UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES

National Identities among Israelis and Palestinians

A discourse analysis of how representatives for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs relate to national identities, in relation to the conflict between them and the settlement thereof

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Abstract

The world is amidst accelerating processes of globalization increasingly emphasizing universal human rights and common human-ness. Parallel, nationalistic movements and values grow stronger.

Universal and nationalistic values are expressed simultaneously in the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians. On the basis of semi-structured interviews, this study explores how representatives from Israeli and Palestinian non-governmental organizations working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians, relate to national identity among Israelis and Palestinians, in relation to discourses of nationalism and universalism, in the context of the conflict between them, and the settlement thereof. This is done by a discourse analysis of how national identity is discursively constructed among the respondents, and what political consequences this entails, in relation to a settlement.

The narratives and identities of the respondents are characterized by both nationalistic and universal values. One discourse highlights national identity, correlating with the national struggle of the two states solution. Othering is strongly prevalent, particularly towards settlers. Another discourse underlines universal human rights and common human-ness, which politically translates into the civil rights struggle of the one state solution.

Israelis and Palestinians have distinct national identities. However, there is a need for a common identity able to embrace the common human-ness, while simultaneously nursing the specific Israeli and Palestinian identities. Israeli Palestinians could be seen as forerunners in this process as many of them already have dual identities, transgressing the strict lines of the national identities expressed in nationalistic discourses.

Key words: Israel, Palestine, national identity, Othering, nationalism, universalism

Acknowledgements

List of Acronyms

EU – the European Union

ICC – the International Criminal Court

IDF – the Israeli Defense Forces

NGO – non-governmental organization

PA – Palestinian Authority

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organization

UK – the United Kingdom

UN – the United Nations

USA – the United States of America

Local Words and Expressions

Ashkenazi (plur. *Ashkenazim*) – 'German' (Hebrew). Term used for white European Jews. Also called *Western Jews.*

Intifada – 'Uprising', 'shiver', 'shudder' (Arabic). Used to describe the waves of violence in 1987-93 (the first intifada) and 2000-2005 (the second intifada)

Mizrahi (plur. *Mizrahim*) – 'Oriental' (Hebrew). Termed used for Jews with Arab, North African or Asian origin. Sometimes the terms *Sephardic* ('Spanish')*, Arab* or *Oriental Jews* are used to describe the same group

Nakba – 'Catastrophe' (Arabic). The term is used to describe the events that took place during the foundation of Israel when around 500 Palestinian villages were demolished and approximately 700.000 Palestinians became refugees. Those events are, however, contested as Israel has a rather different narrative. Official Israeli history writing, describe this period of time as the war of independence (see for example Caplan 2010, Pappe 2012)

Yani – 'You know' (Arabic)

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Table 1. Analytical Framework

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The world today is amidst accelerating processes of globalization. Global institutions, cooperation and governance are growing in importance. So do international law and transplanetary solidarity, forming a perception of a common identity of shared human-ness (Scholte 2005). A basic global political consensus has emerged, as seen in the United Nations' (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Nederveen Pieterse 1995, pp. 329) Several social movements taking off in 2011 – 'the Arab Spring', the Occupy and the Indignados movements for example – have brought up similar demands on democracy and human rights, showcasing a *"shared articulation of claims"* (Glasius & Pleyers 2013).

Despite increasing internationalization and globalization, the idea of state sovereignty has not dwindled. Rather the opposite, claims on sovereignty are underlined in times when states' independence is perceived to be questioned or threatened (Werner & De Wilde 2001, p. 284). Proof of this is the recent rise in national and right-wing movements, particularly in Europe (Ames 2016, BBC News 28-04-16).

Leo Panitch argues that globalization confirms the importance of states and the sovereignty: *"today's globalization is authored by states and is primarily about recognizing rather than bypassing them"* (quoted in Guillén 2010, p. 12). The increased importance of state sovereignty is evident in that marginalized peoples' struggle for equality increasingly being formulated as struggles for national independence and sovereignty. Hylland Eriksen (2009) argues that many conflicts defined as 'ethnic', when scrutinized, show signs of taking place due to inequality based on economic issues and class, rather than ethnicity (p. 36). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as many others, is defined as a territorial conflict based on ethnicity, where people are politically mobilized around ethnicity and national identity. However, just like most other political struggles, what they are fighting for are resources, power, and rights (p. 38).

Hence, one can see an increase in emphasis on both universal values, such as universal human rights, and national values based on the particularity of national identity. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is a case in point of a conflict where universal and national values are expressed simultaneously as demands on national sovereignty, on both sides, based on the

internationally recognized idea of every nation's right to self-determination (Hylland Eriksen 1999, p. 43) are combined with claims of universal human rights (Azarov 2014).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to a high degree concerning identity, more particularly: national identity. The settlement propositions are to a high degree colored by the question of national identity. Two main solutions have been brought up: *the one state solution* and *the two states solution.* The *one state solution* suggests a binational state with equal citizenship for all. Israel would have to give up its specific Jewishness, compromising the Zionist project of Israel as a Jewish state (Yiftachel 2002, p. 7). Palestinians would have to give up the national struggle in favor of a right-based approach claiming human rights from their former occupier (Farsakh 2011).

Alternatively, there is the *two states solution*, where the territory would be divided along the Green Line[1], and a sovereign Palestinian state would be created alongside today's Israel. This would be a compromise solution, not fully satisfying either side. Nonetheless, it has been recommended since 1947, negotiated during the 90's and partly agreed upon in 1993, but has not yet come to place (Persson 2012).

Hylland Eriksen (1999) argues that nations are dependent on its members' identification with its symbols and their loyalty to it. National identity is thus constructed, forming 'imagined communities' (Anderson 2006). Scholte argues that *"identities often lie at the heart of, and give shape to, political struggles"* (2005, p. 224).

Discourse theory argues that discourse is what provides meaning to social phenomena, nationalism and national identity is only constructed as something meaningful through discourse. Further on, discourses, as are identities, are forever in flux (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000). With the background of the simultaneous expressions of universal and national values in mind, I raise the question of how national identity in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict currently is discursively constructed, in relation to universalism and nationalism. This may clarify the roots of the ongoing conflict and thereby tentatively imply how to settle the conflict.

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[1] The armistice line drawn in 1967, demarcates the internationally recognized borders of Israel, excluding the Palestinian Territories: the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem (Haaretz)

To find out about this, I conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working for peace within the Israeli and Palestinian context. Many researchers argue that sustainable peace can only be reached if the design and implementation of the peace agreement is supported by the local civil society (Aggestam & Björkdahl 2011, pp. 20). This study regards NGOs as representatives from the civil society as well as active agents of societal change and discourse. The aim of this study is therefore:

to explore how representatives from Israeli and Palestinian NGOs working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians, relate to national identity among Israelis and Palestinians, in relation to discourses of nationalism and universalism, in the context of the conflict between them, and the settlement thereof.

1.2. Delimitations

Initially, the aim of this study was investigating a new idea for a solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, the Parallel States Project (Mossberg & LeVine 2014). However, during the interview and transcribing process I realized that new solutions are rather superfluous for the respondents. Through coding of the transcripts of the interviews, it was clear that the main theme found in all interviews where the question of national identity and values of nationalism and universalism. Subsequently, the deductive strategy of the study changed in favor of an inductive method to better relate research with theory (see 4.6.).

The study could have included a wider range of groups and identities, such as the Bedouins[2], the Druze[3], and asylum seekers in Israel[4]. However, these groups are not directly involved in the conflict even though, of course, it affects them – many of the obstacles Palestinians in Israel face correlate to those of Bedouins, for example. The primary conflict is between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, but the solution has to include how to deal with those other population groups to ensure their rights. To have a meaningful discussion of how the conflict and its solution affect those groups respectively, however, studies have to be made targeting those

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[2] An Arabic native people. They are discriminated in Israel in a similar manner as the Israeli Palestinian population, but have to a large extent chosen to be outside of the Palestinian nation and struggle (Isabelle Humphreis 2009)

[3] A non-Arabic native people. Due to Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights (earlier belonging to Syria) they now have many Druze in its citizenry. The national identification differs between them but generally the ones that earlier were Syrians, in the very north of Israel, are still loyal to Syria while Druze more south are embracing Israel as their country

[4] Israel does not grant citizenship to non-Jews. Including asylum seekers, despite that Israel have signed international treaties stating every refugee's right to seek and be granted asylum (Yaron, Hashimshony-Yaffe and Campbell, 2013)

groups specifically. Therefore, I have chosen to focus solely on the participants of the primary conflict – Jewish Israelis, Israeli Palestinians and Palestinians.

The number of respondents is very limited and alas, only those particular individuals' narratives and identities are discussed and analyzed in this paper. Furthermore, the views on national identity presented in this study, is not by necessity the respondents' own view, but rather their interpretation of a general view in the society.

1.3. Research Questions

To find out about how representatives for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs working for a settlement of the conflict, relates to national identity, one must first scrutinize how identity is constructed. The point of departure for this study is based on discourse theory's view on identity as discursively constructed, thoroughly social and in flux (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000). Furthermore, identity is temporal and flexible (Hall 1987). In fact, globalization has led to a pluralization of the particular, hence, many people are today rather than having one identity, living with multiple identifications. (Hylland Eriksen 2004)

National identity is central in the imagination of the nation. In times of conflict, people are often mobilized around the national identity (Hylland Eriksen 1999). Therefore, the first research question is:

How is national identity discursively constructed among representatives for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians? Can one speak of coherent national identity among Israelis and Palestinians, respectively, according to the respondents?

Identity, individual and national, is created through a process of differentiating oneself from another (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000). However, these differences are not neutral but hierarchical ordered (Laclau 1992). Thus, a system, a discourse, is constructed of superior and subordinated identities. During the colonialization this system and discourse gave legitimacy to the colonial project by the West (Said 1978). Hence, the discourse on national identity is tied to power relations that have political consequences. Next research question is thus:

What political consequences do the discourses on national identity carried out by representatives for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians, have, in relation to a settlement of the conflict?

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1.4. Relevance to Global Studies

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to a very high extent an international conflict. There is a high involvement of international actors in the peace process, such as the UN, the United States of America (USA), the European Union (EU) and the Arab League. Both Israel and the Palestinian territories are recipients of military and police materiel and training from other countries (Aggestam et al. 2014, p. 36, 133, 135)

Several wars between Israel and surrounding Arab states have broken out, partly as a consequence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Persson 2012, ch. 5, 7, 9). Many of the surrounding countries host a high amount of Palestinian refugees, which further strengthen their involvement, and stake, in the conflict (p. 73). There are UN forces on the ground in the near region to prevent outbreaks of violence and many international organizations are working in the area (p. 205). Both Israel and Palestine have actively used the international community to strengthen their position in the conflict. Since some years back, the Palestinians are actively using a strategy of internationalization of the conflict (Azarov 2014). Therefore, the study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is highly relevant for the field of Global Studies.

In a time when the issues of nationalism and universal values are increasingly pushing to the top of the political agenda, as seen in recent debates of closing borders versus welcoming refugees, regionalization and globalization, the study of national identity and discourses of nationalism and universalism is highly relevant. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as one of this century's most high profile cases, makes for an excellent example of scrutinizing and understanding the narrative behind the identity-driven political discourse.

Discourses and identities are forever changing and changeable. Thus, the study of them is mere an investigation of the temporary, a moment that has already passed as the study is finished. Hence, there is a need of continuous research on the topic.

1.5. Disposition

The subsequent chapter briefly presents historical processes of national identity construction and nationalism among Israelis and Palestinians. Thereafter, previous research on the topic is presented and the theoretical framework is outlined alongside definitions of key concepts used in the thesis. The next chapter elaborates upon the method of data collection, and method of analysis. Results are presented and analyzed in the following chapter. In the final chapter con-

clusions drawn from the study, is presented. The thesis concludes by outlining how to proceed, giving suggestions for future research.

2. Background

This chapter gives a short presentation of historical processes of national identity construction among Israelis and Palestinians, in the context of the proliferation of two diverging national movements related to the creation of the State of Israel.

2.1. Nationalism and national identity among Israelis and Palestinians

The state of Israel was founded in 1948, when the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to hand over the British colony, the Mandate of Palestine, to the Jewish people to establish a Jewish homeland (Caplan 2010, pp. 107). As Palestinians had lived on the land for thousands of years before, the already tense relations between Jews and Arabs escalated into a conflict still unresolved. It operates on multiple levels where demands on self-determination interact with territorial, ethnic and religious conflicts (pp. 31).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been framed in different terms depending on the historical moment and the current and/or preferred discourse. During the past decades, it has mainly been defined as a conflict between two different national groups, Jewish Israelis[5] and Palestinians (Caplan 2010, pp. 4).

The definitions of those two national groups, or 'peoples', are contested and rather ambiguous: according to The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia, a 'Jew' is someone that *confesses him/herself to and/or practicing Judaism* (Persson 2012, p. 11). 'Jews' is also a known as *a people* and *cultural community* (Oxford Dictionary). The right to define who is a Jew has, since the foundation of Zionism and the State of Israel, been a site for power struggle (Persson 2012, p. 11).

Like the Jewish people, Arabs are mainly brought together as a people by a common language and religion, Arabic and Islam. The Arab world have been invaded multiple times throughout history and been subjected to several migration flows, and thus, 'Arab' is not an ethnicity.

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[5] Henceforth called 'Israelis'. By using this term I do not intend to express any opinion that Arab or Druze Israelis are not Israeli, or constitute a less important part of the citizenry. This term is used due to it being the term most commonly used by the respondents when talking about the Jewish Israelis. When needed, the more precise terms 'Jewish Israeli' and 'Israeli Palestinian' are used to avoid confusion.

Still, not all Arabs are Muslims – part of the Palestinian population, for example, is Christian. Thus, the term 'Arab' is not clearly defined but open for individual interpretation and identification (Persson 2012, pp. 17).

Jewish nationalism, Zionism, was formed in the wake of exclusion of Jews and increasing anti-Semitism in Europe during the 19th Century. The subsequent Holocaust further underlined the urgency of a safe haven for Jews. Under the leadership of Theodor Herzl, the Zionistic movement formulated thoughts of creating a Jewish state in Palestine, the land where they were dispersed from by the Romans in the 1st and 2nd Century AD (Caplan 2010, p. 18). The Zionists argued for an establishment of a Jewish state in this specific area as they claim to have a divine – and legal – right to the land. They justified their claims by stating a continuous Jewish habitation in the area (pp. 42).

Israel was formed as a secular state – the Jewishness of it came from ethnicity rather than religion. Zionism can be defined as an ethno-nationalistic movement, and a settler movement creating a mirror process of *'Judaizing'* and *'de-Arabizing'* Israel (Yiftachel 1999, p. 371). The Zionist project of creating a secular, 'normal state' for the Jews, however, increasingly is overshadowed by a religious view of Israel as *"a terrestrial messianic entity"*, as religion is growing in importance (Pinto 2013, p. 14).

The slogan for a Jewish state in Palestine was: *"A land without people for a people without land"* (Moor 2012, p. 15). The Zionists did not recognize the Arabs living in Palestine as 'civilized' and hence, the territory was 'empty' in their world view (Chatty 2010, p. 185). This narrative strongly correlates with the colonial discourse in Europe, where most of the leading Zionists were situated at the time. A discourse also influencing how Israel relates to its different Jewish population: the *Mizrahi*[6]*,* Jews with Arab, North African or Asian origin, constitutes the lower strata while the *Ashkenazi*[7], white European Jews, in all regards is privileged in the Israeli society (Smooha 2008). This discourse has been put to the fore by activists and scholars arguing for an analogy between today's Israel and South Africa during apartheid (see for example Bakan & Abu-Laban 2010, Farsakh 2011, Moor 2012, Pappe 2012).

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[6] *Mizrahi* (plur. *Mizrahim*) – 'Oriental' (Hebrew). Sometimes the terms *Sephardic* ('Spanish')*, Arab* or *Oriental Jews* are used to describe the same group
[7] *Ashkenazi* (plur. *Ashkenazim*) – 'German' (Hebrew). Also called *Western Jews.*

Palestinian nationalism and national identity were proliferated in the 1920s as a reaction to Zionism and Jewish influx in the area. It is situated in a time when the pan-Arabism faded due to the breakdown of Greater Syria. The Palestinian leaders realized they could not expect the Arab Nation or pan-Arabism to protect the Arabs of Palestine. Hence, a specific Palestinian nationalism, *wataniyya al-Filistinyya*, grew in the area of the British Mandate of Palestine (Persson 2012, p. 35).

The Palestinians have throughout the existence of the State of Israel claimed their rights in terms of the Palestinian people's right to the land. As such, it is formulated as a national liberation movement (Hassassian 2002). A framework that has gained support and legitimacy by the international community, as seen in the Oslo Accords, two agreements signed in 1993, and 1995, between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (Persson 2012, p. 212, 215). The emphasis on national identity and nationalism is further pushed today, simultaneously as universal values are invoked, as Palestinian officials in 2011 adopted a strategy of internationalizing the conflict. Amongst other things, the strategy has entailed Palestinian application for membership in the UN, as the State of Palestine, and a bid to the International Criminal Court (ICC), in 2009, to investigate allegations of war crimes committed by Israel during the military incursion in Gaza 2008 (Azarov 2014, Quigley 2010).

3. Theory

This chapter will firstly give an overview[8] of earlier research in the area of identity construction and national identities in general, and among Israelis and Palestinians in particular. Secondly, the theoretical framework will be presented with discussion and definitions of the key concepts used to analyze the empirical material: *identity, national identity, Othering, nationalism, and universalism.*

3.1. Literature Review

'Identity' is a key concept within the postcolonial field. Frantz Fanon (1952, 1961) argues that the identity politics of the colonial powers inculcated feelings of inferiority in the colonized people constructing hierarchies that enabled the continuation of colonization. An identity based on perceived superiority was, likewise, created in the colonialists. Edward Said (1978)

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[8] Research on Israelis and Palestinians and the conflict between them, is extensive, as it is one of the most recorded conflicts on earth (Caplan 2010, p. 3). Due to limited size of this study, I will only be able to touch upon a small fragment of the literature on the subject and make no claims of covering an entire research field.

investigates how stereotypes against Orientals were constructed by the doctrine and ideology of Orientalism, where Westerners were equally exoticizing and demonizing the Oriental. The stereotypes constructed a discourse, legitimizing Western colonization of the Orient.

Thus, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1999) argues that universalistic principles must rule in the political sphere. Identity politics quickly becomes a tool of power for a ruling ethnic or cultural group. The dire consequences such politics may entail are exemplified in the Holocaust, where six million Jews were murdered, legitimized by the idea that Europe's Jewish population may be able to embrace the European civilization but never its culture. Ergo, he concludes that *"politics must be about everything else than cultural identity"* (p. 66). However, identity politics may be a legitimate instrument for marginalized groups to reach equality, he argues – *"and in extreme cases it can even be legitimate to demand full political sovereignty"*[9] (p. 13).

Identity politics, and Orientalism, have colored the construction of national identities among Israelis and Palestinians. Oren Yiftachel (2001) and Sammy Smooha (2008) argue that due to the European colonial discourse that the Ashkenazi Jews brought with them to Israel, two distinct Israeli national identities have been constructed, one Ashkenazi and one Mizrahi.

Amal Jamal (2002) argues that: *"[t]here is no Israeli nationality despite the fact that there is Israeli citizenship"* (p. 420). The definition of the state identity is solely based on one of the ethno-national groups within its citizenry – the Ashkenazi – excluding other groups from the state identity. Furthermore, Yiftachel (1999) continues, Israel is defined as 'the State of the Jewish people', hence it is non-territorial *Jewish* (as opposed to being defined as *Israeli*) – Jews everywhere can be included in its citizenry while Arabs can never become Jewish. Thus, *"their right to equal citizenship is structurally denied"*, Yiftachel concludes (p. 384).

Consequently, a specific identity has emerged among Israeli Palestinians – they still view themselves as 'refugees in the homeland' as they are excluded from the Israeli national identity. The discrimination Palestinians are facing in Israel, despite having full citizenship, are a consequence of the state policy of de-Arabization and Judaization of Israeli cities, argues Isabelle Humphreis (2009).

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[9] Translated from Swedish: *"och i extrema fall kan det till och med vara legitimt att kräva full politisk självständighet."*

Arab nationalism was constructed, partly, as a reaction to the Orientalism and European colonialism (Said 1978). In a similar manner has the Palestinian identity been shaped by and in relation to Zionism and Israel's treatment of them, argues Manuel Hassassian (2002). The dispersion of Palestinians, in 1948 during the formation of the State of Israel, is thus, one of the main factors in the construction of the Palestinian national identity. Furthermore, collective memories are essential for national identity, and the Nakba[10] is the starting point for contemporary Palestinian history, according to Ahmad H. Sa'di (2002). Hence, it is the point of reference for the current Palestinian national identity.

Amos Oz (2015) argues that the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is so complicated due to it being a conflict between two victims. Both victims of the same perpetrator: Europe – Palestinians were victimized during the European colonialization of the Arab world and the Jews became its victim due to discrimination, pogroms and ultimately the Holocaust. Jews and Arabs alike see the picture of their former oppressor in each other. Oz means that there is a deep lack of knowledge among Israelis and Palestinians of the past trauma of the other that must be understood and overcome for peace to take place.

Studying Israeli and Palestinian youths, Phillip Hammack (2006) argues that their identities are polarized, as a consequence of the conflict. He states it is due to the function of identity to consolidate a group, in times of threat: *"master narratives of collective identity must embody the ideals that maintain ideological solidarity in the wake of existential threat"* (p. 346).

Contradicting the identity polarization the conflict has created, Herbert C. Kelman calls for a *"transcendent identity"* for Israelis and Palestinians, *"that does not threaten the particularistic identity of each"* (1999, p. 581). The existent zero-sum mentality – regarding the negation of the other's national identity as the prerequisite for the fulfillment of the own national identity – must change to reach a settlement. There is a negative interdependence between the Israeli and the Palestinian identity, obstructing coexistence and a settlement of the conflict, as Israelis and Palestinians, in the other see a reflection of the self they view as unacceptable. Both of them perceive themselves as victims. Due to the conflict both have become victimizers – which is blamed on the other. However, to some extent a positive interdependence also

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[10] Literal meaning in Arabic: 'Catastrophe'. The term is used to describe the events that took place during the foundation of Israel when around 500 Palestinian villages were demolished and approximately 700.000 Palestinians became refugees. Those events are, however, contested as Israel has a rather different narrative. Official Israeli history writing, describe this period of time as the war of independence (see for example Caplan 2010, Pappe 2012)

exists between the two. This needs to be further elaborated, in order to reach a long-term solution for the conflict. That would be one state for each people, argues Kelman, where both parts recognize that fulfillment of the other's national identity is, in fact, promoting the fulfillment of the own national identity.

Hammack (2006) argues that coexistence workshops focusing on identity interventions may be a tool for identity transcendence, to construct the transcendent identity Kelman calls for. In this way, the discourse of polarization of the national identities of Israelis and Palestinians, enabling the continuation of the conflict, can be dismantled and eventually lead to peaceful coexistence. However, the youths in Hammack's study, showed a greater tendency to further identity polarization although some identity transcendence was evident.

3.2. Discourse Theory and Identity Construction

The point of departure for this study is based on discourse theory's view on identity as *discursively constructed* and anti-essential in its nature (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 104). Meaning, one does not have a fixed identity but it is continuously shaped by the social environment. Stuart Hall (1987) notes that everyone has multiple, flexible identities which one can chose to show at different times, in different situations, which means that they are temporal and relational. Furthermore, identity is dependent on how one formulates oneself – one constructs the identity through speech, thus identity is, in a sense, fictional and narrative.

Through discursive processes one is ascribed identity and negotiates and renegotiates them through discursive processes. Hence, identity is something thoroughly social and constructed (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 51).

The notion of discursively constructed identity is based on social constructivism, that argues that humans are historically and culturally formed. Their view on the world is affected by the context they grow up and live in. Furthermore, social constructivism claims humans to be anti-essential – they do not possess a preconceived inner essence, but are solely shaped by external factors. Hence, both one's identity and world view is perceived as changeable and forever in flux (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, pp.11).

This study views the individual as shaped by the social and will analyze identity against this backdrop. Historical, cultural, and political factors as well as group belonging are seen as signifiers in identity creation. The key point is that identity is changeable and affected by prevailing discourse(s), which are also changeable.

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However, important to note is that 'identity' is *"not a thing people either possess or don't"* (Hylland Eriksen 2004, p. 156). Rather, it is a continuous process where several identities may exist simultaneously. Hence, a more correct term would be 'identification'. Furthermore, exemptions from ethnic group belonging are prevalent. Those *ethnic anomalies*, are people who do not fit perfectly into one category, but are *"both-and and neither-nor"* (p. 167). Israeli Palestinians may constitute such an anomaly as they, so to speak, live with one foot in the Israeli society and one in the Palestinian.

Craig Calhoun challenges the idea proposed by cosmopolitans that individuals are *"abstract enough"* to be able to freely choose all their identifications. He does not deny the greater freedom from cultural particularity that globalization has brought. Rather, he underlines that there is no absolute escape from social determinism, as people *"are necessarily situated in particular webs of belonging"*. Additionally, he points out the high extent to which people are involved in social actions, without a choice of their own (2008, p. 286). Israelis, for example, share (or are by others ascribed) responsibility for the occupation of the Palestinian Territories, although many are opposing it.

3.3. Identity Construction through Othering

Identity is created by positioning oneself against what one is not, against one's opposite. Hegel explains this through *the Master-Slave Dialectic*: the Master is master because of the Slave, and the Slave is slave because of the Master (Azar 1995, pp. 10).

In the same manner is national identity constructed through a process of differentiating the own identity, 'us', with other national identities, 'them'. National identities are as such relational just like the personal identity. The differences between 'us' and 'them' give the national discourse its substance (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, pp. 166). However, those differences are most often not only seen as differences per se, but are hierarchically ordered in power relations, on the basis of exclusion and subordination (Laclau 1992, p. 88).

Postcolonial theory stipulates that during the colonial era, the colonizers depicted the colonized as inferior and uncivilized. This process is called 'Othering', and the subject for the process 'the Other'. It became so frequent that the colonized internalized the stereotypes into their selves and their own identity, creating social power hierarchies still standing today. Derogatory stereotypes of the Other is used to enhance the self-image – by creating images of other societies as inferior, savage, and demonic, an image of the own society as superior is

constructed (Edwards 2008, p. 21). Stuart Hall argues that the stereotyping maintains a social order, while Homi Bhabha perceives it as an expression of insecurity in the own identity – Othering is a way of dealing with, and denying, feelings of insecurity, failure and shame (Eriksson Baaz 2002, p. 37).

Said describes how the West constructed the East as its antithesis, in the doctrine and ideology of Orientalism, in order to strengthen their own self-image. The Orientalism, argues Said, legitimized the colonialization of the Middle East by the West. Due to Orientalism, white Westerners perceived they possessed the right to not only rule, but to *own* the non-white world, because unlike the Oriental, the Westerner is a 'real' human being (Said [1978] 2004, p. 199).

The discourse of Orientalism is characterized by antisemitism – including Jews and Arabs alike – stating their unescapable primitiveness (p.359). However, Israel's politics is entirely governed by Orientalism in the way it treats Arabs, argues Said (p. 453).

3.4. Nationalism and Identity Politics

Benedict Anderson writes that *"nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time."* (2006, p. 3). However, the concepts of 'nation', 'nationality', and 'nationalism' are remarkably hard to both define and analyze. There is no uncontested "scientific definition", he notes. His point of departure is that nationality, nation-ness and nationalism are cultural artefacts. They have been affected by and used for various political and ideological reasons over time and in different places (pp. 3).

Henceforth, this study will use the word 'nation' as defined by Anderson: *"[the nation] is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign"* (2006, p. 6). The nation is *imagined* in that way that people who have never met, and likely never will meet, still have a sense of both their own and the other person's belonging to the same community. It is *limited* because it has boundaries, even though they can be elastic. Anderson writes: *"no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind"*. *Sovereignty* is central in the imagination of the nation. Nations strive to be free and the sovereign state is the symbol and the token of the nation's freedom. Further on, the nation is imagined as a *community*. Its members are often willing to not only kill for it, but to die for it, something enabled by the idea of the nation as a *"deep, horizontal comradeship"* no matter what kind of inequalities and exploitation that may occur within the nation (p. 7).

What national and ethnical ideologies do, according to Thomas Hylland Eriksen, is to transform personal identity into politics. Signifiers such as religion, language and history form in these ideologies dividing lines between different cultural communities, implying that one's political loyalty and group belonging is determined by those signifiers (1999, p. 12). In line with Anderson's reasoning, Hylland Eriksen argues that nations do not have an objective existence but are purely subjective and intersubjective – the nation is dependent on its members' identification with its symbols and their loyalty to it. In contrast to a state that has an objective existence in a physical and clearly demarcation form (p. 40).

Classical nationalism, that strongly connects the nation with the state, is the prevalent model today for nation and state building. It is supported in *the Wilson doctrine*, stating that every 'civilized people' should have self-determination. Colonial struggle have erased the phrase 'civilized', but the doctrine still stands as a part of international law. Arguably, it is an impossible idea for the over ten thousands ethnic groups in the world to have their own state (Hylland Eriksen 1999, p. 43).

The ideology stating that the nation and cultural community should be related, if not identical, breeds the idea that every people should be sovereign and have its own state. Although, there are several problems with this line of reasoning: for one, how to define 'a people'? Hylland Eriksen argues that it is close to impossible to draw clear lines between 'peoples', they are by definition unclear and political and affected by historical and contextual factors. Hence they are, just like the personal identity, discursively constructed and forever changing and/or changeable (1999, passim).

Furthermore, he points out that no 'people' has its territory by itself, in particular in today's globalized world (Hylland Eriksen 1999, p. 16), the conflict between Israelis and Palestinian being a case in point – if not *the* case in point – of this dilemma.

Ethnic identity, and national identity, is not tied to an objective culture (as 'culture' is always changing, always in motion) but rather the lines that demarcates one ethnic or national group from another are shaped by ideologies underlining the importance of those lines. Hence, culture is used for political reasons, as a political resource to strengthen the nation, the ethnic belonging, or the national identity (Hylland Eriksen 1999, p. 22). Furthermore, Hylland Eriksen questions the idea of a coherent national culture and the abstract notion of common ancestry and culture as the most important signifier for forming communities. In fact, the na-

tional ideology only presents one way of determining one's belonging, based on culture, language, religion, or other traits treated as national signifiers. Rather, he argues, sense of belonging is contextual and relational (p. 22).

National identities are not formed in a vacuum, but are, as discussed, constructed in relation to something else – what it is not. Difference is thus created separating one nation from another. Through differentiating the own nation from other nations, legitimacy is gained. This gives, that to be a nation, one is dependent on the existence of and difference from other nations. Nations are, in modern times, the normative way of forming a community bound together by a common national identity, and nation-states are the hegemonic way of organizing the nation. Thus, there exists a universal norm of nation-ness – nations and national identity constitutes a *universalization of the particular* (Lechner & Boli 2005, pp. 419).

3.5. Universalism

Founded in ideals of the French revolution and the European Enlightenment, *universalism*, stands as a contrast to the exclusivity of nationalism and identity politics. Based on Christian perception of a universal salvation, the idea was transferred into the political and philosophical sphere of human rights debates. A 'universalist' is defined as: *"a person advocating loyalty to and concern for others without regard to national or other allegiances"* (Oxford Dictionaries). This study will use the term 'universalism' as *the basic principle that all humans are entitled to equal rights on the basis of being humans.*

In the wake of accelerating globalization, a common identity of 'human-ness' has developed. Increasingly, people of the world are working together on specific topics as a 'we' without an 'other'. The common human-ness comes with both a bond and a responsibility towards other humans anywhere in the world, as seen in 'humanitarian aid', and political debates on the 'human interest' (Scholte 2005, pp. 241).

Furthermore, in the globalized world we are all more or less creolized, living with and within multiple overlapping cultures (Hylland Eriksen 1999, p. 62). A statement very relevant, in particular, in the Israeli society where Jews from all over the world have gathered bringing with them not only their Jewish heritage but also the cultures and languages from the place they lived in before (see for example Smooha 2008).

The universal principle of the common human-ness is manifested in the international community, and its international institutions. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN

1948a) and several other justice related conventions are proclaimed, aiming at the inclusion of an all-encompassing humanity (however weak the ability is for actual implementation) (Scholte 2005, p. 243).

One must, nonetheless, underline the inter*nationality* of those institutions: built on the Western idea of the inclusion of every piece of land and every human being in one nation-state or another, non-nations are not included (Scholte 2005, p. 229). This exclusion of stateless nations, results in an inability to access international institutions and international law. Something that has been put to the fore by the Palestinians and the call for international recognition of the Palestinian State, and the ICC bid (Quigley 2010).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and universalism as principle have been extensively criticized for being Eurocentric. The hegemonic formulation of universalism is in fact, grounded on European culture, and is thus a universalization of the particular (Laclau 1992, p. 86). However, through democratization processes and a discursive shift challenging the Eurocentric definition, or fixation, of the universal, the content of universality can be transformed into something fluent and breaking the connection to the particularity of European culture (p. 90).

Nonetheless, emphasis on universalism and universal human rights' ideals has dwindled in favor of national identity and popular struggle. A tendency one can discern all over the world as political struggles are formulated as a people's struggle for sovereignty and national or cultural rights, instead of a class or human rights' struggle (Hylland Eriksen 1999, pp. 25). However, national struggles entail seeking recognition of the national particularity, implying beliefs in equality and equal rights. National struggles can therefore be seen as expressions of universality, invoking *"a common universe of difference"* (Nederveen Pieterse 2003, p. 318).

4. Method

This chapter presents the sample group and the chosen methodological framework, *discourse analysis,* and it presents an outline of the analytical framework. Bias of the researcher and ethical considerations are also discussed here.

4.1. Sample Group

Many researchers argue that local ownership, by local actors and the civil society, over the design and implementation of the peace agreement is a necessity for a sustainable peace, as it

cannot be imposed by external forces. If the peace process is not seen as legitimate and is supported by the local society it might have negative impacts on the peace process, or even break it down, and aggravate the capacity for self-governance (Aggestam & Björkdahl 2011, p. 20f).

In the Israeli and Palestinian context it is the many non-governmental organizations working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinian that most likely will, and are, carrying out the practical work of creating coexistence. Hence, one can say that local organizations function as a bridge between the international community, the leadership and the local populations, regarding the peace process and settling the conflict.

Based on the idea of *citizens' diplomacy* and John Paul Lederach's (1997) thoughts on diplomacy as carried out by several actors on different levels in a society, this study will take the approach of *peace building from below* and focus on representatives for local NGOs working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. Local organizations working for a settlement of the conflict play an important role as representatives for the civil society and as citizens' diplomats. They constitute some of the leading voices on the national stage in questions within their area of interest. Furthermore, many NGOs main aim is to be formers of opinion.

Discourses are enabling and limiting the space in which actors can engage in the world. However, actors have agency and as such they are able to shape discourses (Feindt & Oels 2005, p. 166). Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, with their role as citizen's diplomats and as formers of opinion, are in this study seen as potential formers of discourse. They are here viewed as both active parts in the peace process and identity discourses. They also have the function of a bridge between high level diplomacy and everyday people.

The sample group is therefore: *representatives for local non-governmental organizations working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians.*

No specific criteria exist regarding age or gender of the respondents. During the process of contacting organizations and arranging interviews, I tried to get a diverse range of national belonging amongst the respondents as well as the target group/s of their respective organization.

4.2. Ethical Considerations

Israeli and Palestinian human rights defenders and peace activist are marginalized in the Israeli society. In particular, Palestinians engaged with NGOs or movements working for human rights and peace or regular Palestinians objecting the occupation, are highly subjected to discrimination and detentions. Additionally, elements in the Palestinian society argue that cooperation and coexistences with Israelis are normalization of the occupation. Consequently, Palestinians engaged in such activities risk being subjected to stigmatization and hostility in their own community. Thus, many Palestinians who work within binational organizations are not publicly open with their cooperation with their Israeli counterparts (see for example Lis 2011, Matar 2015).

With this background in mind, the possibility of anonymity when participating in studies like this is of high importance. The respondents were given the choice to give up their name or be anonymous, prior to the conduction of the interview. All but one agreed to being named in the study. However, due to the changes of focus of the study, an additionally approval of participation was required. Four respondents answered positively to the request of continuous participation. One withdrew their participation, and consequently, has been excluded from the material. The rest of the respondents have not responded, and thus, they are anonymized regarding their personal identity as well their organizational belonging.

4.3. Bias of the Researcher

The researcher is always part of his/hers research insofar as s/he influences the choice of topic, what questions to ask respondents, how the collected data is analyzed etc. All of this is based on *the normative point of departure* of the researcher, the sociopolitical location of the researcher – his/hers *bias*.

The race, class, gender and other positions of the researcher automatically create political relations between the researcher and the respondents and phenomena that are being studied. In line with feminist research ethics, I have tried throughout the research process to pay attention to power relations and my own bias in relation to the respondents and how this influences the relations researcher-respondents both during interviews and in the analysis of them (Ackerly & True 2010, p. 24), as this is a necessity in order to do ethical research (p. 37).

The bias of the researcher influences the respondents and the interviews taking place between them. The answers provided by the respondents might be adjusted to what the respondents

perceive that the researcher wants to hear. These so called *interviewer effects*, are due to traits of the researcher that s/he has or are prescribed by the society and by the specific respondents (Esaiasson *et al* 2012, p. 235).

Further on, the bias of the researcher can create distances between him/her and the researched, in regards of power relations due to age, nationality, gender etc. The very same traits can also help to break down the distance between researcher and research subject (Sprague 2005, 134ff).

My bias as a Swedish, young, female social science student certainly colors this study and the relation to the respondents. First of all, I do not have a personal stake in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians as I am neither a national (of either these two nations) nor part of their respective Diaspora. But, my nationality as Swedish might have a certain effect on the respondents as Sweden quite recently recognized the State of Palestine (Socialdemokraterna). Further on, there is a relatively high presence of Scandinavian volunteers and aid workers in particular in the West Bank. This led some respondents to assume by my nationality and re-gionality that I carry certain views that are prevalent among the international aid community.

My position as non-national can create both a distance and a cause for trust. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians are quite concerned about their reputation and status in the international community. As an outsider, I am to some extent seen as a representative for the international community which simultaneous makes me a potential ally and a stranger with the power to besmirch or praise the respondent and his/her particular standpoint. Especially considering that I am from a Western country that is a member of the EU which has an important role in the peace negotiations as well as being a trade partner and former of opinion.

Furthermore, my position as a foreigner in this particular context mean that I have certain privileges the respondents lack, such as being able to leave the conflict zone when the re-search is done. I also have greater freedom of movement than do both Israelis and Palestinians. I can travel to and stay in all areas in Israel and the West Bank, while many areas are inaccessible or forbidden for the locals depending on their nationality[11].

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[11] Israelis are forbidden to go to Area A in the West Bank (see map in appendix 1), Palestinians need a (Israeli issued) permit to go to Jerusalem, Israel proper and to settlements in the West Bank, in Area C. Palestinians residing in Gaza have a particular hard time to get travel permit to leave the Strip, even when it is a matter of medical issues. Furthermore, Palestinians in the Palestinian Territories and in Jerusalem need a permit to travel

During the time for the execution of interviews, I was doing an internship at a binational peace organization at its Tel Aviv office. The position of this particular organization and the role of 'colleague' to the respondents my internship might have influenced the respondents' attitudes towards me as an interviewer and towards this study. This does in many ways correlate to the respondents' identity and role as activist/representative for the various organizations working for peace, which creates closeness between them and me.

Despite this, I felt that the respondent had a somewhat hostile attitude during a few interviews. In particular regarding issues concerning security some respondents reacted negative to formulations of the questions. The interview guide was formulated to be as neutral as possible so it would not reflect any valuation or political opinions of the researcher. It is probable that the reactions arose due to a perceived distance caused by my position as outsider, and linguistic and/or cultural misunderstandings that could have been avoided would the interview have been conducted in the native language of the respondent.

Power relations created as an effect of other parts of my bias, such as age and gender, are relative to the respondents and did as such, vary from person to person. The respondents were in general considerable older than me and all but one was male. This did in fact create both clear and visible power relations as well as less visible ones. When I shared gender with the respondent or the age and/or educational differences were lesser, unequal power relations were less tangible.

To lessen all of these impacts of my bias as researcher, I tried as far as possible to lessen power relations by, for example, adjusting the way I dress and communicating to every specific respondent. I also tried to downplay my own person and avoid positioning myself in questions related to the study before and during the interview. My firm belief is, however, that no matter how hard you try, it is impossible to avoid impacts from the researcher's bias as one cannot escape this position. Hence, instead of hiding under a supposed neutrality of science, I highlight the importance and openly discuss the researcher's normative point of departure.

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abroad (excluding Jordan) as they do not have citizenship and hence lack (the right to have) passports. Those travel documents are issued by Israel, as the PA does not have the legal right to issue such documents.

4.4. Semi-structured Interviews

The empirical data was collected through *semi-structured, qualitative interviews* with representatives from local non-governmental organizations working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians.

In-depth interviews put focus on the respondents' own thoughts and as semi-structured interviews are very flexible, the respondent is free to express his/her own opinion and be part of directing the conversation (Bryman 2012, p. 471). This was a great advantage for the study, as the focus of it underwent a change (as discussed in 2.2. and below in 4.6) due to how the respondents' answered. Since I was aware that this might happen before the interviews took place, the interview guide[12] was designed in a way that would allow flexibility to adjust the conversation to the respondents' narratives and interests. The majority of the questions are held general to allow the respondent to express his/her views and for me to pose follow up questions of a more specific nature.

The respondents are all from non-governmental organizations based in Israel and/or the West Bank. Four of the respondents are identifying themselves as Jewish Israeli, five as Palestinian, and one as Israeli Palestinian. Approximately half of the respondents are either the spokesperson or the founder of the NGO, while the other half is regular employees or active members without a leading position.

Due to the current political situation, it is extremely hard to get a permit to enter the Gaza strip, rendering conduction of interviews in Gaza impossible.

The respondents were found and chosen through a few different sample methods: direct contact with around 40 different peace-oriented organizations in the area which lead to around half of the interviews I made. I also posted ads on social media where many of the peace activists and professionals are active. Further on, I used snowball sampling and an intermediary, which appeared to be the most useful methods in the West Bank where the Internet is less used and networks of contacts are an essential part of the societal structure. Reaching respondents through personal contacts enables access to otherwise hesitant respondents who would perhaps not respond positively to an email from an unknown researcher.

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[12] See appendix 2

Using snowball sampling can have certain effects on both the conduction of the interviews and the respondent's attitude towards the researcher. This may in its turn affect the answers given during the interview. The contact I got four (whereof I used three) of the interviews through, was present during two full interviews and half of one interview. This may of course, have had effects on the respondents answer. Before these interviews I made sure the respondent was comfortable having the/those specific people present during the interview, to ensure that the respondent would not alter the answers or put him/herself at risk of any kind.

One of the interviews was excluded partly from the results because of interaction with bystanders and the intermediary, that acted as translator, as it was conducted in Arabic due to lack of knowledge in English. The organization are not completely in line with the criteria for the sample group (the peace focus of the organization was rather weak). Additionally, the answers given did not differ in any significant way from answers given by other respondents. Thus, I judged the usage of this interview redundant and the sample group to have reached the level of data saturation.

Besides this excluded interview, the language used during the interviews was English, as I speak neither Arabic nor Hebrew. This posed no difficulty in most cases as both Israelis and Palestinians generally possess a high knowledge of English, in particular the ones active within NGOs.

During two interviews in the West Bank, the respondents initially were hesitant to conduct the interview in English. They agreed as the intermediary, who presented me to those specific respondents, accompanied me to assist, in case of language difficulties. The few problems that did arise were solved through translation but were isolated instances.

Two other interviews were excluded from the results: one due to suspicion that the respondent was not engaged in the peace movement, but had a hidden agenda for participation in the study. Additionally, the respondent was rather vague concerning the name of the organization they claimed to represent. Hence, I could not confirm their engagement in any NGO. The other interview excluded, was so due to that the respondent did not give any chance for me to pose any of the questions from the interview guide. It was the first interview conducted, thus, it is viewed as a sample interview.

One interview was conducted during a guided tour, organized by the respondent, as a part of the organization's program. Due to communication problems this situation was unavoidable.

The interview became slightly forced, partly due to the audience and the respondent's intention of including the interview in the tour to promote the specific political message of the organization. And partly, due to the respondents' reaction to some of the questions in the interview guide that he did not agree with (see 4.3.).

Although, the gender distribution of the sample group was on my mind during the whole process of finding respondents, circumstances out of my control (such as last minute cancellations), resulted in all but one participant being male. Whether this is a reflection of existing gender roles where men are taught and expected to be more outgoing and/or hold higher positions, or it was by chance, or a combination of the two, I can only speculate on.

In total, fourteen interviews were conducted. Due to communication problems and/or lack of fulfillment of the sample group criteria, and suspicion regarding the respondents' intentions with participating, three interviews are excluded. One respondent rejected participation due to the change of focus for the study. Alas, in this study, ten interviews are analyzed. They were conducted in Israel and the West Bank between April 15th and May 28th 2015[13].

The interviews lasted between one, and one and a half hour each. For the sake of correct coding the interviews have been transcribed in their entirety[14]. In the presentation of the results nonsense words, stuttering and the like have been excluded. Additionally, some grammatical mistakes have been corrected to facilitate understanding.

4.5. Discourse Analysis

The method chosen to analyze the empirical material is *discourse analysis*. It is combined with elements from *critical discourse analysis* and *discourse psychology*.

The term *discourse* is frequently used within academia and has thus been interpreted in numerous ways. Michel Foucault used the term to describe the way language relates to objects. He argues that the way an object is linguistically depicted – the discourse of that specific object – affects how it is comprehended. Language is thus both constituting and producing the social world. Discourses are in this manner ways of constituting knowledge and they uphold power relations, as discourses are the framework giving legitimacy to the relations (Bryman 2012, p. 528).

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[13] See appendix 3 for a detailed list of interviews and respondents

[14] With exception for utterances during the interview not directed towards the interviewer, such as when the interview was interrupted by other members of the organization

Furthermore, Foucault states that discourse constitutes a particular way of relating to the world and participating in it. Discourse is not a description of 'reality' – rather 'reality' is physically shaped by discourse (Feindt & Oels 2005, p. 166). Discourse analytics are therefore not searching for a reality *behind* the discourse, but studies the discourse in itself. The aim is not to find "an absolute truth" as such a thing is seen as non-existent. Rather, the goal is to discern what social consequences different discursive representations of the reality have (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 28).

There is not one accepted discourse, or one dominating and one dominated discourse, but a multiplicity of discursive elements working on different levels, and having predominance in different contexts and different times (Walls 2010, pp. 90). Furthermore, discourses are only temporary fixations of meaning, and continuously in flux (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 36). Thus, identity discourses in among Israelis and Palestinians changes over time, and is relative to situation and person.

Fairclough argues that discourses contribute to the creation of social identities and relations (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 73). Analysis of discourses can thus give an indication on how national identities among Israelis and Palestinians are constructed and reproduced, and how they relate to one another. If a Foucauldian lens is applied on the analysis of the discourses carried out among the subjects for the study, searching for the multiplicity of discourses concerning national identity, one might perhaps see the interplay between discourses and the power relations between them. This may show an inclination and implication of what political consequences the discursive practices among the respondents might entail in regards of the (future) settlement of the conflict.

Individuals can express several discourses simultaneously or parallel, reflecting an ambiguity in the narrative. This *interdiscursivity* shows the relation between discourses, as well as antagonism within the discourse order. Thus, one can discern how discourses among the respondents are produced, reproduced, and change. Furthermore, interdiscursivity shows how identity is discursively constructed and reconstructed (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 132).

Important to note is that discourses are subjected to and restricted by structural factors existing outside of the discursive. In the same manner, things and phenomenon exist outside of discourse (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 63). However, discourses provide *meaning*

to social phenomena. For example, nationalism is carried out by state sanctioned violence and material strength, but is constructed as meaningful only through discourse (p. 105).

By looking at identity discourses, one can examine how representatives for local organizations working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians, uses discourses of nationalism and universalism to legitimize nationalistic and/or universalistic values and strategies to reach and shape the settlement. As stated by discourse psychology, discourses are actively used as resources as humans are not solely carriers of discourses but actively creating and recreating them (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 105). The self is a discursive subject and identity is relational and instable – one chose the version of the self that is best fitted to the social environment (Hall 1988). Hence, the identity discourse/s carried out among the respondents has political consequences. In this case, consequences on how a future peace agreement will look like and the nature of the Israeli and Palestinian society/ies.

An important aspect for the study is the assumption by Faircloughs *critical discourse analysis* that discourses contributes to inequalities in the society. Discourses thus have an *ideological effect*. It is manifested in power hierarchies, for example between the majority population and the minority population (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 69). This perspective is an important tool in the analysis of the relation and interplay between different national identities among Israelis and Palestinians, as there is a power relation between the two that by necessity needs to be changed in order for a settlement to become reality. Through analysis and mapping of identity construction that eventually can break down destructive power relations, the aim and the hope of this study is to contribute to social change.

In contrast to Althusser, who view humans as passive ideological subjects, Fairclough perceive humans as subjects able to act and renegotiate practices and structures they are subjected to (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 80). The basic assumption for this study is that humans are capable to revalue the systems of knowledge and meaning they grew up in. My firm belief is that the respondents are able to form an opinion on the conflict and the settlement thereof, despite growing up in a specific culture, national group and geographical place, with a specific history and ways of viewing themselves. Furthermore, I believe them to be able to form and negotiate their own identity and national belonging.

Due to the inability to conduct interviews in the mother tongue of the participants, methods of analysis focusing mainly on linguistics, such as Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis, has

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not been applied. When using a second language there is a risk of the speech becoming hampered, inept, or less nuanced than would one speak one's first language. This has been taken into consideration during the analysis. Thus, the analysis focuses on narrations rather than specific words used. A method in line with discourse psychology that focus on the rhetoric organization of text and speech, and how it is organized against social action (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, p. 115).

4.6. Analytical Framework

Initially, the study intended to investigate how representatives for organizations working for a settlement between Israelis and Palestinians, relate to a specific type of solution to the conflict, namely the solution brought up by the Parallel States Project (Mossberg & LeVine 2014). However during the course of interviewing and transcribing the material, I realized that bringing in new ideas for a solution, or really discussing any political solution, is not the greatest concern of the respondents. Most of the participants have a clear opinion of which solution is the most preferable, albeit most are open for any solution that brings peace and justice for all. However, the emphasis in the respondents' narratives is not on political solutions.

Processing the empirical data, it became clear that the focus of the study must be changed to be in line with the topics brought up by the respondents, to justly portray them. Furthermore, it is of importance for the study, in order for it to bear relevance within academia and to be relevant for the respondents, and other Israelis and Palestinians.

To find what the respondents hold as most important, an initial, detailed coding of the transcripts was done, dividing the data in approximately fifty categories. A second coding cut the number of categories in half. The coding laid the groundwork of discovering the core narratives and discourses in the text. Now, themes recurring in more or less all interviews could be detected.

Thematization of the codes, where themes not found in all interviews were excluded, gave the final outline of what the respondents were actually talking about: identity, and how it relates to the conflict and its solution. The identity is both/either connected to the nation and/or to "being human", relating to the theoretical stances of nationalism and universalism. Thus, these two theoretical stances constitute the overarching discourses. Othering is prevalent in the nationalistic discourse. In the universalistic discourse, Othering per definition is non-

existent. However, these are not clear cut discourses separate from each other. Several interviews are characterized by a high degree of interdiscursivity, as further discussed in the two subsequent chapters.

Table 1. Analytical Framework

Overarching discourse	Identity discourse	Discourse of the Other	Social and political consequence of the discourse
Nationalism	National identity	Settlers as the absolute Other	National struggle – the two states solution
Universalism	"Being human" – common identity		Civil rights struggle – the one state solution

5. Results and Analysis

In this chapter are the results presented and analyzed. The narratives and identities of the respondents are characterized by bearing strong connotations with both nationalistic and universalistic values and ideals. Some respondents are relatively coherent in their narrations while others show a high degree of interdiscursivity. There is one discourse highlighting national identity, correlating with the national struggle of the two states solution. Othering is strongly prevalent in this discourse, between all groups. However, the settlers constitutes the absolute Other for both Israelis and Palestinians. Another discourse circles around universal human rights and a perceived common human identity. Politically, this discourse translates into a preference for civil rights struggle and the one state solution. The narrations and representations of national identity among the respondents are therefore discussed on the basis of these discursive contexts.

5.1. Nationalism

5.1.1. Identity characterized by national belonging

National identification, to be 'a people', is one of the key issues and values in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There are clear differences between Israelis and Palestinians as well as the experiences of belonging to respective nation.

To be a Palestinian is relative to the occupation, as experiences related to it shapes the consciousness and values of Palestinians. One respondent, who was only a child during the second intifada,[15] says: *"I saw everything, tanks and everything. That was my childhood in general".* Traumatic incidents during the intifada have forever shaped the consciousness of the respondent (23-05-2015). One Palestinian respondent argues that the Israeli Army's brutal actions, in particular during the intifada, have a strong effect on Palestinians' values, and perception of Israelis in general. Furthermore, the brutality pushes people to become more extreme, she argues (24-05-2015).

Being the weak side in the conflict is characterizing the Palestinian national identity. When they, for once, could be interpreted as the strong side during the war in 2014, Palestinians began to support Hamas and the violent resistance, one participant recalls, despite the high number of Palestinians killed in the war. Many Palestinians felt proud when Nablus was safer than Tel Aviv, argues the respondent (15-04-2015).

Even though Palestinians are on the weakest side, both Israelis and Palestinians live in uncertainty and fear due to the situation. Fear is, indeed, a trait that seems to, in particular, characterize the Israeli. It is fear that everybody else hates them (23-05-2015), fear of the demographic coming to their disadvantage, and that if Jews were in minority Islamic laws might be imposed on them (26-05-2015a). Furthermore, fear stemming from historical Jewish experiences is omnipresent: *"we were at the mercy of people that often hated us"* (26-05-2015a). Those experiences teach you the necessity of self-defense: *"Jewish history has thought us that you cannot be powerless"*(17-05-2015).

The negative interdependence of the Israeli and Palestinian national identities, described by Kelman (1999), is discernable as respondents speak of how inducing feelings of unsafety in the other strengthens the position and proudness of the own group. Furthermore, the issue of demography – that it *is* an issue – is an indication of the zero-sum mentality in identity construction among Israelis and Palestinians. Demographic majority of the other group is seen as a threat, suggesting that the success of one people is perceived as the failure of the other.

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[15] Literal meaning in Arabic is: 'Uprising', 'shiver' or 'shudder'. The term is used to describe the waves of violence occurring in 1987-93 (the first intifada) and 2000-2005 (the second intifada) (see for example Caplan 2010)

The strong influence of historical events in the Palestinian and Israeli identity construction is evident in how they describe the self, but also in descriptions of the other. As Oz (2015) and Kelman (1999) argue, Palestinians and Israelis both have a history of being victimized, which complicates the relationship between them.

The narratives of the respondents indicate that the Israelis in all regards hold the stronger position in the power relation between Israelis and Palestinians. However, there is a trait of fear embedded in the Jewish national identity stemming from historical experiences of being a prosecuted minority. This fear lives on in Israel, despite Israeli Jews holding the stronger power-position. Several Israeli respondents are highlighting the importance for Israeli Jews to have a strong army and keep control over state institutions in Israel, because of their specific historical background (26-05-2015a, 17-05-2015, 29-04-2015). Thus, there is a national discourse arguing that a strong military and Jewish control over the vital institutions, are central for the national community and its survival.

However, one Israeli respondent notes that the people in the West Bank does not have any sovereignty, but is ruled by the Israeli army that has found legal ways to rule as they please over the Palestinians (26-05-2015a). Consequently, Israelis are, in general, described by both Israeli and Palestinian respondents, as oppressors and occupiers upholding racists and/or discriminatory practices.

Diverging narratives between Palestinians and Israelis are creating a separation between the two peoples, further augmented by the wall between the West Bank and Israel. The Palestinians do not see the civilian everyday life of Israelis:

> *We don't know that there is normal people, there is normal Israelis having normal life, having their own jobs, they go to schools or whatever. We, Palestinians, think... all the Israelis are soldiers and they have the duty to kill us.* (23-05-2015)

Israelis, on the other hand, see Palestinians as terrorists: *"they don't know that there is a people, they know...there is a terrorist, a...a creature, he wants to kill me"*. Therefore, they do not communicate with each other (23-05-2015).

The Palestinian respondents are trying to maintain a narrative saying that civilian Israelis are not their enemies: *"[the] enemy is Israelis as occupier and as soldiers, and not as PEO-*

PLE[16]" (24-05-2015). Although, one Palestinian respondent is not differentiating as much between the civilian Israeli and the Israeli soldier as the two Palestinians quoted above. He states that:

> ANYBODY[17] [who] is silent in Israel – I see them equal as the soldiers, because they are responsible about their soldiers. They are responsible about the occu...their occupation. They are responsible about their government. (11-05-2015)

In accordance with this logic, except for the few Israelis who actively are taking a stand against the Israeli occupation, all civilians are part of the concept of enemy.

However, another respondent argues that the Israeli society is characterized by an apolitical attitude towards the conflict and the Palestinians. He states that Israelis just do not care. From the Israeli side there is no political plan: *"we're just gonna build the settlements...and keep control the land. And that's it!"* (26-05-2015b).

Several respondents point out the war fatigue amongst Palestinians. One respondent expresses a lack of hope for the future: *"As a Palestinian I was attacked many times, I was beaten, I was arrested, I have no hope for future."* (11-05-2015). Others talk about how Palestinians have had enough. Thus, an attitude of indifference towards the framework of the solution has emerged among Palestinians – as long as they can get a functioning life they are happy (26-05-2015b). One respondent argues that the Palestinians are stuck in "the middle" of being poor and not being poor. Hence, their sole focus is how to feed their children, not their freedom (15-04-2015). This is interpreted, by one respondent, as an Israeli success of *"making the PEOPLE apolitical"*[18] (26-05-2015b). However, another respondent argues that it is not the fault of Israel alone – the Palestinian Authority carries part of the responsibility for this situation[19] (15-04-2015).

One Palestinian respondent argues that the war fatigue is pushing them to move forward, towards a sovereign country: *"we want to build a state. We want to live for our country, for our people – not die for [it]."* Despite that, the dream of having whole of historical Palestine once again, lives on, as *"it's something emotional for the Palestinians"*. However, the respondent

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[16] Emphasis by the respondent
[17] Emphasis by the respondent
[18] Emphasis by the respondent
[19] I.e. the terms of the Oslo Accords, he explains, that has become an awkward status quo that was not supposed to last more than a transitional period of five years

notes that Palestinians *"need to think rational and be realistic"*. He underlines that you cannot forget about the past, but it is necessary to move beyond it, to *"get over it"* (23-05-2015).

For one Palestinian respondent, the identity is tied to national sovereignty. Because of the occupation Palestinians have a need to *"feel that we have our own identity //…// through our own state"* (24-05-2015). Several other respondents, however, underline the emotional part of national identification, rather than sovereignty: *"It's something emotional, or yani, inside you that you're recognize yourself as a Palestinian"*. Nonetheless, regarding Palestinians in Israel one respondent says: *"you're a Palestinian but you have to admire this...the place you're staying and you have to respect the law"* (23-05-2015).

The important thing, according to this respondent, is the connection to the land – not the identity, as he disassociates between the two. The emotional part of being a Palestinian is strongly connected to the dream of whole historical Palestine being Palestinian. But as in the case of Israeli Palestinians, the respondent argues, the admiration of the place you live in is obligatory. So is respecting the law, which for Israeli Palestinians is the Israeli law.

While Palestinians have a strong connection to the Arab world, Israel rather turns to the Western world, where its emotional connection lies. One respondent is pointing out how Israel rather competes in sports and music championships in Europe, instead of participating in Asian championships. Even if that means a lower ranking: *"a lot of these things are just an emotional kind of thing that you're part of the Western world"* (26-05-2015a).

Further underlining the West-East perspective, one Israeli Palestinian explains how the Arab connection to the land causes a culture clash with the Israeli and Western cultures. For Arabs, he explains, the land was everything: *"your land is your home, is your job, is your livelihood"*. Westerners and Israelis do not understand this. However, the strength of this connection to the land might be lesser among the younger generation. The respondent explains that even though getting another piece of land would not be the same for his grandfather, it is sufficient for him. It is a price worth paying – if it would solve the conflict. Although, Israel needs to acknowledge the anger the loss of the land causes amongst Arabs, and do whatever it can to avoid dividing the land (21-05-2015).

Israelis also have a connection to the land, as many Israelis view this area as their historical heritage (17-05-2015). A Palestinian respondent emphasizes the religious connection for Israeli Jews. They chose to go here, not any of the other places that were on the table, *"because*

they think in their Holy book it's the land that God promised them" (15-04-2015). A view one Israeli respondent agrees on, saying that for many Israelis the connection is indeed religious, and *"if you believe literary in the Bible then there's not much you can argue with"* (26-05-2015a).

Israeli and Palestinian national identity is constructed in contrasting relation to each other. Israeli Palestinians, on the other hand, are facing a slightly different situation with potential identification with both Israel and Palestine. One Israeli Palestinian explains: *"We live together our ENTIRE lives, we've shared EVERYTHING together"*. Yet, the narratives Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Israelis grew up with are completely different, and their lifestyles are different. A fact, crystallized once they turn eighteen:

> *What does that mean when I hit eighteen and my best friend, my best Jewish Israeli friend is going to the army? So now I've taught him Arabic and he's going to join...the intelligence, you know what I mean, and spy on my people.* (21-05-2015)

Another event showcasing the divide between Israelis and Israeli Palestinians is the Israeli Independence Day and the Palestinian Nakba Memorial Day that coincides. This creates a dilemma for Israeli Palestinians:

> *So imagine, whenever a Palestinian Israeli boy or girl, who at that day from one side his identity is with Palestinian identity, let us say, and he has to raise up the Israeli flag at that day.* (24-05-2015)

Israel does not respect the Israeli Palestinians' belonging to the Palestinian identity, she states. The Independence Day/Nakba is a proof of that (24-05-2015). However, another respondent argues that Israeli Palestinians *"recognize themselves as a Palestinians with the Israeli identity"*. He states that *"for them it's not about the nationality"* (23-05-2015). A narrative supported by another respondent. She argues that Israeli Palestinians would stay in Israel, even if there was an independent Palestinian state. However, it is not because they want an Israeli state, but *"because it's their homeland"* (24-05-2015). Hence, the respondents perceive that it is not the identity or national feelings that ties Israeli Palestinians to Israel, but the land itself.

The Israeli Palestinian respondent agrees on Palestinian ties to the land. However, he perceives the importance of identity and national identification as greater than the emotional ties to a specific piece of land. He explains what he would do:

> *...if there is a two states solution and they sign it and it's all over I'm there, I'm Palestinian. I'm going to Palestine and if that's what we got out of Palestine, then I will kiss the ground I left behind //...// and I'll leave.* (21-05-2015)

For the respondent it is more important to have a country that willingly includes him in its citizenry:

> *I'll go to a country that will give me a passport that has writing in my language. You know what I'm saying? And the symbol of the country is something I can relate to and something that I can swear allegiance to.* (21-05-2015)

The respondent says he has given Israel a chance: *"I've tried loving Israel. Many times".* However, without success: *"it never loved me back".* It is visible on all levels of the Israeli society, he argues, *"it just reminds you every day that you're different".* The Othering he felt from the Israel society is based on his Palestinian identity. Therefore, the respondent states, he would not want to raise his children in a Jewish state, because they would not be Jewish and hence be left out. He wants them to have a state that would protect them and have an anthem they can relate to – something he feels lacking as a Palestinian in Israel (21-05-2015).

The importance of identification with national symbols expressed here correlates with Hylland Eriksen's articulation of the nation as dependent on its members' loyalty and identification with its symbols (1999, p. 40). Although, the respondent underlines the importance for members of the nation to feel included in the national symbols and be able to trust that it would protect you. Simply, be included in the nation's loyalty towards its members.

The narrations concerning Israeli Palestinians are characterized by being an ethnic anomaly. There are traits of identifications with both the Israeli national identity and the Palestinian national identity – Israeli Palestinians are both-and, neither-nor Israeli and Palestinian (Hylland Eriksen 2004, p. 167).

The other side of the coin, for Israeli Palestinians, is the question of citizenship. The Palestinians who stayed in Israel after 1948 were given citizenship. Hence, Israel *"admits that they are part of the Israeli state"* (24-05-2015). But they were for a long time living under military rule and were *"not really equal citizens"*, notes one respondent (29-04-2015). There were, and still are, all kinds of discrimination against them. One respondent says that: *"all the time [Israel] deal with them that they are Arabs...yani, their place is not there"* (24-05-2015).

However, their status as citizens is not questioned by the majority in Israel, not even if Palestine would become an independent state (29-04-2015).

Palestinians in Jerusalem, however, are not granted citizenship or even permanent residency. Hence, they are regarded as visitors only, concludes one participant. He argues that Israelis until now does not consider Palestinians as human beings, indigenous people or *"people really"* (28-05-2015). An attitude echoing colonial discourses where domination and ownership were reserved for the Westerners, as Orientals were not seen as 'real' human beings (Said [1978] 2004, p. 199).

There is an understanding among most respondents that nothing lasts forever – the occupation is not sustainable in the long run. Further on, without a settlement to the conflict, Israel will not remain what it is today. A Palestinian respondent says that *"the only opportunity for [Israel] now"* is to make peace with the Palestinians while they are strong: *"When they are weak they can't ask for our mercy, after they humiliated us"* (11-05-2015).

An Israeli respondent states that: *"I don't think there's a future for the state of Israel without a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict"* (17-05-2015). He refers to the demographic issue: within 20-25 years the majority of the population in the area of historical Palestine will be Palestinian. This will become a turning point:

> *IF[20] we do end up having a one state solution, then that one state would not have a Jewish character. OR it would be an Apartheid states with total Israeli...controlled with Israeli power. That would be the end of the State of Israel as we know it today.* (17-05-2015)

Some Palestinian participants are hesitant towards the possibility of coexistence. Sixty years of wars and destruction have made it *"at some point"* hard for Palestinians *"to coexist with the Israeli society"* (23-05-2015). Differences between the two peoples are another obstacle: *"it's a bit hard for [Palestinians] to live normally with Israelis, which is…sometimes a bit different"* (15-04-2015).

One Palestinian respondent does not see the possibility of having *"a normal relation"* with the Israelis today. However, he believes *"that time cures everything"*. In the future they may be able to have a good relation, if the Palestinians have their rights and their state (23-05-

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[20] Emphasis by the respondent

2015). Another respondent agrees: *"I don't trust that we have peace with them no, for now."* Although, he is *"very optimistic"* for the future, as there are *"very good Israelis, who may be the majority one day"* (11-05-2015).

'Hate' is a word frequently popping up when talking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One Israeli respondent contradicts that discourse: *"I don't think Palestinians hate Israelis. I think they're PISSED OFF with Israelis and they're ANGRY. //...// Israelis don't give a shit, they don't hate Arabs, they just don't care."* Thus, in contrast to other ethnic conflicts where hate has been inherited for generations, peaceful coexistence is within reach for Israelis and Palestinians, he argues, if a settlement would be agreed upon (26-05-2015b).

Algeria was occupied by France for more than 130 years, but today they have a good relation. Same goes for the Irish and the Brits. Something similar can happen between Israelis and Palestinians, argues one respondent:

> *So by the time, without, yani, humiliating people, without violating their rights, I think no problem to even becoming friends, not only to accept each other, to become a friend.* (28-05-2015)

Israel must admit its responsibility for the Nakba[21] and the creation of the refugee problem, according to all respondents. The only question that is up for discussion regarding the refugees, according to one respondent, is whether they come back as Palestinians or Israelis. However, this is not the main obstacle for peace, he says, it can be postponed. Because *"It's not about solution, it's about the current situation"*, as more Palestinians are leaving due to the harsh living situation (11-05-2015).

One Palestinian respondent states that *"The Palestinians need to be connected to their land and to their own people"* and that all the refugees are welcome to Palestine. At the same time he argues that most refugees probably would chose to stay where they are and instead get compensation, would the Resolution 194[22] be implemented. Because many of them have inte-

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[21] Literal meaning in Arabic: 'Catastrophe'. The term is used to describe the events that took place during the foundation of Israel when around 500 Palestinian villages were demolished and approximately 700.000 Palestinians became refugees. Those events are, however, contested as Israel has a rather different narrative. Official Israeli history writing, describe this period of time as the war of independence (see for example Caplan 2010, Pappe 2012)

[22] The resolution taken by the UN General Assembly, in 1948, stating the Right of Return for the Palestinian refugees (UN 1948b)

grated in their host country and have built a new life there, and: *"If I went back home...I would be a stranger in this country"* (23-05-2015).

The degree of belongingness to the Palestinian nation among the refugees seems to vary depending on one's living situation. In countries where Palestinian refugees are treated as equals and are granted citizenship, the wish to return is less strong than in countries where Palestinians are excluded from the society. Hence, refugees *"that live in bad environments"* will *"think seriously about coming here"* (23-05-2015).

Several of the respondents describe, or define even, the Israeli-Palestinian situation as a conflict of narratives. There are two divergent narratives that need to be deconstructed in order to solve the conflict. Those narratives do not only affect the physical conflict and how to solve it, they also create a culture of Othering (21-05-2015, 29-04-2015, 24-05-2015). The Othering is the real issue, argues one respondent: *"We are racist. We all are. //...// We're not ready for Others among us"* (21-05-2015).

As discourse theory and post-colonialism has argued, Othering is a way of constructing the own identity and strengthen the own community or national group (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, pp. 166, Edwards 2008, p. 21). However, as Laclau points out, the differences demarcating the own identity from another, is not neutral but hierarchical ordered, causing exclusion and subordination (1992, p. 88). National identities among Israelis and Palestinians are constructed through positioning oneself against the other and stereotyping the other side. The respondents demonstrate awareness of and opposition to this phenomenon. There is an understanding that Othering between Israelis and Palestinians is an obstacle for peaceful co-existence.

However, Othering of the around half a million Israeli Jews living in the West Bank as settlers, is not problematized by the respondents in the way they do in regards to Othering between non-settler Israelis and Palestinians.

5.1.2. Settlers as the Absolute Other

The depiction and degree of Othering of settlers differs slightly among the respondents. Although a clear pattern can be discerned: the settlers are portrayed as the Other, distinct from non-settler Israelis. Hence, they are the Other to both Israelis and Palestinians. The settlers are the absolute Other.

Descriptions of settlers by the respondents contain words as *"violent"* and *"provoking war"*. Furthermore, they are described as a *"huge burden for the Israeli Army"* – half the military is devoted to protection of the settlers (21-05-2015). One Palestinian respondent makes an analogue between the settlers and the mafia – which no one would negotiate with. As such, Palestinians will not *"agree to have peace with the settlers"*. For this participant the settlers are: *"here to occupy us. They are here to humiliate us"*. Simultaneously, he compares the settlers to spoilt children who expect to get whatever toy – in this case, land and houses– they want, without consideration for others who are suffering from their behavior (11-05-2015).

The settlers are overall portrayed by the respondents as a problem for the peace process, for coexistence, in particular for Palestinians, but also for Israelis. The illegality of the settlements, by international law, is highlighted by most respondents. There is an agreement among them that the settlers cannot stay in the West Bank, at least not under current circumstances. One respondent argues that they constitute a security threat for both Israelis and Palestinians:

> *...the alternative to [the settlers] having to go away is that everybody will have to live in this country for another hundred years of bloodshed which quite possibly might end with a nuclear war.* (29-04-2015)

Although, there is an unwillingness to incorporate them in the Israeli society and neighborhoods as they differ so much from other Israelis. Mostly because they hold much stricter religious views compared to other Israelis. One respondent expresses the problematic situation with the settlers, from an Israeli point of view:

> *Where would they put them? We also have a problem that the ultra-Orthodox Jews...and the most Israelis don't want to be living with them, because they...they destroy your town and so we put them over in the settlements.* (26-05-2015a)

The clear demarcation of settlers as different from other Israelis – living another lifestyle and carrying other values – indicates that there is no coherent national identity among Israelis. Rather, the national identity is fragmented into one Israeli proper identity and one settler identity. The quote above indicates that political loyalty and group belonging among Israelis does not stretch to fully include settlers. Despite that they have common religious background, and share language and history. This confirms Hylland Eriksen's conclusion: religion, language and history are not necessarily the most important signifiers for forming communities. Rather, sense of belonging is contextual and relational (1999, p. 12).

One respondent suggests granting Palestinian citizenship to all settlers who wants to stay, after the two states solution is realized. In fact, he argues that it should be the obligation of the government of Palestine to enable them to stay. Although, offering settlers to stay in sovereign Palestine, means, according to the respondent, that most of them will leave by free will. The conditions for staying – living as an expat Israeli or Palestinian citizen, under Palestinian rule – is simply unacceptable to the great majority of the settlers. Thus, offering them to stay *"realistically means that you are telling 99 percent of them to go away"*, argues the respondent (29-04-2015).

This way, Israel would not have to evacuate the settlers from the Palestinian state neither by force[23], nor implement political measurements such as land swaps. The respondent means that this could be a strategical move from the Palestinian side to force the settlers to leave in a diplomatic way. The respondent see a clear parallel with the situation in French ruled Algeria and the Algerian struggle for independence. He also predicts that the dilemma the Israeli settlers in Palestine will have is very similar to what the French settlers in Algeria experienced:

> *...the Algeria which was their homeland was very much the French ruled Algeria. They did not feel that they had a place as a minority in an Arab Algeria.* (29-04-2015)

The identity of 'settler' is, in general among the respondents, equalized with the religious-political statement of living in the West Bank, outside of the internationally recognized borders of Israel. Other reasons settlers may have to live there[24], is not mentioned by the respondents other than in sweeping statements such as: *"[the settlements] promotes an Israeli totalitarian agenda"* (21-05-2015).

The implication embedded in the (lack of) utterances about the settlers and the settlements in relation to wider social and political issues, is that the main signifier of the settlers is their political views, built upon the religious views of the Ultra-Orthodox. While other Israelis are primarily portrayed as religiously moderate and ready to accept a compromise solution, the settlers are depicted as the token of a non-negotiable expansionistic Zionism. As such, they

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[23] As was done in Gaza in 2005, when Israel unilateral decided to evacuate all settlements on the Gaza strip (Aggestam et al. 2014, p. 149)

[24] For example, high living costs inside Israel proper and subsidized housing in the settlements as a consequence of structural racism in Israel and a conscious political strategy to expand the settlements, enforced by the Israeli government (Aggestam et al. 2014)

are presented as standing in direct opposition to coexistence and a solution to the conflict that includes the rights or even the minimum demands of the Palestinians.

Settlers' identification as Zionists[25] is something brought up as self-evident by the respondents. Thus, it is implicated that being a Zionist is the essence of the settlers' identity. Would a settler decide to stay in a West Bank ruled by Palestinians, they would, per definition, cease to be a Zionist (29-04-2015). In other words, to reach a solution (that is not Apartheid) for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the settlers have to either leave or change the essence of their identity.

While a settlement of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is hard, yet possible, to conceive for the respondents, a settlement that satisfies both settlers and Palestinians is perceived as impossible. What is acceptable for Palestinians is per definition unacceptable for settlers, and vice versa, argues one participant. He states that: *"As for settlers and Palestinians I think it is a zero-sum game"* (29-04-2015).

Despite the Othering and perception of settlers as peace blockers, two respondents expresses sympathy for the personal trauma settlers will go through, as they eventually will have to move from the settlements. It will be a personal tragedy for them and should be recognized as such (21-05-2015, 29-04-2015).

Reading between the lines in the narrations of the respondents, however, one can discern that this is a price the respondents consider necessary to pay, in order to restore past wrongdoings and secure a peaceful future for everybody else.

5.1.3. National Struggle – Two States Solution

The conflict is defined as a national conflict, between two national movements. One Palestinian participant states that Palestinians *deserve* to have a state: *"as human beings we deserve to have our own country"* (15-04-2015).

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[25] The type of Zionism they refer to is *political Zionism*. As one respondent explains (26-05-2015b), in its pure form it is promoting a Jewish homeland covering the whole area from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, reaching well beyond Israel's official borders. This type of Zionism is therefore per definition expansionistic. There are other streams of Zionism but they have more or less vanished as the political Zionism lead by Theodor Herzl became the hegemonic ideology of Israel (see 5.2.2.). The term 'Zionism' or 'Zionist' in this study refers to political Zionism, if nothing else is mentioned.

Interesting to note in this statement is the universalistic connotation. The perception that one deserves certain things based on being a human correlates to the discourse of universalism and universal rights, based on common human-ness. However, the emphasis on the right to a sovereign state is more related to classical nationalism and the Wilson doctrine of every people's right to self-determination (Hylland Eriksen 1999, p. 43).

In line with nationalistic ideas, one participant argues that independence gives a people its legitimacy: *"Independence is HUGE*[26]*. It's the time you start validly operating as a people"* (21-05-2015).

Moreover, one respondent underlines that independence furthers positive relations between Israelis and Palestinians. Because: *"the Palestinian business men would not be seriously ready to work together with the Israeli business men until they are doing it from the basis of their own sovereignty"* (17-05-2015).

As discussed earlier, fear is part of the identity for both Israelis and Palestinians, and security is one of the key issues in the conflict. The goals for a country, states one respondent, are to provide security to its citizens and abide international law. Something Israel is not doing at the moment. He says that: *"The IDF*[27] *is not providing security for Palestinians, so obviously it needs to go"* (21-05-2015). Another respondent continues, stating that the best way for Palestinians to be secure is to have their own state: *"To be a REAL Palestinian. To have REAL Palestine*[28]*"* (15-04-2015). A statement further underlining the connection between national identity and the sovereign nation-state, as it implies that now, when there is no Palestinian state, Palestinians are not fully Palestinians.

Equality, justice, freedom and self-determination are brought up as the preconditions necessary for Palestinians to be secure. International law must be the umbrella of the solution otherwise it is only a half solution, states one respondent. What he wants is for Israelis *"to leave me alone, leave my country, give me my rights"* (11-05-2015).

The priority for Palestinians is to first and foremost have their state, according to several Palestinian respondents (21-05-2015, 23-05-2015, 24-05-2015, 15-04-2015):

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[26] Emphasis by the respondent
[27] The Israeli Defense Forces – Israel's army
[28] Emphasis by the respondent

...we talk about a FREE[29] democratic state. It should be first free, this is if you take the priorities, to be free first. And then you talk about the nature of that state. (24-05-2015)

However, democracy is the ideal taken for granted by all respondents, preferably, in the form of a civic state (28-05-2015, 24-05-2015). Several participants have high hopes for Palestinian democracy, stating that the structure of the PLO contains more democratic elements than what most Arab states have (17-05-2015, 21-05-2015).

Most respondents that support a two states solution agree on the decision to divide Jerusalem. Referring to the decision from the General Assembly, stating that East Jerusalem should be Palestinian, one respondent argues that it is not a complicated issue at all (23-05-2015). However, there is a gap between the signed agreement and the reality on the ground. Several participants point out that Israel has not admitted their occupation of the city. Instead they have annexed it. Jerusalem is increasingly Judaized, as permanent residency is denied for East Jerusalem's Palestinians, Palestinian houses are demolished and Jewish settlements are expanding in East Jerusalem (28-05-2015, 24-05-2015).

One Palestinian respondent supports the signed agreement to divide it in East and West Jerusalem, even though he considers it Muslim (28-05-2015). Another Palestinian respondent calls out the contradiction in that Palestinians from the West Bank need permits from Israel to enter Jerusalem. Despite that half the city is supposed to lie within the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority (15-04-2015).

If Israel cannot accept that East Jerusalem belongs to Palestine, they should go for the one state solution instead, suggests one Palestinian respondent: *"If they want to share EVERYTHING – let's share!"* If Israel rejects the one state solution they should *"give us our part and leave"* (11-05-2015).

There are many problematic factors with the one state solution, argue several respondents. One of them foresees that it would be either Israeli OR Palestinian, at the expense of the other, further highlighting of the zero-sum mentality that exists between Israelis and Palestinians (Kelman 1999). Due to this, the respondent prefers the two states solution. Although: *"two states solution it's...still not enough for everybody but it's better than one state solution"* (15-04-2015).

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[29] Emphasis by the respondent

One respondent claims that *"if Israel would just agree to contain other citizens that would be just as much punishment as occupation"* for Palestinians. His argument is that *"Israel right now is failing to protect its own citizens",* referring to racism and prosecuting of Israeli citizens with Ethiopian and Russian background[30]. Furthermore, there is a lack of freedom of speech, argues the participant: *"I can't express my views as a Muslim, as Palestinian, as a human being".* For this to happen in a one state solution, Israel would have to *"have a complete makeover"* (21-05-2015).

When speaking of the one state solution, both Israeli and Palestinian respondents present descriptions of Israelis – as a group – as dominating, manipulating and unwilling to let go of the power position they currently have. One respondent thinks that Israel would not accept a one state solution because of the demographic advantage of the Palestinians (23-05-2015). The Palestinians would be dominated by the Israelis. In particular, the influence of the settlers would increase, which would be *"a terrible solution"* for the Palestinians, in the words of an Israeli respondent (26-05-2015a). The one state solution *"would be a recipe either for ongoing conflict or for Israeli domination which would essentially be an Apartheid situation",* argues another participant (17-05-2015).

Accepting Palestinians in charge of the army, the government, and other institutions will be difficult for Israel. It is hard for Israelis to accept Abu Mazen[31] as president over a sovereign Palestinian state, but even more so would he be their own presidents, argues one respondent (29-04-2015). Another participant cannot see this happen at all: *"I cannot imagine that Israel would allow a Palestinian to be the head of the army. Or even the head of the police".* The consequence would be Israeli domination: *"So that wouldn't be equal, you know, [the Palestinians] wouldn't have the same rights"* (26-05-2015a).

Differences, hatred, and racism on both sides, are factors that would obstruct peaceful coexistence. But, there are *"a lot of people that potentially could get along just fine together".* If the leaders from both sides were working together for a good solution, the choice of solution would not matter that much, argues one respondent. However, he does not think that is the case, because: *"the people with the power would make sure that they control it".* Some Israelis' idea of their God given right to the land, and the Jewish history of being a prosecuted mi-

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[30] Both of these groups are Jewish, however, not belonging to the dominant ethno-group of Ashkenazi (see for example Ben-Rafael 2007, Zelalem 2014)
[31] The president of the Palestinian Authority

nority, play, of course, a part to why the two states solution seems favorable to many, rather than the one state solution with binational institutions (26-05-2015a).

The portrayal of Israelis as clinging on to the land, and the predictions of total Israeli domination would there be one state, indicates that Israelis are perceived as not being ready to give up or compromise with their national identity. Given, that their national identity is constructed in relation to the Palestinian national identity, and the superior power-position Israelis hold in relation to them. If they were to give up this position they would lose part of their identity, as the master stops being a master the moment the slave is no slave anymore, to paraphrase the dialectic of Hegel (Azar 1995, pp. 10). Neither are the Israelis ready to go against the national discourse stating that Jewish control of the state institutions is central for the survival of the national community (as discussed in 5.1.1.).

Moreover, several respondents highlight that people wish to nurse their own culture as an argument for the two states solution: *"I think that the overall majority of Israeli Jews want to see an Israel that has primarily a Jewish character"* (17-05-2015).

Most respondents think that Israel, would there be a two states solution, are going to treat its Arab citizens in the same way they do now: as citizens but with a great deal of discrimination. One respondent, who is Israeli Palestinian himself, thinks that Israel would turn more Jewish, at the expense of Israeli Arabs:

> *Because if there was a sovereign Palestine...I think all inhibitors would come off, or would down in Israel. And Israel would become a FULLY Jewish state. Because it would be like: 'look, you have an option.'* (21-05-2015)

However, several respondents in favor of the two states solution are positive to future collaborating between the Palestine and Israel. Because *"yani, we share many things"* (23-05-2015). One respondent cites W. J. Mitchel, stating that Israel and Palestine are like Siamese twins – they cannot be totally separate from each other: *"What we need though, is...not have a repressive occupying relationship, but an equal relationship"* (17-05-2015).

Freedom of access to the other state is something one respondent assumes would be part of any peace agreement: *"So that, yes, you would not control it but you'd be able go visit"* (17-05-2015) – a point recurring in multiple interviews. One Palestinian respondent, supporter of

the two states solution, says: *"the Jews are welcome to live with us. If they'll be good people, they are more than welcome"* (15-04-2015).

5.2. Universalism

5.2.1. Identity characterized by a common human-ness

Even if there is coexistence and people live side by side, argues one respondent, without a change in narrative the Othering still stands. Realizing this, the respondent underlines the need to *"address the issue psychologically first"* (21-05-2015). Several respondents promote dialogue with the Other as a strategy, even though it is not a solution by itself, according to one participant (29-04-2015).

The consequence of being able to stop Othering is that people will start making their own decision, no matter what the government does. It would be *"all about your human experience"*. This is seen as something positive, even as an alternative solution. An organic development of humans respecting other humans, one respondent says: *"I think the solution is purely human. And it needs to come from people"* (21-05-2015).

Most of the respondents, no matter degree of national identification, refer to a universal identity of "human being": *"Regardless their background, religion background, we are human beings"* (28-05-2015). The equal worth of all human beings must be recognized before one can even start to talk about solving the conflict, argues one respondent (11-05-2015).

This implicates a view of a common essence, a universalism among humans requiring equality. The respondents unanimously see this represented in the human rights, as declared by the UN.

The top priority is to ensure the human rights for everybody, no matter which solution that will be implemented: *"the most important is to have the human rights here, to have democracy, and... to get, yani, everyone get his rights, whether he's Palestinian or whether he's an Israeli"* (23-05-2015).

To reach the 'human solution' one must meet the Other, confront one's prejudices about the Other, and the picture of them as the enemy. One respondent shows how dialogue workshops can reconcile Palestinians and settlers on a human level (even if impossible on the political level);

> *...actually, it was an unexpectedly big success on the interpersonal level, I mean that many of the Palestinians and many of the settlers found that they actually liked each other as persons //...// and were quite ready to accept the others...the other kind as human beings.* (29-04-2015)

One Palestinian respondent was a defense lawyer earlier on, working in the Israeli military court. Therefore, he met Israelis on a daily basis. He recalls how everyday meetings created relations and communication between Israeli prosecutors and Palestinian defense lawyers and how this broke down the stereotypes they grew up with. He concludes that it is not that hard to convince Israelis and Palestinians that they have to live together. Although, they have to change the way they think: *"Not to think as occupier, occupying, war. But to think as a human being"* (28-05-2015).

Yet another respondent questions whether the idea of *"we are human beings and ALL human beings are gonna live together"* really would work, rather than first seeking oneself out as a people. He says: *"Would I LIKE to see two big communities coming together and forming one people? That would be ideal, but //...// it doesn't operate that way"* (21-05-2015).

The melting pot idea seems to be an ideal, yet out of reach. However, coexistence does not necessarily have to result in a melting pot, or assimilation where *"two big communities coming together and forming one people".* Another respondent holds high the idea of the one state solution, while speaking for partial mixing – those that want to mix have the possibilities to do so, and those who wish to keep to their own community and culture could do that, within the same state. In Switzerland, he argues, the young generation identify as European rather than Swiss German, Swiss French or Swiss Italian, due to mixing and meeting, studies abroad etcetera. A similar situation can be created in Israel and Palestine, he says – if there were coexistence and equality (26-05-2015b).

A situation like this could partly be created by economic measurements – if the Middle East became one financial entity and people would do business with each other – with the Other, argues one respondent. However, with the reservation: *"if we were ready for it".* The narratives that portray the Other as the enemy still has to be deconstructed, but the respondent thinks that *"money will solve a lot of the issues".* The respondent's rational is that when people earn more money secularism will increase. What people really want is happiness and success, which is closely related to work and money. If you give people this, it does not matter

where they live, he says, concluding that: *"So it's not about land. It's about success"* (21-05-2015).

5.2.2. Civil Rights Struggle – One State Solution – Coexistence

There are several problems related to the two states solution brought up by the respondents: although the international community and the Palestinian Authority supports the two states, many Palestinian do not, because of the large numbers of refugees (15-04-2015). Further on, the attempt at a two states solution has not translated to the ground – the PA's official jurisdiction covers eight percent of historical Palestine, still, they rule *"without any kind of effective control"* (28-05-2015).

Against this background, one respondent concludes that *"Israelis killing every day the two states solution"* and today there is not *"any kind of facts"* to talk about it. Therefore he says that:

> As a human rights activist I believe that, and as a Palestinian NOW, I believe that, the one state solution is the more suitable solution //...// One state, one democratic state, each and everybody who live in...with this in equality, without any kind of discrimination. (28-05-2015)

This stance correlates strongly with the universalistic values of *"advocating loyalty to and concern for others without regard to national or other allegiances"* (Oxford Dictionaries).

One Israeli respondent states that the reality today is that there is *de facto* only one state: there is one government ruling between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. The currency, and the electric and water systems are the same. The task for the peace movement is *"to take this one state reality that already exists – there is one state today, but it's an Apartheid state, to take that and turn it into a democratic [state]."* The problem is not coexistence, but the form of it: *"We get along fine. You know, as long as it's Apartheid"* (26-05-2015b).

So, what there should be is one democratic binational state, argues one participant. The problem is that the Palestinians would have to abandon the dream of a Palestinian state, which is emotionally hard for them. The struggle for national liberation should be turned into a civil rights struggle. That would make more sense for the Palestinians, claims the respondent. However, it means that they are *"asking for equal rights in one country where they're locked in forever with their oppressor"* (26-05-2015b).

The one state solution has much greater potential to provide for everyone's rights, than the two states solution has, he argues. While still enabling separate national identities: *"Just solution is inclusive, one state, equal rights for everybody and binational in that, okay, we recognize it as a Palestinian there and an Israeli people."* Thus, it could still be the homeland for Jews *and* a Palestinian nation: *"you want it to be the land of Israel – this is the land of Israel. You want it to be Palestine – it's Palestine. Whatever you want it to be"* (26-05-2015b).

Despite what could be seen as a failure for the Palestinian national liberation struggle, it does not have to be viewed that way: *"an independent state is not the ONLY outcome of self-determination. You can have a good amount of self-determination and stop short of independence, like the Scots in the UK"* (26-05-2015b).

The possibility to mix should be there, as would the possibility of not mixing as well. The respondent still wishes to see, for example, a Hebrew university, an Arabic university, alongside mixed universities, similar to Switzerland where the different language communities have both separatist and shared arenas. The respondent says: *"[if] Ma'ale Adumim[32] is half Palestinian, who cares? It's a good place to live for everybody. So you break the whole idea of exclusive here and there"* (26-05-2015b).

The train of thought presented here breaks the connection between sovereignty and national community that is the norm today (Anderson 2006, p. 7, Hylland Eriksen 1999, p. 43). Furthermore, the argument of the respondent: *"[it can be] whatever you want it to be"*, underlines the nature of the nation as something imagined (Anderson 2006) and purely subjective and intersubjective, lacking an objective existence (Hylland Eriksen 1999, p. 40).

The European Union is hold as an example of successful peacemaking among the respondents. However, one respondent stresses: *"France and Germany ARE still sovereign states"*, despite the common currency and open borders etc. Although, the EU has proven to be able to change national ideas and create something shared: *"European Union is a living example that nationalism could be if not eradicated, at least domesticated"* (29-04-2015).

The colonizing tendencies among the Zionists are underlined by another respondent. He states that this mindset must change for a just and long term solution to take place (28-05-2015). Although, there is a Zionistic rational that is in line with the idea of sharing, and the one state

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[32] One of the most prominent settlements on the West Bank, viewed by many Israelis as a suburb to Jerusalem

solution. One participant explains that Ben Gurion's *political Zionism* has *"exhausted itself, it has nowhere else to go today, it has led us to where we are." Cultural Zionism*, on the other hand, promotes a return to 'Zion' as well as political Zionism, but sees no need for a Jewish state for Jews to thrive. The belief is that Jews can develop a national culture alongside Palestinians developing their national culture, while the economy is developed together. In this way one could create, package and sell a one state solution that Israel can agree upon, argues the respondent (26-05-2015b).

The issue for Israelis *"isn't territory and it's not a Jewish state at all"* – it's about security, argues one respondent. Just like the Afrikaners in South Africa feared a blood bath after Apartheid, the Israelis fears what will happen to them when they give up power. However, just like in South Africa, the solution should be formulated to avoid this, including collective and individual rights for all people living in the area, and equal citizenship for everyone. A situation would be created *"which Israelis could live with it, just like the whites in South Africa could live with it"* (26-05-2015b).

Several respondents underline the advantages of sharing Jerusalem, because of its religious importance. One respondent argues that there should not be any embassies in Jerusalem. The Old City will have *"some sort of international regime perhaps the three fates Islam, Judaism and Christianity".* He makes the comparison to the Vatican that *"belongs to everybody"* (17-05-2015). Religion is very important in many peoples' lives. Therefore the hottest debates and conflicts are in Jerusalem, as it is considered holy. To avoid conflicts the city *"needs to sit under some sort of universal authority."* One should *"take police in and armies out of there".* Further on, it should not be a capital or about politics. Jerusalem is sacred for so many people and should therefore belong to everybody, argues one participant (21-05-2015).

The universalistic values are underlined by several respondents as they point out the importance of pluralism and secular democracy, with freedom of religion. Having a state based on religion *"is even against the international human rights standards"*, remarks one respondent (28-05-2015).

Some respondents highlight examples of coexistence. Such as Jewish communities in the West Bank, both historically and contemporary, living side by side with Palestinians: *"we live together completely with peace, we don't have ANY singly problem with them"* (15-04-2015). That is proof, one Palestinian respondent argues, that it is not about religion, but rights. It is

not the Jewishness of the Israelis that causes clashes with the Palestinians, but the political position of *"extremist Zionist people".* If this element was not there, and Palestinians would have their rights, the respondent recons that there will be no problem among people regarding their religion or background (24-05-2015).

6. Conclusions

The concluding chapter will firstly discuss conclusions that can be drawn from the study, and lastly, topics for future research will briefly be discussed.

6.1. Conclusions

The Israeli and Palestinian national identities, as presented by the respondents, are to a high extent discursively constructed in contrasting relation to each other. Moreover, they are both characterized by historical events that have victimized them. Confirming what Oz (2015) and Kelman (1999) write, concerning that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is characterized by being a conflict between two victims. Palestinian national identity is, in particular, constructed in relation to the occupation. Israeli national identity is characterized by fear stemming from their historical experiences of being a prosecuted minority.

The fear among Israelis has resulted in a national discourse arguing that a strong military and Jewish control of vital institutions, are central for the national community and its survival. Due, to the zero-sum mentality prevalent among Israelis and Palestinians, the consequence of the Israeli fear is that its dominance over Palestinians is perceived as a prerequisite for the national identity of Israelis.

National identities are constructed through differentiating between 'us' and 'them' (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000, pp. 166). Those differences, however, are not neutral but hierarchical ordered (Laclau 1992, p. 88). Accordingly, a hierarchical order has emerged where Israelis possess a stronger power-position than what Palestinians do. Given that Israeli and Palestinian national identities are constructed in contrasting relation to each other, the Israeli national identity is tied to the stronger power-position they hold. If they were to give up this position they would lose part of their identity, in accordance with the Master-Slave dialectic of Hegel (Azar 1995, pp. 10). Descriptions of Israelis, by the respondents, portray them as holding on to the position they hold. Indicating that Israelis are not perceived to be ready to give up or compromise with their national identity.

Nonetheless, the Israeli national identity is fragmented. There is one national identity among the Israelis in Israel proper, characterized by being willing to accept a compromise solution, and another national identity among the Israeli settlers. The settlers are portrayed as the Other to both Israelis and Palestinians, representing an expansionistic Zionism unable to share the land. However tragic it is for the individual settler, the respondents agree on the impossibility of the settlers staying in the settlements in their current form. Furthermore, settlers are distinct from Israelis in that there is no possibility of reaching a solution with the Palestinians they both agree upon. Would they agree to stay on in a sovereign Palestine, the settler would per definition cease to be a Zionist, and hence, the settler must abandon part of their identity.

The national identity of Palestinians, are by several respondents, tied to having a Palestinian state. Consequently, the discursive construction of Palestinian national identity argues for a two state solution. However, the nationalistic discourse of sovereignty as a necessity for security for Palestinians and fulfilling the Palestinian national identity is invoked through underlining universalistic values of human rights, based on a universal human-ness.

The national identities among Israelis and Palestinians, as portrayed by the respondents, are rather distinct. Furthermore, they are emphasized as important for them both, hence, the nationalistic values of national belonging is confirmed. The consequence the discourse of identification characterized by nationalistic values thus implies is that the two states solution is favorable.

Nonetheless, an identity discourse of a shared human-ness is present in all respondents' narratives. All of them invoke the necessity of implementing human rights, as they univocally see represented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948a). By recounts of some of the respondent, the one state solution has greater potential than the two states solution to provide for equal human rights for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians is perceived by some respondents as hard, due to the current situation and the Othering. However, they are hopeful that it may be possible in the future. For this to be realized, the diverging narratives of Israelis and Palestinians must be deconstructed and the Othering be combated. The thought of exclusivity, prevalent among some Israelis and Palestinians, must be eradicated.

Furthermore, drawing on the narratives of the respondents that correlate with universal human rights, Israelis and Palestinian would both gain from a further development of the already

existent identification with a common human-ness. Nevertheless, this common identity must be able to simultaneously nurse the specific Israeli/Jewish and Palestinian/Arab identity, due to the importance of those identities.

Israeli Palestinians could be seen as forerunners in this process, as they to a certain extent are perceived to identify with both the Israeli and the Palestinian national identity. Thus, their identifications are transgressing the strict lines of national identities as expressed in nationalistic discourses. In accordance with the Israeli Palestinians' double identifications, and the identification with a common human-ness, a common identity should be constructed. It should be able to embrace the particularity of the own culture while nurturing universal rights and universal values based on a common humanness among both Jews and Arabs living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Moreover, whether or not there is one state, two states or ten states, the respondents' request equal rights. Hence, Israel, if it wishes to be a democratic state, would have to give up its constitutional Jewishness, as it will have non-Jewish individuals included in its citizenry, no matter what solution. This is necessary in order to ensure everyone's equal rights and inclusion in the Israeli national identity. By most accounts among the respondent, the same must be applied to Palestine, would it be a sovereign state. Settlers that might stay and acquire citizenship must be treated as equal citizens. Accordingly, one could just as much have one state as both societies, if they wish to embrace the universalistic values of human rights, would be more or less forced to be multicultural and inclusive of others, including the Other.

6.2. Future Research

The sample group of this study consists of somewhat more Palestinian than Israeli respondents. Hence, a certain bias towards the Palestinian narrative may be detected. Furthermore, if the study initially had been formed as an investigation of national identity in relation to the conflict, the questions may have been posed differently. Subsequently, different answers would have been given. The study therefore, is somewhat flawed due to the change of course. Consequently, additional research should be done to ensure the findings of this study.

Moreover, the sample group may not be representing general views in the Israeli and Palestinian societies. The probability is that the respondents carry a less biased view of the Other, due to their engagement within the field of peace and reconciliation. Additionally, they have, to some extent, an arena where they meet the Other, something that other Israelis and Palestini-

ans lack. A topic for further research is to compare the representations of national identity presented here with perceptions of national identity among a more general stratum of the Israeli and Palestinian populations.

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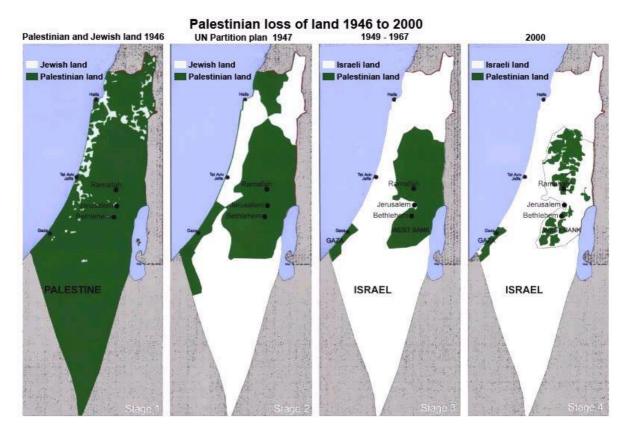
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Appendix 1. Maps

Palestinian loss of land 1946 to 2000

Appendix 2. Interview Guide

Name:

Organization:

General questions about the organization

1. How would your organization, in one or two sentences, define the Israeli/Palestinian conflict? What are the key issues?

2. How does your organization work with the issue of peace and settlement between Israelis and Palestinians?

3. Does your organization work with and/or promote a specific solution for the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians? If so, which one and why this particular one?

Questions about the PSP

4. What do you know about the Parallel States Project?

5. Does your organization in any way work with ideas and elements from the Parallel States Project? If not, why?

6. If you do, how does this work practically take place?

7. In comparison to other solutions to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, which strengths does the Parallel States Project have? What weaknesses?

8. To what extent do you think that the Parallel States Project would facilitate for a stable peace in Israel/Palestine specifically and in the region in general?

9. What advantages and disadvantages would functional citizenship have in the context of Israel/Palestine?

10. Would this type of citizenship solve the questions of demographic concerns, the right of return, the Israeli wish for a Jewish state and democracy for both peoples?

11. To what extent would it solve the conflict of the land, compared to how other solutions deal with this issue?

Questions concerning key issues in the conflict

12. To what extent can a political solution solve the humanitarian issues at stake in Israel/Palestine (such as the right to water, food and shelter, freedom of movement etc.)? What would be the best political solution from a human rights aspect?

13. How is the Palestinian refugees dealt with in the best possible way? And how to deal with the implications an eventual return would bring for Israelis?

14. How can one best preserve security for Palestinians? What would it take to ensure their right to freedom from oppression, arbitrary imprisonment, torture etc.? (For Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza as well as Israeli Palestinians.)

15. How can one best ensure security for Israeli Jews, in regards of diminishing violent attacks and regional hostility towards Israel and Israelis?

16. To what extent would the different solutions, such as the two-state, one-state and the parallel states solution, meet the security requirements of the Israelis respective the Palestinians?

17. What to do with Jerusalem? What are the pros and cons from different proposed solutions for the question of Jerusalem?

18. What importance has independence and sovereignty? How much and what can be 'sacrificed' or compromised with for independence? For peace? For democracy?

19. How can one best deal with the (already existing) settlements? Are land swaps an acceptable solution?

Appendix 3. List of respondents

Date of interview	Organization	Name of respondent	National belonging
15-04-2015	Windows – Channels for Communication	Amir Abu Al-Soud	Palestinian
29-04-2015	Gush Shalom	Adam Keller	Israeli
11-05-2015	*anonymous*	*anonymous*	Palestinian
17-05-2015	*anonymous*	*anonymous*	Israeli
21-05-2015	Artsbridge Inc	Ashraf Ghandour	Israeli Palestinian
23-05-2015	*anonymous*	*anonymous*	Palestinian
24-05-2015	*anonymous*	*anonymous*	Palestinian
26-05-2015a	*anonymous*	*anonymous*	Israeli
26-05-2015b	Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD)	Jeff Halper	Israeli
28-05-2015	*anonymous*	*anonymous*	Palestinian