, where everything was about Palestine, but now I am not, because I try to show the truth. I also am trying to grow from being a revolutionary to developing a theory that this revolution can be based on, you know. I still show Palestine as my picture on Facebook and Twitter, but that is because I believe they are artistic and have a deeper meaning that resembles what I feel.

I do feel restricted on Facebook. Mostly by Israel, the Palestinian government, and expectations from family and friends. When I am in Palestine, I am monitored by the Palestinian government, Israel and even others such as Jordan. For example, if I oppose the government on Facebook, that will not be liked by them and same with Israel. But mostly, my fear is friends. I have friends from various backgrounds: Fatah, Hamas, Israel, homosexuals, liberal, and conservatives. So I

try to be careful on what I post so I don't harm them. I had once an incident when I posted a picture of Israel with Nazi sign in the middle, my Israeli friends didn't like that. I apologized and I understood why.

Family does have an effect on what I post, but that is only when I am home and when they see what I post. When I post things that are political, they get scared and feel feared because of that.

If I felt less restricted on Facebook, I might criticize Israel, mostly the government. I used to do that a lot, but now I don't do it frequently, because my message has already been delivered, and also I should change things instead of just criticizing. For example, when Netanyahu gave his speech at the UN meeting last year, I criticized that because it was really annoying.

I would also like to criticize the Palestinian government. I do that when I am in the US. They do many things badly and I think I should share what I believe. Yes, I also believe that Palestinian society is collapsing, the society is doing many wrong things and shouldn't be done.

Though I don't talk about sexuality much, I welcome everyone whether heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual.

I think right now I share pictures that I believe are appropriate. I don't feel restricted, because I know how to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong.

I use different languages depending on the context. If I would want to share an opinion with everyone, I do it in English, which is most often the case. When I criticize Palestinian society for instance, I do it in Arabic. I use Arabizi when I chat with friends, because sadly, I write faster in English than Arabic, because I am used to writing papers and researching in English. I personally would like to see more Arabic on Facebook. I dislike it when I write to people in Arabic and they answer in English (that is for Arabic speakers of course). Arabic sometimes expresses things better, so I write Arabic to express some opinions and I try to post it in English as well, but most of my use on Facebook is in English.

Participant #13: Hamza

Sex: Male

Age: 25

Raised in: California and Ramallah, West Bank, Palestine

Currently lives in: West Bank

I was born in the California, USA, in 1987. In 1994 my parents went back to their homeland of Palestine, where I was subsequently raised. I never gave much thought to politics whether inter-Palestinian or globally, but then with the eruption of the second intifada I found myself participating in the protests. As I grew older however I began to place this "resistance" in the backseat. Graduating in 2005 I entered Al-Quds University to study information technology. I dropped out of college 3 years later, becoming a common laborer trying to save money and emigrate until one day I met a "friend", telling me about the paradise we can build. Looking back

at my life, I went back to school in 2009 to study journalism as there is no filmmaking studies in Palestine, which is what I really wanted to study. I also became much more active in the fields of politics and non-violent resistance. In 2011 I was in touch with several groups of youth among them the March 15 group, the independent youth movement, the Free Palestinian Youth, and others, bringing my activism to an apex.

I went to a public school for kindergarten and 1st grade while in the U.S. After that I was sent to a private school that taught better English when I arrived back in Palestine. From that point forward, I attended a private school, which I graduated from in 2005.

I use Facebook on a daily basis. As for Twitter I have recently began to use it, especially when I cannot reach a computer, though I do use it when there is a hot topic in the local news. I also use it to scout for news. I learned how to use the internet and new media on my own as I felt the interfaces were simple, and easy to understand.

My mother has a high school diploma, and my father holds a high school diploma along with two years of studying at Riverside. My father is a farmer, he raises sheep to make dairy products, and my mother is unemployed though she also helps with the family business. I am a project coordinator at a human rights and democracy non-profit organization in Ramallah.

I have been on Facebook since around 2006-2007 so about 6-7 years I would say. I use Facebook practically every day, I would say 1-2 hours depending on my time, however if there is something urgent in the news I can be expected to use twitter indefinitely in that case. I have

internet at home, and I was around 13-14 when my father brought internet to our home growing up.

I use Facebook to keep in touch with friends, and as a tool for social and political change. In my opinion, Facebook is a place to express yourself, and how you express yourself, whether differently than you are or the same way you see yourself in society. I try to be as authentic as possible on Facebook. My friends know this, and I know this. I do not try to imitate anyone else other than myself.

I think that some people would like to live the old days of yore when the PLO was more of a resistance front rather than a bureaucratic collective. These people want to be fearless and strong, etc... However I doubt all of them would actually be considered freedom fighters. There are those who as of yet they do not usually try to portray themselves as anything other than "Palestinians refusing to stand down."

I don't portray myself as being fearless because I get shit terrified whenever I go down to Nilin, Bilin, or Nabi Saleh. I view the cost of life as a grave one that I would hate to see myself or any of my friends pay. And I do not believe any one of those young people at the protests or sit-ins are fearless, they have merely learned to stare their fears in the eyes.

I do feel restricted on Facebook. I feel social expectations from Palestinian society, expectations from Islam, and expectations from family and friends. If I didn't feel restricted, I would want to

critique the Palestinian government and Palestinian society. I would want to talk about sexuality and to be more free to post pictures on Facebook.

One of the things that people here have to hide due to pressure from society and family is any kind of non-platonic pre-marital relationship. This would keep a person from being straightforward when talking about whom he/she is with, and preventing one from posting pictures of them together.

The second thing I do not feel comfortable talking about on Facebook, is my drinking habits, due to pressures from society and/or family I wouldn't talk about my drinking habits nor would I post photos of me drinking.

There are many more examples, but the pressure would always come from family and society, with religion being the fulcrum of that.

What language I use relies on what is being written. When I write I usually write so that the local community can understand me, so I use Arabic. When I want to speak to a larger audience I will use English. However, I never use Arabizi for the simple reason being it is difficult to understand the words sometimes.

Participant #14: Yousef

Sex: Male

Age: 21

Raised in: Bethlehem, West Bank & London, UK

Currently lives in: West Bank

My Name is Yousef. I am 21 years old. I was born in Hebron and raised in Bethlehem. I grew up in a refugee camp. I attended a UN school for refugees until I went to the 4th grade and then I went to a public school. I stayed in public school through secondary school and then I had a chance to go to London for an exchange program.

I'm working as a presenter or MC for a radio station. I'm also a rapper. I have a few songs and work with kids and youth in a project to help the youth in their life.

I live in Bethlehem now. I went to the UK to study over there and after I saw the world around me I wanted to be a messenger. That's why I choose to work in radio cause I love radio and I always want to bring the truth to people around me and that's why the last thing I always say on radio before I leave my show is "Be yourself and always smile." I feel I'm helping people and it makes me smile.

The only new media I use is Facebook. I learned to use the internet and new media outside of school with my friends. I also took a course. My mother's highest education level is 7th grade and my father is 9th grade. My dad is a driver, and my mum doesn't have a job.

I've been using Facebook almost 5 years. I use it about 4-5 hours a day. I don't have internet at home, nor did I have it at home growing up. I use Facebook for entertainment, to keep in touch with friends, to share my personal thoughts, as a tool for social and political change, and also for my work, to get in touch with my listeners.

On Facebook you try to be yourself, but it seems you are more open and free when you use Facebook than you are in real life. But most of the time I'm being myself on Facebook.

We live in a place where we have always been fighting for our freedom and we never felt that we are free, but on Facebook we feel a 'lil bit free even though many Palestinians have been sent to prison over things they wrote on Facebook. I do portray myself as a freedom fighter, not through killing but through education.

Yes, we are restricted from posting what we want on Facebook. We are restricted by Israel, by the Palestinian government, by social expectations from Palestinian society, from expectations from Islam, and expectations from friends and family. But on top of all this, there are expectations from my radio station that effect what I say on Facebook, and if I don't follow the expectations it will affect my career. I can't always write what I feel 'cause that will affect my job and our station.

If I could talk more freely, I would want to critique Israel and the Palestinian government. I would want to see freedom and human rights in my community. I want to be free to live in my

country the way I deserve. I would want to change my government, especially as I am a youth who is paid so cheap and things are way too expensive.

If I'm working on radio or speaking to my friends who are from the West I write in English. Or if I want to speak about our country and the assault that we go through so I can send a message, I use English. If I'm speaking to a friend who only speaks Arabic I write in Arabic and if I'm doing the news headlines on our page it's in Arabic. But if I'm talking to my friends (my mates) I will write in Arabizi.

8.2 Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Letter

בלמ"ס/מיידי

אל: כל הנציגויות
דע: תפוצת הסברה
מאת: מח' מידע ואינטרנט – אגף תקשורת

הנדון: מסרים מחייבים לשלב הנוכחי – אופרת יצוקה - אנגלית

בהמשך למברקו של מנהל הסברה בנדון מהיום להלן נוסח אנגלית.
מועבר במקביל בדוא"ל לכתובות MFA בלבד.

The next stage of Operation Cast Lead

1. **The achievement: During the first week of Operation Cast Lead the Hamas terror organization suffered a heavy blow** – dozens of its commanders and hundreds of terrorists were killed, ammunition stores were destroyed and its arms production capabilities and tunnel smuggling infrastructure were damaged. Hamas's ability to govern was also impaired. Its senior leaders completely abandoned the population and are concerned only in saving their own skins. (Mohammed Bassiouni, Chairman of the Egyptian parliament's foreign relations committee asked, "Where is the Hamas leadership? They are all hiding in underground bunkers while Gaza is being attacked.")
2. The situation revealed by the IDF operation in Gaza is that mosques, public institutions and private homes were being used by Hamas as bases of operation and arms caches. The entire terror infrastructure is located in the heart of the Palestinian civilian population which serves as a human shield.
3. **The reason: Hamas still retains significant ability and desire to carry out terror attacks** and they continue to fire dozens of rockets daily at population centers in the south of Israel. Hamas has placed almost a million Israeli civilians within its range of fire (about 15% of the total Israeli population!). No country in the world would agree to daily fire at its civilians' homes.
4. The Hamas military arm, which is directly responsible for the terrorist activity, continues to fire rockets and is trying to broaden its terrorist activity. Many of its terror operatives are in the field and in the tunnels, some of the infrastructure remains, they still have weapons and rockets, and the terrorists have the will and the means to carry out terror attacks. Iran is helping Hamas and inciting to terror and violence.

5. **The goal: In order to achieve the goals set for the operation – dealing the Hamas terror infrastructure a forceful blow and changing the security situation of the Israeli population in the south in the long term – the Israeli Cabinet decided to approve the next stage of Operation Cast Lead, which includes the entry of armored forces and infantry, and the calling up of reserves in order to expand and deepen the operation as needed. The forces are to take control of primary rocket launching areas and to combat the existing terror infrastructure.**
6. **The continuation of the operation is necessary in order to achieve its goals.** Stopping midway will not only lead to a resumption of terrorism but will also serve as encouragement to Hamas and other extremist elements in the region.
7. Israel has no intention of reassuming control of the Gaza Strip. The entry of forces is intended to achieve the goals set.
8. The operation will not be brief, and there will be difficult days ahead. There may be casualties among our soldiers and civilians, and Hamas will continue to fire at Israeli cities. But the strength and determination of the people of the south will enable the Israeli government and the IDF to achieve the operation's goals. Their firm stand will sustain us.
9. The government of Israel expresses its deep appreciation to the IDF and security forces on their impressive achievements to date and is confident in their ability to attain the required successes on the battlefield. Their fighting spirit and faith in the justness of our course, together with the highest professional standard will ensure the successful completion of the task. Who hope and pray that they will return home safely.
10. Alongside the military effort, Israel is conducting a broad diplomatic effort abroad in order to achieve the goals set. Israel insists that any proposal put forward will lead to a change in the security situation over the long term.
11. Israel reiterates that it is not at war with the Palestinian people in Gaza, but with Hamas. Hamas is responsible for the suffering of the civilian populations on both sides of the fence. Israel will therefore continue to transfer to Gaza all humanitarian aid that is received (in the course of the past week 400 trucks and 10 ambulances entered the Gaza Strip from Israel). There is today no humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. The IDF is striving to prevent any harm to uninvolved Palestinians, including warnings issued prior to attacks. The figures we have indicate that the percentage of casualties among uninvolved civilians stands at about 12% (50 out of 400 killed), much lower than any similar event, such as NATO's bombing

in Kosovo or in Afghanistan, under much more difficult conditions given the location of the terror infrastructure in the midst of the civilian population.

12. Israel embarked on this operation only after it exhausted every possibility to put an end to the terror from Gaza which has continued for years. Israel agreed to the calm arrangement, although Hamas took advantage of it to build its strength, rearm and continue to fire (during the six-month calm Hamas fired hundreds of rockets and mortars at Israel). Faced with ongoing terror, Israel acted with restraint and did everything to avoid a confrontation. But the time came when we no longer had a choice; the security situation of the people of southern Israel became unbearable and a significant change was needed.
13. The government of Israel will use all the means at its disposal to provide vital services to the people of the south. The Homefront Command, government ministries and local authorities, as well as the emergency services are prepared for immediate action and are working ceaselessly.
14. We call on all citizens of Israel to act with restraint. The police will not allow extremists to take the law into their hands, to use violence or to aggravate the situation or cause damage that could be irrevocable.
15. Israel will respond strongly to any attempt by other elements in the region to take advantage of the situation and carry out attacks against Israeli citizens.

עד כאן.

מח' מידע ואינטרנט – אגף תקשורת
3 ינואר 2009

8.3 English Interview Protocol

Interview questions:

1. Please tell me your life story. (Of course mention where you were born and raised and where you live now, but focus on key events or moments that shaped you into the kind of person you are today. Be as descriptive and thorough as you can be.)
2. What kind of school did you attend for primary school (ex: public, private, UN)?
3. What kind of school did you attend for secondary school (ex: public, private, UN)?
4. What new media do you regularly use (ex: Facebook, Twitter, blog, etc.)
5. Did you learn to use the internet and new media in school or outside of school?
 - a. Explain how you became comfortable using the internet and new media.
6. What's your mother's highest educational level?
7. What's your father's highest educational level?
8. What do your mother and father do for a living (job)?
9. What do you do for a living (job)?
10. How many years have you been using Facebook?
11. About how many hours per day or per week do you use Facebook? (specify if you're measuring per day or per week)
12. Do you have internet at home?
13. Did your family have Internet at home when you were growing up? If so, how old were you when your family got Internet at home?
14. Why do you use Facebook? (List all that apply; if you choose f, explain)
 - a. Because I'm bored/it's entertaining
 - b. To keep in touch with friends
 - c. To share my personal thoughts
 - d. As a tool for social change
 - e. As a tool for political change
 - f. Other (explain)
15. Is Facebook a space to be yourself or to portray yourself differently from who you really are?
 - a. Do you portray yourself authentically on Facebook, or not? Explain.
16. Some Palestinians portray themselves as freedom fighters who are fearless and not discouraged by pain or loss. Why might a Palestinian portray himself/herself this way?
 - a. Would you portray yourself this way? Why or why not?
17. Do you feel you can say whatever you want and post whatever pictures you want on Facebook, or do you feel restricted at all? (If you do not feel restricted in any way, skip to question 20). If you feel restricted in any way, what do you feel restricted by? (List the letters that apply; if you choose f, explain).
 - a. Fear of Israel/IDF
 - b. Fear of Palestinian government

- c. Social expectations from Palestinian society
 - d. Expectations from Islam or other religion (if not Islam, specify which religion)
 - e. Expectations from your family or friends
 - f. Other (Explain)
18. If you didn't feel restricted, what would you like to talk about on Facebook or what pictures might you post? (List the letters that apply; if you choose g, explain).
- a. I would want to critique Israel
 - b. I would want to critique the Palestinian government
 - c. I would want to critique Palestinian society
 - d. I would want to talk about sexuality (heterosexuality)
 - e. I would want to talk about sexuality (homosexuality, bisexuality)
 - f. I would post different kinds of pictures of myself or others
 - g. Other (Explain)
19. Can you give some specific examples of what you might say or describe the kinds of pictures you might post if you didn't feel restricted?
20. As you know, many Palestinians post on Facebook using English, Arabic, or Arabizi (ex: rbna ykoon m3akoom). When you choose to write something on Facebook, what determines whether you will use Arabic, English, or alphanumeric Arabic?
- a. What are the pros and cons of each?

8.4 Arabic Interview Protocol

مرحباً!

كما تذكرون، أنا أعمل دراسة عن استخدام الإعلام الجديد بين الشباب الفلسطيني لأنهي رسالة الدكتوراه في جامعة كاليفورنيا، لوس أنجلوس. أردت أن أعمل مقابلة مع الجميع عبر برنامج (سكايب) ولكن لا يوجد معي وقت كافٍ لذلك لأنني يجب أن أنهي هذه الدراسة في أقرب وقت ممكن، لذا أظن أنه من الأسهل أن أرسل لكم الأسئلة عبر البريد الإلكتروني و ترسلوا لي الإجابات بنفس الطريقة. إذا كان باستطاعتكم أن تُجيبوا على الأسئلة قبل هذا التاريخ (2012-03-16) فسأكون ممنون لكم. يمكنكم إرسال الإجابات عن طريق رسالة عبر الفيس بوك أو عن طريق رسالة إلكترونية على البريد الشخصي

(akenderes@gmail.com.)

مرة أخرى، هذه الدراسة هي سرية للغاية، معنى ذلك أنه لن يتم استخدام أسمائكم الشخصية أو أي معلومة تدل على هويتكم.

كذلك، إذا أجبتم باللغة الانجليزية سيكون أسهل بالنسبة لي، ولكن إذا شعرتم أنه من الأسهل عليكم التعبير عن أنفسكم باللغة العربية في كل أو في جزء من إجاباتكم، فأرجوكم أن تجيبوا باللغة العربية عند الضرورة. هذه ليست مشكلة، فعندي مترجم ليساعدني على الترجمة (:)

إذا كان هناك أي سؤال أو استفسار، فالرجاء إرسال رسالة لي عبر الفيس بوك أو على البريد الشخصي.

شكراً جزيلاً مجدداً!!

أماندا

أسئلة المقابلة:

1. أرجوك أخبرني قصة حياتك (طبعاً مع ذكر مكان الولادة وأين تربيّت وأين تسكن الآن, ولكن مع التركيز على الأحداث المهمة والرئيسية التي كانت العامل الرئيسي في تكوين شخصيتك التي أنت عليها اليوم. وضّح واذكر الأحداث بالتفصيل قدر الإمكان).
2. ما نوع المدرسة التي درست فيها دراستك الابتدائية (يعني: مدرسة حكومية, أو خاصة, أو مدرسة تابعة لوكالة الغوث الدولية).
3. ما نوع المدرسة التي درست فيها دراستك الإعدادية (يعني: مدرسة حكومية, أو خاصة, أو مدرسة تابعة لوكالة الغوث الدولية).
4. ماذا تستخدم من وسائل الإعلام الجديد (يعني: فيس بوك, تويتر, مدونة, الخ).
5. هل تعلمت كيفية استخدام الأنترنت ووسائل الإعلام الجديدة في المدرسة أو خارجها؟
 - a. اشرح كيفك أصبحت مرتاحاً في استخدام الأنترنت ووسائل الإعلام الجديدة.
6. ما هو أعلى مستوى تعليمي حصلت عليه والدتك؟
7. ما هو أعلى مستوى تعليمي حصل عليه والدك؟
8. ماذا يفعل والدك في حياتهما (وظيفتهما)؟
9. ماذا تفعل أنت في حياتك (وظيفتك)؟
10. منذ كم سنة وأنت تستخدم الفيس بوك؟
11. كم ساعة في اليوم أو في الأسبوع تقضي على الفيس بوك؟ (خاصة إذا كنت تحسب في اليوم أو في الأسبوع).
12. هل يوجد عندك أنترنت في البيت؟
13. هل كان في بيتكم أنترنت منذ صغرك؟ إذا كان كذلك, كم كان عمرك عندما حصلت عائلتك على الأنترنت في البيت؟

14. لماذا تستخدم الفيس بوك؟ (اسرد كل ما ينطبق: إذا اخترت الإجابة في فرع (و) مثلاً، ارجو الشرح).

- I. أنه مُسلّي/لأنني أشعر بالملل
- II. لأبقى على اتّصال مع أصدقائي
- V. لأشارك أفكارى الشخصية
- VIII. كوسيلة للتغيير الإجتماعي
- XXVI. كوسيلة للتغيير السياسي
- XXVII. أسباب أخرى (اشرح)

15. هل الفيس بوك مكان لتكون فيه من تريد أو تُظهر نفسك وشخصيتك بشكل آخر عمّا هو أنت عليه في الحقيقة؟

I. هل تُظهر نفسك على حقيقتك على الفيس بوك أم لا؟ اشرح

16. بعض الفلسطينيين يُظهرون أنفسهم على أنّهم مُناضلون من أجل الحرية وأنّهم لا يخافون من أحد ولا أحد يستطيع أن يثبط من عزيمتهم. برأيك لماذا يلجأ بعض الفلسطينيين إلى إظهار أنفسهم بهذه الطريقة؟

I. هل من الممكن أن تُظهر نفسك بهذه الطريقة؟ لماذا ولم لا؟

17. هل تشعر بأنه بإمكانك أن تقول ما تريد أو تضع ما تريد من الصور على الفيس بوك. أو هل تشعر بأنك مُقيّد؟ (إذا لا تشعر بأنك مقيد بأي حال من الأحوال فيمكنك أن لا تُجيب عن هذا السؤال وتذهب للسؤال 20 مباشرة) إذا شعرت بأنك مُقيّد بأي حال من الأحوال، فما الذي يُقيّدك؟ (اسرد كل ما ينطبق: إذا اخترت الإجابة في فرع (و) مثلاً، ارجو الشرح)

- I. أخاف من الجيش الإسرائيلي/أخاف من إسرائيل
- II. أخاف من الحكومة الفلسطينية

V. توقعات مُجتمعية من المجتمع الفلسطيني

VIII. توقعات من الدين الإسلامي أو ديانات أخرى (إذا كان دين آخر غير الدين الإسلامي, أرجو تحديد أي دين)

XXVI. توقعات من أفراد العائلة أو الأصدقاء

XXVII. أسباب أخرى, اشرح

18. إذا لم تشعر بأنك مُقَيّد, فما الذي توَدّ قوله على الفيس بوك أو ما الصور التي توَدّ أن تضعها؟ (اسرد كل ما ينطبق: إذا

اخترت الإجابة في فرع (ز) مثلاً, أرجو الشرح)

I. سأنتقد اسرائيل

II. سأنتقد الحكومة الفلسطينية

V. سأنتقد المجتمع الفلسطيني

VIII. سأتكلم عن النشاط الجنسي (العلاقة مع الجنس الآخر)

XXVI. سأتكلم عن النشاط الجنسي (الشذوذ الجنسي, الازدواجية الجنسية)

XXVII. سأضع صور لِنفسي أو لغيري غير الصور التي أضعها الآن على الفيس بوك

XI. أشياء أخرى (اشرح)

19. هل باستطاعتك أن تُعطي أمثلة محددة عن ما يمكنك أن تقوله أو هل يمكنك أن تشرح بالتفصيل ما هي الصور التي

يمكنك أن تضعها على الفيس بوك إذا لم تشعر بأنك مُقَيّد من أحد؟

20. كما تعلم, الكثير من الفلسطينيين يكتبون على الفيس بوك باستخدام اللغة العربية, أو اللغة الانجليزية, أو العربية

باستخدام الأحرف والأرقام اللانجليزية

(مثل: rbna ykooon m3kooom)

عندما تريد ان تكتب على الفيس بوك, ما الذي يُحدد أي لغة تريد أن تختار: اللغة العربية, اللغة الانجليزية, او العربية باستخدام الأحرف والأرقام الانجليزية؟

I. ما الإيجابيات والسلبيات لكل منهم؟

8.5 *Gaza Youth Breaks Out (GYBO) Published Response and Manifesto*

<http://gazaybo.wordpress.com/about/>

GYBO Manifesto 2.0: Gaza Youth to Planet Earth! Anyone out there? “Gaza what?”

The previous manifesto seems to have grown bigger than expected; many supported us, many others stood firmly against us, and very few stayed indifferent. Everyone had an opinion, yet rarely did they listen to others’ and in the middle of that mess, **our own voice remained unheard.**

Secular, Islamophobic, Dividing, Conspiratorial, Imaginary (?); we’ve been called by so many names, stopped counting and started crying. Both our supporters and those who swore to tear us down seem to have stopped at ONE thing in our manifesto: *“Fuck Israel. Fuck Hamas. Fuck Fatah. Fuck UN. Fuck UNRWA. Fuck USA!”*. And no matter how hard we tried to explain on our Facebook page, in vain.

What about the rest? Let’s make things clear, starting with the Palestinian movements point. We were harsh, true. We were angry, and still are. The order in which the “parties” have been cited was not intended, and we are conscious that it brought much confusion in people’s minds.

However, to those reproaching us – because we denounced the corruption of our political leaders – of insulting the thousands who voted for Hamas in 2006 (among which **us**), of insulting the memories of the martyrs of the Resistance groups affiliated to the different Palestinian factions who shed their blood for us in many occasions, starting with Operation Cast Lead, we want to reply don’t insult the Palestinian people’s right to criticize its politicians.

Cast Lead wasn’t a war; Cast Lead was a massacre, a slaughter, anything but a war. And during that massacre, we, people of Gaza, paid from our blood too. Every single Palestinian sacrificed

something, someone, it affected us all, from the youngest to the oldest, not only the Resistance. Bombs didn't make much difference. We never intended to reject the Resistance, and we're going to repeat it again; we will **NEVER** reject those who fight for us, for our Palestine, and it was **NOT** the case in our previous manifesto.

Yes we voted for Hamas government. We all did. We were tired of Fatah government's corruption, wanted a change and hoped Hamas would be that change. That **PRECISELY** gives us the right to shout our anger at them, because they are responsible of us, responsible of our well-being, our security. Fatah in the West Bank arrests Hamas affiliates, Hamas in Gaza arrests Fatah affiliates, while everywhere in Palestine you can find family members from different factions living united. Yes we denounce our politicians – note that words; **POLITICIANS** – because their mutual hatred divided them even during the commemoration of the first anniversary of Cast Lead massacre, while a crowd of Palestinians from all factions stood united by martyrdom, grief, and love for Palestine.

Whether you want to admit it or not, believe it or not, corruption exists, and it's our right as Palestinians to denounce it, because we are tired of it. Internal change has not only internal parameters. Change will come only if people outside realize that they need to take into consideration the fact that corruption does exist, and that it needs to be stopped if we want unity back. So if it takes us to shout it to the world for our political leaders to hear us and care to unite for us, we'll do it a hundred times.

No one helps us by asking from us to keep our mouths shut about our political issues. We're accused of encouraging division because we dare point out the weakness of our political leaders. No one knows, apart from those who are **INSIDE**, how life is in Palestine because of these

divisions. Trying to shut us up by saying “*don’t criticize, keep your divisions “secret” and discrete*” is most harmful! It just confirms our politicians that they can keep on doing it the way they do it, they will be supported by people who don’t know the theory lying in political programs. In other terms, criticizing Hamas political leaders – but the other factions’ political leaders AS WELL – is a way for us to say “if you keep it this way, all you will get is division, which is what Israel seeks”. We ought to remind them of our martyrs and imprisoned, our ancestors, those who gave birth and made those movements live. We ought to remind them that Cheikh Yaseen, Marwan Barghouti, and all the others deserve more than that. Who’s in the best position for such an honest shout out, if not their own children?

The question has been raised about our anonymity. We can understand that. What we don’t understand is that instead of listening to our call for patience and time, we’ve seen ourselves caught in a witch-hunt, as ridiculous as fetching for the slightest element to make us fall.

Example?

“The founding base of this group [Sharek Youth Forum] was funded by the U.S.’s National Endowment for Democracy (which have done much to overturn democracy in many countries) is suspect. Allen Weinstein (one of the founders of NED) said “a lot of what we [NED] do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA”. Does that sound good anyone?”

Seriously?! Because we mentioned that the closure of the forum – which was one of the only centers for youths remaining in Gaza, one of the only places where young people could meet, learn foreign languages, use the internet, and enjoy things they don’t have at home to escape from the deadly routine in Gaza – was the straw that broke the camel’s back for youths who had nowhere else to go, people assumed that our “base” was that center and that we were funded by

the CIA? Other people claim that it's most suspicious that our manifesto created that much buzz, made its way to Western journals. Where is the "innocent until proven guilty" principle? We seem to be the first victims of our success.

We do exist, and if we don't want to reveal our identity for the moment – for safety reasons – it's our right. However, more proofs of our existence are to come in the next days, one brought by contributors of the Electronic Intifada:

What is our leitmotiv? Freedom. And for that, we know that we need the Palestinians and their leaders to unite against the Zionist Occupier. And that's precisely why we call for action. Now. Not in 6 months, not in a year, not wait until another massacre strikes us. Now. We call on the Palestinians to unite and organize in an efficient movement of non-violent protests, boycott. We call for divestment and sanctions against "Israel". We want our land back, we want our freedom of movement back, we want to be able to go abroad to have a chance, like other people of our age, to get education. We want to be able to exchange freely with the world, to have a future and be motivated to work for it. Enough fear, enough terror, enough misery, enough broken dreams, enough airstrikes, enough blockade, enough mourning, enough violation of every single human right we are supposed to have.

We want **three things**. We want **to be free**. We want **to be able to live a normal life**. We want **peace**. Is that too much to ask? We are a peace movement consistent of young people in Gaza and supporters elsewhere that will not rest until the truth about Gaza and Palestine is known by everybody in this whole world and in such a degree that no more silent consent or loud indifference will be accepted. And if we fail, other groups will take our place, until our voice can't be ignored anymore.

Previous version of the manifesto:

Fuck Israel. Fuck Hamas. Fuck Fatah. Fuck UN. Fuck UNRWA. Fuck USA! We, the youth in Gaza, are so fed up with Israel, Hamas, Fatah, the occupation, the violations of human rights and the indifference of the international community! We want to scream and break this wall of silence, injustice and indifference like the Israeli F16's breaking the wall of sound; scream with all the power in our souls in order to release this immense frustration that consumes us because of this fucking situation we live in; we are like lice between two nails living a nightmare inside a nightmare, no room for hope, no space for freedom. We are sick of being caught in this political struggle; sick of coal dark nights with airplanes circling above our homes; sick of innocent farmers getting shot in the buffer zone because they are taking care of their lands; sick of bearded guys walking around with their guns abusing their power, beating up or incarcerating young people demonstrating for what they believe in; sick of the wall of shame that separates us from the rest of our country and keeps us imprisoned in a stamp-sized piece of land; sick of being portrayed as terrorists, homemade fanatics with explosives in our pockets and evil in our eyes; sick of the indifference we meet from the international community, the so-called experts in expressing concerns and drafting resolutions but cowards in enforcing anything they agree on; we are sick and tired of living a shitty life, being kept in jail by Israel, beaten up by Hamas and completely ignored by the rest of the world.

There is a revolution growing inside of us, an immense dissatisfaction and frustration that will destroy us unless we find a way of canalizing this energy into something that can challenge the status quo and give us some kind of hope. The final drop that made our hearts tremble with

frustration and hopelessness happened 30th November, when Hamas' officers came to Sharek Youth Forum, a leading youth organization (www.sharek.ps) with their guns, lies and aggressiveness, throwing everybody outside, incarcerating some and prohibiting Sharek from working. A few days later, demonstrators in front of Sharek were beaten and some incarcerated. We are really living a nightmare inside a nightmare. It is difficult to find words for the pressure we are under. We barely survived the Operation Cast Lead, where Israel very effectively bombed the shit out of us, destroying thousands of homes and even more lives and dreams. They did not get rid of Hamas, as they intended, but they sure scared us forever and distributed post-traumatic stress syndrome to everybody, as there was nowhere to run.

We are youth with heavy hearts. We carry in ourselves a heaviness so immense that it makes it difficult to us to enjoy the sunset. How to enjoy it when dark clouds paint the horizon and bleak memories run past our eyes every time we close them? We smile in order to hide the pain. We laugh in order to forget the war. We hope in order not to commit suicide here and now. During the war we got the unmistakable feeling that Israel wanted to erase us from the face of the earth. During the last years Hamas has been doing all they can to control our thoughts, behaviour and aspirations. We are a generation of young people used to face missiles, carrying what seems to be a impossible mission of living a normal and healthy life, and only barely tolerated by a massive organization that has spread in our society as a malicious cancer disease, causing mayhem and effectively killing all living cells, thoughts and dreams on its way as well as paralyzing people with its terror regime. Not to mention the prison we live in, a prison sustained by a so-called democratic country.

History is repeating itself in its most cruel way and nobody seems to care. We are scared. Here in Gaza we are scared of being incarcerated, interrogated, hit, tortured, bombed, killed. We are afraid of living, because every single step we take has to be considered and well-thought, there are limitations everywhere, we cannot move as we want, say what we want, do what we want, sometimes we even cant think what we want because the occupation has occupied our brains and hearts so terrible that it hurts and it makes us want to shed endless tears of frustration and rage!

We do not want to hate, we do not want to feel all of this feelings, we do not want to be victims anymore. ENOUGH! Enough pain, enough tears, enough suffering, enough control, limitations, unjust justifications, terror, torture, excuses, bombings, sleepless nights, dead civilians, black memories, bleak future, heart aching present, disturbed politics, fanatic politicians, religious bullshit, enough incarceration! WE SAY STOP! This is not the future we want!

We want **three things**. We want **to be free**. We want **to be able to live a normal life**. We want **peace**. Is that too much to ask? We are a peace movement consistent of young people in Gaza and supporters elsewhere that will not rest until the truth about Gaza is known by everybody in this whole world and in such a degree that no more silent consent or loud indifference will be accepted.

This is the Gazan youth's manifesto for change!

We will start by destroying the occupation that surrounds ourselves, we will break free from this mental incarceration and regain our dignity and self-respect. We will carry our heads high even though we will face resistance. We will work day and night in order to change these miserable conditions we are living under. We will build dreams where we meet walls.

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