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**Learning Palestine: the construction of
Palestinian identities in south Lebanon**

Kathleen Fincham

2010

**Submitted to the University of Sussex in fulfilment of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

Declaration

This thesis is my own work, and no part of it has been submitted for a degree at this, or any other, university.

Kathleen Fincham

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADF	Arab Deterrent Force (<i>Qoowat A-Rada 'a Al Arabiya</i>)
AMAL	Lebanese Resistance Battalions (<i>Afwaj Al Muqawama Al Lubnaniya</i>)
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (<i>Al Jabha A-Dimocratiya Li Tahrir Filastine</i>)
Fatah	Palestinian National Liberation Movement (<i>Harakat A-Tahrir Al Watani Al Filastini</i>)
Hamas	Islamic Resistance Movement (<i>Harakat Al Muqawama Al-Islamiya</i>)
IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
LNМ	Lebanese National Movement (<i>Al Haraka Al Wataniya Al Lubnaniya</i>)
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (<i>Al Jabha A-Sha 'abiya Li Tahrir Filastine</i>)
PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (<i>Al Jabha A-Sha 'abiya Li Tahrir Filastine - Al Qiada Al A 'ama</i>)
Phalange	Lebanese Social Democratic Party (<i>Al Kataeb Al Lubnaniya</i>)

PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad (<i>Al Jihad Al Islami Filastini</i>)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation (<i>Jabhat A Tahrir Al Filastiniya</i>)
PRCS	Palestine Red Crescent Society
PRF	Palestinian Rejectionist Front (<i>Jabhat A-Rafd Al Filastiniya</i>)
SHCs	Special Hardship Cases (UNRWA designation)
SLA	South Lebanese Army (<i>Jaish Lubnan Al Janoobi</i>)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East
UNSC	UN Security Council

Abstract

This thesis explores how Palestinian youth in Lebanon construct their identities in the context of statelessness. Specifically, the study examines how Palestinian youth in south Lebanese refugee camps and gatherings understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis nationality, gender and religion; how the discursive resources of identity are appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps and how Palestinian identities in Lebanon have shifted across exilic generations, all in the absence of formal state structures.

Acknowledging that Palestinian young men and women are meaningful actors in their own right, I have engaged in interpretivist inquiry and sought to capture and reconstruct the subjective meanings placed on social life by Palestinian youth in Lebanon through a case study. Given this methodological perspective, I have used semi-structured interviews, focus groups and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approaches as research methods within this study. In light of the vulnerability of Palestinians as a refugee population situated within the larger context of Western imperialism and colonialism in the Middle East, I have drawn on post-structuralist, post-colonialist and feminist theoretical frameworks to interrogate the data.

The findings of this study show that Palestinian youth in Lebanon construct their identities through nationalist discourses of shared history, kinship, culture and religion. This is accomplished over time through the production and reproduction of symbolic systems in and through the institutional sites of the school, the family, political organizations, the media and religious institutions. Through these processes, Palestine is constructed as different from ‘Other’ nations and ‘Palestinian-ness’ as distinct from ‘Other’ national identity positions. However, the processes of national signification described above produce identities that are in a constant state of flux and transformation across time and space. Moreover, internal contestations are produced, particularly in relation to religion, gender and generation, which trouble and

problematize the notion of a singular and homogenous Palestinian identity. The case study research presented in this thesis explores how Palestinian young people come to understand themselves and learn to navigate their lives both in relation to and in distinction from external ‘Others’ and dominant ‘imaginings’ of ‘Palestinian-ness’.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

I come to this study with personal as well as professional interests and experiences in the areas of diversity and social inclusion/exclusion, migration, citizenship and multicultural education. The following section discusses my rationale for undertaking this study at the levels of the personal, the contextual, the theoretical and the methodological, making reference to the broader implications and relevance of the study of identity in the modern world. I conclude the chapter with an outline of the structure of the thesis and an overview of each thesis chapter.

1.1 Rationale

Seeds of my interest in identity

This study, at least in part, emerged out of my own personal interest in identity, how it is constructed and what it means for daily life. As a Canadian, I have always struggled to define for myself, and for others, what constitutes Canadian identity. Unlike in many other countries, there are no definable characteristics, such as shared history, ethnicity, language, religion or culture, which bind Canadians into a nation. As such, there is no identifiable Canadian cuisine, Canadian traditional dance or Canadian traditional dress. Rather, as a settler country, Canada is a composite of the cultures of the immigrants that populate it, and Christmas, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year, Eid al Fitr and Divali are all celebrated in public schools in Canada. Moreover, the languages of Chinese, Punjabi, Italian and Ukrainian, among many others, are all spoken in Canada, particularly in urban areas. Yet, there is also an underlying hegemonic English and French cultural foundation to Canadian society, as well as an acknowledgement, if not always an overt inclusiveness, of indigenous cultures. However, as the U.S., Australia and New Zealand, among other countries, have been similarly constituted, what specifically makes Canada, and myself, ‘Canadian’? This question first led me to an interest in the study of national identity and the ways it is constructed, performed and contested.

Through my career trajectory as an English as a Second Language (ESL) and Citizenship educator in public schools and colleges in Canada, my interest in identity only grew stronger. Many of my students were recent arrivals from war-torn countries, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia. These students tended to maintain strong emotional ties to the homeland, while they struggled to develop competency in Canadian national languages and to socially and culturally integrate into mainstream Canadian society. On the other hand, students in my classroom also included second generation Canadians, who were born in Canada, yet whose parents originally hailed from far-away countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia. These students also experienced significant, yet very different, challenges in relation to identity, belonging, home and intergenerational relations. Moreover, I noted how male and female students often seemed to experience the processes of migration, resettlement and integration in very different ways.

Through these personal and professional experiences, several questions arose for me around the issue of identity. For example, what did it mean for these individuals to be(come) Canadian? How did diverse groups of people come to feel Canadian? As an educator, what part did I play in this process? What implications did feeling Canadian, and being seen as Canadian by others, have on these peoples' lives? How was being/becoming Canadian experienced differently by males and females, by people of different ethnic origins and by people associated with specific racial or religious categories? This led me to interrogate identity more broadly through questions such as, how is the nation produced and reproduced in our souls, minds and bodies? What is the role of formal and non-formal education institutions in this process? How do ethnicity, religion and gender intersect with national identity? How are identities contested, negotiated and accommodated? And finally, how does identity shift across generations in the context of diaspora? These questions only intensified in me after I lived abroad for many years and married a Palestinian refugee from Lebanon. Through these experiences, issues of identity, social

inclusion/exclusion, 'hybridity' and citizenship became a significant part of my daily life.

Identity in the modern world

Beyond my personal concerns, questions of identity, home and belonging have broad and far-reaching implications and relevance in our modern world. The production and performance of identity is particularly significant within the context of globalization and the current entanglement of the national with the global. Regional and international migration has brought diverse groups together to negotiate their views of the world, value systems and social practices within the bounded reality and lived experience of nationhood (Benei, 2008). Pluralism in many societies has increased the need for effective strategies to manage social integration within national boundaries, which has led to debates around the policy and practice of assimilation, multiculturalism, segregation and even extermination (Woodward, 1997). Moreover, national boundaries have also been challenged and permeated by global mass media and the internet. Emanating largely from 'the West', global media has challenged traditional views, values and social practices around the world. However, in recent times, other groups have begun to use the media as a tool to reassert their identities and create a counter narrative to challenge Western hegemony. For example, Qatar-based Al Jazeera has become a broadcaster of global reach in both English and Arabic (Sackur, 2006). Moreover, extremist groups, such as Al Qaeda, have begun to use the internet in their global recruitment efforts (Corera, 2004). In response, American-based CNN and the BBC have recently developed Arabic and Farsi language websites and begun broadcasting in these languages in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of Arabic/Farsi-speaking populations in their efforts to win "the war on terror" (Byford, 2003).

Within nations, competing imaginings of identity have resulted in the production and reproduction of majorities and minorities, at times leading to violent confrontation. In the last two decades, issues of identity, inclusion and exclusion have been at the centre of ethnic conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe (Former Yugoslavia and parts

of the former Soviet Union) and in Africa (The Great Lakes Region, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and in the Horn of Africa) (Williams, 2004). There has also been widespread sectarian violence in the Middle East (Iraq, Lebanon), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) and Northern Ireland (BBC, 2006; Price, 2001; BBC, 2000). Closer to home, social alienation has been cited as a prime cause for the 'identity crisis' experienced by young British-born Muslims. This has arguably helped to contribute to the rise of religious extremism and violence in the Muslim community in contemporary Britain (Hardy, 2006). At the same time, many Britons have been swept up in the discourse of 'Islamophobia', and support for right-wing political movements, such as the British National Party (BNP), has steadily increased (BBC, 2009). All of these developments have made the analysis of identity and inclusion increasingly important and relevant in our modern world.

Palestinians in Lebanon

As a study of identity, social inclusion/exclusion, 'hybridity' and shifting identities, the Palestinian case is a particularly interesting one. Palestinians are scattered around the world and living as resident aliens in a perpetual state of dislocation. Palestinians resident in Lebanon are particularly challenged, as they have been living there as stateless refugees for more than 60 years without even the most basic civil, political, social and economic rights (Suleiman, 2006). As such, they have had to rebuild their lives and create a sense of home, belonging and identity for themselves and their families in the absence of a Palestinian state and its institutions. Moreover, they have had to do this in the context of chronic conflict, poverty, marginalization and uncertainty.

For Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, concepts of identity, belonging and home are particularly complex. Older Palestinians who experienced *Al Nakba* (the loss of their homeland) directly, have lived their lives largely in the liminal, awaiting the return to their 'homeland'. These Palestinians have found themselves perpetually in a state of dislocation as transmigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are

configured in relation to more than one nation-state (Ahmed, 1999). However, for Palestinian generations born into exile, the situation is even more complex. For younger Palestinians, Palestine remains central to their understandings of home and is imagined as the place to which they will finally belong. At the same time, their connections to, and understandings of, 'the homeland' have been passed down to them through acts of remembering rather than firsthand lived experience (Mason, 2007). In this way, concepts of home, belonging and identity have many layers for members of different Palestinian exilic generations in Lebanon.

To add a further layer of complexity to the situation, there is not one, but rather several Palestinian identities that correspond to widening circles of group membership based on politics, religion, class and gender, among others. Different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel or act on the basis of a gendered, religious or political identity. However, memberships in these different groups may also result in competing or conflicting narratives (Woodward, 1997). For example, membership in a male-dominated group struggling for the nationalist cause may put Palestinian women in conflict with other feminists and feminist agendas. On the other hand, alliance with feminists hailing from different political, ethnic and religious platforms may alienate Palestinian women from Palestinian men and the nationalist cause. Thus, Palestinian women are constantly confronted with conflicting loyalties and forced to choose between allegiances to political determination and self-actualization, political and social citizenship, and tradition and progress (Yuval-Davis, 1997). In a similar way, Palestinian Christians are often forced to choose between allegiance to the 'Christian West' or other Arab Muslims, just as Muslims are caught between the competing discourses of Palestinian nationalism, pan-Islamism and secularism.

All of this raises very interesting questions about the processes of identity construction and regulation amongst Palestinian young people in Lebanon. For example, what does being Palestinian in Lebanon mean, and how is it experienced and performed by different groups of people in Palestinian society? How do

Palestinians in Lebanon construct and regulate national identity in the absence of state institutions, such as schools? How is Palestinian identity experienced and performed by Palestinian young people in comparison with their parents/grandparents?

In response to these questions, I have used data gleaned from fieldwork in three Palestinian refugee camps and two Palestinian gatherings in south Lebanon to examine the ways in which Palestinian youth construct their identities through different formal and non-formal institutions in Palestinian society. Specifically, I have interrogated how Palestinian youth in south Lebanese refugee camps understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis nationality, gender and religion, how the discursive resources of identity are appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps and how Palestinian identities in Lebanon have shifted across exilic generations.

My intention in this research has been to study Palestinian youth's experiences and perceptions from the perspective of their consciousness of them. Because these realities are multiple, subjective, fluid and changing within specific temporal and spatial contexts, they are not reducible to simplistic interpretation (Creswell, 1998). Therefore, I have sought 'thick descriptions' of the experiences and perceptions of Palestinians in Lebanon through memory, image and meaning (Geertz, 1973). This has helped me to understand Palestinian subjective experience, gain insights into people's motivations and actions, and challenge structural or normative assumptions and conventional wisdom about 'truth' and 'reality' in this context. Moreover, it has allowed me to privilege subjectivity and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation in knowledge production.

Acknowledging that Palestinian young men and women are meaningful actors in their own right, I have engaged in interpretivist inquiry and sought to capture and reconstruct the subjective meanings placed on social life by Palestinian youth in Lebanon through a case study. Given this methodological perspective, I have employed semi-structured interviews, focus groups and Participatory Learning and

Action (PLA) approaches as research methods within this study. In light of the vulnerability of Palestinians as a refugee population situated within the larger context of Western imperialism and colonialism in the Middle East, I have used post-structural, post-colonial and feminist theory as a theoretical framework to interrogate the data (see Chapter 4, Methodology).

Working from within a post-colonial and feminist paradigm, I refute the possibility of a researcher starting without any preconceptions or biases (Husserl, 1970). Rather, I recognize that the researcher is always socially, culturally and historically situated and constructs knowledge from his/her own personal location in the world. This means that my account of life in Palestinian camps is inherently ideological, political and permeated with my own values and assumptions (Rouse, 1996). In this way, I acknowledge that I am always implicated in knowledge production within this study.

Consistent with this, it is imperative for me to make clear how unequal power relations between myself (a Canadian researcher in higher education at a UK university) and the researched (young stateless Palestinian refugees) have impacted interpretations and meanings. First of all, as the researcher, I have held the upper hand at every stage of the research process by deciding what research questions would be asked, who would be interviewed, what data would be collected and how that data would be analysed, interpreted and represented. Secondly, my positioning as a Westerner located within the complex social relations of Palestinian camps in Lebanon within the wider context of regional and global politics clearly has implications for any knowledge I have constructed about Palestinians in Lebanon through the research process. As a Western researcher conducting research in ‘the East’, I have had the power to (mis)represent the research participants according to my own agenda. In this way, my researcher identities and my discursive positioning(s) have influenced the research process and what I can claim to know about Palestinians in Lebanon.

The following section provides an overview of each thesis chapter.

1.2 Overview

The research study is divided into seven chapters:

In the Context chapter (Chapter 2), I provide a historical overview for the reader on how and why Palestinians came to live in Lebanon as stateless refugees. Next, I explore the ways in which Palestinians have either been integrated in or excluded from participation in Lebanese political, economical and social life over the last 60 years and address the reasons for this inclusion/exclusion. I then move on to a discussion of the social service provision for refugees in the camps through UNRWA and non-formal institutions in Palestinian society, making specific reference to Education service provision for young people. Finally, I provide a detailed description of the refugee camps and gatherings in which this study is situated.

In the Literature Review (Chapter 3), I provide the conceptual framework for the study and explore the academic literature and current theoretical debates around the broad concept of identity. I begin the chapter with a discussion of the ways in which notions of sameness and difference are played out through the organizing concepts of nation and home and implicated in the construction of specific aspects of identity, such as kinship, culture, ethnicity, religion and gender (see Chapter 5, Boundaries). Next, I narrow the focus of the discussion and undertake a micro-level examination of how identity is constructed through the appropriation and articulation of discursive resources and performances both within and through social institutions (see Chapter 6, Institutions). Finally, I broaden the discussion back out to examine the concept of agency and discuss its importance for the construction, maintenance and performance of identities in shifting time and space (see Chapter 7, New Identities). I conclude the chapter with the research questions that I seek to explore about how social life is created, experienced and given meaning by Palestinian young people in refugee camps and gatherings in south Lebanon.

In the Methodology chapter (Chapter 4), I provide a detailed description of the research design and data analysis for this case study. I then go on to provide a rationale for my decision to undertake interpretivist research. Following this, I present methodological reflections which explore how my researcher identities, and the ways in which they were strategically exercised, impacted the study. I conclude the chapter with a discussion on ethical issues that arose during the research and the ways in which they were negotiated.

I discuss the main emergent themes in chapters 5, 6 and 7. These themes have emerged out of my personal life experiences, engagement with the literature, the research questions and my analysis of the empirical data.

In the first of the empirically-based chapters (Boundaries, Chapter 5), I use empirical data to analyze how Palestinian youth (male and female) understand and perform their identities in refugee camps in Lebanon (research question 1). I do this through a macro-level analysis of how identity is constructed through ‘difference’ in Palestinian society. First, I examine how difference is constructed between Palestinians and external ‘Others’ through the construction of physical, structural and symbolic boundaries in Palestinian society. Next, I look at how Palestinians construct difference through shared cultures and discourses of ‘Palestinian-ness’. Finally, I explore how Palestinians themselves contest these discourses and construct internal ‘Others’. I argue that although identity is constructed through the erection of boundaries between groups, the construction of these boundaries is ultimately problematic. On one hand, the assertion of difference attempts to erase similarities between groups, such as between Palestinians and Lebanese. On the other hand, Palestinian identities are not unified, and there are contradictions within them which have to be negotiated.

In the next chapter (Institutions, Chapter 6), I narrow the focus and use empirical data to undertake a micro-level analysis of how the discursive resources of Palestinian identity are appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps in the

context of statelessness (research question 2). I do this through an examination of how institutions such as the school, the family, political organizations, the media, and religious institutions all function as sites of Palestinian identity production and performance. Within this discussion, I highlight the ways in which Palestine and ‘Palestinian-ness’ are culturally, socially and symbolically produced and regulated in Palestinian society through the use of symbolic systems, the performance of ritual and embodiment. I then examine how these processes are also implicated in the production of internal ‘Others’. I argue that there are vast challenges and complexities entailed in the process of trying to represent the diversity of the Palestinian experience through a single, hegemonic identity. Rather, the concept of authenticity is highly problematic in the Palestinian context, and it challenges the very essence of Palestinian nationalist ‘imagining’.

In the last of the empirically-based chapters (New Identities, Chapter 7), I use both empirical and historical data to explore how Palestinian identities in Lebanon have shifted across exilic generations (research question 3). To do this, I examine how constructions of ‘Palestinian-ness’ have shifted over time through changing discourses of ethnicity, religion, gender and home in Palestinian society. I argue that a homogenized and fixed Palestinian identity does not exist. Rather, the boundaries of difference are continually being repositioned in relation to different points of reference according to changing life conditions. Moreover, Palestinian youth are constantly investing in temporary subject positions based on positions of advantage within specific contexts.

In the Conclusion (Chapter 8), I summarize the key findings of the research study and discuss how it makes important empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions to knowledge. Then, I suggest implications of the study at the levels of the personal, the contextual and the theoretical. Finally, I offer suggestions for further research with Palestinian youth in different geo-political, temporal and methodological contexts and with different demographic populations.

In the next chapter, I discuss the particular socio-political context in which this study is situated.

Chapter 2 – Context

In this chapter, I provide a historical overview for the reader on how and why Palestinians came to live in Lebanon as stateless refugees. Next, I explore the ways in which Palestinians have either been integrated in or excluded from participation in Lebanese political, economical and social life over the last 60 years and address the reasons for this inclusion/exclusion. I then move on to a discussion of the social service provision for refugees in the camps through both formal and non-formal institutions in Palestinian society, making specific reference to Education service provision for young people. Finally, I provide a detailed description of the three Palestinian refugee camps and two Palestinian gatherings in which this study is located.

Before beginning, it must be said that providing a ‘historical’ account of Palestinians in Lebanon is a challenge as, from a post-colonialist perspective, Palestinian history has largely been written through the lens of Western imperialism and colonialism in the Middle East (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). In this way, Palestinians are particularly vulnerable to the hegemonic ‘gaze’ of the Western researcher and the power of research to construct them as ‘Other’ through representation (Said, 1978) (see Chapter 4, Methodology). Considering the socio-political context in which Palestinians have had to live their lives, it is particularly imperative for me to make a conscious effort to avoid reproducing neo-colonial research postures and practices and replicating hegemonic historical discourses of Palestinians in this thesis.

From a feminist perspective, it is also imperative for me to consider the extent to which historical accounts of Palestine and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have been gendered. For example, due to patriarchal relations, women’s voices in historical accounts have often been suppressed or silenced altogether. In this way, history has come to ignore or misrepresent girls and women (Mohanty, 1991). Moreover, the ideas, opinions and experiences of males have often been mistakenly taken to

represent those of the entire community, rather than just the dominant group (Scheyvens and Storey, 2006). Therefore, it is important for me to acknowledge that there are multiple histories of this region and that instabilities of history and geography have had, and continue to have, real impacts on people's lives. In this way, I acknowledge that the historical account presented here of Palestinians in Lebanon is narrated from a particular perspective and is invariably skewed by available historical resources (Hill Collins, 1991).

The following is one account of how and why Palestinians came to be exiled in Lebanon and their experiences there.

2.1 *Al Nakba* (the 'Catastrophe')

Between the sixteenth century and the end of the First World War, Palestine was an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. As this empire began to disintegrate prior to the end of the First World War, European powers began to vie for control of the Arab Ottoman provinces. In 1916, Sir Henry McMahon began to correspond with Al Amir Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca, promising that Great Britain would recognize and support the independence of the Arabs, should they revolt against the Ottomans. A few months later, a contradictory agreement (known as the Sykes-Picot agreement) was drafted between Sir Mark Sykes (Secretary to the British War Cabinet) and the French diplomat François George-Picot dividing the lands of the Arab Ottoman Empire into territories controlled by Britain and France and placing Jerusalem under international administration under the management of Russia. In 1917, less than a year after the Sykes-Picot agreement had been signed, the Balfour Declaration was signed pledging British support for the establishment of a 'national home for the Jewish people' in Palestine (Chatty and Hundt, 2005).

Over the next three decades, the population of Jews in Mandated Palestine increased dramatically from a small minority to approximately a third of the total population of 2,115,000 (Chatty and Hundt, 2005, p.14). In 1947, the UN proposed the partitioning

of Palestine into two independent states, one Palestinian Arab and the other Jewish, with Jerusalem to be internationalized (Resolution 181 (II) of 1947) (UNISPAL, 2007b). According to the partition plan, the Jewish state was to comprise 56.4 % of the territory while the area allocated to the Palestinian Arab state was 42.5%. At the time the resolution was passed, Jews owned 7% of the total land area in Palestine and Palestinian Arabs owned the rest and comprised 66% of the population (Chatty and Hundt, 2005, p. 14). The day after the partition plan was announced, armed conflict spread throughout Palestine. However, the Zionist paramilitary organizations, particularly the Haganah and its international volunteers, were militarily superior to the local Palestinian forces and the neighbouring Arab armies combined. Thus, the Jewish state envisaged in the partition plan proclaimed its independence in 1948 as 'Israel' and expanded its territory to occupy 77 per cent of Palestine and the larger part of Jerusalem. The second state, 'Palestine', never came into being (UNISPAL, 2007a). In this way, "1948 marked two contrasting historical experiences: for the Zionists, it was the culmination of the dream of creating a state for world Jewry, as a means to put an end to European anti-Semitism; for Palestinians it was the time of expulsion and destruction of their land and society" (Chatty and Hundt, 2005, p. 15).

As a result of the conflict, over half of the indigenous Palestinian population fled or were expelled to neighbouring countries by Jewish armed militias, including the Haganah, Irgun and Stern Gang. To the north, Lebanon received 110,000 of these refugees, primarily from the Galilee region, which included the districts of Acre, Bisan, Safad, Tiberias and Haifa (Chatty and Hundt, 2005, p. 11). On June 16, 1948, the Israeli cabinet adopted a plan preventing the return of these Palestinian Arab refugees to their homes, which were now located in the newly created State of Israel. At the same time, Arab governments refused to formally integrate Palestinian refugees, believing that this would threaten their right of return to their homes in Palestine. The majority of Palestinians themselves believed that their expulsion would end in a matter of days, or at most, a few weeks. Therefore, most refugees left their belongings behind and many left the doors to their houses open believing they would soon return home (Chatty and Hundt, 2005).

2.2 The Lebanese Civil War

The newly arrived Palestinian refugees originally received a warm reception in Lebanon from both the Lebanese authorities and the public, as the international community, through the United Nations, worked to find a political solution to the crisis (Suleiman, 2006). Various UN resolutions were drafted, including UN resolution 194 of December 11, 1948, confirming the right of the Palestinians to return (UNISPAL, 2007b). However, once it became clear that a political solution would not be achieved in the short term, the Lebanese public and governmental response to the refugees grew harsher. The arrival of a large number of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon was seen to pose a grave threat to the 1943 National Pact¹, which divided political power in Lebanon along sectarian lines (confessionalism), mainly between the Maronite Christians and the Sunni Muslims. The arrival of 110,000 Palestinian refugees, mostly Sunni Muslims and constituting one tenth of the population of Lebanon, threatened the delicate balance of power. This proved to be a significant contributing factor in the sectarian violence that soon erupted, plummeting Lebanon into a 16 year long civil war (Suleiman, 2006).

Sometimes described as being Muslim versus Christian, the Lebanese Civil War was actually a multifaceted conflict in which there was nearly as much intra-confessional (intra-sectarian) and ethnic violence as there was violence between Muslims and Christians. Starting in 1975, the war resulted in an estimated 130,000 to 250,000 civilian fatalities over the course of the next 15 years. Another one million people (approximately one third of the population) were wounded, half of whom were left with lifetime disabilities (Fisk, 2001).

¹ The 1943 National Pact allocated political power on a confessional system based on the 1932 Lebanese census. According to the National Pact, the President of Lebanon should be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister, a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the Parliament, a Shi'ite Muslim. Efforts to alter or abolish the confessional system of allocating power have been at the centre of Lebanese politics for decades. Those religious groups most favoured by the National Pact have sought to preserve it, while those who have seen themselves at a disadvantage have sought either to revise it or to abolish it. Nonetheless, many of the provisions of the National Pact were codified in the 1989 Ta'if Agreement, which has perpetuated sectarianism as a key element of Lebanese political life (Fisk, 2001).

Palestinians directly witnessed, participated in and were victims of the Lebanese Civil War. In 1969, the Cairo Agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat and the Lebanese government, brokered by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, gave the PLO the right to conduct military operations against Israel from inside Lebanese territory in co-ordination with the Lebanese army. Under the agreement, the (then) 16 official Palestinian camps in Lebanon, home to 300,000 Palestinian refugees, were removed from the jurisdiction of the Maronite-dominated Lebanese army and placed under the full authority of the PLO. However, as Palestinian fighters poured in to Lebanon from Jordan after the Black September² conflict, soon much of south Lebanon fell under their effective rule. At this time, the PLO founded a variety of social institutions and economic corporations that employed large numbers of Palestinian youth and adults. Moreover, the PLO and its factions also recruited a large number of Palestinian adults and youth into the service of its armed militias. As Arafat set about building a 'state-within-a-state' in south Lebanon to create a secure base for the PLO, the Lebanese authorities in the region were gradually pushed into irrelevancy. However, although the PLO was undoubtedly Lebanon's most powerful fighting force at the time, it was little more than a loose confederation of armed groups, and Arafat proved unable to control rival factions. Palestinian radical factions, operating as a law unto themselves, quickly alienated south Lebanese Shi'ite and Christian villagers. However, the PLO was welcomed by the Sunnis, who thought of them as a natural ally in sectarian terms, and by the Druze through a close personal relationship between Arafat and the Druze leader, Kamal Jumblatt³ (Fisk, 2001).

The growing strength of the Palestinians in Lebanon put them into direct conflict with Lebanese political factions, specifically the Maronite-dominated Phalangist (*Al Kataeb*) party. Between 1975 and 1976, there were numerous assassinations and

² September 1970 is known as 'Black September', when King Hussein of Jordan moved to quash the militancy of Palestinian organizations within Jordan and restore his monarchy's rule over the country. The violence resulted in the deaths of thousands of people, the vast majority of them Palestinian. Armed conflict lasted until July 1971 when the PLO and thousands of fighters were expelled to Lebanon (Shlaim, 2007).

³ Kamal Jumblatt was later assassinated by an unknown assailant in 1977.

reprisal killings between the Phalangists and the PLO. The most significant of these events was the infamous bus massacre, known as the Ain Al Remmaneh incident, which is commonly identified as the spark that set off the Lebanese Civil War.

On April 13, 1975, unidentified gunmen opened fire in a drive-by shooting on members of the Phalangist party as they left a church service in the Christian Ain Al Remmaneh section of East Beirut. The attack was believed to have been an attempt on the life of Pierre Gemayel⁴ (leader of the Phalangist Party), who blamed it on Palestinians. Hours later, Gemayel's supporters retaliated by killing 26 members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command (PFLP-GC), a faction of the PLO, who were traveling on a bus through Ain Al Remmaneh on the way back to the Palestinian refugee camp of Tal Al Za'tar in northeast Beirut. As news of the murders spread, armed clashes between Palestinian militias and the Phalangists erupted throughout the city. Soon Lebanese National Movement militias (led by Kamal Jumblatt) entered the battle alongside the Palestinians. Sporadic violence grew into a civil war in which 80,000 people were killed during the next year and a half (Fisk, 2001).

The Lebanese civil conflict became international with the intervention of neighbouring states. In 1976, with the country in turmoil and the Maronites on the verge of defeat, (Maronite) Lebanese President Suleiman Frangieh called for Syrian intervention in Lebanon on the grounds that Beirut's port would soon be closed due to the conflict and Syria would be cut off from receiving a large portion of its imports. Syria responded by ending its prior affiliation with the Palestinian Rejectionist Front, a radical Palestinian offshoot of the PLO, and began supporting the Maronite-dominated Lebanese government. In addition to wanting to protect its economic interests, Syria had its own political and territorial interests in Lebanon, which harbored cells of Islamists and the anti-Ba'thist Muslim Brotherhood, both threats to

⁴ Pierre's son, Bachir Gemayel, was assassinated on September 14, 1982 after being elected to the Lebanese Presidency.

the secular, Ba'athist⁵ Syrian government of Hafez Al Assad. Syria's occupation of Lebanon also provided it with a possible route of attack on Israel. At the Lebanese President's request, Syrian troops entered Lebanon and easily overcame the Lebanese National Movement militias and Palestinian defenses. With Damascus supplying arms, Maronite forces managed to break through the defenses of the Tal Al-Za'tar, Jisr Al Basha and Dbayeh refugee camps in East Beirut, which had long been under siege. A massacre of about 2,000 Palestinians followed, which put Syria under heavy international criticism from the Arab world. However, in October 1976, Syria accepted an Arab League mandate to keep 40,000 of its troops in Lebanon as the bulk of an Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) charged with disentangling the combatants in the civil war and restoring calm. However, other Arab nations soon lost interest, and Syria was left in sole control of Lebanon, now with the ADF as a diplomatic shield against international criticism. Syria remained in Lebanon for the next 29 years and only withdrew from the country in 2005 under international pressure after the assassination of the former Lebanese president Rafik Hariri (BBC, 2005).

Another major international player in the Lebanese Civil War was the State of Israel. In 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon in Operation Litani under the pretext of removing the PLO threat from south Lebanon. During this operation, Israeli troops took and occupied most of the area south of the Litani River. At this time, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 425 calling for immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory and created the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), charged with maintaining peace. Israeli forces withdrew from Lebanon the same year but retained control of the southern region of the country by managing a 12 mile (19 km) wide 'security zone' along the border. To hold these positions, Israel installed the South Lebanese Army (SLA), a Maronite-Shi'ite proxy militia under the leadership of Major Sa'ad Haddad, and supplied it with arms and resources. Violent exchanges resumed between the PLO, Israel, and the SLA, with Israel conducting air raids against PLO positions in south Lebanon, the PLO attacking SLA positions and firing

⁵ The Ba'ath party is a secular Arab nationalist movement, founded in the 1940's, which desired to unify all Arab countries into one State and to combat Western colonial rule. It was strongest in Syria and Iraq, coming to power in both countries in 1963.

rockets into northern Israel, and the SLA continuing its efforts to consolidate power in the border region. However, this was just a prelude for the violence and destruction that was to come (Fisk, 2001).

In 1982, Israel launched what it referred to as ‘Operation Peace for Galilee’, its most devastating assault on Lebanon, under the pretext of demolishing PLO strongholds in the south and establishing an expanded ‘security’ zone to put northern Israel out of range of PLO rockets. Israeli forces quickly penetrated 25 miles (40 km) into Lebanon, moving into East Beirut with the tacit support of Maronite leaders and militia. On June 26, a UN Security Council resolution was proposed demanding “the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces engaged around Beirut, to a distance of 10 kilometers from the periphery of that city, as a first step towards the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, and the simultaneous withdrawal of the Palestinian armed forces from Beirut, which shall retire to the existing camps”. However, the United States was quick to veto the resolution because it wanted to remove any chance of the PLO being preserved as a viable political force. Instead, Washington supported Israel’s objective of destroying the PLO before it could negotiate a withdrawal agreement (Chomsky, 1999).

On August 20, 1982, a multinational force landed in Beirut to oversee the PLO withdrawal from Lebanon. However, Israel reported that some 2,000 PLO militants were hiding in Palestinian camps on the outskirts of Beirut. Ariel Sharon (then Israel’s Defense Minister) and Israeli Chief of Staff, Rafael Eitan, met with Phalangist leaders to discuss ways to rid the Palestinian camps near Beirut of ‘terrorists’. On September 16, 1982, the ‘Israeli Defense Forces’ (IDF) completely surrounded the Sabra and Shatila camps in West Beirut and controlled all of the entrances and exits of the camps by means of checkpoints. The IDF also occupied a number of multi-story buildings as observation posts. Phalangist militia then entered the camps and massacred an estimated 700-3,000 Palestinians over the next 4 days (UNISPAL, 2007a). The massacres resulted in an international outcry and calls for the international community to assume responsibility for stabilizing Lebanon. As a

result, the multinational forces that had begun exiting Lebanon after the PLO's evacuation returned as 'peace keepers'.

Israel occupied Lebanon, particularly the south, for the next 18 years and withdrew to the UN designated border, known as the 'Blue Line', only in 2000. Israel still occupies territories in the south which are claimed by Lebanon, namely the mainly Shi'ite 'seven villages' (Tarbikha, Saliha, Malkiyah, Nabi Yusha, Kades, Hunin, and Ibl Qamh) and the Sheba'a Farms⁶.

The 1982 Israeli invasion had profound and long-lasting consequences for Palestinians, Lebanon and the entire Middle East. After Israel partially withdrew from Lebanon, the Palestinians attempted to rebuild their powerbase in the camps in the south and in Beirut. As more Palestinians regrouped in Lebanon, Syria's anxiety grew, as it did not want Arafat to rebuild his power base in Lebanon or give Israel the pretext for another invasion. Therefore, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad recruited the powerful Shi'ite Lebanese Resistance Battalions (AMAL) militia to dislodge Arafat's loyalists from the camps. The benefit of this alliance for Hafez Al Assad was more complete control of Lebanon through his Lebanese allies. On the other hand, the benefit for AMAL was revenge for decades of what was seen as 'Palestinian arrogance' and control of Lebanon. In 1985, AMAL began a brutal two-year siege of Sabra, Shatila and Burj Al Barajneh camps in Beirut and Rashidieh camp near the southern Lebanese city of Tyre, which became known as the War of the Camps. During this period, AMAL prevented supplies of food and medicine from entering the camps and camp residents from leaving. On April 7, 1987, AMAL finally lifted the siege and handed its positions in the camps over to the Syrian army. This devastating period witnessed the largest waves of Palestinian emigration from Lebanon (Fisk, 2001).

⁶ The Sheba'a farms is an area of land with disputed sovereignty located on the border between Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied and controlled part of the Golan Heights (claimed by Syria). The area measures about 9 km (5.5 mi) in length, and averages 2.5 km (1.5 mi) in width, coming to about 22 km² (8 sq mi).

Israel's 1982 invasion and occupation of Lebanon is also popularly held to be the major catalyst for the creation and rise of the Iranian and Syrian-supported Lebanese Shi'ite organization, Hezbollah. Since Hezbollah's foundation, there has been continual conflict with Israel, culminating in all-out warfare in July, 2006. At this time, Israel invaded Lebanon again under the pretext of removing Hezbollah from its bases in south Lebanon, south Beirut and the Beka'a Valley. The conflict officially ended on August 14, 2006, when the UN Security Council issued resolution 1701 ordering a ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel.

Hezbollah's rise has had important implications for Palestinian resistance in Lebanon, in the Occupied Territories (West Bank and Gaza) and more generally. Although they are not organizationally linked, Hezbollah provides military training as well as financial and moral support to the Gaza-based Palestinian Sunni organization (and PLO rival), the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) (Harik, 2004). In 2006, Hamas was successful in the Palestinian parliamentary elections over the previous ruling party, Fatah, the largest faction of the PLO. However, these election results were not recognized by many Western governments. Hamas is currently gaining strength and popularity in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon (Levitt, 2006).

The Ta'if Agreement and its implications for Palestinians in Lebanon

The official end of the Lebanese Civil War came in 1989 with the signing of the Ta'if accord⁷, which reaffirmed the National Pact and the sectarian division of political power, despite the fact that significant demographic changes had taken place within the country (Suleiman, 2006). As a result of this agreement, and the strengthening of the Lebanese government, the position of Palestinians in Lebanon has become much more precarious since 1989. Since the signing of the Ta'if agreement, Palestinians

⁷ Negotiated in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, the Ta'if Agreement was drafted to end the decades-long Lebanese Civil War, politically accommodate the demographic shift from a Christian to a Muslim majority, reassert Lebanese authority in south Lebanon (then occupied by Israel), and legitimize the Syrian presence in Lebanon, though the agreement stipulated that the Syrians were to withdraw after two years. It was signed on October 22, 1989 and ratified on November 4, 1989 (Fisk, 2001).

are no longer allowed to have a military presence or bear arms outside the camps (although they are allowed to bear arms and keep order within the camps). Moreover, Palestinians, particularly those in south Lebanon, are restricted in their movements and are now required to pass through Lebanese army checkpoints on their way in and out of the camps. Today, Lebanese politicians across the political and religious spectra are in agreement that permanent Palestinian settlement, imposed or voluntary, would devastate the Lebanese nation. This is because the naturalization of such a large number of Sunni Muslims would upset the delicate sectarian balance carefully reconstructed in Lebanon following the end of the civil war (Suleiman, 2006). Lebanon has 18 officially recognised religious sects, and power-sharing between them has always been complex. According to the Constitution, the Lebanese President must be Maronite, the Prime Minister, Sunni and the Speaker of the Parliament, Shi'ite. Christians fear an increased Muslim population, and the Druze and Shi'ite communities fear a larger Sunni population. Consequently, any move towards permanent settlement of Palestinian refugees is considered to be an infringement of the Constitution and a threat to the post-war national reconciliation process. As a result, the Lebanese government has adopted a rejectionist stance, refusing to participate in multilateral negotiations with Israel and refusing to introduce measures which would allow the further entrenchment of this "unwanted burden" (El Khazen, 1997, p. 276).

In addition to the demographic challenges that naturalization would cause, strong resistance to permanent settlement comes from a section of the Lebanese population who lays blame on the Palestinians for the civil war and Israel's repeated invasions of Lebanon. On the other hand, many Lebanese sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians believe that naturalization of Palestinians in Lebanon would only legitimate Israel's land claims and, thus, remove any incentive for the international community to find a political solution to the refugee crisis (Sayigh, 2001). Most Palestinians, themselves, view their existence in Lebanon as temporary and insist on their right to return to their homeland (Holt, 2006).

2.3 Palestinians in Contemporary Lebanon

Almost all Palestinians in Lebanon rely entirely on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as the sole provider of education, health, relief and social services (UNRWA, 2003). Therefore, being officially recognized by UNRWA as a ‘Palestinian refugee’ is extremely important for all individuals. However, only “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict (and their descendents)” are considered to be Palestinian refugees (UNRWA, 2003). Under this definition, other Palestinians, such as those who fled their homes during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War (Six-Day War), are not considered to be refugees and are, therefore, not automatically entitled to receive humanitarian assistance from UNRWA.

The number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon registered with UNRWA currently sits at 409,714, or an estimated 10 per cent of the population of Lebanon (UNRWA, 2003). There are also an estimated 10,000 more refugees who remain unregistered (Chatty and Hundt, 2005, p.11). The majority of refugees live in 12 official camps (4 were destroyed in the civil war) run by UNRWA. Palestinians in Lebanon have the highest ratio of camp residence at 56%, followed by the Gaza Strip at 54% (Chatty and Hundt, 2005, p.19). In addition, about 40,000 refugees live in unofficial settlements close to UNRWA camps (known as ‘gatherings’) or have integrated into Lebanese towns and cities (Abbas, 1997, p. 380). The Lebanese government’s Department of Palestinian Affairs acknowledges that 200,000 Palestinians live in camps only capable of holding 50,000 people (Schade-Poulsen, 2001, p. 12). The result is decaying slums that consist of narrow corridors running between poorly constructed concrete buildings which still show the marks of war. As all of the camps are overcrowded, they contain virtually no open or green spaces that can be used for recreational purposes or sporting activities (Ugland, 2003).

The health situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is generally poor. The initial temporary status of the camps, in addition to poor planning and resource constraints, has led to the perpetuation of health hazards, such as exposed water pipes, open sewage, unpaved flooded roads and haphazard electrical extensions. The combination of high population density, a shortage of drinking water, lack of proper infrastructure and the mismanagement of solid waste has led to an increase in the number of children with serious illnesses. Only 7% of Palestinians are covered by health insurance, as compared with 42% of Lebanese. Instead, 98% of Palestinians utilize UNRWA health services. However, as UNRWA puts a strong emphasis on preventive rather than curative health care, most Palestinians do not have adequate access to hospitals and outpatient services (Ugland, 2003, p. 88). In addition to physical health, Palestinians in Lebanon suffer excessive psychological, mental and emotional distress due to Lebanon's long history of conflict and warfare. In a recent comprehensive health survey, Palestinians of all ages reported feeling high levels of anxiety and depression (Ugland, 2003, p. 74).

Although UNRWA provides social services for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA's mandate, unlike that of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), does not include protection. Consequently, Palestinians in Lebanon are denied international legal and physical protection and remain dependent on Lebanese government policy. Moreover, despite Palestinians being resident in Lebanon for 60 years, there is no legal code regulating the rights and obligations of refugees. Rather, regulation is administered through ad hoc decrees. Without a clear legal framework, the status of Palestinians in Lebanon is extremely precarious (Shiblak, 1996). For a number of Palestinian refugees, even the status of residency is unclear or prohibited. Under Lebanese regulations, registration with UNRWA and receipt of UNRWA rations are prerequisites to the issuance of refugee documents and permission to remain. Therefore, those refugees who did not register with UNRWA in 1948, who became refugees as a result of the 1967 Six-Day War or who have since lost the right to receive UNRWA rations, are under constant threat of deportation (UNISPAL, 2007a).

The Lebanese government continues to place restrictions on Palestinian refugees in all areas of public life, including employment, property ownership and travel. While each aspect of public life is subject to specific legislation, an underlying discriminatory method employed by the Lebanese authorities is the ‘principle of reciprocity’. Under this legal principle, which dates back to ministerial decree 17561 of July 10, 1962, Palestinians are placed on par with foreigners, who theoretically have access to treatment equal to that of Lebanese citizens. However, under the principle of reciprocity, this is only available to foreigners hailing from countries that offer reciprocal treatment to Lebanese citizens. As Palestinians have no country, they are effectively excluded from this arrangement (Sayigh, 2001).

In addition to the principle of reciprocity, the Lebanese government places severe restrictions on Palestinians’ participation in every aspect of public life. Through the requirement of work permits and membership in professional associations and the principle of national preference, Palestinians are essentially barred from employment in over 70 occupations and restricted to working for low wages in trade, construction, manufacturing and seasonal agriculture (Suleiman, 2006). The only possible legal professional opportunities for Palestinians in Lebanon include working for UNRWA, the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) or NGOs. Low labour force participation, labour under-utilization and lack of access to the labour market mean that Palestinian households are among the poorest in Lebanon (Ugland, 2003). UNRWA provides additional financial and material support to the most impoverished members of the Palestinian community, who are classified as Special Hardship Cases (SHCs). 11% of Palestinians in Lebanon are classified as SHCs, which is the highest proportion in any of UNRWA fields of operation, which include Jordan, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza (UNRWA, 2003, p. 1).

The housing conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are also among the worst in the region. Under the law of March, 2001, a revision of law 11614 of 1969, “anyone who does not have citizenship in a recognized state” is not permitted to own

property in Lebanon. This is because property ownership among Palestinians would raise the spectre of permanent settlement (Suleiman, 2006). Moreover, Palestinians have experienced massive destruction of homes, community service facilities, and water, sewage and electricity infrastructures as a result of armed conflict, especially in the last 20 years. However, they have been unable to legally construct, reconstruct or rehabilitate dwellings, schools and infrastructure facilities due to Lebanese government fears of permanent settlement (Ugland, 2003).

Palestinians in Lebanon also face severe restrictions in relation to travel and freedom of movement. Within Lebanon, Palestinians are consistently subjected to demoralizing inspections by Lebanese soldiers at checkpoints leading into the camps, which frequently cause long queues (Suleiman, 2006). Moreover, Palestinians are not permitted to visit Lebanese towns and villages in the borderlands with Israel. International travel for Palestinians is also a particularly lengthy, costly and bureaucratic process, which severely restricts their freedom of movement. For example, between 1995 to 1999, Palestinians resident in Lebanon who had travelled abroad to find employment were required to obtain special re-entry visas to return to their homes (Suleiman, 2006).

2.4 UNRWA and Formal Education

Since 1950, UNRWA has been mandated to provide essential social services for Palestinian refugees, and the agency's largest single area of activity is Education, constituting around 55% of its budget (Chatty and Hundt, 2005, p. 38). Education is highly valued among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as it provides them with transferable skills that can be used to find work in the Arab Gulf countries (Ugland, 2003). In Lebanon, UNRWA runs 84 schools, which educate 42,022 students (UNRWA, 2003, p. 1). However, UNRWA's education system in Lebanon is fraught with technical problems, due largely to the agency's dependence on international donations for operations (UNRWA, 2007). UNRWA schools are inadequate in number and are generally in a state of disrepair. Although Lebanese government

schools are open to Palestinian children, in practice most are prevented from attending through quota systems or discriminatory practices. Due to the low access of Palestinian students to Lebanese government schools, and the prohibitively high cost of private schools, Lebanon is the only field of operations where UNRWA offers secondary education. However, with only 3 secondary schools in the entire country, UNRWA itself admits that it “cannot hope to meet the high demand for secondary education among refugees in Lebanon” (UNRWA, 2001, p. 2).

Even for those youth fortunate enough to attend secondary school, UNRWA is severely limited in its capacity to provide quality education. Because of the political instability and ongoing conflict in the region, schooling for Palestinians is often disrupted. In Lebanon, young people lost months and some even more than a year of schooling because of the prolonged civil conflict and the 1982 and 2006 Israeli invasions. Schools have come under fire or been destroyed and used as military outposts and detention centres. In response, UNRWA has prolonged the school year, when allowed to do so by the Lebanese government, and provided extra classes to compensate for lost instruction time. However, such lengthy disruptions have had a negative influence on the quality of education that UNRWA has been able to provide (UNRWA, 2007). Moreover, the lack of psychological counselling available in UNRWA schools means that most Palestinian young people are not provided with the support they need to cope with the trauma of chronic regional conflict and violence (Ugland, 2003).

Quality education for Palestinian refugees is also challenged due to population demographics. School enrolments are increasing as the refugee population grows, and overcrowded classrooms are commonplace. To maximize use of limited resources, UNRWA is forced to run many of its schools on double shifts with two separate groups of students and teachers sharing a single school building. This is far from ideal as it reduces the number of instruction hours and adversely affects the participation of pupils in extra-curricular school activities, where they are present (UNRWA, 2007).

Another challenge to quality education for Palestinian refugees is in the area of school curriculum. One of UNRWA's aims, as stated in its Medium Term Plan 2005-2009, is to give Palestinian refugees a basic education comparable to that provided in host government schools, so that they are on an equal footing in gaining access to educational and employment opportunities (UNRWA, 2005). Consequently, under agreements made with the host authorities, UNRWA has to use the curricula and textbooks of the countries/territories where it operates, and students sit for national exams at each stage of the education cycle. Consequently, Palestinians have no input into what they learn or how they are assessed, and they are invisible in the curriculum (UNRWA, 2007).

A further challenge to quality education for Palestinian refugees lies in the area of teacher education. The majority of teachers employed in the UNRWA system are locally recruited Palestinian refugees, themselves, who are not adequately trained as teachers. This is particularly the case in Lebanon, where only a small pre-service two-year teacher training programme was instituted in September, 1998 to train teachers to teach the first three primary grades. Thus, educational staff do not have adequate training to address the needs of youth or to provide counselling for young people who have been traumatized by years of conflict and war. Moreover, the standard of teaching is further negatively affected by the high workload and poor salaries paid to teachers leading to low morale (UNRWA, 2007).

The incidence of premature school departure is on the rise in UNRWA schools in Lebanon. Generally, the drop-out rates of students in UNRWA schools in Lebanon are double those in other UNRWA fields of operation. In a survey, economic conditions (29%), disinterest in education (19.5%), family conditions (16.5%) and harsh treatment by teachers (3.2%) were cited as the main reasons for leaving school early (Sirhan, 1997, p. 391). Gendered identities are of significance here. Girls are more likely than boys to leave education prematurely and to attribute their departure to tradition or a lack of support received from their families or the school system (Abu-Habib, 1996). The lack of support experienced by young women in relation to

education is symptomatic of the rise in influence of traditional attitudes and values in Palestinian society. As a result, young women, especially those not academically gifted, are expected to stay at home to help with the housework or to marry at a young age (Zakharia and Tabari, 1997). The high level of unemployment experienced even by well-educated Palestinians has also led to a decrease in the social value of education. Palestinian doctors and engineers who are unemployed or work as casual labourers indicate to parents and youth that despite the great expense of higher education, the financial rewards are extremely limited in Lebanon (Ugland, 2003).

2.5 Non-formal Institutions

Since the end of the civil war, there has been a growth in the number of NGOs who fill the vacuum left by UNRWA cutbacks. There are now 76 NGOs, both Arab and international, who provide assistance to the Palestinian community. However, there is a lack of planning and coordination between the organizations, with an overrepresentation of services in the health and pre-school sectors. NGO projects offer few cultural or youth activities for young people who, without school-based extra-curricular or summer activities, are restricted to the home, in the case of females, or are left to loiter in the streets, in the case of males. Of the 41 youth clubs, most do not have a centre or financial resources, and most of the sports clubs have no playgrounds or coaches (Ajial, 2001, p. 6). The lack of recreational and training opportunities for youth in the camps encourages social disorder and delinquency to increase unchecked (Ajial, 2001).

Social and political disenfranchisement, combined with high unemployment and a lack of youth activities has arguably led to an increase in religious fundamentalism, especially amongst young men. Since the collapse of the peace process and the beginning of the *Al-Aqsa intifada*, traditional responses of camp residents (holding rallies, collecting donations and passively watching news broadcasts) have been joined by increased membership in and support for political Islamist organizations, such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The growth in popularity of political

Islamist groups is symptomatic of underlying social problems, such as family breakdown, intra-community violence and crime. The camps, rife with poverty, social disorder and fundamentalism, do not provide Palestinian youth with an environment conducive to educational engagement and achievement. Instead, political activity seems to provide both security and a sense of belonging for young men (Smyth, 1996).

For Palestinian girls and young women, life in the camps is especially challenging. Due to the patriarchal structure of Palestinian society, girls are 'policed' into adhering to a dress code of modesty, largely through the discourses of Islam. Moreover, they are not culturally permitted to move freely in public places socially constructed as 'male', such as the street, the coffee shop, the internet café, the sports field and the mosque. Consequently, outside of school hours, girls are largely restricted to staying at home or visiting the homes of female relatives and neighbours. In the home, girls endure stifling confinement within small and overcrowded living spaces, which often lack natural light and adequate ventilation (Ugland, 2003). Within this environment, girls are responsible for performing all household chores as well as taking care of younger siblings, the sick and older relatives.

In contrast, males are culturally responsible for earning the household income and protecting the family. However, in the Palestinian context, men's ability to be appropriately gendered as 'masculine' has been seriously undermined by the social, economic and political upheavals that have occurred in Lebanon over the last sixty years. Men's loss of ability to protect and provide for their families, and their dependence on the 'charity' of the Lebanese government and UNRWA, has 'emasculated' them in the eyes of their wives and children. This has encouraged many men to adopt 'hyper-masculine' subject positions, which has often resulted in tensions in the home and domestic violence against women (Peteet, 2006) (see Chapter 3, Literature Review).

It is within this context of marginalization, chronic poverty, conflict and uncertainty that Palestinian young people in Lebanon have had to construct their identities.

In the next section, I provide a detailed description of the three Palestinian refugee camps and two Palestinian gatherings in south Lebanon in which this study is situated.

2.6 Camp profiles

For this study, I conducted research in three official UNRWA refugee camps close to the south Lebanese port city of Tyre (*Sur* in Arabic): Rashidieh, Burj A-Shemali (Burj el-Shamali) and Al Bas (El Buss).

Figure 2.1



<http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/lebanon.html> accessed May 13, 2009

Rashidieh camp is located on the Mediterranean seashore 5 km from Tyre and contains 25,580 registered refugees (UNRWA, 2003). The older part of the camp was built by the French Government in 1936 to accommodate Armenian refugees. The newer camp was built by UNRWA in 1963 to house Palestinian refugees evacuated from villages in northern Palestine. Rashidieh camp was heavily affected by the Israeli invasion and occupation between 1982-1987, which resulted in the total or partial destruction of nearly 600 homes and the displacement of over 5,000 refugees. UNRWA has not been able to assist in shelter rehabilitation or reconstruction due to a ban on the entry of building materials imposed by the Lebanese Government since 1998. The only source of income for the camp's residents comes from work in seasonal agriculture or construction (UNRWA, 2003). There is one secondary school in Rashidieh for 2,805 enrolled students (2003/2004). This is one of only three secondary schools for Palestinians in all of Lebanon. Students from the neighbouring camps (Al Bas and Burj A-Shemali) also feed into this secondary school. In addition, there are a number of NGOs which provide non-formal education, skills-training courses and awareness-raising sessions on health, social, legal and gender issues and human rights (UNRWA, 2003).

Burj A-Shemali (Burj el-Shemali) camp is located 3 km east of Tyre. The camp was established after the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict to provide tented shelter for Palestine refugees from northern Palestine. UNRWA started providing services in the camp in 1955. The camp also houses displaced Palestine refugees from other parts of Lebanon. This camp suffered severe damage during the years of civil war, and much of the infrastructure has been destroyed. Again, UNRWA has not been able to assist in shelter rehabilitation due to a ban on the entry of building material imposed by the Lebanese Government since 1998. Unemployment is extremely high in Burj A-Shemali. Men work seasonally in agriculture, construction and manual labour, whereas women generally work in seasonal agriculture and domestic service (UNRWA, 2003)

Al Bas (El Buss) camp is located 1.5 km south of Tyre. The camp was originally built by the French Government in 1939 to accommodate refugees from Armenia. In

1948, Palestinian refugees arrived from the Galilee region. Due to its location and small size, this camp was spared much of the violence experienced by the other two camps during the years of civil war. As in the other camps, the refugees from Al Bas mainly work as day-labourers or as seasonal workers in agriculture and construction (UNRWA, 2003)

In addition to conducting research in the 3 official UNRWA camps described above, I also conducted some interviews in two ‘unofficial camps’ or Palestinian gatherings close to Tyre: Al Mashuq (3 km east of Tyre) and Al Qasmieh (7 km northeast of Tyre). While these ‘gatherings’ are located outside of the official camps and are not homogenously ‘Palestinian’, UNRWA still maintains some institutions there, such as schools, and provides some limited services to the community.

In the next chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework in which this study is situated.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

In this chapter, I provide the conceptual framework for the study and explore the academic literature and current theoretical debates around the broad concept of ‘identity’ as informed by post-structuralist, post-colonialist and feminist perspectives. I begin the literature review with a discussion of the ways in which identity is framed by notions of sameness and difference and how this is played out through the organizing concepts of nation and home and implicated in the construction of specific aspects of identity, such as kinship, culture, ethnicity, religion and gender. This raises important questions about how people construct identity in the context of forced migration, exile and statelessness (see Chapter 5, Boundaries). Next, I narrow the focus of the discussion and undertake a micro-level examination of how identity is constructed through the appropriation and articulation of discursive resources and performances both within and through social institutions (see Chapter 6, Institutions). Finally, I broaden the discussion back out to examine the concept of agency and discuss its importance for the construction, maintenance and performance of identities in shifting time and space (see Chapter 7, New Identities). I conclude the chapter with the research questions that I seek to explore about how social life is created, experienced and given meaning by Palestinian young people in refugee camps in south Lebanon.

3.1 Introduction

As discussed earlier in Chapter 1 (Introduction), identity is an important subject of analysis because it locates each of us in the world and presents a link between us and the society in which we live (Woodward, 1997). On a personal level, how we experience social life influences the formation of our self-image and the development of our self-confidence (Hall, 1987). On this foundation, we construct our personal goals and aspirations. For example, a confident young person may be more likely to pursue higher education or professional goals than someone who has less self-belief.

In this way, our identities help to shape our level of participation in social life and influence the form that this participation takes.

Reciprocally, our social identities help to construct us as individuals. All of us have multiple individual and social identities which are constructed in relation to one another (Giddens, 1984). How we are positioned in relation to gender, ethnicity, race, class and age, among others, provides us with the parameters through which we may exercise our choices and develop our talents and abilities. Moreover, our place in the world also determines what groups we are included in and what groups we are excluded from. Group membership is important because it gives us a sense of belonging and regulates our access to resources, information, opportunities and power (Giddens, 1984). For example, being male or a member of a dominant social group may open up more opportunities for education or employment in the ‘public sphere’ than being female or a member of a minority group. In all of these ways, identity has real social and material consequences for our daily lives. Moreover, socially and culturally constructed categories of identity, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation and class do not act independently of one another. Rather, they interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels contributing to systematic social inequality (Hill Collins, 1991).

In order to know who we are, we must first know who we are *not*. In other words, identity can only be understood in terms of relationships. As Woodward argues,

identity relies for its existence on something outside itself: namely another identity which it is not...something that both differs from it, yet provides the conditions for it to exist (Woodward, 1997, p.9).

Thus, an individual is constructed through his/her relationship to another person at a particular time and within a particular system of relationships. Therefore, to be Palestinian is to be *not* Lebanese or *not* Israeli. Identity is, thus, marked by ‘difference’, and difference is underpinned by exclusion and the erection of physical,

structural and symbolic ‘boundaries’ between communities. Construction of these boundaries can be seen to be both positive and negative. In one sense, difference is both necessary for the production of meaning and the formation of language and culture. At the same time, the construction of boundaries can also result in a heightened degree of social exclusion, xenophobia, hostility and aggression toward the ‘Other’ (Hall, 1997). This can be particularly true of the exile. As Said argues,

With very little to possess, you hold on to what you have with aggressive defensiveness. What you achieve in exile is precisely what you have no wish to share, and it is in the drawings of lines around you and your compatriots that the least attractive aspects of being an exile emerge: an exaggerated sense of group solidarity as well as a passionate hostility toward outsiders, even those who may in fact be in the same predicament as you (Said, 1984, p. 51).

In this way, notions of sameness, difference and boundaries are particularly relevant to the construction and maintenance of Palestinian identities in refugee camps and gatherings in Lebanon.

In the next section, I will discuss how, in the 21st century, boundaries between communities, and between Palestinians and ‘Others’, are constructed on the basis of ‘the nation’.

3.2 Nation

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Context), Palestinians live in exile as stateless refugees in Lebanon. Therefore, for Palestinians, boundaries around their community are largely constructed through discourses of nationalism and attachment to a specific geographical location (the territory presently occupied by the State of Israel). The construction of the nation of ‘Palestine’ provides Palestinians both with a physical and symbolic point of origin, a space of belonging and the security of an ultimate destination. Moreover, national identity provides Palestinians with a sense of

collective belonging, rootedness and centeredness. While important for all people, these elements are particularly significant for refugees forced to live in exile.

As nations must be constructed on the basis of something, it is through the concept of difference and the erection of boundaries between communities that nations are forged. One of the first requirements of a nation is that individuals must share certain characteristics, and at least some of these characteristics must be exclusive enough to distinguish one nation from another (Anderson, 1991). However, this difference between communities may be marked in different ways.

In the next section, I discuss how construction of the nation is often marked through narratives of shared kinship, culture, ethnicity and religion, as well as the crosscutting discourse of gender. I also discuss the implications these narratives have on the construction of Palestinian identities in Lebanon (see Chapter 5, Boundaries).

Kinship

In modern nationalisms, nations often have their basis in biology and are constructed around the genealogical origin of a specific people. In this narrative, only a group of people who share common kinship ties can be classified as a nation. This is the most exclusive form of nationalism, as ‘blood’ alone is seen as the only legitimate marker of belonging to the nation. From this perspective, boundaries between nations are natural, permanent and fixed (Hall, 1997).

As notions of ‘citizenship’ are constructed through genealogical inheritance in ethnic nationalist discourse, this has specific implications for deciding who can be, and who cannot be a ‘citizen’ (Muller, 2008). Indeed, national identity based on shared biology lies at the very heart of the ‘Palestinian/Israeli conflict’ and the issue of ‘right of return’ for Palestinian refugees. For example, Israel’s Law of Return grants every ethnic Jew the right to settle in Israel and automatically acquire citizenship. However, at the same time, Palestinians in the diaspora are denied their right to return ‘home’, as they are viewed by the State of Israel as an ethnically distinct people group

(Hadary, 1999). Moreover, ethnicity interacts with gender in this discourse to construct particularly exclusive notions of citizenship based on either matrilineal inheritance, as in the case of Israel, or patrilineal inheritance, as in the case of Lebanon (and other Arab societies) (Cook, 1994). For example, in Lebanon, children automatically inherit the nationality of their father. Therefore, a child born to a Lebanese father and a Palestinian mother will automatically obtain Lebanese citizenship. On the other hand, a child born to a Lebanese mother and a Palestinian father will legally remain Palestinian, stateless and unable to benefit from the rights of Lebanese citizenship such as education, health care and employment. In the case of Israel, only children born of a Jewish mother are considered to be sufficiently Jewish to be eligible for Israeli citizenship (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001).

Despite the importance of kinship in the construction of nations in the Levant region, this biological determinist line of thinking is highly questionable from a critical race theoretical perspective. First of all, it is the social meanings we attach to biological differences between individuals, rather than the differences themselves, that signify (Winant, 2000). Secondly, it is naïve and historically inaccurate to assume that bloodlines have remained pure throughout the centuries. Particularly in the Levant, political borders have shifted and territories have been redistributed throughout history. This has resulted in significant intermarriage between communities, such as among the numerous people groups who populated the ancient land of Palestine. This means that the possibility of biological purity in the modern Levant is nothing more than a discursive myth used to construct boundaries between groups (Renan, 1990). In other words, the biological basis on which the nations in this region have been constructed is highly suspect.

History and culture

Another narrative used to construct the nation is the notion of a fixed and authentic national identity rooted in shared history and culture. In this narrative, nations are seen as entities with a centuries-old history, and nationalism attempts to fashion this pre-history into a sense of common identity (Smith, 1999). The construction of a

common national identity is accomplished through individuals' acceptance of stories written by their 'narrative ancestors' and claiming them as part of their own personal history. In this sense, it is not important if these historical 'facts' are valid or verifiable. Rather, what signifies is the act of individuals seeing themselves in what others have said and written, taking it up and claiming it as their own (Ricoeur, 1988). In this way, many nationalisms are based on historically flawed interpretations of past events, and nations tend to overly mythologize small, inaccurate parts of their history to create a collective consciousness. Two such historicized nation-building doctrines related to this study that are imagined in cultural absolutes and oppositions are 'Zionism' and 'Phoenicianism'.

Zionism is an example of a historicized nation-building narrative used to legitimize the existence of a nation and its present occupancy of a particular territory. The political movement of Zionism originally supported the 're-establishment' of a 'homeland' for the Jewish people in Palestine and continues to support the modern State of Israel. Zionism is partly based upon religious tradition linking the Jewish people to the land of Israel, a land promised to the Jews by God, according to the Bible. During the early years of the State of Israel, the Zionist mantra of 'a people without a land for a land without a people' was often quoted to encourage Jewish immigration to, and colonization of, the 'empty' land of Palestine (Christie, 1998). However, not only was this narrative historically inaccurate, it created a revisionist version of history where,

Israeli citizens have been trained not to 'see' Palestinians. It is not that they are not there, but political, visual, cultural, and legal barriers have been erected that obscure the view (Petrovato, 2006, p.1).

Moreover, for Zionists, Israeli national culture is assumed to be shared with previous generations of Jews and passed down as an historical 'inheritance' to all Jews throughout the diaspora. Therefore, in their quest to inhabit their 'natural' identity, Zuckermann notes how once Zionists move to Israel, many refuse to speak their

diasporic mother tongues and adopt Hebrew as their ‘authentic’ ‘native’ language. Moreover, many immigrants give themselves new ‘authentic’ Hebrew names (Zuckermann, 2006).

Phoenicianism is another example of a historicized nation-building doctrine that is imagined in cultural absolutes and oppositions. Phoenicianism relates to the ongoing debate in Lebanon over the ethnic origin of the Lebanese people. A form of Lebanese nationalism, Phoenicianism promotes the concept that the Lebanese are ‘pure’ descendants of the Phoenician people, whom they view as separate and distinct from the other ancient residents of the region, such as the Palestinians (Abu-Khalil, 1998). Although Phoenicianists come from all Lebanese religious sects, Phoenicianism is mostly embraced by Maronite Christians who are anxious to dissociate themselves from ‘Arabism’ and its Islamic connections by becoming the legitimate ‘heirs’ to the ancient Phoenician tradition (Kaufman, 2004). In this way, ethnic nationalist discourse works to erect boundaries between Palestinians and their neighbors, both in Israel and in Lebanon, making homemaking and belonging for Palestinians in Lebanon a formidable task (Abu-Khalil, 1998).

Ethnicity and religion

As the examples above reveal, ethnicity and religion are both important boundary markers in the context of nation-building, particularly in the Middle East. However, the relationship between ethnicity and religion is a complex one.

For some scholars, religion is merely a subset of ethnicity. For example, Horowitz argues that ethnic groups are defined by ascriptive differences, whether they be color, appearance, language or religion (Horowitz, 1985). Indeed, ethnicity and religion share many features in common. Like ethnicity, religion is a social construct which functions to unite, organize and mobilize individuals within a specific context and for a specific purpose, such as nationalism. Additionally, both ethnic and religious identities attempt to trace themselves ‘back’ to a specific place (ie: Jerusalem), time (ie: antiquity) and ancestor(s) (ie: the prophet(s) in order to “derive an ideological

lineage and to provide a guide for future actions” (Kinnvall, 2004, p.756). In this way, both ethnicity and religion offer individuals a kind of immortality, as the group continues on even after the passing of the individual. Furthermore, ethnic and religious identities often overlap, which means that it is not always clear whether people are organizing based on shared attachments to religion or ethnicity (Stewart, 2009). For example, Sunni Muslim religious identity forms the core of Arab ethnic identity. Therefore, individuals unite and act on the basis of both of these identities at different times and in different situations. However, the relationship is quite complex, as ethnic and religious identities do not always conveniently and neatly align. For example, in the so-called Arab World, some ethnic groups, such as the Kurds and the Berbers, are Sunni Muslims but non-Arabs. On the other hand, groups such as the Assyrians and Chaldeans are Arabs but non-Muslims. In addition, there are many non-Sunni Muslim faiths in the Arab world, including various Shi’ite sects and the Druze. All of this problematizes the ‘essentialized’ conflation of ‘Arab’ with ‘Sunni Muslim’ in contemporary political discourse (Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2004).

Despite the similarities and often overlapping nature of ethnicity and religion, there are some significant differences between them which have important implications for nation-building in the Middle Eastern context. First, while ethnicity encompasses cultural signifiers, such as language, customs and behaviors relating to everyday life, religion (at least in the context of the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam) is primarily concerned with people’s relationship with God. In this relationship, the world is polarised into ‘good’ and ‘evil’ with non-adherents of the faith being constructed as the apostate ‘Other’. On the one hand, belief in one stable ‘truth’ through religion provides a sort of ‘ontological security’ for individuals living in an otherwise chaotic and changing world, particularly in the context of globalisation (Giddens, 1991). On the other hand, the essentialist polarization between ‘believers’ and ‘non-believers’ can help to fragment national communities through the construction of supra-nationalisms (Christendom; Islamic *Umma* [nation]) and sub-nationalisms (Maronite/Sunni/Shi’ite/Druze Lebanon). Moreover, it

can also fuel conflicts. When existing conflicts related to political, social or economic inequalities are discursively framed as religious, they are given ‘divine sanction’, and supporters come to believe they are doing ‘God’s will’ by attacking the ‘evil Other’. This is particularly salient in the Middle Eastern context where both Israelis and Palestinians, not to mention many Lebanese groups (ie: Hezbollah), have framed their claims to specific territory and defended their (para)military actions against ‘Others’ as ‘holy war’ or *jihad* (Harik, 2004).

Another key difference between ethnicity and religion is that, certainly in a Middle Eastern context, religious identity is largely constructed as fixed and unchangeable. For example, in Islam, an individual is ‘born’ a Muslim, and conversion from Islam to another religion is considered to be an apostasy punishable by death (Esposito, 2004). Moreover, religious identities are generally constructed in more exclusive terms than ethnic identities. For instance, a child of a ‘mixed marriage’ can be both half-Lebanese and half-Palestinian and be equally fluent in Arabic, English and French. However, that same child cannot be both half-Muslim and half-Christian. Rather, he or she will be required to choose (or be allocated) one religion or another. In addition, religious differences between people often imply very different ways of understanding the world, whereas ethnic differences often do not. For example, observance of ‘sexual purity’ before marriage may be required of adherents of a particular religious sect. On the other hand, there may be a diversity of acceptable sexual mores and behaviors within a particular ethnic group. In other words, it can be argued that there is less ambiguity vis-à-vis group boundaries in relation to religion than to ethnicity. However, the situation is more complex than it may first appear, as religious conversion (as a spiritual experience) is indeed possible in many religions, whereas ethnic conversion is usually not. Moreover, ethnic difference may also imply different ways of seeing the world, such as the differing world-views associated with language. On the other hand, there is a lot of commonality in perceptions and beliefs among the major world religions (Stewart, 2009).

A further difference between ethnicity and religion is that while religion is a social construct, it is a very formal one with formal religious organizations and institutions. Thus, while ethnic groups have to work hard at creating these structures, 'ready-made' organizations and institutions, such as churches, mosques and synagogues, assist religious groups in unifying, organizing and mobilizing followers. Moreover, the extensive influence and control of these religious institutions over adherents' behavior inevitably leads to politicization, with religious organizations either collaborating with the state or coming into conflict with it (Stewart, 2009). Religious organizations are also often in a much stronger position than ethnic ones to secure external support through links with other co-religionists around the world. For example, Islamic organizations in Lebanon and Palestine receive financial and organizational support from all over the 'Muslim World', whereas Christians in the same region primarily receive support from the so-called 'Christian West' (Stewart, 2009). On the other hand, ethnic groups who are geographically located within a specific territory generally have a narrower base of support. However, in the context of globalization and transnationalism, support for ethnic groups can be increased if there is a large diasporic community which can mobilize both material and human resources. Indeed, it is through the involvement of the Arabic and Jewish diasporic communities around the world that the 'Palestinian/Israeli conflict' has transcended geographical borders and taken on global dimensions.

As previously mentioned, there is a strong tendency for religious and ethnic affiliations to overlap in many nations. However, people often form a stronger attachment to one particular identity position than another within a particular context. For example, individuals can be effectively organized and mobilized under a single religious umbrella despite there being many ethnic differences between them. An example of this is the State of Israel where all ethnic divisions between 'citizens' are subordinated to their shared Jewishness. Having said this, ethnic divisions between the *Mizrahim*⁸, the *Sephardim*⁹ and the *Ashkenazim*¹⁰ continue to run deep in

8 Jews descended from the Jewish communities of the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

9 Jews descended from the Jewish communities of the Iberian Peninsula.

contemporary Israeli society (Shohat, 1999). On the other hand, adherents of the same religion can also be organized and mobilized into conflicting groups based on the 'difference' of ethnicity. For example, the Kurds, who are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, have been waging armed resistance against the governments of the predominately Sunni nation-states of Turkey, Syria and northern Iraq in the interests of ethnic self-determination and the creation of a new ethnic state of 'Kurdistan' (Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2004).

When both ethnic and religious identities mark the boundaries of difference between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', Stewart (2009) argues that there are two features which help to determine which identity will become the most salient for mobilization. First, the number and relative size of groups, or demographics, can influence how people mobilize. Where there is a large number of different ethnicities, effective mobilization along ethnic lines may become difficult, and organization through some overarching identity, such as religion, may prove to be more strategic. For example, a shared adherence to Islam has helped to unify diverse ethnic groups within the so-called 'Arab World'. However, the converse is also true, and during the 1970's and 80's, many Palestinian organizations, such as the PLO, the PFLP and the DFLP¹¹, found it more strategic to subordinate religious divisions amongst Palestinians and focus on their shared experience of ethnic oppression and common goals of ethnic self-determination and future statehood.

The second feature which helps to determine which identity will become the most salient for mobilization in a particular context is 'shared oppression'. As Stewart (2009) argues, where strong inequalities and discrimination occur along ethnic or religious lines, this will tend to politicize that identity and encourage mobilization. A relevant example of this is how the historic marginalization and persecution of Shi'ite

10 Jews descended from Jewish communities of Germany, northern France, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Russia and the former Eastern Europe.

11 The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) are Marxist, secular, Palestinian nationalist political and paramilitary organizations.

Muslims in south Lebanon encouraged the strengthening of religious identities in this community. This ultimately took a political form and led to the creation of the Amal and Hezbollah political/paramilitary organizations (Nasr, 2006; Harik, 2004). On the other hand, the forced removal of Palestinians from their homes during *Al Nakba* helped to construct boundaries between Palestinians and ‘Others’ on the basis of ethnic communal suffering and ‘loss’, regardless of religion. However, within the context of current political and social conditions, and the overall ‘Islamicization’ of the region, Sunni Islam is fast becoming a much more significant marker of Palestinian identity. This indicates that identity alliances can slip and reconfigure as a strategic response to shifting environmental conditions. This will be discussed later in this chapter (3.5 see New Identities).

As discussed above, ethnic and religious nationalist discourses are prevalent in modern nationalisms, including Palestinian nationalism. However, they are highly problematic from a number of perspectives. First, ethnic/religious nationalists tend to base national identity on the collective use of a single historical narrative rather than being inclusive of multiple histories. For example, reflecting on his own memories of the Hindu-Muslim riots during the India-Pakistan partition in the 1940’s, Sen recalls how:

The broad human beings of January were suddenly transformed into the ruthless Hindus and fierce Muslims of July...A great many persons’ identities as Indians, as subcontinentals, as Asians, or as members of the human race, seemed to give way - quite suddenly – to sectarian identification with Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh communities...The same people were suddenly different (Sen, 2006, p. 2, 9-10).

In the Levant region, identities have been similarly essentialised based on attachments to nation or religious sect. For example, in the ‘Israeli/Palestinian’ conflict, Jews and Arabs have been constructed as binary opposites (Kalmar and Penslar, 2005). However, as Kalmar and Penslar note, prior to the dismemberment of the Ottoman

Empire, the population of what is now Israel was multicultural, and Muslims, Christians and Jews inhabited the land. Though, at the creation of the modern State of Israel as an officially 'Jewish' state, nearly all native Palestinian Jews became 'citizens' of Israel, while other inhabitants became collectively known as Palestinians. Today, the people inhabiting the territory are generally regarded to fall into two categories that are assumed to be mutually exclusive: 'Jews' and 'Arabs'. However, Arabs may be adherents of any religion, and there are Muslim Arabs, Christian Arabs and Jewish Arabs, among others. Moreover, Israeli Jews hail from dozens of countries around the world, including many from the so-called Arab World, such as Iraq, Yemen, Morocco and Algeria. Therefore, the construction of Israel as 'Jewish' has created a false dichotomy, positioning Israeli Jews in opposition to Palestinian Arabs, even though many inhabitants of the land identify themselves as both Jewish and Arab (Kalmar and Penslar, 2005). The privileging of a singular historical narrative is also problematic in that the construction of Israel as a 'Jewish' state homogenizes and essentializes all Israeli identities. As Sen astutely adds,

It would be a long-run victory of Nazism if the barbarities of the 1930's eliminated forever a Jewish person's freedom and ability to invoke any identity other than his or her Jewishness (Sen, 2006, p. 8).

Beyond its significance in regional conflicts, the privileging of singular identities has also incited and inflamed conflict between the Arab World and 'the West' and served as the theoretical underpinning for the 'clash of civilizations' theory. From this perspective, humanity can be pre-eminently classified into distinct and discrete civilizations, such as the so-called 'Muslim World' or 'Western civilization'. Moreover, it is assumed that all relations between human beings can be seen in terms of relations between these different civilizations (Huntington, 1996). However, this thesis is problematic for a number of reasons. First, it denies the extensive interaction between different civilizations throughout history and the mutual influence that these societies have had on the development of culture. Moreover, the essentialized distinction between 'East' and 'West' homogenizes populations and presumes that

there is no room for intellectual diversity within communities. For example, all Muslims are frozen as a static, inward-looking, culture-bound population that is 'incompatible with modernity' (Alexander, 2002). Likewise, all Muslims are assumed to have the same political views, lifestyles and cultural tastes (Sen, 2006). Moreover, Sen argues that in the contemporary world, in the context of 'Islamophobia' and the 'War on Terror', there is a general failure to distinguish between 'Islamic history' and the 'history of Muslim people'. In other words, the Western search for the 'moderate Muslim' confounds moderation in politics with moderation in religious faith. For example, a person with a strong religious faith may have tolerant politics, while the converse may also be true. For Sen,

Muslims, like all other people in the world, have many different pursuits, and not all of their priorities and values need be placed within their singular identity of being Islamic (Sen, 2006, p.14).

Again, this critique is particularly problematic for the construction of Israel as a 'Jewish' state, as Israelis have many identities in addition to their 'Jewishness'. Moreover, it also problematizes Palestinian Islamist political organizations, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which have equated being Palestinian with being (Sunni) Muslim (Levitt, 2006).

Another highly problematic aspect of nation-building based on shared history is the inevitable search for 'truth' and 'authenticity'. As Spivak questions, who speaks for whom, and who *can* speak for whom? This is because any national origin has long become obscured and unrecoverable. Moreover, the historical past is always and inevitably read through contemporary interests and concerns (Spivak, 1988). In this way, meanings and identities are constantly shifting, transforming and emerging. This means that in another time or in another context, a meaning will become a different meaning because of new interactions between relevant 'signifieds' and 'signifiers' (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis, 2006). In other words, meanings and nations cannot be simply 'recovered' from an 'authentic' past, as they no longer exist

as they once were. Rather, they have been, and will continue to be, transformed into something new.

For Kalmar and Penslar (2005), an example of the shifting nature of identities is how, historically, Jews have been constructed variably as both 'occidental' and 'oriental' in the Western world. Identification with the ancient Israelites and the Biblical lands allowed Jews throughout the centuries to be seen, both by themselves and by those in the West, as an 'oriental' people. However, in the twentieth century, this perception was challenged in the West only as the result of the Jewish-Arab conflict in the Middle East, through which the Jews generally came to be thought of as a Western people (Kalmar and Penslar, 2005). In a similar way, the discourse of Zionism was used by both Jews and Europeans to 'return' an 'oriental' people back to their 'oriental homeland'. On the other hand, Palestinians, viewing the Jews as a Western people, have generally viewed Zionism as an example of 'Orientalist' ideology in the service of Western colonialism. In other words, for many Palestinians, the creation of the State of Israel is linked to the West's imperialist project in 'the Orient' (Kalmar and Penslar, 2005).

Further problematizing the search for authenticity in the construction of nations is that the identification of past culture with present culture is often largely symbolic. For example, the archaeological site of the temple of Baalbek, an exceptional example of Imperial Roman architecture, is managed by the Lebanese government and is considered to be an important Lebanese national symbol, even though Lebanon and Lebanese people did not exist when it was constructed several millennia ago. In addition to archaeological sites, modern nations have similarly appropriated ancient literature, art and even entire civilizations as 'national heritage' (Smith, 1986). For example, antiquity has been used to legitimate the existence of the modern State of Israel in the territory formerly inhabited by the ancient Israelites. This appropriation of history has created a powerful common mythology on which the nation has been constructed (Smith, 1986).

However, the appropriation of ancient symbols in order to construct authenticity for the nation is not unproblematic, as modern nations are largely ethnically and culturally heterogeneous. Moreover, 'history' has largely been written from a male perspective, thereby silencing female accounts. In this way, a historical connection with a particular place or artifact may constitute continuity for one group, but it may not for others. For example, the Western ('Wailing') Wall in Jerusalem, dating back to 19 BCE, is considered to be an important symbol of Israel's 'Jewish' and male¹² foundations, even though the modern state comprises a population that is religiously heterogeneous. Similarly, Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, which was constructed in the seventh century, has been adopted as an enduring symbol of the modern nation of Palestine, even though this symbol is largely only inclusive of Muslim, male¹³ Palestinians. In this way, Al Aqsa mosque has helped to appropriate Islam as a key signifier of Palestinian national identity and difference.

As discussed above, what is important here is not the degree of actual difference that exists between communities. Rather, what signifies is how this difference is constructed, regulated and enacted by the community. For example, in the case of Lebanese and Palestinians, even small differences in pronunciation are enough to categorize individuals as members of the Lebanese or Palestinian communities, despite the numerous historical, cultural and linguistic similarities which both groups share. On the other hand, the internal diversity found within both the Lebanese and Palestinian communities is far greater than the differences between them. For example, in Palestinian narrative, all Lebanese are constructed as 'Other' under the umbrella of national identity despite the splintering of socio-economic experiences

12 In ancient times, females occupied only a raised gallery along three sides of the court of the Jerusalem Temple. There, they were allowed to observe religious ceremonies but never participate in them (Bach, 1999).

13 In Islamic worship, although women are allowed to go to mosques, many do not do so out of fears of unchastity. Those who do worship separately from men. Muslims explain this by citing the need to avoid male distraction during prayer prostrations that raise the buttocks while the forehead touches the ground. Separation between sexes ranges from men and women on opposite sides of an aisle, to men in front of women (as was the case in the time of Muhammad), to women in second-floor balconies or separate rooms accessible by a door only for women (Mattson, 2006).

and cultural segmentation among Palestinians themselves (Hobsbawm, 1990). This is an example of how nations work to construct notions of ethnicity through the drawing of boundaries between groups and the negating of difference within communities (Alexander, 2002).

It is clear that in the modern Levant, a plethora of nations-states have been founded on the 'genie in a bottle' understanding of the construction of nations. As Wilford sardonically states,

Once the cork is removed – whether through revolution, economic crisis, war, conquest or the collapse of empire – the hitherto trapped essence of national identity is released and quickly assumes its 'given' shape (Wilford, 1998, p.9).

However, as I have discussed, these biological or historical determinist explanations for national identity are highly problematic and leave many questions about 'authenticity' unanswered.

A more helpful explanation is that nations are social constructs and 'imagined communities' which are rooted in shared culture. Nations are 'imagined' because most people who define themselves as members of a nation:

will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson, 1991, p.6).

In this way, "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; rather, it invents nations where they do not exist" through shared notions of 'difference' (Gellner, 1964, p. 168).

Moreover, Renan argues that the nation is a shared sentiment, "a soul, a spiritual principle...a moral consciousness" that unites members in the hope of a shared

destiny and which is constructed through a 'daily plebiscite' (Renan, 1990, pp. 19-20). As members of the nation participate in the life of the nation, they show their consent to its existence and to their own continued membership. In this way, knowledge of the nation is not simply handed down to individuals by governments. Rather, 'citizens' construct stories of the nation and are in turn constructed by these available cultural narratives. In this way, members of the nation are co-producers in the construction of meaning (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis, 2006).

Gender

Up until now in this discussion, I have largely treated national identity as a singular phenomenon. However, it is important to acknowledge how the processes of nationalism affect different people in different ways. For example, although gender does not produce categories of people in uniform ways, it positions subjects differently vis-à-vis national and ethnic membership and rootedness. Moreover, gender, itself, is intersected with class, race and sexual orientation, among others, which means that there will be a multiplicity of constructions of, and orientations towards the nation.

Like nation, gender is also a social construction that is 'performed' within the practices of culture. As Butler argues, gender:

is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender (Butler, 1990, pp. 43-44).

For Butler, "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender...identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results"

(Butler, 1990, p. 25). In other words, gender is not 'being' but 'doing' in word, deed, dress and manner. Thus, both 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are not natural states but, rather, daily performances of gender scripts which are located in a specific time and place. In this way, Palestinian gender performances shift and transform as the nation is continually repositioned within sociopolitical discourse. Moreover, gender performance also helps to construct the nation.

Metaphorically, the construction of 'masculinity' is often symbolically linked with the construction of the nation. As Enloe argues, the nation has largely been constructed as a male project and imagined as a 'brotherhood' which has sprung from "masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope" (Enloe, 1989, p. 44). Moreover, Mayer notes the relationship between gender and colonialism by suggesting that nationalism developed in reaction to imperialism, and to imperialism's "feminization and infantilization both of the colonies themselves and of indigenous men" (Mayer, 2000, p. 14). For example, as the colonial powers challenged their 'masculinity', indigenous men emphasized both control over their own bodies as well as control over 'their' women's bodies. In this way, "men's sense of masculinity has, increasingly, come to depend on preserving women's femininity, modesty and religiosity" (Mayer, 2000, p.15).

In the Middle Eastern context, both Jewish and Palestinian history has been burdened by colonialism and a continuous struggle for survival. In this way, national myths of creation, wars, survival and heroic endeavours have become integral to the Jewish/Palestinian experience and central to the formal and informal education of both peoples. For both Israelis and Palestinians, this has resulted in "a militarized nationalism and an almost exclusively male cult of heroism" (Mayer, 2000, p. 15). For example, Mayer argues that since its inception, the idea behind Zionism has been the creation of a "*Muscle Jew* who is the antithesis of the pejoratively 'feminized' *diaspora Jew*" (Mayer, 2000, p. 15). In this way, Israeli 'hyper-masculinity' and the nation have reciprocally worked to construct one another. In a similar way, Yuval-Davis argues that the symbolic 'emasculatation' of Palestinian men throughout the

Israeli occupation has resulted in the construction of a hegemonic Palestinian masculinity that depends for its existence on the domination of Palestinian women (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

The discourses of gender and nation also intersect to construct specific 'femininities'. For example, biological determinist discourses of nationalism have often positioned women as 'biological reproducers' of the nation. This has resulted in the 'battle of the cradle' over women's sexual reproduction, regulating under what conditions, when, how many and whose children women will bear. Within this discourse, the state (through family planning), orchestrates "control over both women's sexuality and the public articulation of nationalism" (Mayer, 2000, p.7). Moreover, the forms this takes are "historically specific and regulated by socio-religious norms, technological developments, economic pressures, and political priorities" (Peterson, 1994, p. 78). For instance, if 'citizens' are required to populate the nation, pro-natalist policies may be instituted to restrict contraceptive knowledge and techniques, deny abortions, and provide material rewards for having children.

In this way, biological determinist discourses of nationalism have played a significant role in the construction of both Palestinian and Israeli 'femininities' as well as gendered configurations of the nation. For example, in the early years after the establishment of the State of Israel, Ben Gurion's government instituted an award to be given to 'heroine' mothers who gave birth to ten or more children to provide a 'Jewish' citizenry for the new state. Moreover, in his role as the Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Peres was reported in the Israeli press as saying "politics is a matter of demography, not geography" (quoted in Yuval-Davis, 1997, p.27). Arguing from a similar perspective, Yasser Arafat is reported to have said,

The Palestinian woman who bears yet another Palestinian every ten months...is a biological time bomb threatening to blow up Israel from within" (Portuguese, 1996, p. 311).

As women have been constructed as 'biological reproducers' and 'cultural transmitters' of the nation in nationalist discourse, at various times both Palestinian and Israeli women have been restricted in their life choices, such as being confined to heterosexual marriage and compulsory child-rearing (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Moreover, this has limited their goals and aspirations for the future.

As mentioned above, the relationship between gender and nation is not always a comfortable one. In nationalist discourse, "differences between nations are often highlighted which tend to suppress differences within them" (Allen, 1994, p. 96). Thus, the discourse of national unity often obscures the nation's inner workings, especially in relation to gender (Anderson, 1991). Although gender equality is assumed to be an automatic by-product of nationalist projects, national democratization does not necessarily entail a democratization of power relations between men and women (Miller, 1997). Moreover, there is no 'given' or automatic relationship between women's interests and national interests. This is because women are situated differently than men, and each other, in relation to divisions of power, violence, labour and resources. Therefore, what benefits men, or other women, will not necessarily benefit them. It is from this perspective that theorists such as Halliday (1988) warn that the struggle for self-determination can, in fact, often be detrimental to the interests of women because it is premised, over and above all else, on a primary commitment to the welfare of a community of men. He argues that,

Nationalist movements subordinate women in a particular definition of their role and place in society, and enforce conformity to values that are often male-defined (Halliday, 1988, p. 419).

For example, in the Palestinian context, the struggle for civil rights and national liberation has typically stressed the particular experiences of Palestinian men over feminist concerns. Moreover, Charlesworth argues that the oppression of women

within groups claiming the right to self-determination has never been considered relevant. Rather, she asserts that,

The right to self-determination attaches to ‘peoples’, entities defined ethnically or culturally, even if half the persons constituting the people have little or no power in that community...In this sense, the right is only relevant in the most public of contexts: male political life (Charlesworth, 1994, p. 75).

In this way, nationalist sentiments often provide a perfect pretext for the continuing oppression of patriarchy, because it is women who are required to sacrifice and postpone their needs and rights for the greater cause of nationalism. As Enloe argues,

Women who have called for more genuine equality between the sexes...have been told that now is not the time, the nation is too fragile...they must be patient; they must wait until the nationalist goal is achieved; then relations between women and men can be addressed. ‘Not now, later’ is the advice that rings in the ears of many nationalist women (Enloe, 1989, p. 62).

Moreover, Pettman notes the occurrence of an “uneven but very widespread pattern of regression in terms of women’s claims and participation after the state is won” (Pettman, 1996, pp. 136-7). Men, she observes, often suffer a collective and convenient memory loss about the contribution made by women to national liberation struggles:

Forgetting...appears to be a frequent effect of reconsolidating centralized control of authority...it is part of the process of legitimizing privilege, including gender privilege (Pettman, 1996, p. 138).

Furthermore, in societies affected by colonialism or Western imperialism, such as Palestine, calls for female emancipation are often dismissed as ‘Western influence’.

This has only served to strengthen the position of men who are opposed to changes in the traditional sex hierarchy (Richter-Devroe, 2005).

This discussion has, so far, taken for granted that the modern world is, and should be, divided into discrete nations (imagined communities) that correspond with specific and ‘fixed’ territories and political structures (nation-states). Moreover, it has also assumed that individuals automatically develop deep and long-lasting feelings of ‘home’ for these spaces. However, Palestinians’ experiences of exile and statelessness within the context of globalization and transnationalism mean that these assumptions have to be challenged. This will be done in the next section.

3.3 Home

Although nationalist narratives often assume the possibility of a physical space, a national territory, which is ‘fixed’, ‘pure’, and ‘uncontaminated’ by movement or desire, in the 21st century, the processes of globalization mean that there is increased population mobility across international borders. For many families, it is commonplace to have members living, working or studying in other countries. Moreover, modern conflict and warfare have meant that within the last century, thousands of people have been displaced both within and across national borders. Transmigration has also affected individuals who have never left their place of birth. Open markets and global media mean that cultural absorption and influence affect everyone around the world through the exchange of goods and ideas. Moreover, the use of telecommunications technology means that bonds no longer have to be cemented through physical proximity. As Cohen argues,

In the age of cyberspace, a diaspora can, to some degree, be held together or recreated through the mind, through cultural artifacts and through a shared imagination (Cohen, 1996, p. 516).

In all of these ways, there is a growing disjuncture between territory and 'subjectivity'. Transnationalism has changed people's relations to space by creating social fields that connect and position actors in more than one country. Moreover, through transnationalism, individuals are forming 'hybrid' cultural understandings and identities (Bhaba, 1994). At the same time, transnationalism is enabling the creation of new forms of solidarity and identity where face-to-face contact is not paramount (Vertovec, 1999). For example, 'nations without states', such as Palestine, can develop constructions of the nation-state that encompass all refugees and their descendents wherever they may have settled and whatever legal citizenship they may have acquired. In this way, Palestine has been discursively constructed as a 'borderless state' that exists within the legal boundaries of many existing nation-states. In a similar way, the twentieth century Muslim 'community of believers' (Islamic *Umma*) transcends any territorially bound notion of nationhood. Therefore, rather than being understood as a singular, linear and 'fixed' narrative attached to the nation or a particular territory, 'home' can be theorized across different registers: where one lives, where one's family lives, one's native country and one's 'spiritual country'. In this sense, migration has become a process of transition, a movement from one register of 'home' to others (Ahmed, 1999).

Just as transnationalism challenges the essentialist discourses of nation and 'home' and the binary divisions of 'detachment/attachment', it also problematizes the binary opposition between 'here' and 'there' and the assumption that transnational migration can ever be completed. Rather, as Chambers argues,

Migrancy...involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the process of home-coming-completing the story, domesticating the detour-becomes an impossibility (Chambers, 1994, p. 5).

In this sense, 'home' is not simply an already constituted space, from which one can simply depart and remain the same. Rather, as Ahmed argues, locality intrudes into the senses, and 'the subject' and the space come to inhabit one another. In other words, the boundary between 'self' and 'home' becomes permeable, and the process of migration works to construct new subjectivities (Chambers, 1994).

However, despite the formidable challenges to the modern nation-state, national identity and 'home' that I have just discussed, these concepts are far from irrelevant in the contemporary world and are here to stay. Although human mobility, telecommunications, media and the internet have significantly contributed to the creation of 'translocal' understandings and identities, these are all anchored in physical spaces with a variety of legal, political and cultural ramifications. For example, the attachment to a nation and the acquisition of a national identity provides individuals with certain rights and privileges, such as access to resources, information, opportunity and power. Moreover, it gives individuals an important sense of centeredness, rootedness and solidarity around which they can construct collective 'memories', 'traditions' and 'home'. Furthermore, although globalization and nationalism appear to be parallel forces in conflict, in practice, they are bound through processes of 'intersectionality'. Thus, while globalization challenges the power of the state, the nation-state continues to be the major mechanism through which globalization processes are accomplished. In this way, the tensions and contradictions between nationalism and globalization continue to shape and regulate identities as individuals and nation-states negotiate their way between the global and the local, the powerful and the marginal and 'tradition' and 'modernity' (Chambers, 1994). For all of these reasons, the nation and the state are very relevant concepts for Palestinians and important units of analysis in this study of Palestinian identities in Lebanon.

As discussed above, the tension between the national and the transnational affects all individuals. However, while we all experience the transnational in the modern world, issues of identity, belonging and 'home' are particularly complex for exiles, whose

relocation and interaction with another culture have been forced upon them. For refugees, migration has been undertaken without them having complete security or the right to participate as full members of the new 'host' society. Thus, as Said argues, exile is an 'unhealable rift', a 'discontinuous state of being', a splitting of 'home' as the place of origin and 'home' as the sensory world of everyday experience (Said, 1999).

For many Palestinian refugees exiled in Lebanon, particularly those who experienced *Al Nakba* (the loss of their homeland) directly, their lives have been lived largely in the 'liminal', awaiting the return to their 'homeland'. These Palestinians find themselves perpetually in a state of dislocation as 'transmigrants' whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relation to more than one nation-state (Ahmed, 1999). As discussed in Chapter 2 (Context), as refugees in Lebanon, Palestinians are not incorporated into the Lebanese economy, political institutions or patterns of daily life. Yet, they also cannot maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions and influence national events in their 'homeland' (Mason, 2007). However, in trying to make the best of their lives in exile, they have established some level of 'roots' and attachment to the country in which they reside. This has made concepts such as identity, home and belonging difficult to reconcile for these refugees. It is here that Bhaba's concept of the 'hybrid third space' is useful in attempting to understand how Palestinians make sense of, and negotiate, the interplay between various elements of their identities and concepts of 'home' (Bhaba, 1994). Said's metaphor of music is also helpful in understanding the 'contrapuntal' nature of Palestinian identity that exile creates. For Palestinians in the diaspora, identity is like "a series of notes flowing over, around and through one another, where two or more voices or notes can be heard simultaneously" (Mason, 2007, p. 274). In other words, the 'home' of the 'homeland' and the 'home' of lived reality are lived concurrently by Palestinian exiles in Lebanon and are central to their feelings of belonging and notions of identity.

For younger Palestinian generations in exile, the situation is even more complex. As *Al Nakba* took place 60 years ago, most Palestinians in Lebanon have been born in exile. This means that for these generations, their connections to, and understandings of, the ‘homeland’ have been passed down to them through ‘acts of remembering’, and the experiences of their parents and elders, rather than personal lived experience. As Mureed Al-Barghouti notes,

The (Israeli) occupation (of Palestine) has created generations of Palestinians who are strangers to Palestine, generations who are familiar with every alleyway of their places of exile, but who are ignorant of their homeland [...] These generations are condemned to love an unseen lover, a distant, difficult lover separated from them by guards and fences and sleek terror. The [Israeli] occupation has transformed us from the sons of Palestine into the sons of the idea of Palestine (Al-Barghouti, 1998, pp.60-61).

It is in this context of exile that the processes of ‘homemaking’ become particularly important survival mechanisms for Palestinians as they aim to recreate the exilic community as well as foster a sense of ‘home’ in the ‘host’ country. As discussed earlier, this often involves the production and reproduction of the nation as well as discourses and shared cultures of ‘Palestinian-ness’.

The ways in which the nation and notions of ‘Palestinian-ness’ are constructed through the appropriation and articulation of discursive resources and performances both within and through social institutions in the camps in Lebanon will be discussed below.

3.4 Discursive resources

As I have previously discussed, there is nothing natural or ‘given’ about nations or national identity. Rather, nations are ‘imagined communities’ that are constructed around notions of difference. As all nations are comprised of diverse individuals,

these individuals must be ‘made’ to feel an intense bond of solidarity to the nation and to other members of their nation. Therefore, nation-building must take place through the construction of a symbolic image of the community and the creation of symbols and rituals designed to emphasize its unique character and difference from other nations. As all symbols are arbitrary and there are no natural flags, crests or other national symbols, these symbols are made to embody the norms and values of the community through their reification within nationalist discourse. Moreover, since there are no inherent qualities in any symbol that link it emotionally or cognitively to the entity which it symbolizes, this linkage has to be learnt (Eriksen, 1993) (see Chapter 6, Institutions).

Learning the nation is often accomplished through large-scale social processes, such as formal schooling, and schools are often key sites for the reproduction of ‘tradition’, a shared vision of the past, the dominant language, religion, culture and social hierarchies in society. Moreover, nationalist discourse can be found in virtually all curricula systems, often through school subjects such as Civics, Social Studies and Religious Education. As Zambeta argues,

Dominant discourses on the cultural supremacy of the nation, underlining the distinctiveness, continuity, nobility, originality and purity of its legacy to the world, constitute common features of school curricula (Zambeta, 2005, p 79).

In addition to disseminating ‘knowledge’ about a particular nation, nationalized school curricula are also used as a political project in the context of shifting socio-political discourses and changing geo-political realities. For example, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, standardized education has been used as a political tool to support the goals and practice of Israeli military occupation through curricular censorship of textbooks mentioning Palestine and the prohibition of supplementary learning materials (Nicolai, 2007).

Although the school continues to be, perhaps, the most effective mechanism for constructing and regulating the nation and disseminating ‘knowledge’ to young people, its’ influence on shaping young people’s national identities is being diminished through the increasing influence of media and popular culture. As Billig argues, the nation is being produced through everyday practices:

Small words rather than grand memorable phrases make up the stuff of national belonging for a great many people: coins, stamps, turns of phrase, televised weather reports; in brief, the banal nationalism continuously strengthens and weakens people’s sense of national belonging (Eriksen, 1993, p. 101).

In other words, it is not through acts of government, but through a ‘daily plebiscite’ that the nation is constructed. As Renan argues, members of the nation, by their daily participation in the life of the nation, show their consent to its existence and to their own continued membership (Renan, 1990). As citizens construct stories of the nation, they are in turn constructed by these available cultural narratives. In this way, knowledge is not simply handed down. Rather, members of the nation are co-producers in the construction of meaning and in construction of the nation (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis, 2006).

Moreover, institutions do not produce and reproduce meanings on their own. Rather, meanings are accumulated “across a variety of texts and mediality, inter-textually” (Hall, 1997, p. 232). In other words, both formal and non-formal institutions in society, such as the school, the family, religious institutions, political organizations and the media, all function as sites of identity production and performance. Moreover, the ‘knowledge’ that is socially produced in and through these sites is legitimated and made to appear factual, stable, neutral and natural through culture. In this way, institutional regimes, networks and processes regulate and discipline identities in formal and informal life (Foucault, 1977). This ‘intertextuality’ becomes even more meaningful in the context of Palestinians in Lebanon, as they must

construct their identities in the absence of a state and its institutions and in reference to another place.

One way that nations are produced and reproduced in everyday life in and through institutions is through the construction of 'typical' ethnic symbols, which stimulate reflection on one's own cultural 'distinctiveness'. For example, in Palestinian society in Lebanon, a dish called *bisara* has been reified as a symbol of 'Palestinian-ness', and Palestinians reproduce the nation whenever they eat it. However, many so-called 'traditions' are not 'traditional' at all. Rather, they are invented by national elites to justify the existence and importance of their respective nation-states (Hobsbawm, 1990). For example, folk costumes, cross-stitch, traditional music and peasant food have all become Palestinian national symbols even to people who were not raised with these customs. In other words, certain aspects of rural peasant culture have been reinterpreted and placed into an urban diasporic political context as evidence that Palestinian culture is distinctive, that Palestinians are 'a people' and that they, therefore, ought to have their own state (Eriksen, 1993). Moreover, in the construction of 'typical' ethnic symbols in the context of diaspora, there is often a reference/deference to places and artifacts back in the 'homeland'. In this way, Palestinian symbols, such as Al Aqsa mosque, help to construct links between subjects and specific territory.

However, despite the fact that symbols are used to construct 'cultural distinctiveness', many of these symbols are neither 'ancient' nor 'typical' at all (Khalidi, 1997). Moreover, these symbols are often contested by different groups. One example of this involves the politics of food in the Levant. The origin of 'traditional' foods has recently become a hot point of contention between Israelis, Palestinians, Lebanese and their neighbours in their quest to construct an 'authentic' cultural identity and to demarcate boundaries between themselves and 'Others'. For example, foods indigenous and common to the whole region, such as *falafel*, are being marketed internationally as 'Israeli', even though the State of Israel is only 60 years old and the majority of Israelis are Ashkenazi Jews who originally hailed from Europe, where

they did not eat such foods. In other words, the construction of *falafel* as a ‘traditional’ Israeli food not only problematizes the ‘East/West’ nation-state distinction, it also helps to construct historical continuity and connect Israel with its ‘ancient’ Israelite past in the region. However, in the battle over cultural distinctiveness, and therefore national ‘legitimacy’, the Lebanese Industrialists’ Association has recently begun pushing back against what they see as Israel’s appropriation of ‘their’ cuisine. At the time of writing this thesis, the Lebanese Industrialists’ Association was advocating to have 25 ‘traditional’ food dishes, such as *falafel* and *hummus*, officially designated as Lebanese and given ‘Protected Designated Origin status’ under EU law, meaning that these foods can only be marketed under their names if they are made in Lebanon (Macleod, 2008). This move is situated very much within the ‘historical origin of nations’ discourse discussed earlier, through which ‘history’ is used to validate the ‘legitimacy’ of modern nation-states. By designating these foods as officially Lebanese (Arab), Israel is being discursively ‘inauthenticated’ as a ‘legitimate’ nation, while Lebanese culture is being validated as ‘ancient’, even though the State of Lebanon has also only been in existence for 66 years. In this way, national territory is not only geographic. It also relates to many aspects, symbols and artifacts of cultural history.

In addition to the creation and adoption of symbols, the nation is also reproduced culturally, socially and symbolically through the ‘performativity’ of its members through culture and ritual. Bhaba theorizes that,

The people are the ‘subjects’ of a process by which national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process. The scraps, patches, and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects (Bhaba, 1990, p. 296).

Moreover, Billig speaks of the everyday forms of nationalism, which shape the minds of a nation’s inhabitants on a day-to-day basis. Through regular, repetitive exercises

of solidarity, signifiers of nationality become accepted by members of the nation as 'natural', and national consciousness is kept alive (Billig, 1995). In this way, the performance of everyday ritual, like wearing 'Palestinian colours' or singing the 'Palestinian national anthem', works to produce and reproduce the nation.

One important way in which 'performativity' constructs the identity of the nation is through 'the body'. Foucault argues that the body is constructed, shaped and reshaped through the intersection of disciplinary discursive practices. In this way, the body functions as a sort of surface on which different regimes of power/knowledge are inscribed and where difference is defined (Foucault, 1977). In nationalist discourse, the body is often an important boundary marker for the nation. As Mayer argues, through the body:

the mythical unity of national 'imagined communities' is maintained and ideologically reproduced by a whole system of symbolic 'border guards' (Mayer, 2000, p. 18).

These 'border guards' serve to identify people as members or non-members of a specific collectivity through cultural codes of style of dress and behaviour, as well as through customs, religion, language, and the construction of specific 'masculinities' and 'femininities' (Armstrong, 1982). For example, the *hijab* (head covering worn by Muslim women) acts as a symbolic border guard to demarcate the difference between Muslim women and 'Other' women, as well as the difference between women and men.

As the previous example shows, embodiment of the nation is gendered, and women often bear the burden of representation for the collective identity. In this way, women are often made to embody such ideals as 'tradition', 'culture' and 'honour' for the nation (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Women's movements and bodies are, therefore, 'policed' in terms of their sexuality, fertility and relations with 'Other' men (Pettman, 2001). In the Middle Eastern context, where the nation is often reproduced in

resistance to Western imperialism, tradition and women's modesty and purity become keys signifiers of the collectivity. One way to ensure this type of reproduction is by employing coercive means to control women's sexuality. This may take the form of policing women's dress, restricting their movements and regulating their access to sex through arranged marriages (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

Moreover, in situations where conflict is linked with questions of identity and ethnicity, there is often increasing societal control over women's mobility and control over their bodies (Ricoeur, 1988). For example, Palestinian women, in their role as 'defenders of culture and national values', are often called upon to exhibit conservative dress and behaviour to embody the line which signifies the collectivity's boundaries between 'them' and 'Others'. Penalties for transgression across these boundaries are severe and have included so-called 'honour killing' by male relatives for perceived 'shame' brought on their families and community (Yuval-Davis, 1997). While women are expected to uphold these traditions without question, men often have the choice of being unbound and unregulated by the values and belief systems of their culture. For example, Palestinian Muslim men are free to marry 'foreign' women who are not Muslim. On the other hand, Palestinian women are socially required to marry both within their ethnic group and within their religious sect. In this way, women are expected to 'perform' the nation through the preservation of the 'sanctity' and 'purity' of their bodies (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

As I have discussed above, identity is constructed through the appropriation and articulation of discursive resources in society. However, as identity is constituted through culture, it is not an already accomplished 'fact'. Rather, it is a 'production' which is never complete. When economic, social or political conditions change over time, identities become contested and new 'hybrid' subject positions emerge (Bhaba, 1990). In this way, identities are unstable positions that are always in the process of shifting, transforming and 'becoming' in relation to changing circumstances (Hall, 1996). The production of 'new identities' will be discussed in the next section.

3.5 New identities

As I have already discussed, there are no ‘authentic’ or ‘inauthentic’ representations of a seemingly monolithic community. Rather, popular culture is a site where new and emergent forms of identity proliferate and are open to contestation (Hall, 2000). The dominant culture dictates, or tries to dictate, what can be thought and what can be done. However, it does not stand uncontested. Rather, residual culture in the form of old values and meanings is often still active in the present. Moreover, emergent culture in the form of newly emerging values, meanings and practices puts pressure on the existing dominant culture while guiding its future directions. In this way, culture is dynamic and always in a state of flux. Moreover, it is the ground through which identity is constituted and where struggles over dominance and resistance to hegemony are waged (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis, 2006).

In the construction of identities, there is also the important issue of ‘agency’. As discussed earlier, identity is not a single linear narrative. Rather, as Hall argues, identity is:

increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions (Hall, 2000, p. 17).

In other words, all individuals bear ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality as collective as well as individual identities. Thus, Sen notes that he is simultaneously:

an Asian, an Indian citizen, a Bengali with Bangladeshi ancestry, an American or British resident, an economist, a dabbler in philosophy, an author, a Sanskritist, a strong believer in secularism and democracy, a man, a feminist, a heterosexual, a defender of gay and lesbian rights, with a nonreligious lifestyle, from a Hindu background, a non-Brahmin, and a nonbeliever in an afterlife (Sen, 2006, p. 19).

Moreover, he bears all of these identities at the same time.

However, although all individuals bear multiple identities, within different historical and geographical contexts, they choose to give prominence to one identity over another. For example, complex internal cultural segmentation cuts through Palestinian identity, and at any given time, locality, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, class or generation can serve as the locus for identity, or for identity politics (Alexander, 2002). In other words, identity is strategic and positional, and individuals form temporary attachments to specific subject positions based on positions of advantage (Bhaba, 1990). Therefore, although we may be constituted within a social-symbolic order, we are not determined by it. Rather, there is always the possibility of agency, of acting out within the system in ways that are subversive and transformative. As identities are always in the process of becoming, changing and transforming through the processes of resistance, negotiation and accommodation (Hall, 1996), “the human subject is made only temporally specific, highly context-dependent and unfinalizable” (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis, 2006, p.51). In this way, Palestinian identities continue to shift and change throughout time and space (see Chapter 7, New Identities).

Although there is a multiplicity of identities that are available to each one of us, these identities are not on equal footing. Rather, they are ranked hegemonically and regulated through culture (Mayer, 2000). For example, in Palestinian society, multiple ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ are available for young people to take up. However, displaying sensitive behaviours, such as emotional vulnerability, can often expose young males to teasing and bullying. On the other hand, an overt display of ‘sexual confidence’ by young females can result in social sanctioning and their inability to marry. In other words, gender identities, as well as others, are disciplined through the enactment upon them of both symbolic and physical violence (Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Webb, 2006).

There is also the extent to which individuals are capable of exercising agency. Sen makes an important point when he argues that, although we all exercise ‘choice’ in our take up and performance of identities, the existence of choice does not indicate that there are no constraints restricting that choice (Sen, 2006). Rather, choice is exercised within the limitations set by any particular field. For example, Sen notes that during the apartheid era in South Africa, a non-white person might have chosen to be a ‘citizen’ of the country; although, he or she would not have been regarded by the state as such. Similarly, on November 15, 1988, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) unilaterally proclaimed the establishment of the ‘State of Palestine’, and this day has been commemorated by Palestinians throughout the diaspora as ‘Palestinian Independence Day’ ever since. However, this is despite the fact that at the time ‘independence’ was declared, the PLO had no control over any territory. Moreover, no *de facto* independent Palestinian state has come into existence since. Thus, the unilateral declaration of ‘Palestinian statehood’ in the absence of official international recognition is a clear example of how:

our freedom to assert our personal identities can sometimes be extraordinarily limited in the eyes of others, no matter how we see ourselves (Sen, 2006, p. 6).

Moreover, Sen makes the distinction between ‘well-being’ and ‘agency’ and argues that a person may have various goals and objectives other than personal well-being (Sen, 1990). For example, in many contexts, it may be entirely rationale for a woman to try and get the best possible position available to her within the confines of her particular socio-economic and cultural context, even if it threatens her personal well-being (Sen, 1990). In this way, women’s attachment to and stake in certain forms of patriarchal structures may neither derive from ‘false consciousness’ nor from deliberateness but from an actual stake in certain positions of power available to them (Kandiyoti, 1998). For example, Kandiyoti (1998) argues that in Islamic fundamentalist communities in the Middle East, there are few options available to women other than to embrace Qu’ranic values and beliefs. Indeed, any attempt to

oppose or subvert its tenets courts danger. In this context, women's decision to wear the *hijab* (Islamic head covering) may be construed not as an act of induced submission but as a pragmatic response among women. From this perspective, wearing the *hijab* represents a "bargain with patriarchy" enabling women to move freely in public spaces, hidden from the 'male gaze', while reassuring their menfolk that they continue to be "worthy of protection" (Kandiyoti, 1998, p. 283). In this way, women's wilful subjection of their bodies to Islamic discourse may not necessarily promote personal well-being, however it may help them to achieve other goals, such as freedom of movement.

People's actions must also be seen in light of their attempts to subvert and resist colonialism (Spivak, 1988). In any cultural setting, there are dominant groups that establish what can and cannot be said and done by others on the basis of the discursive knowledge they impose on others. The historical reality of colonialism and continued Western imperialism in the Middle East makes issues of representation particularly relevant to a study on Palestinian identity. As Said argues, 'the Orient' has been constructed through discourse within the framework of Western hegemony (Said, 1978, p. 8). In this way, 'the West' was able to manage and even produce 'the Orient' politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively through the discourse of 'Orientalism'. As an object of study, 'Orientalism' created 'the Orient' by:

making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it (Said, 1978, p.3).

In this context, the strategic use of 'positivist ethnic essentialism' might be seen as a necessary strategy to question and disrupt the hegemonic power of colonial discourse (Spivak, 1988). For example, in the Arab World, the issue of Western hegemony has made the task of preserving ethnic pride and a positive identity a formidable task (Moghadam, 1993). Therefore, as a backlash to perceived Western imperialism, many Arab women have begun the search for an 'authentic' identity

‘uncontaminated’ by Westernization or modernity through cultural identification with fundamentalist movements such as radical Islam (Afshar, 1989). For many women, this has involved taking up the *hijab* and voluntarily subjecting their bodies to the strict regulation of Islamic discourse (Afshar, 1989). Moreover, the search for an ‘authentic’ identity has convinced many Arab women to unite with Arab men in solidarity against ‘Westernisation’, even though they are aware that Arab men have been implicated in constructing ‘woman’ as the ‘Other’ (Shukri, 1996). Therefore, as Western feminist discourse has often been complicit in constructing Arab women as ‘sub-altern’ subjects and subverting their attempts to speak for themselves, many Arab women have consciously chosen to reject modernization and female ‘emancipation’ as defined by the West (Spivak, 1988).

The discussion above highlights how individuals construct their identities through the erection of physical and symbolic boundaries of difference between themselves and ‘Others’. These boundaries are constructed through the appropriation and articulation of the discursive resources of identity through everyday practices through institutions in society. However, as culture is constantly shifting and transforming, individuals strategically take up specific subject positions in order to gain positions of advantage in any given context.

All of this raises important questions about how social life is created, experienced and given meaning by Palestinian young people in refugee camps in south Lebanon in the absence of state structures and apparatus. This brings me to the research questions that I seek to explore in this study.

3.6 Research Questions

In this overview of the academic literature and current theoretical debates around the broad concept of identity, specific themes have emerged that have particular relevance for this study of Palestinian identity in Lebanon.

First, the literature has discussed the ways in which notions of sameness and difference are played out through the organizing concepts of nation and ‘home’ and implicated in the construction of specific aspects of identity, such as kinship, culture, ethnicity, religion and gender (see 3.2 Nation; 3.3 Home). This raises important questions about how people construct their identities and erect boundaries between themselves and ‘Others’ in the context of forced migration and exile. Therefore, my first research question for this study is as follows:

1. How do Palestinian youth (male and female) understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis nationality, gender and religion in camps and gatherings in south Lebanon?

This question will be addressed in Chapter 5, Boundaries.

Secondly, the literature provides a theoretical overview of how identity is constructed through the appropriation and articulation of discursive resources and performances both within and through social institutions (see 3.4 Discursive Resources). This raises important questions about how identities are constructed in the absence of a state and its institutions. This leads to my second research question, which is as follows:

2. How are the discursive resources of Palestinian identity appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps?

This question will be addressed in Chapter 6, Institutions.

Finally, the literature acknowledges that identities are not ‘fixed’ but, rather, shift across space and time (see 3.5 New Identities). As the processes of forced migration have dramatically and brutally repositioned Palestinians within the world and called upon them to interact with it in new ways, this raises important questions about how

Palestinian identities in Lebanon have shifted and transformed over time. This brings me to my third research question, which is as follows:

3. How have Palestinian identities in Lebanon shifted across exilic generations?

This question will be addressed in Chapter 7, New Identities.

3.7 Overview

Located within a theoretical framework of post-structuralism, post-colonialism and feminism, this study is about the instability of social categories and the need for critical reflexivity in research. The literature reviewed in this chapter specifically focuses on how nations are discursively constructed through the production and reproduction of symbolic systems in and through institutional sites. The intersectionality of ‘nation’ with other social categories, such as ‘gender’ and ‘religion’, produces multiple identities that are in a constant state of flux and transformation across time and space. Moreover, these categories themselves are fluid, as they have been arbitrarily constructed through history and language. In other words, this thesis is about the instability and transience of Palestinian identiti(es) in Lebanon. Rather than being a singular, linear narrative, ‘Palestinian-ness’ is continually being constructed and reconstructed through processes of intersectionality, resistance, negotiation and accommodation. This instability makes the writing of this thesis extremely challenging, particularly given the limitations of the linguistic resources available to us.

In the next chapter, I provide a rationale for the methodology used in this study and a detailed description of the research design.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Located within a post-structuralist, post-colonial and feminist theoretical framework of identity production and regulation, this study explores how Palestinian youth in Lebanon understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis nationality, gender and religion, how the discursive resources of identity are appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps and how Palestinian identities in Lebanon have shifted across exilic generations.

In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the research design for this case study. I then go on to provide a rationale for my decision to undertake interpretivist research. Following this, I present methodological reflections which explore how my researcher identities, and the ways in which they were strategically exercised, impacted the study. I conclude the chapter with a discussion on ethical issues that arose during the research and the ways in which they were negotiated.

4.2 Research Design

This research was a qualitative, interpretivist case study using interviews as the primary research method.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Context), I conducted research in three official UNRWA refugee camps close to the south Lebanese port city of Tyre (*Sur* in Arabic): Rashidieh, Burj A-Shemali and Al Bas. Fieldwork was conducted between June, 2007 and December, 2008. Due to the chronic political instability in the region, and owing to my legal status as a ‘foreigner’, I was required to get official permission to enter the camps from the Lebanese army base in the south Lebanese city of Sidon (*Saida* in Arabic). This permission had to be renewed on a 1-3 month basis, which

meant that I was always in a somewhat precarious position in terms of gaining re-entry to the camps. Thankfully, I was always able to secure the official permission I needed to enter the camps and did not experience any unanticipated breaks in my interview schedule. I also had to obtain permission from the Palestinian Authorities in each of the camps in order to interview the youth. In all cases, this permission was granted without difficulty. Moreover, in the case of Burj A-Shemali and Rashidieh camps, the Palestinian Authorities specifically helped me access the youth and provided a meeting place for the interviews.

Although I sought official permission from UNRWA Headquarters in Beirut to conduct interviews with young people in UNRWA schools within the camps, my request got lost in bureaucratic 'red tape', and this permission was never granted (although it was also not denied). Therefore, I was only able to interview some teachers 'off the record' at UNRWA schools. Instead, I conducted interviews with youth in community centres within the camps. In Burj A-Shemali camp, I conducted interviews at the Fatah-affiliated Al Kurami Centre, at Al Bas camp, I conducted interviews at the UNRWA Vocational Training Centre (VTC), and at Rashidieh camp, I conducted interviews at the Fatah-affiliated Al Kadoumi Library. A limitation of this study is that the community centres where I interviewed youth in Burj A-Shemali and Rashidieh camps were politically affiliated. Therefore, the people I was able to interview and the data I was able to collect in these environments were skewed in favour of the Fatah (PLO) political organization.

In addition to conducting interviews in the 3 official UNRWA camps, I also conducted some interviews in two 'unofficial camps' or Palestinian gatherings close to Tyre: Al Mashuq and Al Qasmieh. While these gatherings are located outside the official camps, UNRWA still maintains some institutions there, such as schools, and provides some limited services to the community. In Al Mashuq and Al Qasmieh gatherings, I conducted interviews with the youth in family homes. With the adults, I conducted interviews in work places or private homes within the camps or at the UNRWA regional office in Tyre.

I chose to conduct research in these specific communities because of their proximity to one another, their shared history and questions of access, that is the presence of ‘gatekeepers’ known to me.

The following section provides a rationale for the framing of this research as a case study and includes a detailed description of participant demographics, research methods (semi-structured interviews, focus groups and RRA/PLA approaches) and data analysis used in this study.

Case Study

In order to conduct an in-depth study of the Palestinian community in south Lebanon, and to capture and reconstruct the complexity and richness of this unique environment in the text, I chose to do a case study. As a bounded dynamic system, a case study allowed me to holistically portray what it is like to live in a Palestinian camp in south Lebanon through the experiences, thoughts and feelings of young people (Geertz, 1973). Empirical data was gathered in their naturalistic setting without intervention or manipulation so that I could capture the context in which actions, behaviours and processes occurred. Rather than me explicitly interpreting, evaluating or judging events and situations, they were accepted at face value. However, due to my privileged status as both a researcher and an educated and ‘affluent’ Westerner, my very presence in the camps no doubt influenced the research environment as well as what I ‘saw’ there.

I found doing a case study to be useful for a number of purposes. First, a case study allowed me to recognize the complexity and embeddedness of social truths and alternative interpretations, and it helped me to capture unique features that may otherwise have been lost in large-scale data collection. For example, a case study enabled me to uncover hidden voices and perspectives from marginalized populations in the community, such as ‘youth’ and ‘women’, that would not have otherwise been heard. Secondly, a case study allowed me to present research data in a more publicly accessible and intelligible form than would have been possible with other kinds of

research report. As a case study contains elements of the ‘everyday’ that people can connect with, this has helped to enhance the accessibility of and interest in the text for a wider audience who may not be familiar with the Palestinian refugee situation in Lebanon (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

Despite its advantages, a limitation of doing a case study in this context was that it resulted in too much information and provided more variables than data points (Yin, 1994). For example, I went in to the research specifically looking at how gender, religion and nation influenced the construction of identity for Palestinian young people only to discover that other variables, such as class, generation and urbanization, were, perhaps, equally significant factors. However, I was only able to touch on some of these issues in the text. In other words, the complexity of the situation on the ground made a truly in-depth study very difficult to achieve and the resulting comprehensive text very challenging to write. Therefore, I acknowledge that the claims I make in this thesis are clearly biased towards the categories of analysis that I had pre-determined before undertaking the study and that further research is needed in order to enrich and nuance the account I have provided here. On the other hand, focusing on a few selected dimensions of identity (gender, religion and nation) has allowed me to achieve intensity in the text that would not have been possible with a broader focus.

As with other case studies, another limitation is that this study provides little basis for generalization in other contexts (Stake, 1995). In this case, as south Lebanon has been shaped by unique social, political and historical factors, Palestinian communities have developed unique ways of reproducing themselves. Therefore, the claims I make in this thesis do not necessarily extend beyond the bounded environment of Rashidieh, Burj A-Shemali and Al Bas camps and Al Mashuq and Al Qasmieh Palestinian gatherings in south Lebanon. However, as Yin notes, generalization of results from a case study can be made to theory rather than to populations (Yin, 1994). Thus, while the findings of this research are not necessarily generalizable to other refugee populations, or even other Palestinian communities in Lebanon, I have

been able to advance theoretical knowledge of identity in refugee/diasporic contexts through this case study.

The following section includes a detailed description of participant demographics, the research methods (semi-structured interviews, focus groups and RRA/PLA approaches) and data analysis used in this study.

Participant demographics

In total, I interviewed 50 Palestinian youth, aged 15-24 (in traditional Arabic culture, individuals, and particularly females, become ‘adults’ after they marry and move out of their parents’ home). I identified research participants through a number of processes which included: using my own personal contacts within the communities, establishing links with key individuals and UNRWA officials within each locality and ‘snowballing’. My research sample was purposive, and I chose participants based on the criteria of camp/non-camp residence, age, gender, religious affiliation and political affiliation.

In order to explore the relationship between camp/non-camp residence and identity construction, I interviewed respondents from each of the three official UNRWA camps in south Lebanon as well as respondents from two Palestinian gatherings close to the city of Tyre. As in the camps most interviews took place within institutions, it was easier to get a larger sample of respondents than in the gatherings, where interviews took place within private homes (see Table 4.2.1).

Table 4.2.1 Youth participants by camp/gathering

<i>Rashidieh</i>	<i>Burj A-Shemali</i>	<i>Al Bas</i>	<i>Al Mashuq</i>	<i>Al Qasmieh</i>	<i>Total</i>
21	6	14	4	5	50

As youth do not exist outside of the larger society, I also interviewed 26 adults (aged 30+) in order to provide a more contextualized picture of Palestinian youth identity

and to provide reference points for how Palestinian identity has changed, and continues to change, throughout exilic generations. The adults I interviewed included UNRWA school administrators and teachers, local NGO staff, political leaders, religious leaders and parents (see Table 4.2.2).

Table 4.2.2 Adult participants by role

<i>Parents</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Community leaders</i>	<i>Total</i>
10	12	4	26

In order to represent as broad a spectrum of experience as possible, and recognizing that males and females often experience life in very different ways, I attempted to interview an equal number of male and female respondents. Although I achieved parity in terms of the number of male and female youth interviewed, the number of adults interviewed was skewed in favour of male respondents (see Table 4.2.3). This is because in Palestinian society males work outside of the home and dominate leadership positions. Therefore, I was able to access and interview male respondents in public environments, such as offices. On the other hand, I mostly had to access and interview female respondents in their homes.

Table 4.2.3 Participants by gender

<i>Youth</i>			<i>Adults</i>		
Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
23	27	50	17	9	26

As the Palestinian community is religiously segmented, and south Lebanon has a long history of sectarian conflict and violence, I attempted to interview members of all major religious sects. The fact that the majority of Palestinians are Sunni is reflected in the large number of Sunni respondents interviewed (see Table 4.2.4).

Table 4.2.4 Participants by religious affiliation

<i>Sunni Muslim</i>	<i>Shi'ite Muslim</i>	<i>Christian</i>	<i>Total</i>
51	13	12	76

As the Palestinian community is also politically segmented and situated within the complex political landscape of south Lebanon, I attempted to interview members of all major political parties. Although Palestinians in Lebanon have multiple and complex political identities, Fatah (PLO) controls the three camps in south Lebanon and they helped me to gain access to youth participants within the camps. Therefore, the number of participants I interviewed is heavily skewed in favour of the Fatah political organization (see Table 4.2.5).

Table 4.2.5 Participants by political affiliation

<i>Fatah (secular)</i>	<i>Hamas (Sunni)</i>	<i>Islamic Jihad (Sunni)</i>	<i>Hezbollah (Shi'ite)</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>
47	5	3	11	3	7	76

Research Methods

Acknowledging the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production (Kvale, 1996), and to be inclusive of as many voices as possible (Connell, 2007), I chose to adopt interviews as the primary research method in this study. These consisted of semi-structured interviews and focus groups using Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approaches, such as taxonomies, sorting and ranking techniques, Venn diagrams, art and role-play. These interviews were conducted either individually or in single-sex groupings, depending on time and space constraints and the preferences of the participants. Depending on the nature of the exercise, some data were recorded on paper by the participants, and all interviews and follow-up discussions to group activities were recorded on tape. Observational notes were taken during each activity and later added to my researcher diary (Dunne, Pryor

and Yates, 2005). I interviewed both youth and adults until saturation of the data had been achieved and responses had become predictable.

I informed all participants in the study of the purposes of the research and the ways in which the findings would be disseminated (thesis, written reports, academic papers and conference presentations). Verbal consent was granted by all interviewees to participate in the study. However, due to the sensitive nature of the environment, the history of political and sectarian conflict in the region and the fear expressed by marginalized segments of the Palestinian community (particularly the youth, females, religious and political minorities and UNRWA staff fearful for their jobs), I did not seek written consent in an effort to relieve anxiety and preserve the anonymity of participants.

As the language of instruction in UNRWA schools is English/Arabic, all Palestinian youth in Lebanon have a working knowledge of English. Therefore, interviews were conducted in English, with a translator from the Palestinian community always present. When required, I used my knowledge of Arabic for clarification purposes during interviews and activities. I found my occasional use of Arabic to be useful in terms of ‘connecting’ with the participants, creating an environment of comfort and equalizing linguistic advantage.

The following section is an in-depth discussion of each research method used in this study (semi-structured interviews, focus groups and RRA/PLA approaches).

Semi-structured Interviews

Among the research methods I used in this study were semi-structured interviews (see Appendices 1-5). From a post-colonialist and feminist perspective, I chose interviews as a research method because they offered the potential for participants to discuss their interpretations of the world around them and to express how they regarded situations from their own point of view. As such, interviews yielded rich insights into Palestinian biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and

feelings (May, 2001). Moreover, my direct interaction with the participants through the interview allowed for greater depth than would have been possible with other methods of data collection, such as questionnaires, because I could probe, encourage people to expand on their answers and cross-check information (Kane, 1995). Additionally, the social nature of the interview meant that respondents became involved in the research process and, hence, more motivated to participate.

I specifically chose to undertake semi-structured interviews for the purposes of this research study, as they allowed local, individual and marginalized viewpoints to emerge more readily than would have been possible with structured interviews (Kane, 1995) (see Appendix 1). Respondents were the ones who decided what was important, and they created the categories for the interview. For example, youth often directed the conversation towards issues of interest or concern to them even if these issues were not specifically addressed through my interview questions, such as their concerns relating to factional violence within the Palestinian community. Moreover, my use of open-ended questions allowed the meanings that respondents attributed to events and relationships to be understood on their own terms (May, 2001). Semi-structured interviews also gave me the flexibility to modify the sequence of questions, change the wording, explain them or add to them. By probing, I could seek both clarification and elaboration beyond the answers, and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee. Moreover, the open-ended nature of the questions encouraged the development of cooperation and rapport between me and the participants. It also challenged my preconceptions through the emergence of unexpected or unanticipated answers which suggested unthought-of relationships or hypotheses. For example, although I did not theorize the importance of generational shifts in Palestinian identity before I undertook the research, through interviews with the youth, I found it to be of major significance in contemporary Palestinian society and proceeded to follow up on this theme. In this way, I entered the research situation and responded to what emerged (May, 2001).

A limitation of semi-structured interviews in this research context was that the open-ended nature of the questions sacrificed standardization of the data. This made

comparison between different groups and different contexts problematic. For example, the youth in Burj A-Shemali camp were interested in talking about changes they wanted to make to the UNRWA education system and, therefore, they directed the conversation towards this end. However, the youth in the other two camps did not mention this issue. Therefore, I cannot make any generalized claims about this ‘knowledge’, as I do not know if the views and opinions of young people in Burj A-Shemali are representative of Palestinian youth in general or they are localized to the context of that particular camp.

I also struggled with the open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews. Going in to the interview session, I often had a personal agenda and specific information that I wanted to find out in order to broaden my understanding of a particular aspect of Palestinian identity. Therefore, it was challenging for me not to purposefully ‘hijack’ the conversation and guide it towards my own ends but, rather, allow the participants to direct the conversation as they wished. However, in all honesty, I was not always successful in my attempt to relinquish control during these interviews, and my agenda sometimes dominated.

Focus groups

In order to recognize the existence of multiple perspectives, I also chose to conduct group interviews through focus groups. I found focus groups to be useful because participants interacted with each other, rather than only me, which provided space for the participants’ agenda to dominate. Moreover, it was often through the interaction of the group that the data emerged (Chambers, 1997). Focus groups provided me with valuable insight into both social relations and the processes of social dynamics within the camps and amongst the youth, in particular (May, 2001). For example, I could clearly witness the gender divide in Palestinian society through male and female youth refusing to sit next to one another in interview sessions. I could also witness gender dynamics at work with girls often deferring their ‘air time’ and their opinions to those of boys.

Within this research context, I found focus group interviews to have a number of advantages. First, focus groups were a useful orientation for me to life in the refugee camps from the perspectives of the youth. In this way, focus group interviews helped me to develop themes, topics and schedules for subsequent interviews and to develop tentative hypotheses (Kane, 1995). Second, focus groups enabled me to acquire shared cultural knowledge. Group members had an overlapping spread of knowledge which covered a wider field than that of any single individual. Moreover, group dynamics meant that dominant discourses rose to the surface. In this way, focus groups allowed me to acquire understanding of normative social organization and cultural behaviour in Palestinian society. Third, focus groups were less intimidating than individual interviews for participants. For example, I noticed how the youth, both male and female, sometimes became shy and uncomfortable once their classmates left the room. Moreover, the movement from individuals to group shifted the balance of power creating a lower ratio of 'outsiders' to 'insiders'. This encouraged participants to discuss sensitive topics more freely in groups than they would have alone with a stranger (Chambers, 1997).

A limitation of group interviews in this context was that the nature of group dynamics inhibited full participation by all members. For example, some girls hesitated to participate fully or reply truthfully in a group situation if boys were present due to the hegemonic nature of gender relations in Palestinian society. Moreover, participants who were older or who were from dominant political and sectarian groups were often more vocal and tended to dominate group discussions, which restricted the participation of others. Being an 'outsider' to the community, I was not always sensitive to the hegemonic nature of these social relations, particularly at the beginning of the fieldwork. However, once I became aware of these group dynamics, whenever possible, I tried to ensure that an equal number of boys and girls were present and that religious sects and political organizations were as equally represented as possible in interview sessions.

Focus groups also posed a challenge for me in terms of group facilitation. Not being used to this form of semi-structured group interaction, the young people often all spoke at once, interrupted each other or giggled on the side while another speaker ‘held the floor’. This meant that taped interviews were sometimes rendered inaudible or difficult to decipher afterwards. Moreover, as interview sessions were held over a number of meetings, not all of the young people could attend all of the sessions. This meant that there was a lot of ‘coming and going’ in and between interview sessions which was often quite disruptive. Moreover, the lack of continuity in participant attendance affected the nature and quality of data that I was able to collect. In retrospect, I should have introduced the participants to this form of semi-structured group interaction slowly and discussed ‘speaker/audience etiquette’ with them at the outset.

Although focus groups yielded rich data, it was difficult to know how to record, transcribe and attach meaning to the data. This is because it was not just what the participants said but also how they interacted with each other and with me that was of significance. In other words, it was the spaces between the lines of the text that were also important in constructing meaning (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005). Therefore, making observational notes during the interview proceedings and keeping a researcher diary greatly helped me to enrich and nuance verbal data.

RRA/PLA approaches

In order to recognize the existence of multiple perspectives, I also chose to adopt Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approaches, which aim to empower local people to analyze their own lives and enable them to contribute to the planning and management of research projects. The RRA and PLA activities that I used in this study included taxonomies, sorting and ranking techniques, Venn diagrams, art and role-play (see Appendix 6).

RRA and PLA activities helped me to move:

from closed and preset to participatory and open, from etic to emic, from measuring to comparing, from individual to group, from verbal to visual, from higher to lower, from reserve to rapport and from frustration to fun (Chambers, 1997, p.130).

Moreover, RRA and PLA approaches were flexible and allowed me to mix and match methods to tailor the interview to the local situation and the aims of the session. Through the use of mapping techniques, taxonomies, sorting and ranking techniques, Venn diagrams, calendars, maps, art and role-play, I was able to gather a picture of the lives, attitudes and beliefs of Palestinian youth in camps in Lebanon. As I collected and fed information back into the system, the direction and context of the research was changed and refined as necessary in an iterative approach (Chambers, 1997).

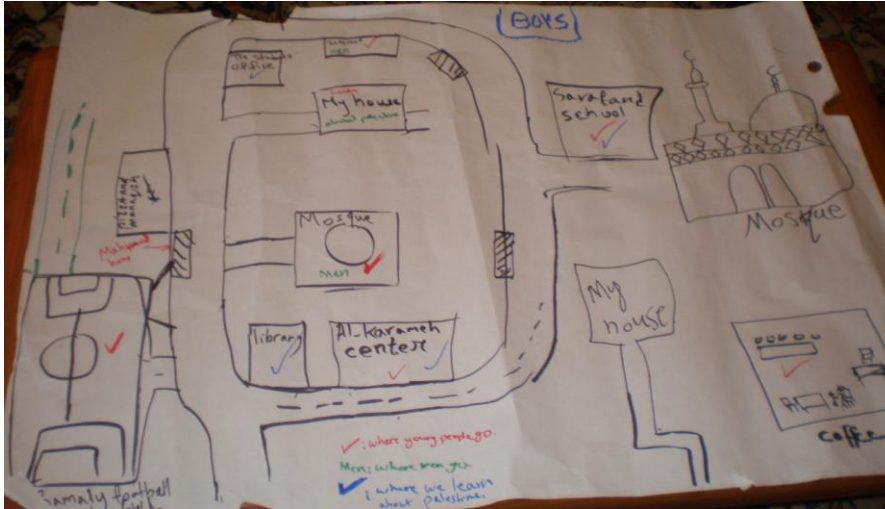
Some of the RRA/PLA approaches that I used in this study produced rich visual data. For example, in order to ‘get a feel for’ how the youth understood ‘Palestine’, I asked them to draw a picture to show what Palestine meant for them (see Figure 4.2.6). I then analyzed the pictures to see what themes emerged (e.g.: Islam, suffering, etc.). From this activity, I was able to gain insight into how the youth understood their identities and constructed boundaries between groups (see Chapter 5, ‘Difference’).

Figure 4.2.6



On another occasion, I asked the youth to map their community specifically indicating the places and institutions through which males, females and youth learned about Palestine (see Figure 4.2.7). I used this activity to understand how male, female and youth spaces are constructed in Palestinian society (e.g.: the mosque, the internet café, the coffee shop and the sports field = ‘male’ space) and what institutions are considered by the youth to be important in their construction of identity (e.g.: the family, political organizations, religious institutions, etc.) (See Chapter 6, ‘Institutions’).

Figure 4.2.7



I also had the youth construct a type of Venn Diagram to choose and rank the most influential institutions in the camps for learning about Palestine. Larger circles indicated the most important institutions (e.g.: the family, political organizations), and smaller circles indicated the least significant institutions for learning about Palestine from the youths' perspective (e.g.: the school). Through the youths' placement of the circles in various degrees of proximity to one another, I was also able to learn about the level of institutional cooperation in Palestinian society through the eyes of the youth (see Figure 4.2.8).

Figure 4.2.8



All of the activities producing visual data were followed up by a feedback session in which the youth had a chance to explain what they had produced, and other youth had the opportunity to comment on it. These conversations were recorded and later transcribed. Moreover, observational notes were taken during these activities and entered into my researcher diary.

I also used other RRA/PLA activities which yielded different types of data. For example, I had the youth roleplay the ‘difference’ between Palestinians and ‘Others’, including Palestinians and other Arabs (Lebanese), Palestinians in Lebanon and Palestinians in other countries (Syria), Palestinian men and men in other countries, Palestinian women and women in other countries, Palestinian Muslims and Muslims in other countries, Palestinian men and Palestinian women and Palestinian Muslims and Palestinian Christians. This activity helped me to understand how Palestinian youth define and construct boundaries between their community and ‘Others’ (i.e., through ‘suffering’) (See Chapter 5, ‘Difference’). Another type of RRA/PLA activity that I used was the ‘Sociogram’. In this exercise, the youth were asked to decide if they agreed or disagreed with a prepared statement on the ‘responsibilities’ of males and females in different institutional contexts within Palestinian society and respond to it by standing in a particular corner of the room (see Appendix 7).

Through this activity, I was able to learn about how Palestinian youth understood (and contested) gender performance in their society (See Chapter 7, 'Shifting Identities'). Again, these activities were followed up by a feedback session in which the youth had the chance to justify their positions and discuss different points of view. In these exercises, the discussions were recorded and I took notes on the social interactions taking place. These notes were later entered into my researcher diary.

I found RRA and PLA approaches to be advantageous for a number of reasons. First, from a postcolonial perspective, these approaches helped me to address power reversals and allowed me to work with Palestinians as 'partners', rather than as 'subjects'. It was the participants who expressed, owned and shared the information gleaned from RRA and PLA activities. Second, the visual nature of representation in RRA and PLA allowed different people in the group to add details and verify and amend information. It also enabled marginalized groups, such as girls or those from political and sectarian minorities, to express their preferences and priorities in a physical form which did not entail personal confrontation with those normally dominant (Chambers, 1997). Furthermore, RRA and PLA proved to be particularly effective research methods to interview young learners. RRA/PLA approaches helped to establish trust and rapport in a very short space of time in a way that reduced young people's inhibitions and allowed them to speak freely. RRA and PLA activities were also very enjoyable for young people and took on the appearance of drawing, acting or 'a game' (Mulhall and Taylor, 1998).

One challenge of using RRA and PLA approaches was that they required me to 'let go' and turn over facilitation responsibilities to the young people. In semi-structured interviews and focus groups, the young people were all focused on one task with me as facilitator. However, in RRA and PLA activities, the large group split up and each small group of young people went off to work on different tasks. In this way, facilitation became a lot more challenging, and I was not always successful at it. Moreover, the unstructured nature of RRA and PLA activities also made it very difficult for me to listen to important conversations the youth were simultaneously

having in different parts of the room. In this way, I was unable to capture valuable data on the processes involved in the youths' thinking in relation to the issues they were discussing and the tasks they were working on.

Another challenge of using RRA and PLA approaches was that they required consistent group attendance and participation. As exercises often conceptually built upon one another, or revisited issues discussed in previous meetings, RRA/PLA activities required youth to attend interview sessions consistently. However, due to family, work and school commitments, this was not always possible for all youth. Moreover, some youth lost interest in the activities after one or two sessions and stopped attending. Therefore, although I conducted Focus Group interviews using RRA/PLA activities over several meetings with youth at Burj A-Shemali and Al Bas camps, due to the difficulty of consistently assembling the youth at Rashidieh camp during the school term, I conducted in-depth individual interviews with the youth in that camp. Although individual interviews were valuable as they produced a different kind of data, the data that I was able to collect in Rashidieh camp differed markedly from that collected in the other two camps. This made comparisons between the youth and between the different camps problematic.

Another challenge of using RRA and PLA approaches was that both qualitative and quantitative data were produced. For example, drawing and mapping activities produced visual data, whereas ranking and Sociogram activities produced quantitative data. This required me to find effective ways of integrating and interpreting the different data sets. Moreover, the visual nature of much of the data that emerged through RRA and PLA activities challenged me to find effective methods of transcription and translation of the data into textual form.

From a practical perspective, RRA and PLA activities also created transport as well as data storage and retrieval challenges. First, chart paper, coloured markers, coloured paper, scissors, tape and glue had to be transported to and from each interview site. Next, as masses of charts and posters were produced through these

activities, data storage and retrieval became difficult. Therefore, when leaving the field site, I systematically captured all the images in a digital form so that they could be saved and transported electronically.

Data Analysis

As the study was interpretive, data analysis involved a “reflexive, reactive interaction between [myself] and the decontextualized data” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 285). I analyzed the data through a constructivist, thematic coding of transcripts. The first stage of data analysis was to read and re-read interview transcripts, unstructured notes and personal texts in my researcher diary to get ‘close to the data’, to get a feel for what was being said and to identify the key themes and issues being discussed by the participants. These themes included boundaries of identity (i.e., religion, suffering), the use of discursive resources to construct identity through institutions and the processes of resistance, negotiation and accommodation in the construction of new identities. Of course, I was not a ‘blank slate’ in this process, and key concepts and ideas from the literature I had read, as well as my own personal experiences and discursive positionings influenced the construction of these themes. Moreover, the research questions I had entered the research with were also pivotal in the thematic structuring of the text.

After I identified units of meaning, I clustered, categorized and ordered them through thematic coding (Gibbs, 2002). This enabled me to juxtapose and compare the data to identify relationships between different themes. By noting patterns and counting the frequency of occurrence, I made interpretations and linkages and developed tentative theories, relating the findings to previous literature and research. From this, I wrote a general narrative description of the lived experiences of Palestinian youth from the perspectives of the research participants. Of course, this text was filtered through my own discursive locations and theoretical positionings (see Methodology section, below).

In response to the particular discursive positionings of Palestinians in Lebanon, I used post-structuralist, post-colonialist and feminist theory as a framework for the interrogation of the data (see Literature Review, chapter 3).

4.3 Methodology

The design of this research study emerged from my epistemological and ontological positioning in relation to the nature of ‘the social’ and the production of ‘knowledge’. In the following section, I discuss the theoretical underpinnings which informed the research decisions made in this study. In particular, I provide a rationale for my decision to design this research as an interpretivist study.

The nature of ‘the social’ and the production of ‘knowledge’

An ongoing question related to the research process is, what is the nature of the social world, and how can we have knowledge of it? How we answer this question and where we locate ourselves ontologically and epistemologically conditions the way we envision, plan and conduct our research. For example, do we see participants in our research study as ‘collaborators’ with us in the research process or as ‘subjects’ to be researched? Do we see ourselves as ‘miners’ who go in to ‘extract’ external, objective and pre-existing information, or are we ‘travellers’ who are constantly in negotiation with research participants in the process of social construction? (Kvale, 1996). Our assumptions in these matters largely determine what methodological position we adopt, what research methods we implore and how we analyze the data (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005).

My ontological and epistemological position is that the social world cannot be viewed in the same way as natural phenomena within a traditional scientific methodology. There is no objective ‘knowledge’ of the social that can be extracted and recorded in a neutral fashion by an unbiased and disengaged researcher. Rather, “human science is constitutively value-engaged in a way natural science is not” (Walsh, 1999, p. 51), and I, as the researcher, am always implicated in knowledge production. This is

because I am located discursively, which means that I am constructed and regulated by the specific discursive spaces that I inhabit. Therefore, these discourses constitute, to some extent, what I can 'know'. Moreover, I am constituted by 'technologies', such as sexual, political, legal, educational and religious patterns of behaviour, of which I am often unaware (Foucault, 1977). As such, I may take as 'neutral', 'natural' and 'given' specific discursive formations in my own society, and thereby make judgments about 'Other' populations based on my own normative assumptions (Said, 1978). This combined with the power differentials inherent between researcher/researched and West/East clearly has implications for any 'knowledge' I may construct about Palestinians in Lebanon through the research process and how I may represent them.

However, despite the power differentials inherent in research, meaning does not just belong to me alone. Rather, it is constructed in the dialogue between me and the research participants in a space where our semantic histories collide or intersect (Bakhtin, 1986). In other words,

The specific contexts in which utterances are produced, distributed and consumed are influenced by at least four levels of intentionality: a) the intentionality of the historical moment, b) the intentionality of the social and cultural frames at work, c) the intentionality of the culture in which the utterance is produced, and d) the intentionality of the individual speakers (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis, 2006, p. 52).

In this way, each social encounter I have had with Palestinians in Lebanon has constructed new 'knowledge' both through the discursive practices which contained us and through the personal agency which we exercised within a specific context. As we collected new "vocabularies" and ideologies from each social encounter and integrated them in new ways, we became:

laminates (or mosaics) of these discursive practices and became partially responsible for [our] own uniqueness (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis, 2006, p. 53).

Acknowledging that Palestinian young men and women are meaningful actors in their own right, I initially chose to undertake interpretivist research within the phenomenological tradition in order to answer questions about how social life is created, experienced and given meaning by Palestinian young people in Lebanon. Adopting a broad definition of phenomenology, my initial intention was to study Palestinian youth's experiences and perceptions from their consciousness of them in order to privilege personal perspective and interpretation in knowledge production. I intended to do this with the understanding that the youth make these constructions within a socio-cultural and historical framework and through the sites of institutions (Foucault, 1977; Flick, 1998). Moreover, as identity is process, the youth continually test and modify these constructions in light of new experiences (Schwandt, 1998).

However, as I engaged in the research process, contradictions began to emerge for me around the issue of researcher identities. Pure phenomenological research seeks to start from a perspective free from hypotheses or preconceptions by the researcher 'bracketing' her experiences and preconceptions (Husserl, 1970). However, exposure to feminist and postcolonial literature and my fieldwork experiences (see 4.4 Researcher Identities, below) left me questioning, and ultimately refuting, the possibility of a researcher starting without any preconceptions or biases. Rather, I came to see that social research is not under the control of an "autonomous, disengaged, disembodied subject, knower, or ideal epistemic agent" (Schwandt, 1998, p. 199). Rather, the researcher is always socially, culturally and historically situated, and the researcher frames the research and constructs 'knowledge' from the position of her own personal location in the world and her biography of experiences and background assumptions. This means that my account of life in Palestinian camps is inherently ideological, political and permeated with my own values and assumptions and my own discursive positionings (Rouse, 1996). Therefore, I have needed to

become visible in the ‘frame’ of the research as an interested and subjective actor rather than as a detached and impartial observer and make clear how unequal power relations between myself (a Canadian researcher studying at a UK university) and the researched (young, stateless Palestinian refugees) have impacted interpretations and meanings (Stanley and Wise, 1993). As Said argues,

No production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author’s involvement as a human subject in (her) own circumstances (Said, 1978, p.11).

Moreover, this realisation has meant that I have had to shift my initial phenomenological framing of the research to a more broadly based constructivist analysis.

4.4 Researcher Identities

As discussed above, the researcher is always socially, culturally and historically situated and constructs ‘knowledge’ from her own personal location in the world. Therefore, from post-colonialist and feminist perspectives, it has been imperative for me to interrogate my multiple identities, and the ways in which they were strategically exercised in this study. The following section will examine the ways in which my identities regulated my access to participants, the quality of data that I was able to collect, how I interpreted the data and how I constructed ‘knowledge’ from it.

Access to participants

My different group identities situated me both as an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ in Palestinian society. As a Canadian, non-Arab and non-Muslim, I was clearly an ‘outsider’ to the Palestinian community I was living in. However, being married to a Palestinian meant that I was also an ‘insider’ in some respects, as I was formally attached to a ‘tribe’. Moreover, I was considered to be an ‘insider’ to certain segments of the population, specifically ‘women’ and ‘Christians’. In other words,

the ‘insider/outsider’ binary collapsed as I was reconstituted along this sliding scale in different contexts and according to different criteria.

Being an ‘insider’ *and* an ‘outsider’ to the community proved to be both advantageous and disadvantageous in different situations and at different times in terms of gaining access to participants. For example, being an ‘insider’ to females meant that I had unfettered access to Palestinian girls and women in their homes, where most female life takes place. A male researcher would not have had this access or been privy to the type of information that this environment yielded.

However, being an ‘insider’ in terms of gender also meant that I was expected to take up and perform local female subject positions and participate within the ‘honour and shame’ paradigm, whereby women become responsible for the ‘honour’ of the family and community through the regulation of their bodies (Yuval-Davis, 1997) (see Literature Review, Chapter 3). This meant that I had to follow a certain ‘dress code’ and refrain from venturing out into ‘male space’, talking to men unsupervised, travelling by myself, going out in the evening alone or staying out late at night. For example, on one occasion as I was returning home around 10:00 p.m. from the local internet café, I was met by an inquisitive male neighbour at the entrance to the apartment building where I was staying. Upon seeing me, he commented, “Returning home so late? Well, your husband is in charge of you”. At this remark, I realized that I had committed two cultural ‘faux pas’, the first had been venturing into the ‘male space’ of the internet café without a male ‘chaperone’, and the second was returning home after dark. However, what is of significance in this exchange was my status as an ‘insider’. Whereas a ‘foreign’ woman is understood to participate within a different (and ‘inferior’) cultural paradigm of ‘morality’, a Palestinian woman is always expected to conduct herself with utmost propriety and never compromise her ‘honour’ or the honour of her (extended) family. As the ‘wife of a Palestinian’, and therefore an ‘insider’, I was expected to adhere to these cultural and moral norms. Consequently, I was placed under the constant ‘surveillance’ and ‘gaze’ of the community. Moreover, I was expected to ‘police’ myself to avoid perceived moral indiscretions (Foucault, 1977). As a researcher, these restrictions on my movements

proved tremendously challenging in terms of data collection, as they determined where I could go, who I could talk to and under what conditions.

Identifying participants through the process of ‘snowballing’ was also affected both by my identities and those of the participants referring me to others. For example, my data sample is admittedly heavily biased towards members of the Fatah political organization. In part, this reflects the inequitable demographic balance of political membership in the camps in south Lebanon in favour of Fatah. However, it is also indicative of the fact that interviewees tended to recommend associates, colleagues and friends for interview who held the same political affiliation as themselves. For example, staff at the Al Kurami Centre (Fatah Office) in Burj A-Shemali camp referred me to the Fatah (Al Kadoumi) Library in Rashidieh camp. In a similar way, Sunnis referred me to other Sunnis, Shi’ites to other Shi’ites and Christians to other Christians. This meant that I had to make a conscious effort to seek out members of other political parties and religious sects in order to gain a more balanced understanding of Palestinian identity (see Participant Demographics).

Nature and quality of data collected

In addition to impacting my access to participants, my identities also impacted the nature and quality of data that I was able to collect. In the interview process, there is a constant symbolic exchange between the researcher and the participants which largely determines what questions can be asked and what information will be given. One example of this is how my status as an ‘insider’ in terms of gender allowed me to ask questions and receive information about female sexuality within the Palestinian community. On one afternoon, as I was sitting with three young Palestinian teachers, two male and one female, I approached the subject of sexuality within Palestinian society. Although I normally would not have approached this subject in mixed company, I did so because my assessment of the female teacher present was that she was something of a ‘rebel’ in the sense that she did not wear the *hijab*, she rode a motorcycle and she was engaged to a European Christian. Believing the female teacher to be quite ‘liberal’, I assumed that she would be willing to speak about this

subject with the other teachers. However, although the male teachers were happy to speak openly about (hetero)sexuality, the female teacher suddenly fell silent. Instead of articulating her views, she asked if she could write her responses down in my notebook because she didn't want to discuss this topic in the company of men. At this point, I realized that it was my 'insider' status as a 'female' that had gained me access to this important data. A male researcher, whether an 'insider' or an 'outsider' to the Palestinian community, would never have been privy to this type of information. However, it was also the assumptions I had made as an 'outsider' that had led me to make this cultural error in the first place. Moreover, it was the power I held as a Westerner and as the researcher that allowed me to impose Western meanings onto the situation.

Although being an 'insider' sometimes worked to my advantage in terms of gaining access to participants and specific types of data, being an 'outsider' was also advantageous in certain circumstances. For example, the fact that I was a 'foreigner', and therefore an 'outsider', meant that I was seen to exist outside local and regional political and sectarian conflicts. In other words, I was perceived to be somehow 'neutral' and non-partisan. In this way, minority populations, such as Shi'ites and Christians felt comfortable in providing me with their perspectives on Palestinian issues and life in the camps. In the same way, I was able to gain access and conduct interviews with members of all political factions. In terms of my national identity, being Canadian definitely worked to my advantage as a researcher in this environment, as Canada is perceived to be a "peaceful" and "good" country by most Palestinians. On the other hand, Americans are widely disliked for their overt support of Israel, and the British are distrusted for their historical role in the drafting of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which laid the foundation for the 1948 Palestinian *Al Nakba*. Moreover, many Palestinians hold both Americans and Britons responsible for the events currently unfolding in (Arab) Iraq, and the Middle East more generally.

In some instances, my multiple identities intersected to create new 'hybrid' identities which sometimes worked to my advantage. For example, my 'insider' status as the

‘wife of a Palestinian’, and my status as a woman, intersected with my ‘outsider’ status as a Canadian to give me unique access to sensitive information. On one occasion, a young Palestinian woman disclosed to me that she had been the victim of a sexual assault. Believing she could talk freely to me about the incident ‘woman to woman’, and believing that, as a foreigner, I would not pass judgment on her according to local cultural and religious traditions, she felt safe in sharing this information with me. This was despite the fact that she had never spoken about this incident with even her closest family members out of fear of reprisals. In other words, it was who I was in relation to who she was that allowed this exchange to take place. Moreover, our exchange of personal information and empathy directly challenged dominant ‘masculine’ research methodologies calling for ‘emotional detachment’ in the interview process and “the manipulation of interviewees as objects of study/sources of data” (Oakley, 2002, p.33).

The symbolic exchange between myself and the participants was further complicated through the presence of an interpreter at interview sessions. Although the interpreters I used were always Palestinian, and every effort was made to ensure that they were of the same age and sex as the participants, they were not necessarily members of the same religious sect or political organization as the respondents. For example, in Burj A-Shemali camp, two Sunni female youth participants approached me after a group interview session to say that they did not feel comfortable speaking in front of a female Shi’ite interpreter because they felt that her religious sect made her more sympathetic to the “Lebanese perspective” (most Lebanese in south Lebanon are Shi’ite). In other words, for these youth, the interpreter’s religious affiliation challenged her ‘authenticity’ as a Palestinian and transformed her into an ‘outsider’ in their eyes. Just as the interpreter being ‘too different’ from the participants sometimes affected the interpretation process, being ‘too close’ also presented specific challenges. For example, in Rashidieh camp, one participant expressed hesitation to speak in front of the interpreter because she was his neighbour in the camp, and he did not want her to know his ‘business’. However, the same youth was

more than willing to speak with me alone, as he considered me to be an ‘outsider’ to the community and, therefore, a ‘non-threat’.

Interrogation of data and creation of ‘knowledge’

Beyond access to participants and information, my identities also determined what I saw in the field, how I interpreted it and what ‘knowledge’ I created out of it. For example, my identity as a woman meant that I was particularly interested in listening to and giving articulation to female perspectives within the community. Moreover, as a non-Muslim conducting research in an increasingly Islamicized society, I was eager to interview non-Muslims and religious minorities and give them an opportunity to express their views on life in the camps and changes in Palestinian society.

One of the benefits of being an ‘outsider’ in the Palestinian community was that it enabled me to view things through ‘fresh eyes’ and question the ‘normal’. However, as an ‘outsider’, I had to work hard to try to understand life from the perspective of the participants. For example, I had to try and resist the temptation to interpret and judge local gender relations according to my Western feminist perspectives.

As an ‘outsider’, it was also very easy to view participants as a monolithic whole, as Palestinians, Arabs or Muslims, rather than as individuals with complex identities. On one hand, this meant that there was a tendency to want to ‘Orientalise’ the population and to ‘teach’ or ‘correct’ them (Said, 1978). On the other hand, it was tempting to want to portray the community as ‘innocent victims’ of Western imperialist policies and Israeli aggression, as people who need to be ‘pitied’ and ‘helped’. However, this would have merely served to deny Palestinians any form of agency or control over their lives. Moreover, it would have ignored the realities ‘on the ground’ of community participation and complicity in gender inequality and the symbolic use of violence to politicize and militarize children from an early age.

Contestation, negotiation and accommodation of identities

Conducting fieldwork in such a challenging environment meant that my own identities were constantly being contested. This required me to engage in the processes of identity negotiation and accommodation. For example, I knew that espousing a Western feminist dogma would merely serve to alienate me from the community and preclude me from collecting the data that I needed. However, I also knew that unconditionally taking up local female subject positions would be an unacceptable compromise to me on a personal level. Therefore, I had to reach a place of accommodation by implementing some key strategies. First, I took up what I could of local subject positions, such as adopting a negotiated version of the female 'dress code'. For example, rather than swimming in the sea fully-clothed and with my hair covered, as the other Palestinian women did, I opted to enter the water in a baggy T-shirt and knee-length shorts. In this way, I could show that at least I was making some attempt to respect cultural norms and protect my 'modesty', while at the same time still managing to enjoy the experience of swimming.

Being both female and 'the wife of a Palestinian', I knew I could not escape from participating within the 'honour and shame' paradigm. On the other hand, as a researcher, I knew that I needed freedom of movement to complete my data collection. Therefore, in order to achieve both objectives, I chose to strike a 'bargain with patriarchy' (Kandiyoti, 1998). One way I did this was by using my mother's visit to my field site as an opportunity to comply with cultural norms while conducting fieldwork in the company of men. I capitalized on my mother's identity as an older female, and therefore as a kind of 'chaperone', to enable me to move freely within public space and openly interact with males in her presence. Being accompanied by my mother during interviews not only gave me access to male participants and 'male spaces', it served to humanize me and soften my 'foreignness' in the eyes of the participants, as they highly value and respect close family relationships. Another strategy that I employed was to ask my London-based Palestinian husband to phone his family, certain influential officials and key members of the community to let them know that I had his 'permission' to enter 'male space'

and interview men. Therefore, I could culturally comply with accepted norms and still carry out my fieldwork.

My attachment to certain subject positions and the performance of my identities in different contexts also raised several ethical issues during my fieldwork. For example, on my part, there was a definite desire to want to ‘play up’ certain identities in order to gain positions of advantage in the interview process. For example, when I was interviewing minority Palestinian Shi’ites, I often used my relationship with my husband’s family in order to gain the trust of the participants. However, when I was interviewing Palestinian Christians, I often didn’t mention that my husband’s family was Muslim due to the long history of sectarian conflict in the region. Moreover, my own identity as a Christian meant that Christian Palestinians already felt safe and comfortable in discussing with me their marginalized status within the Palestinian community. Was it ethical for me to use my identities strategically to gain positions of advantage in the interview process, or is this what we all naturally do in any given social interaction?

Sometimes I was asked about specific aspects of my identities, such as whether or not I had ever eaten pork, drank alcohol or been to Israel. Although I knew what answers participants wanted to hear, I came to the decision that, for better or for worse, I was going to represent myself accurately and honestly to the community. Was this a wise thing for me to do in terms of forwarding my research goals? For me, it was a compromise that I felt I could live with on a moral level.

In all of these ways, my researcher identities and my discursive positioning(s) largely influenced the research process and what I could claim to ‘know’ about Palestinians in Lebanon.

4.5 Ethical Issues

As discussed earlier, social research is concerned with knowledge production and is inherently bound up in relations of power. Therefore, the moral and ethical dimensions of the research must be assessed through a critical analysis of power relations between researcher and researched. In this way, it has been crucial for me to acknowledge the power differentials that existed in this study between ‘researcher’ and ‘subject’, to recognize the vulnerability of the participants and to hold myself accountable. The following section will discuss ethical issues in this study relating to researcher relations, issues of consent, privacy and representation and the dissemination of findings.

Researcher relations (researching the vulnerable)

Working from within the interpretivist tradition, I was attempting to describe the lived experiences of the participants through their eyes and then reconstruct an account for the reader. In other words, I was involved in the creation and representation of ‘knowledge’ about Palestinians in Lebanon. However, knowledge is inextricably bound with power and possesses the power to harm as well as to benefit (Foucault, 1977). Therefore, from a post-colonial perspective, I have had to acknowledge my position of power as a Western, educated researcher conducting social research with a vulnerable population, such as Palestinian refugee youth in Lebanon.

As a stateless people group and a minority ethnic population, Palestinians experience systematic political, social and economic marginalization in Lebanon (see Chapter 2, Context). Moreover, their historical experiences have been, and continue to be, framed by Western imperialism and colonialism (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). In this way, Palestinians are particularly vulnerable to the hegemonic ‘gaze’ of the researcher and the power of research to construct them as ‘Other’ through representation (Said, 1978). Despite this vulnerability, ethnographic research, in particular, has been historically linked with colonialism and imperialism where white, Western, bourgeois males have created and legitimated ‘knowledge’ of colonized peoples through the social sciences (Akeroyd, 1984). Moreover, research has often

been conducted in an oppressive manner through a one-way process of extraction of information without regard for the impact on the researched (Scheyvens and Storey, 2006). As hooks argues,

There is no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speak-subject, and you are now at the centre of my talk (hooks, 1990, p.151-152).

Considering the socio-political context in which Palestinians have had to live their lives in Lebanon, it was particularly imperative for me to make a conscious effort to avoid reproducing neo-colonial research postures and practices that would only serve to enhance their experiences of oppression and domination by ‘the West’/Israel.

The Palestinian community, like all communities, is internally segmented, and specific groups within Palestinian society often experience particular forms of marginalization and vulnerability. In the Palestinian context, young people are among the most vulnerable. While sharing with adults the pain and hardship of living their lives as refugees in exile, Palestinian young people lack even the most basic decision-making power and access to resources that adults in their community enjoy, however limited. Despite this, the trend in research has often been to consider young people only indirectly, if at all. As Bowden argues, “[the young] is a category taken for granted – seen but not heard, acted upon but not with” (Bowden, 1998, p. 282). In other words, parents, teachers and other adults in the community are often called upon to speak ‘on behalf’ of young people, effectively silencing them and rendering them invisible in the narrative, or worse yet, misrepresenting them. Even if young people are included in the research, it often takes the form of:

a 'raid', whereby the investigator moves in, plunders the results, swiftly moves out and in this process, [the youth] are denigrated to little more than tokens (Matthews, Limb and Taylor, 1998, p. 316).

Within this context, it was particularly important for me, as the researcher, to treat the youth as equal partners in the research process and empower them as much as possible to express and own the data through the adoption of an interpretivist methodology and participatory research methods.

In addition to the young, girls and women are also among the most vulnerable in Palestinian society. Patriarchal structures mean that Palestinian females often face specific forms of oppression in their daily lives. For example, women are rarely given leadership roles or appointed as official spokespersons for their community. Moreover, women's lack of freedom of movement in the public sphere often results in their inability to attend meetings, express themselves or ask questions. These social realities mean that it is often difficult for a researcher to gain access to women in public spaces. Moreover, it is often impractical or culturally inappropriate for the researcher to visit women in their homes. In this way, research can easily come to ignore or misrepresent Palestinian girls and women and become centred around men. Additionally, the ideas, opinions and experiences of male respondents can be mistakenly taken to represent those of the entire community, rather than just the dominant group (Scheyvens and Storey, 2006). As gender intersects with other social categories, such as race, ethnicity and age, this constructs additional forms of marginality (Hill Collins, 1991). Therefore, I had to take special care to ensure that females had equal chance to freely express their views in an environment that was empowering, respectful and safe.

In this context, it was also particularly important for me, as the researcher, to question the assumed 'neutrality' and 'objectivity' of social research and to reflect on the power dynamics inherent in the research process. This meant that I had to assess the effects of my presence in the camps and my research techniques on the nature and

extent of the data collected (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, I had to acknowledge that there was interpretation and conjecture on my part in deciding what topics to explore, what data to select and how to express and order this data. In this way, I had to acknowledge that I had the power to misrepresent, distort or delete findings which were provided in good faith by the research participants in order to serve my own ends.

Consent

A practical research issue related to power is that of participant consent. Social research involves the collection of data about and from human beings. Therefore, before research participants consent to participating in the research, it is imperative that they be informed about the methods and aims of the study, its anticipated consequences and the potential benefits, risks and disadvantages their participation may bring to themselves and their community (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). However, the acquisition of participant consent in social research is far from straightforward. For example, from whom is consent to be obtained and in relation to whom? What matters, events and data does the consent pertain to? Is obtaining consent a simple one-off process or is it a negotiated, lengthy, repeated process? If consent is withdrawn, what implications are there for the field data relating to that person? Is covert research acceptable when it is the only way to ensure that participants behave naturally or to obtain information about illegal or disapproved activities? Does full disclosure need to be balanced against scientific interests? (Akeroyd, 1984) In addition to the moral dilemmas I encountered around the issue of consent, pragmatically, the need for informed consent presented me with acute challenges in relation to politically sensitive settings. It was difficult, impractical or simply impossible for me to obtain written consent from everyone in the field setting (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). This was particularly true in relation to the youth, women, religious and political minorities and UNRWA staff members who feared for their jobs. Instead, I sought to gain knowledgeable and voluntary verbal consent from each participant. The ethical boundaries were further blurred as participants often provided me with rich information during informal ‘chit chat’

sessions at the end of interviews once the microphone had been turned off. As this information was provided outside the context of the formal interview setting, was it to be considered 'off the record', or could it still be considered legitimate data? At the very least, this informal exchange invariably coloured how I interpreted the 'legitimate' data afterwards.

Privacy

Related to the issue of informed consent was the right of participants to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity in the research process. I had to establish a good level of rapport and trust with participants in order to gain depth of information, particularly where the issues being investigated were of a sensitive nature (Dunne, Pryor and Yates, 2005). However, I was aware that those whose lives were being portrayed risked exposure, embarrassment, a potential loss of standing in the community or even physical reprisal for information they were sharing with me. Again, this vulnerability was particularly acute for the youth, females, political and religious minorities and UNRWA staff, who all had good reason to fear being identified. In this way, it was critical for me not to inappropriately exploit the rapport I established with the participants, to use deception or to probe sensitive issues that may have further enhanced participants' vulnerability (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, I needed to think through my methods and procedures for recording, transcribing, processing, storing and accessing data in order to ensure that the confidentiality of research participants was protected (Akeroyd, 1984). For example, it was important for me to make sure that the inclusion of direct quotes and vignettes of individual cases or participants did not compromise confidentiality. However, the practice of maintaining participant confidentiality and anonymity was also not without moral ambiguity. For example, during fieldwork, I sometimes learned of behaviour or planned acts which threatened my moral values or posed harm to others. Therefore, I was faced with the dilemma of whether or not to report these situations or to keep them in confidence. Then there was the issue of whom these situations could be reported to. This last point is particularly problematic in a society that lacks formal state institutions. Therefore, in order to minimize the risk of these situations

arising in the first place, at the start of each interview, I had to make clear to informants that matters of this nature could not be kept confidential for their personal well-being and for the well-being of the community.

Representation

An ethical dilemma which I faced during the writing-up phase of the research process was one of representation. In my 'insider' status as the 'wife of a Palestinian', I knew that I was expected to view the 'Palestinian struggle' with sympathy and represent the Palestinian community as 'innocent victims of Zionist aggression'. Moreover, I strongly suspect that some participants agreed to participate in this study with the hopes that I would tell the international community about the injustices suffered by the Palestinians at the hands of the Israelis. Although I was clear and honest with all participants about the aims and objectives of the research study from the outset, was it ethical to take participants' comments, made with the objective of political posturing, and apply them in a different context? I decided that I did not have control over the political agendas of the participants, yet in clearly and honestly explaining the aims and goals of the research and in gaining their expressed consent to participate in the study, I had gained the 'right' to use their data for analysis. This is not to say, however, that I have never felt a sense of guilt or disloyalty to the participants by not necessarily representing them as they would wish, particularly because of their status as a marginalized and vulnerable population and because of my husband's relationship to the community. Instead, this experience has highlighted for me the power of the researcher to manipulate the data, take quotes out of context and elevate or diminish certain perspectives in order to support a particular thesis. In other words, the 'knowledge' that is created through the research process is inherently ideological, political and permeated with my values, assumptions and agendas as the researcher.

Dissemination of findings

Many of the ethical issues that arose during the research process occurred during the reporting and publication of data. Questions that arose during this stage included:

What is legitimate private and public knowledge? Who will have access to this data? Who will own it? Should participants be allowed to respond to or alter matters of interpretation and judgment that I have made? (Akeroyd, 1984) For example, should members of the Palestinian community have veto powers over portions of the thesis where I have exposed gender inequality in Palestinian society? I decided that a balance had to be struck between my commitment to the interests of the informants and to the public dissemination of findings. As the researcher, I had to think through how participants would be given feedback on the results, to what extent they would own the data and if/how they would have a say in its publication. In turn, these issues had to be tempered by practicalities such as distance, language issues, elapsed time and participants' level of interest. In this sense, I have had to continually negotiate the relationship between my moral position and a professional code of ethics.

4.6 Overview

Located within a theoretical framework of identity production and regulation, this study explores how Palestinian youth in Lebanon understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis nationality, gender and religion, how the discursive resources of identity are appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps and how Palestinian identities in Lebanon have shifted across exilic generations. The study has been interpretivist and framed as a case study. In this light, empirical data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)/Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approaches in three official UNRWA refugee camps and two Palestinian 'gatherings' in south Lebanon. Data analysis was interpretive and framed through post-structural, post-colonial and feminist theory (see Literature Review, Chapter 3).

In the next chapter, I turn my attention to the research questions and, using empirical data, begin to analyze how the concept of 'difference' plays itself out in identity construction in Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

Chapter 5 – Boundaries

In this chapter, I use empirical data to analyze how Palestinian youth (male and female) understand and perform their identities in refugee camps in south Lebanon (research question 1). I do this through a macro-level analysis of how identity is constructed through ‘difference’ in Palestinian society (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). First, I examine how difference is constructed between Palestinians and external ‘Others’ through the construction of physical, structural and symbolic boundaries in Palestinian society. Next, I look at how Palestinians construct difference through shared cultures and discourses of ‘Palestinian-ness’. Finally, I explore how Palestinians themselves contest these discourses and construct internal ‘Others’. I argue that although identity is constructed through the erection of boundaries between groups, the construction of these boundaries is ultimately problematic. On one hand, the assertion of difference attempts to erase similarities between groups, such as between Palestinians and Lebanese. On the other hand, Palestinian identities are not unified, and there are contradictions within them which have to be negotiated.

5.1 Palestinians and external ‘Others’

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), in the context of exile, Palestinians in Lebanon have been constructed as a separate people group both from neighbouring Israelis and from their Lebanese ‘hosts’. This section will discuss the ways in which physical, structural and symbolic boundaries have been erected and used to construct difference between Palestinians and ‘Others’ in Lebanon.

The construction of physical boundaries between groups is one means of preserving the ‘purity’ of ‘imagined communities’ and keeping out those perceived to be ‘foreigners’, ‘intruders’ and ‘aliens’ (Kristeva, 1982). As refugees, the vast majority of Palestinians in south Lebanon live in enclosed, gated camps which are guarded by

the Lebanese army (see Chapter 2, Context). This physical boundary of separation between the Palestinian and Lebanese communities serves two purposes. First, the enclosures, gates and guards produce a landscape that spatially encodes ethnic segregation between the two communities. For example, when asked to explain the difference between Lebanese and Palestinians, one male Palestinian youth from Burj A-Shemali camp replied, “Lebanese live in their homeland, and we live in camps.”

Secondly, the physical boundaries between the Lebanese and Palestinian communities not only demarcate territory, they also help to symbolically produce and reproduce narratives of the ‘dangerous’ and ‘licentious’ Palestinian ‘Other’ who is to be distrusted and avoided. Camp boundaries separating the two communities serve both to construct and regulate Lebanese fears of Palestinian ‘violence’ and ‘crime’. This fear is reflected in the fact that few Lebanese dare to enter the Palestinian camps, as they are considered to be bastions of ‘corruption’, ‘danger’ and ‘lawlessness’. As a young Lebanese woman who was accompanying me on a visit to Burj A-Shemali camp teasingly asked a Lebanese soldier at the gate, “If they try to kill me in there, will you come and save me?”

The narrative on the Palestinian side is similarly one of mistrust and fear of the ‘Other’. For example, in my discussions with Palestinian youth, they frequently expressed their concerns about being physically or verbally attacked by Lebanese youth outside the camp boundaries, “for no reason...because we are Palestinian only”. This fear of ethnic violence is so strong among Palestinian youth that it has largely curtailed their movements outside the camps. On the other hand, as the Lebanese army has jurisdiction outside the camps while the Palestinian security forces keep order within the camps, the boundaries of the camp symbolically signify for Palestinian youth the space in which they may exercise their freedom from Lebanese authority. Moreover, all of the Palestinian young people remarked how they felt much safer remaining within the camp enclosure among their “own people”.

As discussed above, the shared Palestinian/Lebanese narratives of racialized fear and security have resulted in the creation of a ‘garrisoned’ Palestinian community. Yet the camp offers a kind of incomplete boundedness, as residents have to leave the camp in order to work and to shop in the Lebanese city of Tyre. Moreover, as there is only one high school for Palestinian students in all of south Lebanon, which is located in Rashidieh camp, young people from the other camps and gatherings must traverse Lebanese territory to reach it. When Palestinians do leave the camps through checkpoints at camp gates, Lebanese soldiers assess the ‘acceptability’ of Palestinian identity documents, car passengers and contents. If an inspection does not meet the satisfaction of the soldiers, residents and goods are denied exit or re-entry into the camp. Not only does this practice result in the creation of lengthy cues at camp gates, it also reinforces Lebanese hegemony over Palestinian residents. By tightly regulating and controlling who and what goes in and out of the camps, the Lebanese army enacts a form of ‘surveillance’ over the Palestinian community. Those Palestinians who manage to successfully navigate these checkpoints are still subjected to the random ‘stop and search’ tactics employed by the Lebanese army over the Palestinian population in south Lebanon. In this way, the ‘gaze’ of the Lebanese army on all aspects of camp and non-camp life works to create ‘docile’ Palestinian bodies who know their place in the socio-political order (Foucault, 1977).

In addition to the construction of physical boundaries between groups, ‘Othering’ between Lebanese and Palestinians is both marked and maintained through unequal social and material conditions. In the context of Lebanon, the social and material disadvantage of the Palestinian ‘Other’ is both produced and reproduced through official discourses of ‘citizenship’. Discourses of citizenship classify people either as ‘insiders’, who are protected by the state, or ‘outsiders’, for whom the state bears no responsibility. As refugees and stateless persons living in Lebanon, Palestinians are constructed as ‘burdens’ to the Lebanese state (see Chapter 2, Context). Consequently, structural, institutional and legal boundaries are erected to produce and maintain segregation between the Palestinian and Lebanese communities. As ‘non-citizens’ of Lebanon, Palestinians have no legally enshrined political, economic or

social rights within the country. For example, all Palestinians are forbidden from participating in government, attending government schools, working in more than 70 professions, accessing health and unemployment benefits, building and owning their own homes, travelling freely within Lebanon and obtaining a passport (see Chapter 2, Context). As one male Palestinian youth from Rashidieh camp explained,

The difference between Palestinian and Lebanese people is they (Lebanese) study just for work, but I study to service the Palestinian people and because of my family's economical status. And the difference is that they will get work easily, because they are Lebanese people, but me, as Palestinian, I couldn't find work easily. And the difference is they live at home, and we live in the camp where all houses are near each other, and the water is leaking from the roof and we can't build anything.

As mentioned above, in the context of south Lebanon, segregation between Palestinians and Lebanese has largely been imposed on the two communities through the construction of physical and structural boundaries by the Lebanese government. However, Palestinians have also used their circumstances to symbolically construct boundaries between themselves and the Lebanese 'Other'. Although Palestinians are largely restricted to living in camps, camp life, itself, has become a marker of national identification for young Palestinians. For example, when asked to define what the difference was between Palestinians and 'Other' people, one male youth from Rashidieh camp responded,

Other people live in their homes, and we live in a camp. We are in Lebanon now, but we are still Palestinians living together. Because of this, we say that we are Palestinian.

For camp residents, the 'boundedness' of their community has permitted them to construct a unified 'Palestinian' culture and national identity in correspondence with a specific territory. In an attempt to build community within the camp, Palestinians

have imprinted themselves physically on the landscape through the erection of symbolic boundaries between themselves and ‘outsiders’. When visitors enter through the camp gate, they are immediately bombarded with a plethora of signs that clearly indicate that Lebanon has been left behind, and they have entered Palestinian territory. Banners, posters and graffiti depicting specifically Palestinian figures, monuments and landscapes work to erase history and create the illusion of an unbroken, continuous Palestinian identity attached to a specific territory (see Chapter 6, Institutions). This is despite the fact that camp residents have been refugees in Lebanon for more than 60 years. Moreover, on the air waves, Palestinian satellite and local TV stations, such as *Al Quds*, *Filastine*, *Al Aqsa* and *Al Barak*, create a virtual reality where physical and temporal distance is collapsed between residents and their ‘homeland’ in Palestine. The call to prayer from the mosques inside the camps also works to erect sacred boundaries between the predominantly Sunni Palestinian camp residents and the largely Shi’ite south Lebanese population. As if to purposefully distance themselves from the ‘Other’, Sunni mosques inside the camps broadcast their call to prayer a few minutes earlier than the call to prayer heard from the Lebanese Shi’ite mosques outside.

Moreover, ‘hardship’ in the camps, itself, has become reified by many Palestinians as a boundary marker between ‘their’ community and ‘Others’. Many young Palestinians have taken up their suffering as a kind of ‘badge of honour’ that differentiates themselves from the Lebanese. As one young woman from Rashidieh camp put it,

We are the people who suffer. I am proud because the Palestinians are the strong people, and if we are not strong, we would not be outside our homeland. When you face problems, you will become stronger. When people were in Palestine, they didn’t ask about identity, but now they do.

In other words, ‘suffering’ has become appropriated as an identity marker and a symbolic boundary between Palestinians and ‘Others’. For this young woman,

Palestinians suffer precisely because they possess some unique and exceptional strength which 'Others' lack. Hence, by taking up their suffering, Palestinians reinforce the essence of their 'Palestinian-ness' and mark the difference between themselves and 'Others'. In this way, Palestinian identity is unified and strengthened through adversity.

This brings me to a discussion of how Palestinian youth exercise agency and work to construct difference between themselves and 'Others' through the construction of shared cultures and discourses of 'Palestinian-ness'.

5.2 Shared cultures and discourses of 'Palestinian-ness'

Although physical and structural boundaries between Palestinians and 'Others' have largely been constructed and imposed by the Lebanese government, UNRWA and other foreign powers, Palestinians themselves work to construct the nation through shared cultures of 'Palestinian-ness'. They do this discursively through the construction and performance of narratives of shared history, kinship, religion and the cross-cutting theme of gender (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). Through these narratives, Palestinians simultaneously emphasize their sameness with other members of 'their' collectivity as well as underline their difference from 'Others', as discussed below.

Shared history

As discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 3), shared history is often used as a basis for the construction of the nation. As refugees, one experience which unifies all Palestinians is the displacement and forced exile they suffered as a community as the result of the creation of the 'State of Israel' in 1948 (see Chapter 2, Context). The uniqueness of this history has been reified by Palestinians as a boundary marker of the nation. For Palestinian youth, the very borders of Palestine have been discursively constructed through the shared suffering of the collective, and Palestinian territory is considered to be those villages and lands which were 'lost' at

the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Within this narrative, Palestinians are all the people who suffered that loss. For example, when asked what differentiated Palestinians from other people, one male youth from Rashidieh responded,

They are homeless. All people have a home, but Palestinians live in their homes only in their hearts. We have only one goal which is to liberate our homeland and return back to it.

There are a couple of interesting points to note from the comment above. First, this youth, like all the others, was born in a refugee camp in Lebanon and has never been to or experienced Palestine as a physical or political reality. For this youth, Palestine is a narrative, a myth of an idyllic land with “many rivers, mountains, lakes and trees, vegetables and fruits”. Through the narratives of his parents and grandparents, this youth’s ‘memories’ of Palestine have been discursively constructed (see Chapter 6, Institutions). Moreover, the village in Galilee that his grandparents fled from in 1948 has symbolically become Palestine in his imagination. This has important political implications for the Middle East Peace Process and how the borders of a new Palestinian state might be ‘imagined’. For example, in the ‘two state solution’ to the ‘Palestinian/Israeli conflict’ proposed by the American government and others, ‘Israel’ would continue to exist as a state, although somewhat reduced in territory, while ‘the West Bank’ and ‘Gaza’ would collectively become part of a new Palestinian state. However, for Palestinian young people in Lebanon who envision Palestine as the village from where their grandparents were exiled in Galilee, this solution would never be acceptable, as it requires them to ‘return’ to a ‘foreign’ culture and way of life in the ‘foreign’ land of the West Bank/Gaza Strip.

The second point worthy of note from the comment above is this youth’s genuine desire to ‘return back’ to his ‘homeland’ and ‘restore’ a ‘historical’ past where Palestinians enjoyed full ‘nationhood’ and ‘self-determination’. In reality, Palestine was never a bounded or autonomous territory under Ottoman rule, and it was not a self-governing nation under the British Mandate. Rather, Palestine is a geopolitical

‘casualty’ of history, forever caught between the decline of empire and the rise of the nation state (see Chapter 2, Context; Chapter 7 New Identities). In this way, the ‘history’ of Palestine as an ‘occupied state’ has been discursively constructed through institutions in Palestinian society (see Chapter 6, Institutions). In a similar way, the ‘State of Israel’ has been discursively constructed through the Jewish historical myth of “a land without a people for a people without land”. Moreover, this myth has been used as a pretext for the occupation of territory and forced removal of indigenous Palestinian inhabitants.

Interestingly, for many Palestinian youth, the creation of the ‘State of Israel’, or *Al Nakba*, provides a historical boundary against which they can construct their identities. As one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp put it,

Palestinians are people who lived in Palestine, and Israel occupied their homeland, and now they are scattered around Arabic countries.

When the youth were asked to draw a timeline of events they considered to be important in Palestinian history, all of the youth ‘began’ time in 1916. This is significant, as although Palestinians as a people group have been in existence for more than 3000 years, for the youth, ‘Palestinian’ history began in 1916 with the British-French negotiated Sykes-Picot agreement, which laid the foundation for the creation of the ‘State of Israel’ in 1948 (see Chapter 2, Context). In other words, it was the creation of the ‘Israeli Other’ which constructed them as ‘Palestinians’. Ironically, it is this very historical event which many Palestinians refuse to acknowledge or would like to reverse. For example, when asked to cite the most important historical event affecting the Palestinian people, one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp said,

Until now, it didn’t come. When they put ‘Palestine’ in the place of ‘Israel’ in international maps.

The shared historical experience of forced migration has not only helped to construct boundaries between Palestinians and 'Others', it has also helped to shape notions of 'Palestinian-ness'. For many young Palestinians, the experiences of displacement and suffering mark a kind of 'moral' boundary between themselves and the Israelis. As one male youth from Al Bas camp explained, "Israel kills many women and children." For this youth, Israel's attacks on 'helpless' Palestinian women and children render it 'immoral' and 'barbarian'. On the other hand, Palestinians, as the Israeli 'Other', become simultaneously constructed in binary opposition: 'moral' and 'civilized'. In this way, Palestinians develop a positive, shared notion of 'Palestinian-ness' through the construction of their identities as different from the Israeli 'occupiers'. Moreover, as Israel is constructed as 'immoral', Palestinians therefore have the 'ethical duty' to fight 'Israeli evil' through armed struggle. In a similar way, Israeli discourse has worked to construct Palestinians as the 'terrorist Other'. In other words, the binary oppositions of 'good vs. evil', 'moral vs. immoral' and 'civilized vs. savage' have been used by both communities to mark difference and to justify aggression.

Biology and shared kinship

In addition to shared history, Palestinian youth also construct difference between themselves and 'Others' through discourses of biology and shared kinship. Within this essentialist narrative, metaphors of 'blood' and 'roots' are frequently appropriated by the youth to describe what makes them different from 'Other' people. When asked what it meant to be Palestinian, many male and female youth in all the camps responded, "it's in my blood", or "my blood is Palestinian". For example, one young man in Rashidieh camp put it this way,

I may be born in Palestine or in a foreign country, but the blood gives me my personality.

All Palestinians in Lebanon are living in exile. However, many Palestinians in Lebanon find they have no choice but to seek employment in other foreign countries

(see Context, Chapter 2). This phenomena of emigration, particularly to the Arabian Gulf States and Europe, has had a huge impact on Palestinian society. Moreover, it has destabilized identities and worked to construct new ones (see Chapter 7, New Identities). However, when asked if it were possible to ‘shed’ or ‘lose’ ‘Palestinian’ identity and acquire a new one through the process of emigration, one male youth from Rashidieh camp responded,

The son of my uncle was born in Sweden. He is not talking any word in Arabic, only in Swedish and Danish and English. But he is Arabic because his blood is Arabic. His father is Arabic. He has the nationality of Sweden but he is an Arabic people from the root...from the root. He has the Palestinian blood, but Swedish is only a nationality.

This comment is illuminating from three different perspectives. First, it clearly indicates that, for this youth, national identity is based on essentialist notions of biological determinism. Nationality may be bestowed on individuals by governments, but there is an ‘authentic’ ‘Palestinian-ness’ that is only derived through genealogy and shared bloodlines. This is important in light of Palestinians’ experience of exile and statelessness. As Joseph Massad (1995) notes, before ‘*Al Nakba*’ took place in 1948, one was considered to be Palestinian if he/she was born and resident in the territory of Palestine. However, after the loss of ‘Palestinian’ land in 1948, ‘Palestinian-ness’ became reconstituted to involve direct kinship ties with an ancestor who lived in Palestine. This reveals how constructions of ‘Palestinian-ness’ have shifted over time in response to changing social, economic and political conditions (see Chapter 7, New Identities).

The second interesting point to note about the youth’s comment above is that the narrative of biological determinism also constructs a particularly exclusive form of ‘Palestinian-ness’ that cannot be acquired by ‘foreigners’. When asked if I could become Palestinian through birth or naturalization in Palestine, the youth responded negatively and clarified that I didn’t have ‘Palestinian blood’. The youth’s

association of nationality with biological inheritance means that there is only one way to acquire 'Palestinian citizenship', and that is to be born into it. In other words, it is through biological reproduction that boundaries are constructed between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', and the 'purity' of the Palestinian community is maintained.

The third point to note from the youth's comment above is that the narrative of biology has specific implications for the lives of women. As the nation is reproduced biologically, women are encouraged to have children to reproduce the nation (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). Moreover, this discourse has been internalized by Palestinian youth. For example, when asked what women do to show they are 'good Palestinians', many young people responded that they "have children for Palestine". As one young woman from Burj A-Shemali camp put it,

All women should give birth to more than 5 children to continue Palestinian generations. A good Palestinian woman will have many children to liberate Palestine.

As child bearing is perceived to be a 'cornerstone' of female Palestinian 'citizenship', women are called upon to bear as many children as possible for the nation, perhaps at the expense of their health or the achievement of other personal, educational or professional goals. In this way, Palestinian women are forced into compulsory heterosexuality and marriage, regardless of sexual desire. As a female Palestinian teacher from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

If a woman doesn't marry by a certain age, she should marry whoever. Her life will be almost destroyed if she is not married.

In addition to having direct and specific implications for the lives of women, the narrative of biological determinism also has very serious political implications and is, indeed, at the very heart of the Palestinian nationalist struggle. If nations are biologically-based, then Palestine, with its 'pure' bloodlines is validated as a

‘legitimate’ nation. Conversely, ‘Israel’, as a settler country, whose citizenry has immigrated there from all parts of the world without direct biological ties, becomes ‘illegitimate’. As one male youth from Rashidieh camp put it,

Israel is not a real country. They bring Iraqi and Russian Jews to make Israel.

In this way, ‘blood’ has been constructed as a symbolic boundary to mark the difference between ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ nations and Palestinians and Israelis. Moreover, as ‘Israel’ is not a legitimate nation, according to this narrative, it can and should be dismantled and destroyed.

As Palestine is reproduced biologically, biological reproduction is also used as a demographic weapon in the Palestinian nationalist struggle. As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

All women bring children, but Palestinian women bring heroes. Israel kills one child and we bring 5. If we don’t bring children, Palestine will be lost.

As Palestinian ‘citizenship’ is obtained exclusively through biological inheritance, the only way to increase the size of the Palestinian resistance army is through biological reproduction. In this way, every birth to a Palestinian woman becomes a birth for the whole nation. Similarly, every death experienced by a Palestinian family is grieved as a loss to the whole nation.

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), nations are gendered constructions, and biological discourses of ‘Palestinian-ness’ are also intersected with gender. This has specific implications for who can and who cannot be considered a Palestinian. As one male youth from Rashidieh camp explained,

You can’t be Palestinian because you don’t have a father and all the things that make you a Palestinian. You don’t have this. Feelings are not enough.

The youth's contention that I cannot be Palestinian because I do not have a Palestinian father indicates that Palestinian identity has been 'imagined' as 'male'. As another female youth from Rashidieh camp elaborated,

If your mother is Lebanese and your father is Palestinian, you are Palestinian, but if your mother is Palestinian and your father is Lebanese you are Lebanese.

This youth's comment may be partially a reflection of the fact that in Lebanon, and indeed in Arabic culture(s) more generally, a child legally acquires the citizenship of his/her father. However, patrilineal inheritance practices both reflect and reproduce narratives of 'sexual purity' for women. If national identity is derived through the male, then it becomes imperative to secure paternity and the 'purity' of bloodlines through the control and regulation of female sexuality. In this way, Palestinian females become the symbolic 'gatekeepers of the nation' by being called upon to erect boundaries between 'their' community and 'Others' through the sanctity of their bodies. Therefore, in Palestinian culture, disciplinary regimes of 'surveillance' and narratives of 'honour and shame' (where the 'honour' of the family rests on the women's propriety) ensure that Palestinian females are 'policed' into compliance. As one female Palestinian teacher from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

Women should always be a virgin. It is catastrophic when she is not. It is a sign of a good woman. The husband can make a scandal if he discovers she is not a virgin. More than 98% will ask her to leave the house. We have no open-minded man in this society. The man can do whatever he wants because he is a man. They think it is something related to honour. But a man's mistake is little compared to a woman's. Even a girl who is raped wants to have surgery to get back her virginity. They show the bed sheet to the family of the man to prove she is a good woman. If a woman is not a virgin, maybe she can't get married...A man will marry one but then have a mistress. A

woman can't do this. He doesn't want to marry more than one because of financial obligations, although the Qu'ran says he can have four.

This narrative of biological 'purity' has been internalized by Palestinian young people. For example, when asked how they show they are 'good Palestinians', girls in all camps remarked that they endeavour to maintain a 'good moral reputation' by "not going out at night, by not talking to boys and by not going to the coffee shop", in other words, by marking the boundaries of 'Palestinian-ness' through the 'purity' of their bodies. For boys, however, the maintenance of 'sexual purity' and 'a good reputation' were not mentioned as criteria for Palestinian 'citizenship'. By contrast, boys indicated that they were not subject to the same disciplinary regimes as girls in relation to sexuality. As one Palestinian boy from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

As a boy, how I dress, my behaviour and the places I go reflect my own personality. I am free in Palestinian society as a boy, but girls are controlled.

The construction of national boundaries through patrilineal/matrilineal inheritance is also extremely significant in the context of the 'Arab/Israeli conflict'. Although both Palestinian and Lebanese cultures practice patrilineal inheritance, in Israeli culture, inheritance is matrilineal. In Jewish narrative, Jews and Arabs are both 'sons of Abraham'. However, Jews are descended from Sarah, Abraham's rightful wife, whereas Arabs are descended from Hagar, his slave girl (Genesis, Chapter 16). To Arabs, this difference is not relevant, as both 'peoples' share the same 'father'. On the other hand, to Jews, this difference is extremely significant as, through matrilineal inheritance, they are made the 'legitimate' heirs of Abraham and, therefore, the land of Palestine. Moreover, through this narrative, they are positioned hegemonically above the Arab 'Other'.

Shared culture and religion

In addition to constructing 'Palestinian-ness' through narratives of shared history and kinship, Palestinians also emphasize their sameness as 'a people' as well as underline

their difference from ‘Others’ through narratives of shared culture and religion. For example, when asked what differentiated Palestinians from ‘Others’, one male youth from Rashidieh camp responded,

Palestinians are an Arabic people who are Muslim. The history of Palestine is Muslim. It has an Islamic history. The Turks left Palestine in 1945. It was the best period for the Palestinians when the Turks occupied Palestine. They were Muslims.

This comment is important because the speaker uses the terms ‘Palestinian’ and ‘Arabic’ interchangeably (see Chapter 7, New Identities). As discussed in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), the term ‘Arab’ is a highly contested one that has to be unpacked within the larger socio-political context of Lebanese society. In Lebanon, the ‘historical origin’ debate has been at the very centre of identity politics among Christian and Muslim Lebanese, who ‘imagine’ themselves to be descendents of the ancient Phoenicians and Arabian conquerors of the Levant, respectively. Therefore, in this context, the interchangeability of ‘Palestinian’ with ‘Arab’ in popular discourse serves to construct a very exclusive imagining of ‘Palestinian’ as ‘Muslim’.

As a result of the increasing ‘Islamicization’ of ‘Palestinian’ society, the majority of young male and female Palestinians in the camps in south Lebanon indicated that, for them, Muslim identity takes precedence over attachments to other subject positions. As one male youth from Rashidieh camp put it,

Before I am Palestinian, I am Muslim and Arabic. I don’t say I am Palestinian because the British divided Palestine into Jordan, Syria and many countries.

Moreover, another female Palestinian youth from the same camp added,

Being Muslim is more important because we are born Muslim and will die Muslim. Being Muslim is more important because Islam is wider than belonging to a country. With Islam, we enter paradise.

These comments are interesting for a couple of reasons. First, they indicate that ‘Muslim’ has been constructed as a subject position which is ‘innate’ and ‘fixed’. In other words, adherence to Islam is not a choice to be taken or an idea to be negotiated, and conversion to another faith is not possible (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). Moreover, Muslim identity differs from national identity in that it does not require land, it cannot be bestowed on individuals by governments, and it cannot be taken away through military force. Thus, Muslim identity is more attractive for many Palestinian youth because it is not as ‘fragile’ as national identity and does not rely on external validation for its realization. In this way, Muslim identity offers Palestinian youth a kind of agency and control over their own lives.

The second interesting point to note about the comments above is that they illustrate how young Palestinians value Muslim identity because it unites them with the global Muslim community and gives them a sense of religious and cultural solidarity with others. Moreover, being part of a global Muslim community is also politically advantageous for Palestinians, as it offers them ‘strength in numbers’ in the context of a nationalist struggle. As one male youth from Al Bas camp explained,

Being Muslim is more important because all Muslims aim to liberate Palestine, but Palestinians are alone. It is the duty for all Muslims to fight for Palestine because of Al Aqsa mosque.

In the Palestinian context, Muslim identity is gendered, and it is the women who are called upon to embody Islamic values and traditions (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). For example, when asked how they showed they were ‘good Palestinians’, many girls said, “from our traditions, our clothes and the *hijab*” (Islamic head

covering worn by females). As one female Palestinian teacher from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

Most women in society like to cover (wear the *hijab*), but some people don't follow this. There are more *hijabs* in the Palestinian society than the Lebanese society. Palestinian society is more conservative than Lebanese society, especially in the camps.

This comment reveals how women's bodies are used to construct the boundaries between Palestinians and 'Others' through the adoption of Islamic dress. Moreover, not only are boundaries demarcated between Muslims and 'Others', difference is constructed through female clothing between Sunni Muslims, who are predominantly Palestinian, and Shi'ite Muslims, who are predominantly Lebanese. Although it is not immediately obvious if a man is Muslim or Christian or Sunni or Shi'ite from his appearance, traditional Muslim women can be instantly recognized by the wearing of the *hijab*. Similarly, traditional Shi'ite women can be instantly recognised by the distinctive style, colour and shape of their *chadour* (black robe).

As discussed here, Palestinian youth are working to construct their identities through shared cultures and discourses of 'Palestinian-ness'. However, the hegemonic nature of identities means that these identities are often being constructed in essentialist terms. Moreover, some identities are being positioned above others (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). In this way, discourses of 'Palestinian-ness' are also working to produce contestations and internal 'Others' in Palestinian society. This will be discussed in the next section.

5.3 Contestations and internal 'Others'

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), everyone has multiple identities which are constructed across different, intersecting and often antagonistic discourses (Hall, 2000). However, when these identities are constructed in essentialist terms,

individuals are forced to choose between membership in different groups. Moreover, as identities are hegemonically ranked, membership in some groups is more advantageous than others. As group membership regulates people's access to resources, information, opportunities and power, membership in particular groups has important implications for the lives of individuals (see Chapter 1, Introduction).

In the Palestinian context, discourses of shared culture and religion have actually worked to produce contestations and internal 'Others'. In Palestinian society, practically speaking, everyone is forced to choose a religious affiliation. Moreover, this identity position is constructed in binary terms. For example, it is not possible to be both a Muslim and a Christian. In this way, the construction of Palestine as Muslim unifies, yet it also excludes. Moreover, it also problematizes notions of 'Palestinian-ness'. For example, Turks, Pakistanis and Iranians are Muslims, but they are not Palestinians or even Arabs. On the other hand, Palestinians may be either Muslim or Christian in faith, among others (see Chapter 3, Literature Review).

As discussed in the previous section, in the camps in Lebanon, Palestine has been 'imagined' as Muslim. However, Palestine has been constructed as Muslim to such an extent that when asked to name 'good Palestinian Christians', many Muslim Palestinian youth could not think of any. In some cases, they assumed that key Christian Palestinian figures, like Hanan Ashrawi and Edward Said (political activists and scholars) were Muslim. Moreover, many Muslim Palestinian youth were even unaware that there were any Christian Palestinians living in their camp. This is partly because the notion of Palestine as Muslim is reinforced in the camps through spatial segregation between communities and the construction of symbolic enclaves (see Chapter 6, Institutions). For example, sacred communities in the camps are spatially bounded through the presence or absence of religious iconography and imagery. As Muslim identity is dominant in Palestinian society, one can easily ascertain when one is in a Muslim neighbourhood through the overwhelming presence of images of Muslim figures, monuments and landscapes. On the other hand, in Christian neighborhoods, 'silences' become significant. As Christians are the minority, there is

not a strong presence of Christian iconography in Christian areas. However, there is a telling absence of Muslim symbolism in those areas. In addition to spatial distancing, ‘Othering’ based on religion is also enacted in the camps through social disengagement, with each religious community turning inward on itself.

The physical and symbolic separation of religious communities in the camps in Lebanon has helped to produce narratives of ignorance about the internal ‘Other’ as well as mistrust. As one Muslim male youth from Al Bas camp said,

I have no idea about Palestinian Christians. I love the Christian religion, but I don’t hear about them. It is like Islam. They help us fight Israel.

The comment made by this youth illustrates a couple of points. First, it signifies that there is little, if any, engagement and interaction between the Muslim and Christian Palestinian communities. Moreover, Christian Palestinians do not have a prominent position in Palestinian social and political life within the camps. Secondly, there is an attempt by the Muslim Palestinian youth to collapse all boundaries of difference between the two communities by suggesting that Christianity is “like Islam”, as ‘the Other’ is merely a reflection of ‘the Subject’. Moreover, the youth makes an explicit assumption that Muslim and Christian Palestinians have the same goal, which is to fight Israel and ‘liberate’ Palestine. As another youth from the same camp went on to elaborate,

Good Christians are those who unite with Muslims against the Israeli occupation.

In contrast to this, the Christian Palestinians that I interviewed were acutely aware of their status as the ‘internal Other’. As the minority religious community, they expressed a strong fear that Palestine was being ‘imagined’ as Muslim. Moreover, they were concerned that this ‘imagining’ of the nation was essentially excluding

them from Palestinian 'citizenship'. One Palestinian male Christian resident in the Lebanese city of Tyre put it this way,

Christianity is a part of my nationality. I don't imagine myself as a citizen without the freedom and rights to be a Christian. The conflict has become bigger than the one between the Jews and Arabs. The conflict between Christians and Muslims influences us to think about ourselves. It is a conflict between lifestyles, thinking and living. It's not enough to have a place in Palestine without freedom to hope and dream and play music. Palestine with restrictions can stay away from me.

This comment illustrates how boundaries of viewpoint and lifestyle have been erected to mark internal difference between the Christian and Muslim Palestinian communities. Moreover, once again, it is the women who have been called upon to mark difference and the boundaries of identity between communities through their bodies and behaviour. As a Christian Palestinian man explained,

Christians are different. We don't expect women to stay segregated from men or stay home at night like the Muslims.

As Palestinian identity is not perceived to be inclusive of them, many Christian Palestinians see emigration to Europe or assimilation into Lebanese society as their only viable options. One Palestinian Christian woman from Al Bas camp explained it like this,

If I have the chance to go to Palestine, I wouldn't go because it will be a Muslim society. I would rather stay here or go abroad to avoid conflict.

By refusing to return to Palestine if she had the opportunity, this woman is contesting the dominant discourse of Palestine as Muslim. At the same time, she is working to reposition the boundaries between Palestinians and 'Others'.

In addition to constructing difference between Christians and Muslims in Palestinian society, difference is also constructed between Muslims based on religious sect. For example, in Palestinian society, boundaries are constructed between ‘authentic’ Palestinian Sunnis and Palestinian Shi’ite ‘Others’. Palestinian refugees from what is known as the ‘seven villages’ in northern Galilee are overwhelmingly Shi’ite, in contrast to the predominately Sunni refugees from other villages in Palestine (see Chapter 2, Context). This has led to an interesting phenomenon, whereby the ‘authenticity’ of ‘Palestinian-ness’ in Lebanon is increasingly being constructed on the basis of sect, with Sunnis being hegemonically ranked above Shi’ite ‘Others’. As one man from Al Mashuq Palestinian gathering put it,

I was raised in Rashidieh camp, and I went to school in a camp and I suffered as a Palestinian; so, I am Palestinian. But, I am not fully accepted in the Palestinian community because I am Shi’ite. I am also not fully accepted in the Lebanese community because I have a Palestinian accent.

Although this man’s family came from Palestine, he is ‘inauthenticated’ as a ‘real’ Palestinian by others in the camp community because of his Shi’ite religious affiliation. On the other hand, his ‘Palestinian’ accent gives him away as being *not* Lebanese. In other words, the construction of ‘Palestinian-ness’ as Sunni in binary terms has left him excluded by both Palestinian Sunni as well as Lebanese Shi’ite communities. Therefore, as if to defend his identity as a ‘true’ ‘Palestinian’, he reverts to offering his shared suffering with other Palestinians in the camp as proof of his ‘authentic Palestinian-ness’.

Ironically, it is this suffering which has produced contestations around notions of ‘Palestinian-ness’ for some young Palestinians. As one young woman from Rashidieh camp explains,

I don't like being Palestinian. I sometimes wonder why I have to live as a Palestinian. Life is not easy. I say that I am Palestinian, but these are only words. I don't feel it. I have never been there. It is only in my imagination. Why do I have to suffer for a country I don't know. Most of the young people feel this. I shouldn't say this, but it is true.

While many older Palestinians hold on to their suffering as a boundary marker between Palestinians and 'Others', many younger Palestinians are eager to 'blur' these boundaries in order to facilitate their integration into Lebanese society. In the Palestinian context, 'being Lebanese' is desirable for youth because it is a pragmatic way to achieve their human rights. For example, when asked if she would like to retain Palestinian 'citizenship' or obtain Lebanese citizenship if it were offered to her, another young woman from Al Mashuq gathering said this,

My father feels he is Palestinian but I feel that I am Lebanese. I don't care about Palestine. It's not my life. I didn't see Palestine. I would take Lebanese citizenship to become free and to get my rights.

As these comments illustrate, Palestinian identity is unstable, and the boundaries of 'Palestinian-ness' are continually being repositioned in relation to various points of reference. Moreover, these identities are in the constant process of being negotiated and accommodated by Palestinian youth (Hall, 1996). This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 7, New Identities.

5.4 Overview

This discussion of Palestinian youth has highlighted the ways in which Palestinian identity is symbolically and socially marked by difference. In some ways, difference is constructed between Palestinians and external 'Others' through the erection of physical and structural boundaries between communities. At other times, Palestinians themselves work to construct difference through shared discourses of 'Palestinian-

ness'. However, these discourses have also produced contestations and worked to construct internal 'Others'.

I have argued that although identity is marked by difference, the construction of boundaries between groups is ultimately problematic. On one hand, the assertion of difference attempts to erase similarities between groups. For example, in Palestinian narrative, all Lebanese are constructed as 'Other' under the umbrella of national identity. However, this negates the numerous cultural similarities that Palestinians and Lebanese share as the product of shared history and lived experience in south Lebanon. On the other hand, identities are not unified, and there are contradictions within them which have to be negotiated. For example, the construction of Palestine as Muslim has produced a 'Christian Other' in Palestinian society. Moreover, the specific construction of 'Palestinian-ness' as Sunni has produced contestations among Palestinian Shi'ites. In addition to this, there are generational differences in the degree to which, and how, Palestinian identity is taken up and performed in Palestinian society.

In the next chapter, I narrow the focus and use empirical data to analyze how Palestinians appropriate and articulate the discursive resources of identity in everyday life within the camps through both formal and non-formal institutions in Palestinian society.

Chapter 6 – Institutions

In the previous chapter (Chapter 5, Boundaries), I used empirical data to undertake a macro-level analysis of how Palestinian youth (male and female) understand and perform their identities in refugee camps in Lebanon. In this chapter, I narrow the focus and use empirical data to undertake a micro-level analysis of how the discursive resources of Palestinian identity are appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps in the context of statelessness (research question 2). I do this through an examination of how institutions such as the school, the family, political organizations, the media, and religious institutions all function as sites of Palestinian identity production and performance. Within this discussion, I highlight the ways in which Palestine and Palestinian identities are culturally, socially and symbolically produced and regulated in Palestinian society through the use of symbolic systems, the performance of ritual and embodiment (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). I then examine how these processes are also implicated in the production of internal ‘Others’. I argue that there are vast challenges and complexities entailed in the process of trying to represent the diversity of the Palestinian experience through a single, hegemonic identity. In other words, the concept of ‘authenticity’ is highly problematic in the Palestinian context, and it challenges the very essence of Palestinian nationalist ‘imagining’.

6.1 Discourses of ‘Palestinian-ness’ through institutions

As was discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 3), nations are not pre-formed, ‘natural’ entities. Rather, they are produced and reproduced culturally, socially and symbolically through institutions. The ‘knowledge’ that is produced in and through these institutions is made to look stable, neutral and natural through culture. In this way, institutional regimes, networks and processes regulate and discipline identities in formal and informal life (Foucault, 1977).

In most countries, it is state institutions that are mandated with constructing and reproducing the nation (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). However, as a stateless population living in exile in Lebanon, Palestinians lack state institutions. Rather, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Context), UNRWA is the primary social service provider for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Although the mandate of UNRWA is to provide services for Palestinian refugees, the organization itself is not a Palestinian one. Rather, it is governed and run by the United Nations. Therefore, in order for Palestinians to construct Palestine and a distinct Palestinian identity, they must exercise agency and appropriate and articulate the discursive resources of identity in everyday life within the camps. They do this through both formal and non-formal institutions in Palestinian society (see Chapter 3, Literature Review).

One of the first PLA interview activities I conducted with the youth in each camp was to ask them to map their community and indicate which places they went to learn about Palestine (see Chapter 4, Methodology). In the next section, I discuss the institutions in the camps that the young people identified as important learning sites about the nation, namely the school, the family, political organizations, the media and religious institutions. I then analyze how institutional processes and practices work to produce shared cultures and discourses of ‘Palestinian-ness’ in the context of refugee camps in south Lebanon.

Acknowledging that institutions do not act alone in constructing meaning, and that symbols accumulate meanings inter-textually across a wide variety of institutions (Hall, 1996), I separate out institutions here merely as an organizing structure for this chapter.

The school

As was discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 3), in modern nation-states, schools are charged with the production and reproduction of the nation. However, in the Palestinian case, UNRWA is the primary education provider and the only unifying institution for Palestinian refugees. UNRWA’s stated objective is to give

Palestine refugees a basic education comparable to that provided in host government schools, so that they are on an equal footing in terms of gaining access to educational and employment opportunities (UNRWA, 2005). Consequently, under agreements made with the ‘host’ authorities, UNRWA has to use the curricula and textbooks of the countries/territories where it operates, and students sit for national exams at each stage of the education cycle. As a result of this agreement, Palestinians in Lebanon follow the Lebanese curriculum in UNRWA schools and are assessed through Lebanese national exams (UNRWA, 2007) (see Chapter 2, Context).

In practice, this means that Palestinians in Lebanon, as in all ‘host’ countries, have no input into what they learn or how they are assessed. Moreover, they are invisible in the curriculum. As schools are a primary institutional site for identity construction and regulation among young people, this has profound consequences for the production and maintenance of a distinct Palestinian national identity. As one UNRWA Head Teacher from Al Bas camp put it,

There is no Palestinian content in the curriculum. UNRWA doesn’t care about teaching Palestinian children about their identity. In the Civics class, Palestinians learn how to be Lebanese.

From the perspective of many UNRWA teachers, the omission of Palestine and Palestinians from the national curriculum is a form of ‘cultural genocide’ and a deliberate attempt to get rid of the “Palestinian problem”. One Deputy Head Teacher from Burj A-Shemali camp explained it this way,

UNRWA’s policy was to remove the book about Palestine. I feel sad about it. This is an intentional policy to get rid of the ‘Palestinian problem’ by using local curriculum in the different host countries. Palestinians cannot be given jobs in Lebanon except through UNRWA, so it doesn’t make sense that UNRWA uses the local curriculum to facilitate integration into Lebanese society. This is a deliberate attempt by other Arab governments, the US, the

Israelis and the UN, which is run by the Americans, to get rid of the ‘Palestinian problem’ to make Palestinian students forget their identity and assimilate into host countries.

Although there is no official curriculum on Palestine in UNRWA schools, and there is no official communication or cooperation with the Palestinian Authority on Education, motivated UNRWA teachers can still theoretically take it upon themselves to teach their students about Palestine and being Palestinian in an unofficial capacity. However, there are several barriers to the achievement of this goal. As one UNRWA teacher from Al Qasmieh gathering explained,

We must sign an official document with UNRWA saying we will not talk about Palestine in the class. If we do not sign this document, we are fired.

An UNRWA school inspector added that it was also not possible to introduce Palestine into class lessons because of a lack of training and scheduling constraints:

There is no special teacher training on Palestinian issues. Not all teachers can be depended upon to introduce these subjects or convey accurate information. This requires a very skilled and creative teacher. Teachers don’t have time to teach something extra that is not examinable.

In spite of these challenges, many motivated teachers creatively integrate Palestine and Palestinian themes into their lessons and daily activities. Often, this takes the form of the performance of rituals, such as the commemoration of special ‘national’ days and the singing of the ‘national anthem’ (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). As one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

Every morning we say the Palestinian national anthem, and in the last year, there was special periods for the history of Palestine, and we make a memorial for Palestinian National Day. The UNRWA curriculum doesn’t include

anything about Palestine, but most teachers care about Palestine because they are Palestinian.

For Palestinian young people, performance of these rituals constructs and reinforces their distinctive 'Palestinian-ness'. For example, through regular and repeated performance of the 'Palestinian national anthem', Palestinian young people learn that suffering, steadfastness and resistance are signifiers of Palestinian identity. In a similar way, the annual commemoration of 'Palestinian Independence Day' on November 15 reinforces for Palestinian youth their 'Palestinian-ness' and the 'naturalness' of Palestinian 'nationhood'. Moreover, the performance of rituals also works to construct boundaries between Palestinians and 'Others' (see Chapter 5, Boundaries). For example, through the annual commemoration of *Al Nakba* on the anniversary of 'Israeli Independence Day', difference is emphasized between Palestinians and Israelis.

In addition to the performance of rituals, a sense of shared 'Palestinian-ness' is produced and reproduced in schools through the construction of 'Palestinian' symbols. These symbols can be found in all classrooms in UNRWA schools, often through posters distributed by political organizations. Moreover, these symbols are also displayed on the walls of school courtyards, officially in the form of murals, and unofficially in the form of graffiti. In the next section, I discuss the symbols of shared 'Palestinian-ness' that I repeatedly observed in UNRWA schools. Moreover, these symbols were consistently and repeatedly reproduced by the young people in PLA activities in response to requests to draw 'Palestine' (see Chapter 4, Methodology).

One important symbol which appears frequently in schools and is used to unite Palestinian young people in a shared 'imagining' of the nation is the 'national flag'. The 'Palestinian flag' is an adaptation of the flag designed for the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire in 1916. On November 15, 1988, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) adopted the current flag as the 'national flag' of the 'State of

Palestine' (Abdul-Hadi, 1986). For Palestinians, the colors of the flag have been made to symbolically embody the nation. As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

The red colour represents the colour of blood, the black colour represents the agony the Palestinian people suffered, the white colour represents the purity and the green colour represents paradise. After our life on earth, we can go to paradise.

In other words, the Palestinian flag represents the essence of 'imagined' 'Palestinian-ness': suffering, blamelessness, sacrifice and Islam. As the Palestinian flag has been adopted as a 'national' symbol in the absence of a true state, it has become a symbolic means of constructing the nation of Palestine in public consciousness. Moreover, the flag has become a text through which Palestinian national identity is shaped and kept alive in the imagination of young people who have never seen Palestine. As it is consistently and repeatedly displayed across UNRWA public institutions, such as schools, libraries and hospitals to mark Palestinian 'territory', the existence of Palestine as a nation-state is validated and naturalized in the popular imagination.

Another symbol which is frequently used to produce shared cultures and discourses of 'Palestinian-ness' in the camps, and particularly through schools, is the 'map of Palestine'. However, 'the map of Palestine' works to construct a very specific 'imagining' of the nation. For example, when asked to draw 'Palestine', without exception, all the young people in all the camps drew the map of present-day 'Israel', as opposed to the UN designated 'Occupied Palestinian Territories' (the West Bank and Gaza). As one male Palestinian youth from Rashidieh camp said,

In international maps, there is no name for our country. They write, 'Israel'.

The youth's construction of the land of Palestine as present-day Israel is most likely because virtually all of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon originally hail from the

northern Galilee region of Palestine (see Chapter 2, Context). Therefore, the ‘reduced’ map of Palestine showing only the West Bank and Gaza, which is often found in Western political discourse, is not inclusive of their ‘homelands’. This mergence of national politics with space is significant as the map of Palestine drawn by the youth discursively constructs Palestinians as ‘all people who lost homes and landholdings to the ‘Israelis’ in *Al Nakba* and afterward’ (Christie, 1998). This is in contrast to Israeli narratives which construct Palestinians as only those individuals resident in the West Bank or Gaza (Palestinians resident in ‘Israel proper’ have been granted ‘Israeli citizenship’ and are legally and socially considered to be ‘Israeli Arabs’). In this way, the map of Palestine drawn by the youth symbolizes the ‘loss’ that all Palestinians experienced during *Al Nakba*. At the same time, it unifies individuals of diverse religions and political affiliations into one Palestinian nation.

Within the map of Palestine, other specific symbols of Palestinian collective ‘loss’ are reproduced in schools and other institutions in Palestinian society. For example, ‘keys to homes in Palestine’ act as a powerful symbolic reminder of the Palestinian people’s experience of exile. As many Palestinians left their homes in a state of haste, believing they would soon return, they took their house keys with them. This symbol is also reinforced in the home, as many Palestinian elders still keep the keys to their homes in Palestine, even though these homes have been destroyed or are now occupied by someone else. In this way, these keys have come to symbolically represent Palestinians’ continued connection with the land of Palestine and their right to return to it.

Another important symbol of Palestine frequently reproduced in schools is that of ‘blood’. The images displayed in and around schools often contain graphic depictions of violence against Palestinians and Palestinian suffering, which involves the shedding of Palestinian blood. Moreover, these symbols are often reproduced by the young people themselves. For example, when asked to draw what Palestine meant to them, many youth drew the map of present-day Israel with a dagger piercing

its heart and blood pouring out from the soil. As one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained of his drawing,

This represents the heart of Palestine. By our suffering, we protect our heart. Palestine will come back to her lover.

This comment is interesting because this youth has reproduced the metaphor of the land of Palestine as a female body which is being ‘raped’ by the Israeli occupiers (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). As the ‘violation’ of a woman’s body becomes “a violation of national boundaries, a violation of national autonomy and national sovereignty”, the Palestinian patriot (lover) must shed his blood to ‘liberate’ Palestine and restore life to the nation (Mayer, 2000, p. 18). In this way, this metaphor encourages young Palestinian men to become appropriately gendered as ‘masculine’ through their performance as ‘protectors’ and ‘defenders’ of women/the nation. Moreover, it encourages young Palestinian girls to be ‘worthy’ of protection by maintaining the ‘sanctity’ and ‘purity’ of their bodies (see Chapter 3, Literature Review).

The symbols of Palestine and ‘Palestinian-ness’ discussed here are not just passively displayed on school buildings and other institutions in the camps. Rather, they are actively performed by Palestinian young people. For example, young people are invited to carry the Palestinian flag in their hands when they participate in school assemblies, parades and flag-hoisting ceremonies. Moreover, they are encouraged to reproduce it through school activities, such as art, drama, music and poetry. The Palestinian flag is also inscribed on young Palestinian bodies through the performance of fashion. Although Palestinian students are required to wear an official school uniform in UNRWA schools, they are allowed, and in some cases even encouraged, to embellish and accessorize it with jewellery, trinkets and fabrics embossed with ‘Palestinian colours’. In this way, young Palestinian bodies are symbolically marked with the Palestinian ‘national’ flag. This works both to mark

sameness with members of ‘their’ collectivity as well as to construct boundaries between themselves and ‘Others’.

In addition to visual symbols, language is also used in UNRWA schools as a symbolic mechanism to produce and regulate shared consciousness of ‘Palestinian-ness’. For example, UNRWA schools in the camps in south Lebanon bear the names of Palestinian villages where massacres against Palestinians occurred, such as *Deir Yassine* (Boy’s elementary school in Al Bas camp), *AShajarah* (Boy’s middle school in Al Bas camp), *Bab Alwad* (Girls’ elementary school in Burj A-Shemali camp) and *Al Quds* (High School in Rashidieh camp). Through the naming of schools in this way, ‘wounds’ against the Palestinian community are kept open and fresh, and Palestinian ‘memories’ of collective suffering are inscribed in the consciousness of young people. Moreover, through this practice, Palestinian youth are ever reminded of their ‘origins’ in Palestine.

It is also within schools that the repeated usage of certain language by school administrators, teachers and students works to construct shared notions of Palestinian ‘history’. For example, the regular use of the term *Al Nakba* to describe the ‘birth’ of Israel in classrooms and school grounds reconstructs the seemingly happy event into an occasion for Palestinian ‘national’ mourning. Similarly, the replacement of the name ‘Israel’ with ‘Occupied Palestine’ in classroom discourse, learning materials and maps negates the existence of the State of Israel for both the speaker and the listener and inscribes the injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people in students’ consciousness. The use of language also offers the Palestinian ‘subaltern’ an opportunity to ‘fight back’ and challenge dominant discourses or construct new ones (Spivak, 1995). For example, the regular use of terms such as ‘martyr’, ‘resistance fighter’ and ‘liberation movement’ in school discourse to describe the conflict with Israel challenges the dominance of American/Israeli discourse on ‘terrorism’.

In addition to the school, Palestinians also exercise agency and work to produce shared notions of ‘Palestinian-ness’ through other non-formal institutions in

Palestinian society. The section below will discuss how shared Palestinian cultures and discourses are constructed through the family, political organisations, the media and religious institutions in Palestinian society.

The Family

In interviews and PLA activities, Palestinian youth in all camps identified ‘the family’ as the most important institution for learning about Palestine and being Palestinian in their society. The family was identified as a particularly important site of learning for Palestinian girls as, culturally, they are not permitted to move freely in public places constructed as ‘male’, such as the street, the coffee shop, the internet café, the sports field and the mosque (see Chapter 2, Context). Moreover, the Palestinian cultural association of females with the ‘private sphere’, and the largely female practice of visiting the homes of relatives and neighbours, means that the home becomes the most significant site for identity construction amongst girls and women. As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

Girls go to school and stay at home and the Student Office and community clubs. There is no place that girls can go. The internet café is for boys. There is no mosque for girls. Girls don’t go on the street. Boys go to school, home, the internet, the Student Office, the mosque, community clubs, *Kurami* club. They have more choices.

Within the institutional site of the family, Palestinian women become the key actors in the ideological reproduction and transmission of the community’s culture and values. Under patriarchal relations, women are the main socialisers of children, and in their roles as ‘mothers’, women are largely responsible for inculcating beliefs, behaviours and loyalties in their children. In the Palestinian context, this cultural transmission includes teaching children the nation’s symbols, rituals, and myths (Yuval-Davis, 1997). As one male youth from Rashidieh camp put it,

Mothers should teach Palestinian culture, because in our tradition, the mother is nearer to her children than the father, and she spends most of her time in the house, and so the children stay with her...From when I drank milk from my mother, I learned I was Palestinian.

In the family, Palestinian young people learn about ‘typical’ Palestinian ethnic symbols and Palestinian cultural distinctiveness (Eriksen, 1993). One example of this is how the ‘traditional’ ‘Palestinian’ dance called *debke* is learned by all Palestinian young people in the home and is regularly performed at family gatherings, such as weddings. *Debke* is considered to be the ‘national’ dance of Palestine and is fraught with symbolic nationalist meaning. As *debke* dancers link arms in solidarity, they rhythmically stomp their feet, emphasizing their connection to the land. However, as *debke* is actually a shared custom amongst other countries of the Levant, Palestinian parents and older relatives emphasize slight variations in dance steps to differentiate Palestinian *debke* from Lebanese *debke* and to assure its ‘authenticity’ as a distinctively Palestinian cultural artifact.

In a similar way, as Palestinian parents teach their children the Arabic language in the home, they emphasize minor variations in accent to differentiate Palestinian Arabic from Lebanese Arabic. For example, older Palestinians often tell the story of how Lebanese soldiers used the different pronunciation of ‘tomato’ (*‘banadora’* in Palestinian dialect, and *‘banadura’* in Lebanese dialect) to differentiate between the two ‘peoples’. I also encountered the importance of this linguistic difference in my interactions with Palestinians/Lebanese inside and outside of the camps. For example, when I spoke Arabic with Palestinians in the camps, residents frequently commented that my accent or choice of vocabulary was “Shi’ite” (Shi’ite Lebanese). Moreover, some Palestinians even went so far as to ‘correct’ my Lebanese pronunciation or choice of expressions by teaching me to speak ‘Palestinian’. On the other hand, when speaking to individuals in the Lebanese city of Tyre, I was frequently told that my Arabic was “too Palestinian”. In other words, while Lebanese and Palestinian Arabic are interchangeable for me as an ‘outsider’, for the two

communities, language is an important boundary marker for the nation (Rassool, 2007).

It is also in the home that Palestinian national distinctiveness is constructed through local cuisine. As discussed in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, a dish called *bisara* has been reified as a symbol of 'Palestinian-ness', and Palestinians reproduce the nation whenever they prepare and eat it. Moreover, small differences in food preparation between the Palestinian and Lebanese communities are accentuated and given meaning. For example, when asked what differentiated Palestinians from Lebanese, one Palestinian youth responded, "We have better falafel". Again, as an 'outsider', the difference between the two 'national' dishes was not evident to me, although this difference was ascribed important meaning by the two communities.

It is also within the family that males and females learn to perform shared gendered 'scripts' of Palestinian identity. As one Palestinian male youth from Al Bas camp observed,

A Palestinian man should work to get a good income, to get married and have a family, to find a beautiful young wife to have beautiful babies. A Palestinian woman should cook, take care of the house, raise kids to have secondary education and to teach the kids. Women have limited expectations to get a man to support them as a father, not as a lover. They are interested in someone who will support the kids. The wife should be much younger, able to deliver babies, very beautiful and to be always under her husband's control.

By observing the different expectations and privileges that are accorded to males and females in the family, Palestinian young people learn to perform gendered representations of 'Palestinian-ness' from an early age. For example, in the home, Palestinian girls learn that they bear the burden of representation for the collective identity and are called upon to embody such ideals as 'tradition', 'culture' and

‘honour’ (Yuval-Davis, 1997) (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). In practical terms, this means that Palestinian women’s bodies are highly regulated by family members (both male and female), and their movements and behaviours are subject to public surveillance and control. As one Palestinian boy in Rashidieh camp explained,

If her husband is dead, a good Palestinian woman doesn’t marry again. She should just hug her children.

In addition, it is in the home that Palestinian females are made to symbolize the future of Palestine through the biological reproductive capabilities of their bodies. From an early age, Palestinian girls learn that they are expected to have many children for Palestine. As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

A good Palestinian woman has children for Palestine. In my opinion, it is necessary to have children, so the children will grow up and fight for Palestine. If there are no children, Palestine ends.

As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), the prominence placed on childbearing within the nationalist discourse means that women are confined to the realm of ‘heteronormativity’, through which marriage becomes compulsory. In the family, Palestinian young people learn the boundaries of gender relations in specific contexts and the boundaries of ‘Palestinian sexualities’ through the enactment upon them of both symbolic and physical violence. In this way, ‘Other’ configurations of gender and sexuality are regulated and ostracized, and inequality between males and females is made to appear ‘natural’ and ‘stable’ (Butler, 1990).

Political Organizations

Outside the family, the youth identified political organizations and their institutions as the most important sites of identity construction for Palestinian young people, especially for males. As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

The Student Office is the most important source of information about Palestine. It is part of the political organization. It is for Fatah. Hamas also have an office and *Al Jihad Al Islami* (Islamic Jihad) also. All the organizations have an office. At the Student Office, we learn many things. First of all, we learn about the history, and about our rights, and how to behave as Palestinian people and live beside the Lebanese people. We have formal sessions, posters and meetings.

As this comment illustrates, Palestinian political organizations mimic the formal structures and functions of the state. Each political organization constructs a symbolic system to represent itself and its vision of Palestine and Palestinian identity. These symbols of Palestine are then produced and reproduced through the performance of ‘nationalist’ rites and ceremonies through institutions in Palestinian society. For instance, in Burj A-Shemali camp, I attended a Fatah (PLO) youth meeting in a community centre where, at its outset, all the youth were instructed to stand up, uniformly raise their arms in salute and pledge eternal allegiance to the flags of both Palestine and the Fatah political organization. This mimics the way that ‘citizens’ are called upon to pledge allegiance to the state through the performance of nationalized ritual. Moreover, it also mimics the way that citizens are required to assimilate within the dominant nationalist discourse.

Because political organizations are trusted and respected in Palestinian society, their rules, processes and practices are largely unquestioned and taken-for-granted by young people. As these organizations define what is ‘normal’, they are inscribed in relations of power. As one female Palestinian youth from Burj A-Shemali camp put it,

The political organization gives us true news. Not everything you see on TV is true. The organization tells us how to behave as Palestinian people. For example, if a Lebanese person saw on TV a certain event about Palestine, then they told us, what you do and how you behave and what you say? Not

everything you heard from the TV is correct, so the political organizations give us the right way and how to behave.

As was discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 3), political discourse often constructs specific gendered representations of the nation. For example, in nationalist discourse, the construction of 'masculinity' is often symbolically linked with the construction of the nation. In the Palestinian context, political discourse produces shared notions of male 'Palestinian-ness' through the construction of Palestinian symbols of 'masculinity'.

Certainly the male figure who most embodies Palestine for all the youth in the camps is Yasser Arafat, and in virtually all Palestinian institutions and homes, Arafat's photo is enlarged, framed and displayed in a prominent position, as if to be the symbolic focal point for Palestinian national consciousness.

During his lifetime, Arafat founded and acted as Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the President of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and leader of the Fatah political party until his death in 2004 (Rubin and Rubin, 2003). During most of this time, Arafat remained single and proclaimed himself to be 'married' to Palestine and the cause of 'national liberation'. In this way, Arafat symbolically became the 'father of the nation'. In this role, Arafat was frequently photographed with the poor, the infirm, the young and the aged, as if to be 'all things to all people'. As one male youth from Rashidieh camp put it,

He is like my father. I love him. We can't find as him. He spent his life working for his country. He worked in policy and in the military. He talked internationally. He was a normal person who spent time with his children and in hospitals. All his life, he wanted to liberate Palestine and let the refugees return. He only talked about Palestine. He gave everything for the Palestinian people. He showed the people what is Palestine.

Moreover, in his role as ‘spiritual leader of the nation’, Arafat took on the *kunya* (honorific name) of Abu Ammar (father of Ammar), even though he never actually had a son named Ammar. This designation helped to construct a direct symbolic linkage between himself and Ammar ibn Yasser (Ammar, son of Yasser), a companion of (the Prophet) Mohammed and a prominent figure in Arab history, thereby legitimatizing his position as a leader for both Sunni and Shi’ite Palestinian Muslims. Although Arafat himself was Sunni Muslim, when he finally married in his later years, he married a Palestinian Christian and called upon both Muslims and Christians to fight to liberate their respective ‘holy sites’ in Palestine (Rubin and Rubin, 2003). In this way, the symbol and ‘personality cult’ of Arafat works to construct a shared notion of ‘Palestinian-ness’ and to unify diverse communities under the banner of the nation. As one male Muslim Palestinian youth from Rashidieh camp explained,

Arafat said that Palestine is for Muslims and Christians. He said that we must continue the struggle until a Palestinian girl raises her Palestinian flag in all mosques and churches. He also told us not to forget our Muslim and Christian holy places like Al Aqsa mosque and the Church of the Nativity.

Another Christian Palestinian man from Al Bas camp added,

Arafat has been connected to Palestine for over 40 years. All of us love him. If he was alive, Hamas would not have dared to do what they are doing now in Gaza.

The symbolic figure of Arafat also helps to unite Palestinians in their attachment to Jerusalem as both the historical capital of Palestine as well as the capital of a future Palestinian state. Although he was born in Cairo, Arafat identified himself as being a ‘native’ of Jerusalem. Moreover, his attachment to the city continued even after death. Fearing the symbolic appropriation of Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state, the Israeli authorities refused to allow Arafat to be buried in

Jerusalem. Consequently, Arafat was buried in Ramallah in a concrete block filled with soil brought in from Jerusalem for the occasion, with hopes that he would someday be able to be buried in Jerusalem, itself (The Independent, 2004).

Arafat not only took on symbols of Palestine, he came to embody Palestine himself. In life, Arafat always adorned his body with symbols of 'Palestinian resistance', such as military fatigues, a pistol and a *kofiya* (black and white checked headscarf) (Rubin and Rubin, 2003). Therefore, by emulating their 'idol' Arafat, young male Palestinian bodies are shaped into hyper-masculine 'resistance fighters'. As they adopt military dress, postures of aggression, the carrying of weapons and the glorification of 'martyrdom' for the nation, Palestinian young men perform Palestine in the camps in Lebanon. As a young man from Rashidieh camp explained,

My father wants me only to work and study, but I want to do something else.
My father wants me to fight for Palestine through Education, but I want to
fight Israel with Fatah.

In addition to constructing hegemonic notions of Palestinian 'masculinity', Palestinian political organizations and their institutions also help to construct shared notions of Palestinian 'femininity'. As a frequently seen poster in the camps reads, "Women are our light until the liberation of Palestine." Through political discourse, Palestinian young women are called upon to be the 'light' of 'the nation' by guarding the sanctity of their bodies (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), in practice, this means that women's dress, movements and bodies are subject to community 'surveillance' and are 'disciplined' through both symbolic and physical violence. Moreover, women, as 'lights of the nation', also become the 'transmitters' of Palestinian values and traditions to the younger generation.

Palestinian political discourse also helps to construct shared notions of 'appropriate' male and female 'citizenship'. For example, political organizations appropriate and

articulate naturalist discourses of the 'innate' qualities of males and females to construct and regulate gender inequalities in decision-making and political participation. Moreover, these inequalities are posited as the 'natural' consequence of women's 'weak' and 'unstable' bodies. As one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp put it,

Women cannot be leaders at the high levels, just the medium and the low levels. They don't give her all the authority. If she is a leader, she must be controlled by one who is greater than her, who is a man. She might fall in love with the enemy.

A female youth from the same camp went on to elaborate,

Girls can't be president because they think of their emotions more than their minds. The mind of a man is larger than the mind of a woman. According to the Palestinian issue and struggle, that is impossible. This is different from any other country. According to the struggle between the Palestinian and Israeli people, if a woman were in the place of a man, that is impossible because she is not tough.

In other words, through political discourse, males are discursively constructed as 'biologically stronger' and 'more rationale' than females; whereas, females are constructed as 'innately more fragile' and 'more emotional' than males. The logical outcome of this train of thought is that women cannot be trusted in positions of leadership because of their 'inherent' weaknesses. Moreover, the 'urgency' and 'uniqueness' of the Palestinian nationalist struggle does not support women's active participation in the 'public sphere'. In this way, political discourse works to construct Palestinian females as 'secondary' and restricts and contains their goals and aspirations for the future. This will be discussed further in Chapter 7, New Identities.

The Media

Another ‘institution’ identified by the youth as an important discursive space through which they construct shared notions of ‘Palestinian-ness’ is the media. As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), political organizations often use graphic media, such as posters, banners, flyers and graffiti in order to produce and reproduce shared symbols of ‘Palestinian-ness’. Streets and institutions within the camps are lined with this graphic media, as are other discursive sites, such as T-shirts and notebooks.

In addition to graphic media, electronic media is also used to construct shared notions of ‘Palestinian-ness’. For many Palestinians, Western media is largely discounted as an accurate source of information, and its ‘biased’ coverage of the ‘Palestinian crisis’ is largely held to blame for the global political inertia surrounding the enforcement of UN Security Council Resolutions requiring Israel to withdraw from occupied territory. Therefore, Palestinian political organizations have appropriated the media as a means of constructing and regulating Palestinian identities.

In the camps, TV is the most important medium through which symbolic systems and notions of ‘Palestinian-ness’ are produced and reproduced by the political organizations. As mentioned in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), Palestinian homes receive Palestinian satellite and local TV stations, such as *Al Quds*, *Filastine*, *Al Aqsa* and *Al Barak*. It is through these TV channels that Palestinian youth actively view political speeches, news broadcasts, documentaries and “learn how to sacrifice (oneself) for Palestine”. Moreover, television ‘fillers’, combining war footage and symbolic imagery with music soundtracks to honour ‘martyrs’, are broadcast regularly and are consumed by the viewing public in an almost subconscious manner. Through the images broadcast on TV, new shared symbols of Palestine have been created for Palestinian youth. One such example is that of Mohamed Durra, the young Palestinian boy who was shot dead in his father’s arms by Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip. As one young Palestinian male from Al Bas camp exclaimed,

Mohamed Durra was killed in his father’s arms with his father crying ‘help please!’

Mohamed's death was captured on film and repeatedly broadcast on TV stations throughout the Arab world to demonstrate the unjust suffering of the Palestinians under the 'barbarous' Israeli occupation. Although just a boy in life, in death, Mohamed Durra became transformed and objectified by the media as a shared 'national' symbol of Palestinian suffering for Palestinians throughout the diaspora.

For young males, another popular medium for learning about Palestine is the internet. Websites operated by political organizations, such as *Al Aatesam* (Fatah), Islamic organizations, such as *Al Aqsa Islam* and *Islam Way*, and videos posted on *YouTube* teach them about Palestinian history, geography, current events, the suffering of Palestinians and "how to hate Israel". Moreover, through search engines, such as *Google*, web mail providers, such as *MSN Messenger*, *Hotmail* and *Yahoo* and social networking sites, such as *Facebook*, Palestinian youth in Lebanon are able to chat with other Palestinian youth on-line. In the absence of road and telephone links between Lebanon and Palestine, and no right of return for refugees, the internet has transcended geo-political borders and enabled Palestinian youth throughout the diaspora to communicate with one another and with Palestinians in 'the homeland' through the power of technology. In this way, a sort of 'cyber nation' has been created through which shared symbolic systems of nationhood and 'Palestinian-ness' are produced, consumed and regulated through global media and telecommunications (see chapter 3, Literature Review).

Religious Institutions

The final discursive site that the youth identified as an important space where they go to learn about Palestine is religious institutions. For many male Muslim youth, the mosque is an important institutional site for learning about Palestine and being Palestinian. As one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

From the mosque, we have religious lessons. After praying, we talk in small circles about what happened in Palestine, the wars, the political consciousness

and the suffering of the Palestinian people, and if something happens they talk about it.

Moreover, it is through religious discourse, ritual and performance that many Muslim youth understand and interpret the Palestinian nationalist struggle. As one male youth from Al Bas camp explained,

The Qu'ran says that Palestine is occupied by the Jews, and Muslims must liberate it in different ways. It is the duty of all Muslims to liberate Al Aqsa mosque.

Because of the 'imagining' of Palestine as Muslim, the mosque plays a key role in the construction and regulation of Palestinian nationalist discourse. Reciprocally, the discursive construction of the mosque as an important symbol of Palestine reinforces Palestinian identity as Muslim. As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), the landscape in the camps has largely been symbolically 'Islamicized'. As Palestinian youth pass through the camp gates or walk down a street in the camp, they are bombarded with Islamic iconography. Moreover, the frequently seen Islamic symbol of Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem discursively draws them 'back' to the 'homeland'. In addition to the mosque, Islamic discourse is also reproduced intertextually through a wide variety of other institutions in Palestinian society. As Article Fifteen of the 1988 Hamas Covenant states:

...It is necessary that scientists, educators and teachers, information and media people, as well as the educated masses, especially the youth and sheikhs of the Islamic movements, take part in the operation of the Islamic 'awakening' (of the masses)...

In this way, other institutions in the camps in Lebanon, such as political organisations, the school, the media and the family are also called upon to function as sites of Muslim identity production and performance. As Palestine is being

constructed as Muslim through multiple institutional sites in Palestinian society, this ‘knowledge’ is legitimated and made to appear ‘factual’, ‘stable’, ‘neutral’ and ‘natural’ to Palestinian young people in the camps (Foucault, 1977).

As described above, shared cultures and discourses of ‘Palestinian-ness’ are being produced and reproduced in and through multiple institutional sites in Palestinian society. This is being accomplished through the use of symbolic systems, the performance of ritual and embodiment. However, institutional processes and practices are also producing contestations. For example, symbols of national identity are often contested by different religious and political groups. Moreover, the discourse of gender cuts across these other discourses to construct new identities. In this way, institutional processes and practices are also constructing narratives of the internal ‘Other’ in Palestinian society. This will be discussed in the next section in relation to specific institutions in Palestinian society.

6.2 Contestations and internal ‘Others’

The school

As previously mentioned, despite the fact that there is no official curriculum on Palestine in UNRWA schools, the school is an important institutional site for ideological production and reproduction of the nation. However, in addition to producing shared notions of ‘Palestinian-ness’, the narratives produced in and through schools also produce contestations and construct difference between Palestinians. Part of how the school helps to construct fragmented Palestinian identities is through UNRWA’s policy of using the school curriculum of each of the ‘host’ countries where Palestinians are exiled (see Chapter 2, Context). As one UNRWA teacher from Al Qasmieh gathering said,

Because every country where Palestinian refugees are present uses their own curriculum, this leads to a lack of unity amongst the Palestinian people and a

weak identity. The division of school curriculum keeps Palestinians divided and weak.

Those teachers who want to teach about Palestine in an unofficial capacity in the classroom find they must do so without the aid of approved teaching and learning materials. Consequently, many teachers use the 'learning materials' that are distributed by the political organizations in order to supplement their lessons. As one UNRWA teacher from Al Bas camp put it,

Teachers who are not afraid can teach about Palestine. There is no standardization of materials in the classroom. The ones that are used are distributed by the political organizations. The political organizations don't teach them about the history of Palestine but only the principles of the political organization. The schools are becoming politicized, and this is dangerous.

A young man from Rashidieh camp went on to elaborate,

In school, they don't have books or lessons on Palestine, but my teacher, who was from *Dimocratiya* (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine), spoke to me about Palestine.

The use of political propaganda as official learning material in public schools is highly problematic for a couple of reasons. First, as the school is an institution where 'knowledge' is created and decimated to young people, it is inscribed in relations of power. Because political materials are distributed through the school, they are attributed a certain legitimacy, which renders them largely unquestioned and unchallenged by the students. This is more akin to the process of indoctrination than education.

Secondly, the use of learning materials from different political organizations means that there is no standardization of curriculum. Rather, different ‘truths’ and different histories of Palestine are being discursively constructed in classrooms based on the personal political affiliations of the teachers. In this way, the process of public education for Palestinians is helping to create fragmented Palestinian identities.

In addition to the formal instruction that some students in UNRWA schools receive on Palestine, students also participate in the enactment of the ‘hidden curriculum’: the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs conveyed through both the formal content of Education, as well as the social interactions experienced within schools. As part of the formal curriculum in UNRWA schools, Religious Education is taught and made examinable at all levels. However, in keeping with the Islamic ‘imagining’ of ‘Palestinian-ness’, the curriculum defines religion as Islam. As one UNRWA teacher at Al Bas camp explained,

Sunni Islam is taught at UNRWA schools for all Muslim students, Sunni and Shi’a. Only Christian students are allowed not to attend it. There is no religion class for Christian students. They are few, and the religion which is part of the curriculum is Islam. It has an annual plan for all grades and a Subject Supervisor. Students sit for exams.

As this comment indicates, Muslim identities are hegemonically ranked in Palestinian society. As Palestinian identity is ‘imagined’ as Sunni, Shi’ite students must study religious history and doctrine from a Sunni perspective in order to pass their exams. Through this practice, Shi’ite Palestinian students are made to feel like ‘outsiders’ who must be ‘normalized’ into ‘proper’ Palestinian Muslims by becoming Sunni. On the other hand, the absence of Christian Religious Education classes altogether symbolically excises the presence of Christians from the Palestinian community. Moreover, it puts into question their status as ‘true’ and ‘authentic’ Palestinians.

The processes and practices of public education also produce unequal gendered representations of 'Palestinian-ness'. In UNRWA schools, males and females are assigned different tasks, activities and responsibilities and are allocated different resources and power. One male UNRWA teacher from Al Bas camp explained it this way,

In schools, males dominate the meetings and administration work and control students. There is a schedule in my school, and the male teachers have priority. Also, the same is true in the playground and the class. Boys feel women don't control the class as well as males. Boys don't have respect for female teachers. Women have a secondary role, even if they are educated and are teachers.

In other words, UNRWA school patterns of inclusion, exclusion and positioning produce and reproduce social inequalities between Palestinian males and females (Kabeer and Subrahmanian, 1996). This means that Palestinian females are constructed as 'secondary' Palestinians to their male compatriots.

The process of formal schooling has also helped to create different constructions of 'Palestinian-ness' for different generations of Palestinians in Lebanon. For example, standardized, formal schooling is the most significant difference in life experience between contemporary Palestinian youth and their elders in the community. Although 58% of Palestinian adult males and 85% of adult females over the age of 45 have not completed secondary school, only 25% of Palestinian males and 18% of females in the 15-29 age group fall into this category. Moreover, while 28% of males and 72% of females over the age of 45 are functionally illiterate, just 10% of males and 7% of females aged 15-29 are classified as functionally illiterate. In this way, schooling has had an important impact on the way Palestinian identities have been shaped and transformed over the past sixty years, particularly for females (Ugland, 2003).

In Palestinian society, many older Palestinians who have not been to school are still strongly emotionally attached to the 'homeland' of 'Palestine'. However, because Palestinian youth are now being educated through the Lebanese curriculum in UNRWA schools, and there is no Palestinian content in the curriculum, they are losing identification with their land of ancestry and learning to be good 'Lebanese' citizens, even though they will never receive Lebanese citizenship. In many cases, their bonds with Palestine are becoming so weak that they no longer 'feel Palestinian'. One youth from Al Bas camp put it this way,

My father loves Palestine, but I feel that I am Lebanese. Palestine doesn't affect my life, and it has nothing to do with me.

In other words, formal schooling has helped to create a generation gap in Palestinian society in Lebanon between older Palestinians, who still largely hold on to their 'Palestinian-ness', and Palestinian young people, who increasingly 'feel Lebanese'.

The family

Narratives of internal difference between Palestinians are also produced and reproduced through the institution of the family. In the home, through story-telling and the recounting of 'memories', Palestinian young people learn from their parents, grandparents and extended families about their villages in Palestine, "being Palestinian" and "being patriotic for Palestine". Through these narratives, Palestinian young people learn to describe their home and village in Palestine in intimate detail, although they have never been there in a physical sense, and in many cases, it no longer exists. However, it also through these narratives of 'home' that Palestine becomes fragmented as a concept, as Palestine comes to reflect the specific villages in Palestine from which their families were exiled. For example, families exiled from the Palestinian village of Tarbikha construct Palestinian identity as Shi'ite in contrast to families from other villages in Palestine, such as Safad, for whom Palestine is constructed as Sunni. Moreover, some Palestinians in Lebanon were exiled from rural communities, while others were exiled from towns in Palestine. In this way,

different religious and political orientations, as well as unique regional customs, are reproduced in the home as 'Palestinian-ness'. This helps to construct multiple, and often conflicting, narratives of Palestinian identity. Moreover, this difference is spatially encoded and reproduced in the camps, as camp residents from the same village in Palestine and from the same religious community largely live and socialize together.

As discussed earlier, the family is the key institution through which Palestinian 'tradition' and 'values' are reproduced. However, the institutional site of the family is also a place where gendered constructions of Palestinian identity take on a generational dimension and become contested. As mentioned in the previous section, it is within the home that Palestinian boys and girls learn to perform gendered representations of Palestinian identity. As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), 'national' symbols, such as the *hijab*, are inscribed on the female body. However, identity may also be negotiated or subverted through bodily practice. In this way, some Palestinian girls reject the dress code for Muslim women that has been symbolically reified as an 'identity marker' of 'Palestinian' identity. This can cause conflict between young Palestinians and their parents. As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

I don't always agree with the society. For example, I don't wear *hijab*. My mother wears it and my father is *Haj* (has made the pilgrimage to Mecca), but why I should wear it? I don't know.

Even those Palestinian girls who wear the *hijab* often do so casually with it covering only the top of the head, leaving hair tendrils to cascade down in full view of male observers. Similarly, some Palestinian young women technically keep the 'letter of the law' by wearing sleeves down to their wrists and skirts down to their ankles, yet they wear clothing made out of clingy material, which shapes their bodies and allows them to openly embrace and express their sexuality. Many young Palestinian girls also simultaneously exercise resistance against 'the West' and the 'Islamic norms' of

their society by adopting 'hybrid' bodily practices to create new identities. For example, girls often wear 'Western-style' clothes as an act of resistance against Islamic tradition and their parents. At the same time, they wear the *hijab* to embody resistance against Western hegemony.

On the other hand, the family is also the institutional site through which fundamentalism is often reproduced and performed. For example, the increasing 'Islamicization' of Palestinian society, and the way in which religious conservatism has been used as a boundary marker between the Palestinian and Lebanese communities, has encouraged many Palestinian young people, especially males, to adopt more conservative and fundamentalist ideas and attitudes than their parents. As one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp figuratively stated,

Girls have to dress conservative, and if I have a sister who doesn't, I will kill her.

In other words, for these young men, 'Palestinian-ness' has taken on the interpretation of strict adherence to Islam and the control of female bodies through male disciplinary regimes. In this context, females are increasingly being called upon to embody the boundary between Muslims and non-Muslims and Palestinians and non-Palestinians through the 'policing' of their behaviour and dress (see Chapter 7, New Identities).

Political organizations

As mentioned above, Palestinian political organizations are an important institutional site for the ideological production and maintenance of the nation. However, these organizations are also implicated in the construction of the 'internal Other'. This is because political identities are constructed in essentialist terms and in opposition to one another. For example, it is not possible to be both a supporter of Fatah (PLO) and a supporter of Hamas. Rather, each political organization constructs a unique symbolic system to represent its idea of the 'true' and 'authentic' Palestine. In this

way, different sub-national symbols are being adopted by different political organizations to construct and reproduce different meanings. As one Palestinian teacher from Al Bas camp put it,

I am independent, so I draw the map of Palestine, but Fatah (PLO) people will draw the scarf of Yasser Arafat.

A Christian man from Al Bas camp went on to add,

The *kofiya* (black and white checked scarf) means nothing for us. We wear it only to keep warm.

As these comments illustrate, each political organization articulates its identity through the representation of itself through a unique symbolic system, such as a crest, flag or 'pledge of allegiance'. Moreover, these representations of the nation often conflict with 'Others'. For example, the crest of the Fatah party shows two fists holding rifles and a hand grenade superimposed on the map of Palestine accompanied by the texts, 'The Palestinian National Liberation Movement' and 'Revolution until victory'. This reflects the organization's secular, Marxist-Leninist ideology and self-proclaimed role as the 'official' representative of the Palestinian people. In contrast, the Hamas crest consists of Al Aqsa mosque, two crossed swords, and two Palestinian flags embracing the mosque accompanied by the phrases, 'There is no god but *Allah*', and 'Muhammad is the messenger of *Allah*.' At the top of the crest is the map of Palestine accompanied by the phrase, 'Islamic Resistance Movement-Hamas', reflecting the organization's Islamist ideology. In other words, Fatah has 'imagined' Palestine as a secular state, whereas for Hamas, the nation has been 'imagined' as an Islamic *waqf* (endowment) specifically for Muslims. These different representations of 'Palestine' and 'Palestinian-ness' have clear implications for who can and who cannot be considered an 'authentic' Palestinian.

Ironically, many figures who appear in Palestinian political posters around the camps, and who have been constructed as 'Palestinian heroes' through political discourse, are not Palestinian at all, such as Gamal Abdul Nasser (Egyptian president from 1954 – 1970), Saddam Hussein (Iraqi president from 1979-2003) and Hassan Nasrallah (Shi'ite leader of Lebanese Hezbollah). Moreover, some symbolic 'heroes' of Palestine and the nationalist struggle, as seen in these posters, are not even Arab. For example, photos of the Latin American resistance leader, Ché Guevara, can be found all over the Palestinian camps. In the Fatah-run Kurami Centre in Burj A-Shemali camp, for instance, the centre piece of the meeting hall is a large image of Ché Guevara beside Yasser Arafat which frames the map of Palestine. While these figures are all male leaders of anti-colonialist or anti-imperialist 'liberation' movements, they differ widely in their political and religious ideologies and 'imaginings' of the nation. Thus, they help to construct different, and often conflicting, notions of 'Palestinian-ness' for the youth.

The essentialist construction of political identities in Palestinian society has serious implications for youth and society more generally. The territorial coverage of these political symbols within the camps marks the extent of influence each organization has on the Palestinian community. Where different symbolic systems collide, there is the potential for conflict. For example, the erection of Islamist symbols in a particular space within the camp can be interpreted as a direct challenge to the ruling secular Fatah party in that area. In other words, the construction of sub-national symbolic systems by political organizations fosters allegiance to specific political organizations rather than loyalty to a collective Palestinian nation. Moreover, this has often proven to be divisive. As one male youth from Rashidieh camp put it,

Fatah talks about Fatah, Hamas talks about Hamas. There is fighting between Fatah and Hamas and between Palestinians. Every day, a Palestinian child will die due to this problem.

Ironically, some political symbols used to represent Palestine in the camps in Lebanon negate its very existence as an independent nation-state. For example, when one walks through the camps, posters for the political organization Hizb A-Tahrir are often encountered. Hizb A-Tahrir is an international, Sunni, pan-Islamist political organization whose goal is to unite all Muslim countries in a unitary Islamic state, or caliphate, ruled by Islamic law. As such, the symbol used to represent this political organization is that of the Süleymaniya mosque in Istanbul, the capital of the former Ottoman empire. In this ‘imagining’, Palestine is collapsed as a physical nation and is incorporated into a larger, Sunni Islamic *umma* (nation). This works to construct ‘authentic’ Palestinians as specifically Sunni Muslim. On the other hand, within this narrative, Palestinian Shi’ites become ‘apostates’, while Palestinian Christians are dismissed as ‘Western collaborators’.

Palestinian political organisations have also worked to discursively construct different, and often conflicting, notions of Palestinian ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’. This will be discussed at length in Chapter 7, New Identities.

The media

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, political discourse is often produced and reproduced through the media. However, as media centres are situated differently vis-à-vis politics and religion, television stations and websites often construct very different ‘imaginings’ of Palestine and ‘Palestinian-ness’ for the viewing public. For example, the largest of the political organizations, such as Fatah and Hamas, each have their own TV networks, which are either broadcast locally from the camps or are received via satellite from Palestine (West Bank and Gaza). In addition, the youth also frequently watch Lebanese *Al Manar* (Hezbollah channel) or pan-Arab *Al Jazeera Arabia* (Qatari-based channel). As the youth consume media from these different sources, different ‘imaginings’ of Palestine are constructed and performed in the camps in Lebanon. As one Palestinian man from Al Mashuq gathering stated,

Each political party uses the media to implant their image of Palestine in the mind of the youth. For example, Fatah tells the youth to wear the *kofiya*, but Hamas tells people to wear Islamic dress. The role model for the youth comes from TV.

As through television, different Palestinian identities are also constructed through different internet sites. However, the internet differs from television in a couple of important aspects. First, while all Palestinian young people have access to television in their homes or through community centres, the ‘digital divide’ means that many Palestinians do not have access to computers or the internet. For example, few families have internet connections at home, and most girls do not have access to the ‘male space’ of internet cafes. Moreover, many members of the older generation are not versed in the use of computer technology, which has helped to create a sort of cyber generation gap in Palestinian society. Whereas contemporary Palestinian young people are likely to learn about Palestine through technology, members of the older generation learned about Palestine and being Palestinian in very different ways. As one youth explained,

Some grandparents were born in Palestine. My parents learned only from their parents. Before, there were no centres, internet, or TV.

Furthermore, the internet also differs from TV in its potential to democratise knowledge. For example, through the internet, and particularly through blogs, chat rooms and message boards, anyone can challenge dominant discourses in society and create new knowledge through desktop publishing for an international audience. Moreover, by only accessing certain internet sites, individuals can selectively narrow and regulate their world views by receiving only the information they want to receive. However, there are still power structures at work and hegemonic discourses still dominate ‘cyberspace’. For example, many of the websites about Palestine are run by Islamic organizations and are not accessed by Palestinian Christians or ‘secular’ Muslims. In this way, the internet not only unites Palestinians in the production,

consumption and regulation of shared symbolic systems of nationhood, the elitist and exclusive use of this technology also helps to divide the community by working to construct Palestine, and hegemonic forms of 'Palestinian-ness', through its users, which are primarily young, male and Muslim.

This segways nicely into a discussion of how the internal 'Other' is constructed in and through religious institutions in Palestinian society.

Religious institutions

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, religious institutions are very important sites for the ideological reproduction of the nation in Palestinian society. The mosque, in particular, functions as a collective symbol of 'Palestinian-ness' and works to construct Palestine as Muslim. Within this discourse, it is specifically Al Aqsa mosque which has been constructed as the symbolic embodiment of Jerusalem, the symbolic 'capital' of Palestine. Consequently, this symbol is prominently displayed within many Palestinian institutions, businesses and homes. However, this 'national' symbol is not inclusive of all groups and has not been taken up by Palestinian Christians. For example, when asked what the symbols of Palestine were for him, one Palestinian Christian responded with strong emotion,

Bethlehem, Jerusalem and its Christian history. If it is only Al Aqsa mosque, it is disgusting for me.

In contrast to the mosque, the church has had very little involvement in the Palestinian nationalist project in recent years, and many Christian Palestinians agree that "the church should stay away from teaching issues of politics." As one Christian Palestinian woman in Tyre explained,

Most Palestinian Christians don't follow political parties. I am against violence.

Moreover, many Christian Palestinians believe that the 'Islamicization' of Palestinian identity through political organizations has marginalized their participation in nation-building. As one Christian Palestinian man from the Lebanese city of Tyre explained,

The Palestinian activities now are only in the Muslim camps. Palestinian identity is becoming more Islamic. After the creation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, 40% of them become fanatic. I want to return to my village in a free, democratic country. I am not ready to kill and be killed and live under *Shari'a* (Islamic) law.

The marginalization of Christian Palestinians from the Palestinian community is not just symbolic. Rather, it has had real social and material consequences for these Palestinians in Lebanon. As one Christian Palestinian woman explained,

Because we are Christians, Muslims don't accept us as Palestinians. We don't receive food or money. In the festivals, they give gifts only to Muslims. To work in UNRWA, you must be Muslim.

As a result of being marginalized from the Palestinian community, many Christian Palestinians feel it is best to facilitate the integration of Christian refugees into Lebanese society by not teaching their young people about Palestine. One Christian Palestinian woman from the Lebanese city of Tyre explained it this way,

Christians are not telling their children about Palestine. We have suffered a lot from Palestinian identity, so why would we teach our children about it? Young Palestinian Christians are well integrated into Lebanese society. Even Lebanese Christians don't like Palestinian Christians, but because we have intermarriage, they accept us for this reason. We never talk to our children about Palestine. In a couple of generations, they will forget about Palestine.

As mentioned in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), the construction of Palestine as Muslim also has specific gendered implications. For example, as the mosque is considered to be ‘male space’, few women attend regularly, if at all. Those women who do attend are permitted limited participation, at best. As a Palestinian male teacher from Al Bas camp explained,

In the mosque, there are two sections, one for males and one for females. Males who want to ask a question raise their voice and ask questions; whereas, women write their questions on paper and give them to the sheikh. A male imam can lead prayers for both males and females, but a female can’t lead the prayers for the males.

In other words, women are essentially silenced and relegated to passive involvement in this institutional context. Moreover, as the line which signifies the boundaries between Palestinians and ‘Others’ has been constructed on the performance of Islam, Palestinian Christians are not embraced in this representation of the nation. Neither, for that matter, are secular Muslims who do not wear the *hijab* or sufficiently perform Muslim ‘imaginings’ of ‘Palestinian-ness’.

6.3 Institutional (Un)cooperation

As discussed in the section above, in the absence of a formal curriculum on Palestine in UNRWA schools, Palestinian identity construction and regulation is taking place informally through the rules, policies and practices of non-state institutions in Palestinian society, such as the family, political organizations, the media and religious institutions. As young people interact with, in and through these institutions, they become complicit in the construction of the nation through practices of ‘banal nationalism’ (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). As one Palestinian man from Rashidieh camp explained,

In my work in the PLO library, I teach young people to read books and encourage them to solve problems. I volunteer with different organizations. I speak with persons about the history of Palestine.

However, what is currently not occurring in Palestinian society is large-scale communication, coordination and cooperation between formal and non-formal institutions in the construction and regulation of Palestinian identities. For example, when asked to describe the level of coordination between UNRWA schools and different institutions in Palestinian society, one UNRWA Education official responded,

Officially there is no coordination between institutions. Bureaucracy prevents this. However, there is some unofficial coordination.

In response to this lack of institutional coordination and cooperation, many Palestinians have called for Palestinian unity to be fostered through the school. Specifically, Palestinians of all ages have called for a specific curriculum on Palestine to be introduced into UNRWA schools and made examinable at all levels. As the Education Head of the Tyre UNRWA Regional Office argued,

There should be an official curriculum on Palestine and official Social Studies books. This curriculum should be the same for all Palestinians regardless of country of residence.

This recommendation was seconded by a Palestinian male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp, who asserted,

We must study in school about Palestine. We should have special summer courses about Palestine. We should be tested on Palestine.

Moreover, many young people expressed the desire for increased institutional cooperation in teaching them about Palestine. As one young man from Burj A-Shemali camp stated,

The school and the community and the Student Office must work together to teach youngsters about Palestine. We must not forget our country. We must not forget our identity.

From the comments above, it is clear that Palestinians in Lebanon are invested in the construction of a ‘distinct’ and shared Palestinian identity through institutions in Palestinian society. Moreover, Palestinians look to schools to ‘take the lead’ in this endeavour through the development of a specific, formal and examinable curriculum on Palestine for students at all levels.

However, these comments also reflect the widely-held perspective among Palestinians that an ‘authentic’, unified and stable Palestinian identity exists and merely needs to be ‘recovered’ from the past and ‘transmitted’ to young people through educational processes and practices. As this chapter has revealed, the construction of one ‘authentic’ Palestinian identity that is inclusive of all individuals in the camps in Lebanon is highly problematic.

6.4 Overview

In this chapter, I have examined how institutions such as the school, the family, political organizations, the media and religious institutions all function as sites of Palestinian identity production and performance. Within this discussion, I have highlighted the ways in which Palestine and Palestinian identity are culturally, socially and symbolically produced and regulated in Palestinian society through the use of symbolic systems, the performance of ritual and embodiment (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). Moreover, I have examined the ways that ‘knowledge’ produced in and through these sites is legitimated and made to appear factual, stable, neutral

and natural. I have also looked at how institutional regimes, networks and processes regulate and discipline Palestinian identities in formal and informal life.

I argue that although institutional processes and practices produce shared cultures and discourses of 'Palestinian-ness', these processes are also implicated in the production of internal 'Others'. This is because there are vast challenges and complexities entailed in the process of trying to represent the diversity of the Palestinian experience through a single, hegemonic identity. Rather, 'national' symbols are often divisive rather than unifying because different religious and political groups have constructed different Palestinian histories. Moreover, gender crosscuts each of these discourses to construct new identities. In other words, the concept of 'authenticity' is highly problematic in the Palestinian context, and it challenges the very essence of Palestinian nationalist 'imagining'.

In spite of there being multiple Palestinian identities, identities are ranked hegemonically and there is a dominant Palestinian identity which is male and Sunni Muslim. Consequently, females, religious minorities (specifically Shi'ite Muslims, Christians and increasingly secularists) are largely excluded from the production and performance of the nation.

Adding to this complexity is that there is currently no large-scale communication, coordination and cooperation between formal and non-formal institutions in the construction and regulation of Palestinian identities. In response, both Palestinian teachers and youth have called on the school to 'take the lead' in 'recovering' and 'transmitting' an 'authentic' and unified Palestinian identity to young people. However, this is highly problematic as, the discussion above reveals, Palestinian identities are temporary, fluid and contingent.

This leads me to the next, and final, empirically-based chapter, where I use both historical and empirical data to analyze how Palestinian identities in Lebanon have shifted across exilic generations through the processes of resistance, negotiation and

accommodation in response to the changing social, economic and political circumstances of the past 60 years.

Chapter 7 – New Identities

In the first two empirically-based chapters (Chapter 5, Boundaries; Chapter 6, Institutions), I examined how Palestinian identities are constructed through discourses of difference and accomplished through the appropriation and articulation of discursive resources within and through formal and non-formal institutions in Palestinian society. However, the identities that are produced through these institutions are not stable or already accomplished ‘facts’. Rather, they are a ‘production’ which is never complete, but always in the process of shifting, transforming and ‘becoming’ in relation to changing life conditions (Hall, 1996) (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). In this chapter, I explore how Palestinian identities in Lebanon have shifted across exilic generations (research question 3). To do this, I use both empirical and historical data to explore how constructions of ‘Palestinian-ness’ have shifted over time through changing discourses of ethnicity, religion, gender and ‘home’ in Palestinian society. I argue that a homogenized and ‘fixed’ Palestinian identity does not exist. Rather, the boundaries of difference between Palestinians and ‘Others’, and between Palestinians themselves, are continually being repositioned in relation to different points of reference according to changing life circumstances. Moreover, Palestinian youth are constantly investing in these temporary subject positions based on positions of advantage within specific contexts.

7.1 Ethnicity

As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), one of the key discourses through which both Palestine and ‘Palestinian-ness’ have been ‘imagined’ is ethnicity. At certain times and in certain spaces, the boundaries of sameness with other Palestinians and those of difference between Palestinians and external ‘Others’ have been constructed on the basis of ethnic bonds between members of the nation. However, in the Palestinian case, the relationship between ethnicity and the nation has been a complex one.

For much of the history of the Middle East, Palestine was closely integrated culturally, linguistically and economically with the other countries of *Bilad Al-Sham* (Greater Syria), the historical region containing the modern nation-states of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel/Palestine. Moreover, the idea of a distinct Palestinian state separated out from its Arab neighbors was initially rejected by many Palestinians. For example, the First Congress of Muslim-Christian Associations adopted the following resolution in February, 1919,

We consider Palestine as part of Arab Syria, as it has never been separated from it at any time. We are connected with it by national, religious, linguistic, natural, economic and geographical bonds (Porath, 1977).

However, historical events and processes worked to promote the rise of Palestinian nationalism. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Context), as part of the colonial project, European powers arbitrarily divided the region into nation-states. This included the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. The demarcation of modern nation-state boundaries in the region helped to construct and shape distinct national identities. Moreover, it also helped to strengthen nationalist discourses in Palestine. (Bosworth, 1997). However, as Palestine never came into being as a modern nation-state, Palestinians found themselves temporally caught between the decline of empire and the rise of the nation-state and entangled in the competing political discourses of ‘pan-Arabism’ (Arab unity) and ‘Palestinian nationalism’.

In 1964, the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) helped to strengthen nationalist discourse in Palestinian society. As part of the nationalist project, the PLO articulated an ethnic nationalist narrative that argued that Palestinian national consciousness and identity were ‘innate’ and had deep historical roots. This is outlined in Article 4 of the 1968 Palestinian National Charter:

The Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential, and inherent characteristic; it is transmitted from parents to children. The Zionist occupation and the

dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people, through the disasters which befell them, do not make them lose their Palestinian identity and their membership in the Palestinian community, nor do they negate them.

However, this new Palestinian nationalist identity was not without its internal contradictions, and it problematized the ‘distinctiveness’ of Palestinians from their Arab neighbors. For example, in a March 31, 1977 interview with the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, a PLO Executive Committee member, Zuhayr Muhsin, said this,

The Palestinian people does not exist. The creation of a Palestinian state is only a means for continuing our struggle against the State of Israel for our Arab unity. In reality, there is no difference between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interests demand that we posit the existence of a distinct ‘Palestinian people’ to oppose Zionism. For tactical reasons, Jordan, which is a sovereign state with defined borders, cannot raise claims to Haifa and Jaffa. While as a Palestinian, I can undoubtedly demand Haifa, Jaffa, Beer-Sheva and Jerusalem. However, the moment we reclaim our right to all of Palestine, we will not wait even a minute to unite Palestine and Jordan (Dorsey, 1977).

The comments above clearly indicate how the discourses of ‘pan-Arabism’ and ‘Palestinian nationalism’ have both been at work in Palestinian society at least since the beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, each of these discourses has been strategically prioritized by different groups at different times.

Today, the often tense relationship between pan-Arabism and Palestinian nationalism continues to influence the construction and performance of Palestinian identities in Lebanon. As a male Palestinian youth from Rashiedieh camp explained,

Palestine is next to Lebanon between Syria and Jordan. It was called *Al-Sham*: Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Then they separated them into

many countries. Who separated them? Britain and France. At first, the world is not divided into countries, it is only divided into civilizations. This means that some people who are called Egyptian people were not called Egyptian and did not have the personality of Egyptians. Now they are only called 'Egyptian' people and not 'Arabic'.

As this comment reveals, the European colonial project in the Middle East has had profound and lasting consequences for the production of identities in the region. For example, a colonial legacy for all Arabs, and particularly for Palestinians, is that they construct their identities on the basis of both 'nation' and 'shared Arabness'. Although Palestinians share much socially, culturally and historically with other Arabs, especially in the Levant, the world is now divided into nation-states, so Palestinians must find a basis on which to construct a 'distinct' and shared sense of 'nationhood' apart from other Arabs. As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries) and Chapter 6 (Institutions), for many Palestinians, shared suffering serves as a boundary marker for the nation and an important signifier of difference between Palestinians and Arab 'Others'. As one male youth from Rashidieh camp explained,

There is no difference between Palestinians and other Arabs. In general, we are common with Lebanese people because we are Arabic, but we have some special traditions. It is the same as the difference between Canadians and Americans. But the problem is we are outside our country. Palestinians are 'the people that lose'.

A male UNRWA Education official went on to elaborate further,

We feel the same as Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. What unifies Palestinians is that they are living in the same miserable conditions with the same objective.

The comments above illustrate how Palestinians in Lebanon bear both ethnic and ‘national’ identities simultaneously. Moreover, Palestinians constantly negotiate both their ethnic and national identities through a process of ‘hybridization’. This enables Palestinians to slip and slide between these identity positions in order to strategically gain positions of advantage in any situation (see Chapter 3 Literature Review). At certain times, pan-Arabism and shared sameness with other Arabs is espoused by Palestinians in order to achieve certain objectives. For example, when asked what she wanted to do in her future to help her community, one female Palestinian youth from Rashidieh camp responded,

I want to work to unite all Arabs to help the Palestinian people.

In other words, for this youth, identification with a larger community (all Arabs) is strategic in the context of a national ‘liberation’ struggle. As part of a larger collective, ‘other Arabs’ can be called upon to help their fellow ‘Arabic brothers and sisters’ to ‘liberate’ Palestine. At the same time, the lack of support offered to the Palestinians in their goal of ‘national liberation’ by other Arab governments (particularly Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf countries) has caused some individuals to retreat behind boundaries of national identity and ‘Palestinian-ness’ in order to construct difference between themselves and Arab ‘Others’. As another Palestinian female youth from Rashidieh camp stated,

I don’t want to help Arabs because they didn’t help me.

Here, ‘Arabs’ are constructed as an external ‘Other’, as they have failed in their culturally assigned ‘duty’ to help fellow ‘kin’ in a time of need.

As a political discourse, pan-Arabism reached its apex in the 1960s, when the movement was spearheaded by Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser (see Chapter 2 Context). However, although it continues to exert a strong influence in Arab print media and intellectual circles particularly in the Levant and especially in Syria, since

the late 1980s, pan-Arabism has been eclipsed by Islamist ideologies in Palestinian society (Khalidi, 1990). As one young man from Rashidieh camp put it,

Palestine should be free, but I don't care if I live in Palestine, Lebanon or Jordan. There is nothing different. I care more about being Muslim.

The next section will discuss how boundaries of 'Palestinian-ness' are increasingly being constructed around the discourse of religion in Palestinian society.

7.2 Religion

As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), one of the key discourses through which 'Palestinian-ness' has been 'imagined' in the camps in Lebanon is religion. The boundaries of sameness with other Palestinians and those of difference between Palestinians and external 'Others' have been constructed on the basis of religious affiliation. However, the signification of religion and 'fundamentalism' as important boundary markers between communities is relatively new.

Historically, the first Palestinian political organizations, like the PLO, adopted a secular ideology and 'imagined' the future state of Palestine along secular lines. This enabled both Muslims and Christians to participate in the collective struggle for Palestinian 'liberation' (Khalidi, 1990). As one Christian Palestinian man explained,

In the past, there were no wars between Christians and Muslims. In the past, Palestinian Christians worked hard for Palestine, but after many wars, they got tired.

Instead of religion, it was originally Marxism that served as an organizing principle for Palestinian unity. In addition to being secular (in a pragmatic sense), the first Palestinian political organizations, such as the PLO, PFLP and DFLP, were heavily influenced by Marxist ideology (Khalidi, 1990). Consequently, Palestinian political

organizations often united with other global Marxist movements in their struggle against colonialism and imperialism. As one Palestinian man from Al Mashuq gathering explained,

Palestinians saw organizations such as the Japanese Red Army (JRA) and *Baader Meinhof* (Red Army Faction) and other liberation organisations in Africa and Latin America as an extension of the Palestinian struggle against the imperialist powers. Despite the difference in language, culture and religion, they still felt connected to those organizations because they had the same cause.

However, in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, Palestinian nationalism has shifted away from its original Marxist secular ideological roots, as expressed by the PLO, and turned toward a focus on political Islam, as expressed by Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement), Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other Islamist organizations (Khalidi, 1990). One Palestinian man from Al Mashuq gathering explained it this way,

When I was young, we used to sing ‘(Ché) Guevara and Mao taught us how to liberate Palestine’. Now the Marxists are almost not there. Fatah (PLO) is like a tired warrior. Now there is a new warrior in town fighting for the Palestinian cause and energizing people to do things. These are the Islamists.

A male UNRWA Education official went on to elaborate:

Political Islam is new. After the Israeli invasion in 1982, many Islamic organizations grew because the secular and Marxist organizations were defeated. This is good even if we don’t agree with the Islamic approach because the problem still exists. Israel helped Hamas to rise because Fatah wanted to make peace with Israel. Hamas wants to liberate all of Palestine, not only the 1967 borders. Religion has a great influence on all people.

For Islamists, Palestine is discursively constructed as an inalienable religious endowment specifically for Muslims. This is outlined in Article Eleven of the 1988 Hamas Covenant:

The land of Palestine is an Islamic *Waqf* consecrated for future Muslim generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up...This is the law governing the land of Palestine in the Islamic *Shari'a* (law), and the same goes for any land the Muslims have conquered by force, because during the times of (Islamic) conquests, the Muslims consecrated these lands to Muslim generations till the Day of Judgement.

In other words, Islamist political narratives are 'imagined' in essentialist terms and attempt to 'recover' an 'authentic' past identity when Muslim caliphates ruled the areas stretching from *Al Hijaz* (Arabian Peninsula) in the south, to *Bukhara* (Central Asia) in the east, to *Al Maghreb* (present day Morocco) in the west.

As Palestine is being constructed as Muslim in this narrative, other Muslims are being called upon to view the 'liberation' of Palestine, Al Aqsa mosque and the holy shrines of Islam as their 'sacred duty'. In this way, the 'borders' of Palestine have been discursively expanded and extended to include the entire Islamic *Umma* (Muslim world). This has worked to create a new 'supra-national' Islamic identity that challenges the boundaries of the nation-state. Within this pan-Islamist discourse, it is the duty of all Muslims to fight for the 'liberation' of Palestine, even if they are neither Palestinian nor Sunni. As one male UNRWA Education official explained,

(Lebanese) Islamic Shi'ites have been fighting Israel, and Hezbollah has given us hope to defeat Israel. Hassan Nasrallah (leader of Hezbollah) is a 'good Palestinian' because he fights the Israelis. He works for Palestine more than the people in the camp. Identity doesn't mean you must be Palestinian by nationality.

On the other hand, the Islamist ‘imagining’ of Palestine has also worked to challenge the boundaries of the nation-state through the construction of new ‘sub-national’ identities. As discussed in Chapter 6 (Institutions), each Palestinian faction constructs a unique symbolic system to reflect the organization’s political and religious ideology, and subjects are recruited within different systems of representation. In this way, secularists are likely to support the PLO while Islamists are likely to support an organization like Hamas. This is how many Palestinian youth are becoming more likely to identify themselves as members of a particular political faction than Palestinian. As the male head of a Palestinian NGO explained,

There is no unity between different Palestinian groups, such as Fatah and Hamas. ‘If I am not with you exactly, I am against you’. We fly flags of all political parties instead of flying only the Lebanese and Palestinian flags. Palestinians have many political identities. The young generation should stop following political parties.

This comment illustrates how the discourses of religion and nation intersect in complex ways and are mediated through politics in the Palestinian context. On the one hand, religion marks sameness with other members of the Palestinian collectivity, while it marks difference between Palestinians and ‘Others’. On the other hand, all Palestinians are not Muslims, and all Muslims are not Palestinians (see Chapter 5, Boundaries; Chapter 6, Institutions). Moreover, there are internal differences between Muslims. As discussed in Chapter 6 (Institutions), Shi’ite Muslims are constructed as ‘the Other’ in relation to the Sunni subject. Additionally, Palestinian Muslims are constructed as different from Muslims in ‘Other’ nations. As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

Muslims in the Gulf (Arabian peninsula) are not very affected by Islam like Palestinians.

Just as Palestinians strategically negotiate identities of ethnicity, they also slip and slide between identity positions of religion and nation in order to strategically gain positions of advantage in any situation (see Chapter 3 Literature Review). At certain times, pan-Islamism and shared sameness with other Muslims is espoused by Palestinians in Lebanon in order to achieve certain objectives. As with pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism is often a key strategy implemented by the youth in the context of garnering support for the national 'liberation' struggle. For example, one female Palestinian youth from Rashidieh camp said this,

Before I am Palestinian, I am Muslim and Arabic. I don't say I am Palestinian. Being Muslim is more important because Islam is international and there is no discrimination between Palestinians and others in Islam.

In other words, for this youth, Muslim identity is more 'stable' and more 'inclusive' than Palestinian national identity, which can be taken away by 'Others'. Moreover, pan-Islamic identity offers Palestinians strength in numbers.

On the other hand, the take up and performance of Palestinian national identity sometimes takes precedence over the performance of Muslim identity for Palestinian youth. For example, some Palestinian youth rebel against the lifestyle constraints they feel in relation to performing Muslim 'scripts'. As one Palestinian male youth from Al Bas camp said,

I am Palestinian more than Muslim because Islam makes me not free. We are a prisoner to Islam.

Another male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp concurred and added,

I don't want to be a slave to the culture. It's better to forget it. I rebel against everything in this culture and I would prefer to live in a non-Arab (and therefore, non-Muslim) society.

Moreover, as discussed in the previous two chapters, (Chapter 5, Boundaries; Chapter 6, Institutions), not all Palestinians are Muslim. Like Muslim Palestinians, Christian Palestinians also negotiate their identities through the discourses of religion and nation in order to gain the most advantageous position in any situation. As one Christian Palestinian woman from Al Bas camp said,

It depends on the political situation whether we feel closer to Palestinian Muslims or Lebanese Christians. We experience the same level of discrimination as Palestinian Muslims, but we can't work in UNRWA because we aren't Muslim.

Generation is also a significant variable in the interaction of the discourses of religion and nation in the construction of Palestinian identities. Although all Palestinians strategically negotiate religion and nation in the construction of their identities, there is often a generation gap in how these identities are taken up and performed. For example, many older Palestinians remember Palestine as the land of their youth and largely hold on to the nation and their 'Palestinian-ness' as their primary identification. As one older Palestinian Christian man from Al Bas camp explained,

Being Palestinian is everything to me. I want to go back because we were happy there. We had our own freedom.

On the other hand, his teenage grandson who was born in Lebanon expressed a contrasting view,

Palestine doesn't mean anything for me. Muslims follow what their families say. But we say for what? We have never been there before. We live in Lebanon and this is our country. I am Christian first.

These comments indicate the different and complex ways in which generations of Palestinians negotiate their identities in the context of exile. While older Palestinians often long to 'return back' to their 'homeland', many younger Palestinians seek to strategically negotiate their identities to gain the most advantageous position available to them in Lebanon. This is particularly the case for young Palestinian Shi'ites, Christians and secularists who do not feel current Sunni Islamist 'imaginings' of Palestine are inclusive of them.

The sections above have discussed the complex ways in which the discourses of ethnicity and religion have intersected with nation to produce new Palestinian identities in the context of exile in Lebanon. They have also explored how Palestinian youth strategically negotiate these identities across and through these discourses in Palestinian society. In the next section, I will examine how these 'new identities' are further complicated through the cross-cutting discourse of gender.

7.3 Gender

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), gender does not produce categories of people in uniform ways. Rather it mediates the performance of other discourses, such as ethnicity, religion and nation. In the Palestinian context, gender intersects with other discourses in Palestinian society to construct new notions of 'Palestinian-ness'.

Within the momentous ideological shifts that have occurred in Palestinian society over the past 60 years (see sections above), there have been significant changes in the construction of Palestinian 'femininities' and 'masculinities' and in the performance of gender relations. The shifts in gender construction and performance have perhaps been the most considerable during the recent shift in Palestinian political discourse from Marxist secularism to political Islam. The ways in which 'femininities' in Palestinian society have been transformed in relation to this discursive shift will be discussed below.

Palestinian 'femininities'

Since *Al Nakba* took place in 1948, Palestinian women have participated in the Palestinian nationalist struggle in a multitude of ways. Although Palestinian women's activism was originally limited to the traditionally 'female' realm of relief and charitable work, this shifted in the late 1960's and early 1970's after the signing of the Cairo Agreement and the relocation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to Beirut (see Chapter 2, Context). During this historical period, the 'feminine ideal' of a Palestinian patriot became constituted and regulated through Marxist nationalist discourse. This meant that the traditional division between the male-dominated 'public sphere' and the female-dominated 'private sphere' was being contested. Moreover, there was a loosening of restrictions placed on female's movements and contact with men outside their families, as well as a permissible removal of the *hijab* in public space (Richter-Devroe, 2005). As one middle aged Palestinian man from Al Mashuq gathering reminisced,

When I was younger, some women joined as comrades in the armed struggle like Leila Khalid (leader of a hijacking operation for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - PFLP) and participated actively in demonstrations. Most of those women did not wear the *hijab*. Also Hanan Ashrawi (Palestinian Christian activist and scholar) was one of the main negotiators for the Palestinian people.

However, despite appearances of Palestinian women being equal partners in the nationalist struggle, Marxist nationalist discourse did not necessarily hold female empowerment as an objective, and militant activism was not used to fight against female oppression in patriarchal society or in fundamentalist organizations. Rather, military operations were used strictly as a political communications strategy to publicize the plight of the Palestinian people to an international audience. As such, female combatants during this period were "neither feminists, nor religious fanatics but, at best, nationalists" (Richter-Devroe, 2005, p.26).

Working from within a different ideological perspective, Islamists initially struggled to reconcile Islam's prescribed gender roles, and the essentialist view that women are inherently 'more peaceful' than men, with the perceived requirements of the nationalist struggle. In Islamic discourse, a Palestinian woman's identity derives from her traditional 'role' as 'mother' who bears and raises the 'nation's children' and offers them in 'sacrifice' for the nationalist cause. As Article Eighteen of the 1988 Hamas Covenant states:

Woman in the home of the fighting family, whether she is a mother or a sister, plays the most important role in looking after the family, rearing the children and instilling them with moral values and thoughts derived from Islam. She has to teach them to perform the religious duties in preparation for the role of fighting awaiting them. That is why it is necessary to pay great attention to schools and the curriculum followed in educating Muslim girls, so that they would grow up to be good mothers, aware of their role in the battle of liberation. She has to be of sufficient knowledge and understanding where the performance of housekeeping matters are concerned, because economy and avoidance of waste of the family budget, is one of the requirements for the ability to continue moving forward in the difficult conditions surrounding us. She should put before her eyes the fact that the money available to her is just like blood which should never flow except through the veins so that both children and grown-ups could continue to live.

As aggression, brutality and violence are incompatible with 'femininity' in Islamist discourse, Islamists initially either ignored women's participation in combat for the 'resistance' or publicly condemned it. For example, Sheikh Ahmed Yassine (co-founder of Hamas) stressed that,

The woman is the second defence line in resistance to the Occupation. She shelters the fugitive, loses the son, husband and brother, bears the consequences of this and faces starvation and blockade (Hasso, 2005).

It was only after women's widespread protests and demonstrations that leaders of Islamic organizations (mostly in the Occupied Territories) were reluctantly convinced to send out female combatants, some in their teens, justifying them through the pragmatic logic that females are less likely to be suspected of political violence and can, therefore, reach highly secured locations more easily (Richter-Devroe, 2005).

Today, as part of the 'Islamicization' of Palestinian society, constructions of 'femininity' have become more Islamic in the camps in Lebanon. Moreover, this has involved girls and women performing Islamic 'scripts', as discussed above, in order to show that they are 'good Palestinian patriots'. As one female Palestinian youth from Al Bas camp explained,

I show I am a good Palestinian by becoming more Muslim.

For many Palestinian females, the take up of Islamic subject positions has been voluntary. In some cases, this is because Islam provides them with comfort and clarity in an often ambiguous and ambivalent world. Through Islam, Palestinian girls and women are offered a guiding purpose, explicit rules for living, a framework for understanding the world and a social network of 'sisters' who share the same values (Lewis, 2005) (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). This is very appealing for many Palestinian girls and women who live their lives in the context of chronic conflict, poverty, marginalization and uncertainty in the camps in Lebanon. Moreover, some Palestinian females feel empowered through Islamic discourse. As one Palestinian girl in Burj A-Shemali camp told me, "Islam is good. In Islam, I take my rights."

Although many Palestinian females in Lebanon have a genuine belief in Islam, for some girls and women, the performance of Islam is a strategic way to successfully negotiate their positions in an 'Islamicized' society. For example, for many Palestinian girls in the camps, wearing the *hijab* is a 'bargain with patriarchy' which allows them to move freely in public spaces and remain hidden from the 'male gaze'

(Kandiyoti, 1998) (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). On the other hand, girls who don't wear the *hijab* often become the focus of gossip and social exclusion. As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

A girl, especially a girl who don't wear *hijab*, she will get a bad reputation if she pass on the same street too many times. If girls go out at night, people will talk about them. Parents will ask society about the girl and if she has a bad reputation based on her behaviour she will not be able to marry.

Performing Islam by wearing the *hijab* also serves to symbolically 'purify' the women who wear it in the eyes of society. Consequently, Palestinian women often take up the *hijab* to 'wipe the moral slate clean' upon marriage or after divorce. As I mentioned in Chapter 4 (Methodology), one Palestinian girl shared with me how she took up the *hijab* after experiencing a sexual assault. For this young woman, wearing the *hijab* symbolically removed the 'stain' of her sexual violation and worked to symbolically 'restore' her prized virginity.

In the context of the 'Islamicization' of Palestinian society, the occurrence of young women performing Islam and taking up the *hijab* is increasing. In fact, many Palestinian girls are choosing to take up the *hijab* even when their mothers do not wear it. This indicates a generational shift in the performance of Palestinian 'femininity'. As a Palestinian female teacher from Burj A-Shemali camp explained,

Some women like to cover (wear the *hijab*). There are girls wearing *hijabs* or *chadours* (long black robes) while their mothers are not doing so. Maybe this is because of association with Islamic movements or because of pressure from society.

For many Palestinian females, performing Islam and wearing the *hijab* is also part of a larger search for an 'authentic' identity 'uncontaminated' by Westernization or modernity. For example, when asked how she showed that she was a 'good

Palestinian’, one Palestinian girl from Rashidieh camp said, “By keeping our traditions, our clothes and the *hijab*.”

In the context of Western hegemony, Islamic feminism has proved to be strategic for many Palestinian females, as it does not alienate the majority of society like Western-style feminism (Afshar, 1989) (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). As one female youth from Burj A-Shemali camp stated,

Palestinian women are different from *ajnabi* (foreign) women. We stay with our family and everyone eat together. We are close to religion. In the case of the *ajnabi* woman, she go to the disco and she live alone when she is 18.

However, the relationship between the discourses of religion, gender and nation in the Palestinian context is a complex one. As the historical example at the beginning of this section clearly illustrates, there are often tensions between being ‘a good female Muslim’ and being ‘a good Palestinian patriot’. Thus, although Palestinian girls in the camps revealed through PLA activities that they still revere Palestinian female militant activists and *shaheedas* (female martyrs), such as Leila Khaled and Dalal Maghrebi, as ‘role models’ of ‘good Palestinian women’, Islamist discourse currently dictates that Palestinian females are to support ‘the resistance’ from within the ‘private sphere’. As one female Muslim Palestinian youth from Rashidieh camp explained,

Men and women sacrifice in different ways. For example, men sacrifice, and mothers sacrifice her son to be a martyr. She will suffer a lot. According to men, they sacrifice directly their lives. A good Palestinian woman has children for Palestine.

This comment demonstrates how Palestinian female identities in Lebanon have been constructed and regulated through the ‘shifting sands’ of political discourse. Political discourse, in turn, has been constructed in response to pragmatics vis-à-vis the

nationalist project. For example, when women's active participation in the nationalist 'liberation' movement has been needed, cultural restrictions on women's movements and behaviour have been relaxed. On the other hand, once women's active participation has been perceived to be no longer needed, women have once again been relegated to the 'private sphere'. This illustrates how 'culture', as a social construct, is highly unstable.

This example also illustrates how the discourses of womanhood and nationalism have often interacted in such a way that the personal goals and aspirations of Palestinian females have been subordinated and deferred until the 'greater cause' of national 'liberation' has been achieved. As one Palestinian woman explained,

Because of the Palestinian cause and national struggle now, the Palestinian woman should put on hold the feminist agenda and equality between males and females until Palestine is free.

In this way, the intersection between ethnicity, religion, gender and nation has often burdened Palestinian young women in Lebanon with the choice between enjoying the full benefits of group membership as Palestinians or Muslims or achieving personal fulfilment.

Palestinian 'masculinities'

In addition to the construction of new Palestinian 'femininities', the significant ideological shifts that have occurred in Palestinian society over the past 60 years have also resulted in the construction and performance of new Palestinian 'masculinities'. As Julie Peteet (2006) argues, 'Arab masculinity' is,

...acquired, verified and played out in the brave deed, in risk-taking, and in expressions of fearlessness and assertiveness. It is attained by constant vigilance and willingness to defend honour (*sharaf*), face (*wajh*), kin and

community from external aggression and to uphold and protect cultural definitions of gender-specific propriety (p. 107).

In other words, the defining characteristic of 'Arab masculinity' is its oppositional status relative to 'Arab femininity'. Therefore, tremendous emphasis is placed on preserving difference between men and women in Palestinian society. This involves maintaining a strict separation between the 'public sphere', where men are responsible for earning the household income and protecting the family, and the 'private sphere', where women are charged with maintaining the household, bearing and raising the children and protecting the family's 'honour' (Conway-Long, 2004). Moreover, this difference between males and females has been internalized by Palestinian youth. For example, when asked to explain the 'responsibilities' of males and female in the Palestinian home, one female Palestinian youth from Al Bas camp said,

Females should take care of their husband and family. If women don't do it, who will? In the case of the man, he is the worker and he is responsible for the family.

However, in the Palestinian context, men's ability to be 'men' and to be appropriately gendered as 'masculine' has been seriously undermined by the social, economic and political upheavals that have occurred in Lebanon over the last sixty years. First, Palestinian males suffered the indignity of becoming refugees in Lebanon in 1948 following the creation of the State of Israel, and again in 1967 following the Arab/Israeli Six-Day War. Then in 1982, the PLO was forced to retreat from Lebanon when the 'Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) captured Beirut (see Chapter 2, Context). All of these events have worked to disempower Palestinian men. As one Palestinian man from Al Mashuq gathering explained,

When the PLO was in the camps, they financed Education and paid maintenance for clinics and hospitals. Palestinians had opportunities to study

in the Soviet Bloc. When the PLO left Lebanon, Palestinian power and work opportunities became less because Palestinian influence became less in Lebanon. Palestinians lost a say in issues that affect them, and they became more dependent on Lebanese businesses for work and Lebanese political parties to consider their rights. Palestinian influence in Lebanese politics became nil. This affects the younger generation. Now Palestinian young people are looked at as 'thieves'. This wouldn't have happened before. Fighting for Palestine gave men meaning and a sense of purpose. Now they are doing nothing but suffering in silence.

In other words, the historical events of the past 60 years have meant that Palestinian men have lost their ability to protect and provide for their families, and they have become dependent on the 'charity' of the Lebanese government and UNRWA. In this way, Palestinian men have become symbolically 'emasculated' in the eyes of their wives and children. As one female Palestinian youth from Rashidieh camp put it,

I feel men have no chance to find work or to study. He always search to find work, and when he found work, he found small salaries. It is the job of men to find work. But many Palestinians stay at home without work and no human rights. Seventy five jobs are gone for Palestinian men (according to Lebanese law).

Consequently, the last refuge for Palestinian men, whose 'impotence' has been forced upon them through socio-economic and geo-political processes, has been an adoption of 'hyper-masculine' subject positions and body postures and a return to 'traditional' patriarchal control within the family. As mentioned above, the gender division of labour within the home has been re-emphasized in the recall of traditional masculinities. Interestingly, these gender 'roles' have been constructed as 'religious duties' in Palestinian society. As one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp said,

It is part of the Islamic religion, men have control over women. Respecting your husband is part of Islam.

The adoption of 'hyper-masculinity' by Palestinian males has, arguably, led to and resulted from an increased male attraction to and participation in Islamic discourse, which clearly delineates and hegemonically organizes male and female 'roles' in contrast to one another. Moreover, the taking up of Islamic subject positions has given men religiously sanctioned authority over women's bodies and behaviour. This has resulted in increased pressure on women to conform to standards of womanhood within Islamic discourse and to take on their 'roles' as 'gatekeepers' of culture and traditional values within the society (see Chapter 3, Literature Review). As one young Palestinian Muslim woman from Rashidieh camp explained,

Palestinian women all the time stay in the house. Her major work is to raise children and take care for her parents. Also women are emotional. Because of the control of her husband and society she always feel psychologically sick. And her life is top secret. She don't tell what she feels. She don't show what she feels.

As the 'Islamicization' of Palestinian society is relatively new, this has also worked to construct a generation gap between Palestinian youth and their parents in terms of the performance of religious 'scripts'. Interestingly, Palestinian young people are often more devout and more strict in their performance of their Islamic religious 'duties' than their parents. Again, this is often played out through increased control over female bodies and behaviour. As one male youth from Burj A-Shemali camp told me,

I am stricter with my sisters than my parents because we are Muslims.

On the other hand, the ‘Islamicization’ of Palestinian society has also worked to produce contestations among the youth, as discussed earlier in Chapter 5 (Boundaries) and Chapter 6 (Institutions).

The previous sections have looked at how Palestinian identities are constantly in the process of transformation through the intersecting discourses of ethnicity, religion and gender (Brah, 1996). Moreover, Palestinian youth are strategically negotiating these identities to gain the most advantageous positions available to them in any situation.

However, as Palestinians in Lebanon are living in exile in the context of globalization, there is a need to discuss how Palestinian identities are constantly transforming in relation to shifting discourses of space and ‘home’. In the next section, I will examine how the processes of international labour migration and urbanization are working to construct new identities in Palestinian society in Lebanon.

7.4 Home

As discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), Palestinians’ statelessness means that they are connected to and positioned in relation to more than one country. Therefore, Palestinians must constantly negotiate notions of ‘here’ and ‘there’, ‘detachment/attachment’ and ‘home’ and ‘away’ (Ahmed, 1992).

Although Palestinians in Lebanon already live in a state of exile, in the context of globalization, Palestinian lives are further destabilized through the processes of international labour migration. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Context), as refugees, Palestinians are legally barred from working in more than 70 professions in Lebanon. As one Palestinian Christian man from the Lebanese city of Tyre explained,

We work hard, but our salaries are obviously less than Lebanese, and our children will not advance if they are educated. It is forbidden to be a lawyer, for example. I have a law degree, but I couldn't practice because I am a Palestinian. Therefore, I became a teacher with UNRWA. But how many Palestinians can get jobs with UNRWA?

Due to the lack of employment opportunities for Palestinians in Lebanon, Palestinians must often seek legal or illegal employment in foreign countries, particularly the Gulf States, Europe and North America in order to make ends meet (Suleiman, 2006). As the Palestinian man quoted above went on to elaborate,

If you open the doors to Canada, the US and Europe, most Palestinian men will go.

Moreover, in the Palestinian context, the process of international labour migration is gendered. In order to perform their gendered roles as economic providers for the family, many Palestinian men find that they have no other option than to travel abroad to find work. At least initially, they often do this without their wives and children. On the other hand, Palestinian females are culturally bound by the 'honour and shame' paradigm through which the 'honour' of a family is preserved through the 'purity' of its' women folk (see Chapter 5, Boundaries). Consequently, most Palestinian females are not culturally permitted to travel abroad alone or without male accompaniment.

As foreign remittances are one of the key sources of income for Palestinian refugees in the camps (Ugland, 2003), international labour migration is perceived by many Palestinian males to be a panacea for all their economic woes. As there are only limited opportunities for Palestinian males to perform their gendered 'roles' as 'breadwinners' in the camps, many youth focus all their attention on getting out of Lebanon. In this way, the discourse of migration often shapes the future goals and

aspirations of Palestinian male youth. One male Palestinian youth from Al Bas camp explained it this way,

I love where I was born, but life in Lebanon is very difficult, so maybe I will travel to Europe because life is easier and I will find people who respect Palestinians, especially Germany.

Another male youth from the same camp added,

I want to go to London to take my rights. Maybe I can achieve my dream in Europe, but not in Lebanon.

However, despite these dreams, the prospect of international labour migration is unachievable for most Palestinians due to financial constraints and a lack of internationally recognized travel documents. As Palestinian male youth are always dreaming of being elsewhere, they often do not pursue ‘excellence’ in their present activities in the camp. As one Palestinian teacher from Al Mashuq gathering explained,

Palestinian youth use the ‘immigration dream’ to run away from reality and from doing things to improve their lives. It is a problem for teachers to keep students concentrating and in school. The students use the lack of job opportunities for educated Palestinians to excuse their carelessness. When confronted with what other alternatives they have, they pull ‘immigration’ from their pocket, although immigration, itself, is not viable for Palestinians, in general, and for the uneducated, in particular.

For those Palestinians ‘fortunate’ enough to be able to work abroad, identities are often dramatically shaped and transformed. As discussed in Chapter 3 (Literature Review), when individuals migrate abroad, their local identities and concepts of ‘home’ often become de-centered and destabilized, and new diaspora ‘hybrid’

identities are produced (Bhaba, 1990). However, the ‘hybrid’ identities that are produced through international migration often result in tension and conflict in and between individuals and communities. For some Palestinians, particularly Islamists, there is a perception that the forces of globalisation are invading and inappropriately transforming Palestinian cultural heritage and identity. This has sometimes resulted in a reactionary attempt to ‘recover’ and ‘preserve’ an ‘authentic’ past ‘uncontaminated’ by the West and to navigate the fractures in national identity caused by migration through Islam. For example, one Palestinian man from Al Mashuq gathering said,

My uncle and my cousin went to Germany as refugees. Although they were more secular in Lebanon, now they are more religious in Germany. They work hard to preserve their Islamic identity.

This comment is interesting, as it reveals an attempt to ‘preserve’ ‘authenticity’ within the context of diaspora. However, as was discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 3), attempts to strengthen and reaffirm national and local identities by ‘returning back’ to an ‘authentic’ past are fundamentally flawed. As new migrant ‘hybrid’ identities are not located in any one ‘home’, they cannot simply be traced back to one source. In this sense, it is impossible to ‘return back’ to ‘Palestine’ (or Lebanon, for that matter), as for migrants, it no longer exists.

Not only does international labour migration affect those Palestinians who have relocated abroad, it also impacts family members who have been left behind. Because Palestinian women often remain behind to take care of the children and older relatives, they become *defacto* households heads during the absence of their husbands. However, as emancipatory as this may sound, in reality, Palestinian women often find themselves under the control of another male relative, such as a brother or even an eldest son. This is to comply with the ‘honour and shame paradigm’ discussed earlier. As husbands are not physically present to ensure the preservation of the family’s ‘honour’, Palestinian girls and women often experience

more pressure to regulate their movements, bodies and behaviours than ever before. In this sense, male labour migration subjects Palestinian females to even more public surveillance and control. One young Palestinian woman from Al Mashuq gathering, whose father is an economic migrant in Nigeria, explained it this way,

My father is more open than my mother. When my father is around, I am more free. I think my mother feels she has to be strict with us girls because my father is not here to protect us.

In other words, international labour migration often serves to enhance existing patriarchal control and inequality between men and women in Palestinian society.

The process of migration is often indefinite, and many Palestinian men do not return to the camps or even go back to Lebanon. Rather, they remain abroad and take 'foreign' brides. As Palestinian women are culturally confined to marrying from within their own community, many women are 'left on the shelf' and are not able to perform their socially defined 'roles' as wives and mothers. Moreover, the increased likelihood of intermarriage with 'Others' among migrants also has implications for the construction of Palestinian identity. As 'Palestinian-ness' is largely perceived to be 'transmitted' through continuous blood lines with someone who originated in the land of Palestine (see Chapter 5, Boundaries), international marriage results in 'blood contamination' and, therefore, a weakening of 'Palestinian-ness'. As one male Palestinian youth from Rashidieh camp put it,

(Palestinian) identity is growing weaker with each generation. People are becoming hopeless. The US will never agree to let the refugees go home. People are marrying from abroad and we are becoming diluted.

International labour migration also has implications for how 'home' is constructed by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. When Palestinian men go abroad for work, they regularly send remittances back to family members in Lebanon. The families who

regularly receive income from abroad are more likely to advance economically in relation to their neighbours in the camps. This means that these families are often able to move out of the camps and into Lebanese cities. In other words, labour migration creates new urban and class identities in Palestinian society, which further complicates Palestinians' relationship to space and place. The impact of urbanization is perhaps the most profound on Palestinian young people. By attending Lebanese schools and interacting with Lebanese peers, affected Palestinian youth become more integrated into Lebanese society. As one male youth from Al Bas camp explained,

I live outside the camp, and I study in Lebanese school, so my life is more similar to Lebanese men than Palestinian men.

Moreover, urbanisation affects the way notions of 'Palestinian-ness' are constructed and performed in Palestinian society. For example, on meeting a fellow Palestinian young woman who had grown up in the Lebanese city of Tyre, one Palestinian female youth from Rashidieh camp responded, "Is she Palestinian? She is not like us." This comment reveals how the processes of international labour migration and urbanisation have helped to create a new transnational 'urban elite' Palestinian identity, which is based on socio-economic class rather than ethnicity or religion. In this way, Palestinian young people who grow up in Lebanese cities often find that they have little in common with other Palestinians from the camps and rather more in common with Lebanese from a certain income bracket. Moreover, as young Palestinians are increasingly being raised in Lebanese cities, the 'authenticity' of these youths' 'Palestinian-ness' is being put into question by the Palestinians who remain in the camps.

7.5 Overview

This discussion has highlighted how constructions of 'Palestinian-ness' have shifted over time through changing discourses of ethnicity, religion, gender and 'home' in Palestinian society. I have argued that a 'homogenized' and 'fixed' Palestinian

identity does not exist. Rather, multiple Palestinian identities have been constructed, shaped and transformed over time through these shifting discourses. Moreover, the boundaries of these identities are permeable and fluid and enable an individual to slip and slide between identity positions to gain positions of advantage in any given context. However, the creation of new 'hybrid' identities has often led to resistance and attempts to 'return back' to an 'authentic' past. This has served to contain the subject positions that Palestinian youth can take up and has worked to shape and limit their goals and aspirations for the future.

In the last chapter, I discuss the conclusions of this study and offer suggestions for further research.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

In this final chapter, I present an overview of the research and summarize the key findings of the study. Next, I discuss how the study makes important empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions to knowledge. I, then, suggest implications of the study at the levels of the personal, the contextual and the theoretical. Finally, I offer suggestions for further research with Palestinian youth in different geo-political, temporal and methodological contexts and with different demographic populations.

8.1 Research Overview

This has been a qualitative, interpretivist case study exploring how Palestinian youth construct their identities in refugee camps and gatherings in south Lebanon. Locating myself within a constructivist theoretical framework of identity production and regulation, I used data gleaned from fieldwork in three refugee camps and two Palestinian gatherings in south Lebanon to examine the ways in which Palestinian youth construct, perform and contest their identities in the context of exile and statelessness. Specifically, my explorations were framed according to 3 research questions: 1) How do Palestinian youth in south Lebanese refugee camps and gatherings understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis nationality, gender and religion? 2) How are the discursive resources of identity appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps?, and 3) How have Palestinian identities in Lebanon shifted across exilic generations?

Given my interpretivist theoretical perspective, the research methods employed in this study consisted of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approaches. This enabled me to capture and reconstruct the subjective meanings placed on social life by Palestinian youth in Lebanon (see Methodology, Chapter 4). Moreover, in light of the vulnerability of Palestinians as a

stateless refugee population situated within the larger context of Western imperialism and colonialism in the Middle East, I used post-structuralist, post-colonial and feminist theory to interrogate the data (see Literature Review, Chapter 3).

In the next section, I present the key findings of this study.

8.2 Findings

My explorations, framed through the three research questions outlined above, resulted in the following discoveries:

Research question 1

How do Palestinian youth (male and female) in south Lebanese refugee camps understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis nationality, gender and religion?

Within the context of statelessness, Palestinian youth in south Lebanese refugee camps understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis nationality, gender and religion through narratives of difference and the erection of boundaries within and between communities (see Chapter 5, Boundaries). Moreover, these boundaries are continually being repositioned, which means that identities are always in the process of ‘becoming’ (see Research Question 3, below).

As was discussed previously (see Literature Review, Chapter 3), identity is relational and relies for its existence on something outside itself, namely, something which it is *not*. For example, to be Palestinian is to be *not* Israeli or *not* Lebanese. Identity is, thus, marked by difference. Therefore, in order to mark difference between communities, boundaries are erected both to unify and to exclude, to demarcate between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ and to preserve the ‘purity’ of ‘imagined’ communities.

Within the refugee camps in south Lebanon, difference between communities is socially marked through the construction and regulation of physical, symbolic and structural boundaries in Palestinian society. At times, boundaries, such as camp perimeters and discourses of ‘citizenship’, are used by the Lebanese government to construct difference between Palestinians and Lebanese. At other times, Palestinians themselves construct boundaries of difference between ‘their’ community and ‘Others’ through discourses and cultures of ‘Palestinian-ness’, such as shared history, kinship, culture and religion. Finally, Palestinians themselves often contest these discourses and erect boundaries within their community to construct internal ‘Others’. For example, the hegemonic positioning of Sunni Islam as an identity marker of ‘Palestinian-ness’ simultaneously constructs Shi’ites, Christians and secularists as ‘Others’.

This chapter argues that although boundaries work to construct specifically ‘Palestinian’ identities, the construction of these boundaries between groups is ultimately problematic. On one hand, the assertion of difference attempts to erase similarities between groups, such as between Palestinians and Lebanese. For example, in Palestinian narrative, all Lebanese are constructed as ‘Other’ under the umbrella of national identity. However, this negates the numerous cultural similarities that Palestinians and Lebanese share as the product of shared history and lived experience in south Lebanon. On the other hand, Palestinian identities are not unified, and there are contradictions within them which have to be negotiated. For instance, Palestinian nationalism requires that individuals of diverse faiths unite under a common political platform in the interests of national unity. However, individual Palestinians often share more in common, on a personal level, with non-Palestinians who are adherents of the same religious sect. Similarly, internal differences of gender and generation work to destabilise the notion of a single Palestinian identity.

Research question 2

How are the discursive resources of identity appropriated and articulated in everyday life within the camps?

In the absence of a Palestinian state and its institutions, and Palestinians' continued status in Lebanon as stateless refugees, the discursive resources of Palestinian identity are appropriated and articulated in everyday life through formal and non-formal institutions within the camps (see Chapter 6, Institutions).

As was discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 3), national identity is not an innate 'fact'. Rather, in order to create a unified and collective national identity, myths are constructed of an 'authentic', shared culture which is marked out by symbols. These symbols are then performed by individuals through language, ritual and embodiment. Since there are no inherent qualities in any symbol that link it emotionally or cognitively to the nation, this linkage has to be learnt, and institutions, both formal and non-formal, play an important role in the production and reproduction of these symbolic systems.

For Palestinian youth in Lebanon, institutions such as the school, the family, political organizations, the media and religious institutions all function as important sites of identity production and performance. It is through these institutions that nationalist symbols play off one another 'intertextually' (Hall, 1996). Moreover, it is through these institutions that the nation produces and reproduces itself through everyday practices (Billig, 1995). Because institutions define what is 'normal', they are inscribed in relations of power. Therefore, the shared knowledge of 'Palestinian-ness' that is socially produced in and through these institutional sites is legitimated and made to appear 'factual', 'stable', 'neutral' and 'natural' through culture (Foucault, 1977). In this way, Palestinian youth come to accept dominant discourses of 'Palestinian-ness' as 'truth'.

This chapter argues that although institutional processes and practices produce shared notions of 'Palestinian-ness', these same processes also work to produce contestations

and construct internal ‘Others’. This is because there are vast challenges and complexities entailed in the process of trying to represent the diversity of the Palestinian experience through a single, hegemonic identity. Rather, symbols that are rooted in a cultural past are often divisive rather than unifying because different ethnic, religious and political groups have constructed different Palestinian histories. For example, the Muslim take up of Al Aqsa mosque as a symbol of Palestine is not taken up by Christians or secularists. Moreover, political symbols, such as the *kofiya* (black and white checked headscarf), are not taken up by Palestinians outside the Fatah (PLO) political organisation. In other words, the concept of ‘authenticity’ is highly problematic in the Palestinian context, and it challenges the very essence of Palestinian nationalist ‘imagining’.

Research question 3

How have Palestinian identities in Lebanon shifted across exilic generations?

As Palestinians have lived in exile for more than 60 years, Palestinian identities in Lebanon have continued to transform across exilic generations through the strategic negotiation of shifting discourses in Palestinian society (see Chapter 7, New Identities).

As discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 3), identity is not an already accomplished ‘fact’. Rather, all identities are constructed and performed within specific spatial and temporal contexts. Therefore, when economic, social or political conditions change over time, identities become contested, and new ‘hybrid’ subject positions emerge (Bhaba, 1990). In this way, identities are unstable positions that are always in the process of shifting, transforming and ‘becoming’ in relation to changing life conditions (Hall, 1996).

In the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, multiple new Palestinian identities have been constructed through ideological shifts in Palestinian society. For example, through

shifts in ethnic discourses in Palestinian society, Palestinian identities have slid along a continuum ranging from pan-Arabism to Palestinian nationalism. Similarly, through discourses of religion, Palestinian identities have slid along a continuum ranging from Palestinian nationalism to pan-Islamism. Moreover, the discourse of gender has cut across all of these discourses to construct new Palestinian ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ and new configurations of gender relations in Palestinian society. In addition, shifting discourses of nation and ‘home’ have worked to construct new Palestinian identities in relation to space and place through the processes of international labour migration and urbanization.

This chapter argues that there is no single ‘homogenized’ or ‘fixed’ Palestinian identity. Rather, as each version of the nation and ‘Palestinian-ness’ has been ‘imagined’, socially constructed and performed within a specific socio-economic and geo-political context, it has also been ‘re-imagined’, reconstructed and performed differently when discursive and material conditions have changed over time. As these shifting discourses in Palestinian society have continually repositioned Palestinians within the world and called upon them to interact with it in new ways, Palestinians have exercised agency and strategically taken up specific subject positions in specific contexts to gain positions of advantage. In this way, Palestinian identities have continued to shift and transform through the processes of resistance, negotiation and accommodation.

In the next section, I will discuss the important empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions this study makes to knowledge.

8.3 Contribution to Knowledge

Situated within the Western hegemonic discourse of ‘the war on terror’, most recent research on Palestinian identity has been through the disciplinary perspectives of Political Science and International Relations with the aim of finding ‘solutions’ to the problems of global security (Bueno de Mesquita, 2005; Debrix, 2005; Gregory, 2004;

Tilly, 2004). Within this discourse, studies on Palestinians have tended to concentrate on the political situation(s), violent events and their aftermath. On the other hand, the 'before' of violence, the way that identities and 'senses of belonging' are 'naturalized' in the 'banality' of everyday processes and practices, has rarely been addressed.

The few studies that have focused on Palestinian children have examined the effects of war, displacement and trauma on young people and have been conducted from within the paradigms of psychology and psychiatry (Ahearn and Athey, 1991; Ahmad, 1992; El-Bedour et al., 1993; Rousseau et al., 1998; Young, 1992). This research has generally been based on psychological or psychiatric measures derived from Western concepts of personhood and trauma (Abu Hein et al., 1993; Baker, 1990; Punamaki and Suleiman, 1990; Qouta et al., 1995). Moreover, these studies have tended to focus on individuals in isolation, rather than the lives of Palestinian children and youth in the context of the family group, the community and the wider social, economic and political arena. In other words, these studies have neglected the strong community-centric focus central to the Palestinian cultural context (Chatty and Hundt, 2005).

By contrast, this research study makes a strong contribution to knowledge by situating the study of Palestinian identity within a sociologically informed perspective on the educative processes of 'becoming' and belonging. By looking at the learning processes involved in young people creating a 'sense of self' through both formal and non-formal education institutions in Palestinian society, this study addresses a crucial gap in the literature. Moreover, this research is unique in that it examines the implications of identity on the choices made and the goals and aspirations set by Palestinian young people in Lebanon.

In addition to approaching the study of Palestinian identity from a different disciplinary perspective, this study also differentiates itself from others in terms of its contextual focus. By far, most academic research on Palestinian identity has focused

on Palestinians in the ‘Occupied Territories’ (the West Bank and Gaza). A few recent studies have been conducted on how Palestinian women negotiate their identities in refugee camps in Lebanon (Holt, 2006; Peteet, 1986; Sayigh, 2001). However, few, if any, of these studies have focused on the perspectives of Palestinian youth, how they see the world and how they understand their place in it. Moreover, most research with Palestinians in Lebanon has focused on refugee camps within the vicinity of the capital city of Beirut. Thus, the stories of Palestinians in south Lebanon, which has been shaped by unique geopolitical circumstances, have rarely been heard.

This study is also unique in its methodological framing and use of research methods. Most research on Palestinian identity has been conducted on a macro-level through the ‘gaze’ of Western-based Political Science or Psychoanalytic theory. However, this research study has taken a micro-level approach and been framed as an ethnographic case study. Moreover, it has used interviews, focus groups and PLA approaches to privilege the personal perspectives and interpretations of Palestinian young people in south Lebanon. In all of these ways, this study addresses key gaps in the literature and makes an important contribution to knowledge.

The next section will discuss the important implications this study has at the levels of the personal, the contextual and the theoretical.

8.4 Implications

Implications at the level of the personal

First of all, this study has important implications at the level of the personal. This research has challenged my understandings of identity, my self-perceptions and my worldview of ‘Others’.

As I reflect back on the original questions that motivated me to undertake this study (what does it mean to be(come) Canadian? How do diverse groups of people come to

feel Canadian? What part do educators play in this process?), I am struck by the extent to which my thinking has developed in relation to issues of identity. First, an implication of this study is that I am no longer looking to construct a 'checklist' of characteristics that define Canadian identity, as I realize that in an actual sense, it does not exist. Rather, Canada is an 'imagined community', and difference between Canadians (myself) and 'Others' has been politically and socially constructed and regulated through the erection and maintenance of physical, symbolic and structural boundaries between communities. Moreover, these boundaries are fluid and frequently repositioned in relation to shifting political, social and economic priorities. An example of this is how requirements for Canadian immigration and citizenship are continually repositioned in relation to shifting perceptions of economic need and shifting notions of who constitutes a 'suitable' Canadian citizen. This is played out through the ever-shifting immigration point system, which determines which individuals are to be included in and which are to be excluded from the Canadian national 'imagining'.

Another implication of this study is that my worldview has been challenged, as has my understanding of 'Others'. Through this research, I have come to appreciate the complexity of identity. For example, the findings of the study clearly show that there is no such thing as a 'homogenous' or 'fixed' Arab or Muslim identity. Rather, each individual is a 'bricolage' of multiple positionings in relation to nation, gender, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, location of residence and sexuality, among others. Moreover, these positionings are strategically performed by individuals in order to gain the most advantageous position in any situation. In this way, identities are temporary attachments to shifting subject positions. Therefore, an important implication of this study at the level of the personal is that I have learned that an essentialist Palestinian/Arab/Muslim identity and an 'authentic' Palestinian/Arab/Muslim perspective, among others, do not exist.

Implications for the Palestinian community in Lebanon

This study also has important implications at the level of the contextual. Identity was at the very heart of the Lebanese Civil War and is central to the modern 'Palestinian/Israeli conflict'. Therefore, this study is of extreme relevance to Palestinians in Lebanon and in the Middle East more generally.

First of all, this study directly challenges the theoretical underpinnings which inform UNRWA's field operations in Lebanon and in other countries. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Context), UNRWA is responsible for providing Palestinian refugees with social services. In this capacity, UNRWA has established clear guidelines which dictate who is to be included in its operational definition of a 'Palestinian refugee', and who is not. Being officially recognized as Palestinian by UNRWA is extremely critical because it regulates individuals' access to resources and opportunities. On the other hand, those not considered to be sufficiently Palestinian by UNRWA, such as refugees from the 1967 Six Day War, are not automatically entitled to receive humanitarian assistance and services from the agency. This study directly challenges the essentialist way in which UNRWA has constructed Palestinian identities and excluded certain groups from the national 'imagining'.

This study also directly challenges UNRWA's policymaking and practice. Although this research has clearly shown that identities are multiple and fluid, UNRWA's policies and practices often 'freeze' Palestinians into a monolithic whole. For example, as discussed in Chapter 6 (Institutions), UNRWA's implicit theoretical assumptions about Palestinian identity are reflected in its Religious Education curriculum, where Palestinians are assumed to be homogenously and 'eternally' Sunni Muslim, despite the presence of Shi'ites, Christians and secularists in UNRWA schools. This institutional practice of excluding religious minorities from equal representation and participation in Religious Education classes undermines their Palestinian 'citizenship' and marginalizes their participation in the nationalist project. In this way, UNRWA's current policies and practices implicitly promote social exclusion, unequal development and social/material disadvantage for some groups in Palestinian society.

This study also challenges the theorizations of identity implicit in the Palestinian/Israeli 'peace process'. Ignoring the complexity, diversity and transience of Palestinian subject positions, recent international negotiations have only included secularized, Sunni Muslim, male members of the Fatah political organization resident in the West Bank, such as Mahmoud Abbas, as 'official spokespersons' for the Palestinian people. In this way, Islamists, Palestinian Christians, Palestinian Shi'ites, Palestinians exiled in diaspora, women and young people have been constructed as 'Other', and their voices and perspectives have been effectively silenced through political processes. As discussed in Chapter 5 (Boundaries), an example of this is how the proposed 'two-state solution' to the Palestinian crisis envisioned by both Palestinian and international negotiators has failed to take into account that Palestinians resident in Lebanon share few, if any, cultural, economic, social and kinship ties with residents in the West Bank or Gaza (Ugland, 2003). Moreover, many Palestinian youth in Lebanon conceive of Palestine specifically as the villages in Galilee from which their families were exiled in 1948 and have no desire to 'return' to the 'foreign' land of what is presently known as the 'Occupied Territories' (West Bank and Gaza). Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 6 (Institutions), many young Palestinians in Lebanon express more interest in being officially integrated into Lebanese society than 'returned' to a land that they have no experience of and have never seen. In this way, this study has important implications for the theorization of identity in relation to the envisioning and construction of a future Palestinian state and the issue of repatriation of Palestinian refugees.

In addition, this study also challenges the ways in which Palestinians themselves are implicated in the construction of 'fixed' and 'essentialist' identities through institutions in Palestinian society. As discussed in Chapter 7 (New Identities), practically speaking, all Palestinians are forced to choose both a political and a religious affiliation, and these attachments to identity positions are often constructed in essentialist terms and in opposition to one another. For example, it is not possible to be both a Muslim and a Christian, or a supporter of both Fatah and Hamas. Rather, these identities have been constructed as 'binary opposites' and 'fixed' subject

positions, which are not open to negotiation. This has often resulted in full-blown armed conflict in the camps both between and within communities. Moreover, the construction of mutually exclusive identities has also promoted internal conflict within individuals. For example, Palestinian women have often been confronted with conflicting loyalties and forced to choose between allegiances to political determination and self-actualization, political and social citizenship, and tradition and progress (Yuval-Davis, 1997). In a similar way, Palestinian Christians have been forced to choose between allegiances to the 'Christian West' or other Arab Muslims, just as Muslims have been caught between the competing discourses of Palestinian nationalism and pan-Islamism, and fundamentalism and secularism. In this way, the findings of this study challenge the rigidity and essentialism through which Palestinian identities have been imagined through institutions in Palestinian society. Moreover, the research challenges the ways these institutions limit the life choices, as well as the goals and aspirations of Palestinian young people.

Implications for Education research, policy and practice

This study also has broader implications at the level of the theoretical and for Education research, policy and practice.

First of all, this study has important implications for the 'knowledge' that is produced and reproduced in textbooks and classrooms of 'Other' peoples, cultures and genders. As this study has clearly shown, identities are unstable positions that are neither purely individual nor collective. Rather, the agency of social actors opens the way for indeterminacy and fragmentation in projects of identity-formation. This problematizes the images often presented in textbooks and mediated through teachers of 'congealed' and 'essentialised' people groups and genders 'frozen' in space and time. In this way, this study has important implications for the construction of 'knowledge' about 'Other' peoples and how this 'knowledge' is passed on to students through educational processes and practices. Moreover, it also has implications for how people groups are represented in research more generally.

The findings of this study also challenge the mind/body binary prevalent in formal schooling and its emphasis on ‘disembodied’ intellectual acquisition of ‘objective facts’. As this study highlights, emotions and passions are crucial in the everyday project of nation-building, in the construction and appropriation of discursive resources and in the recognition and take-up of specific subject positions. As Benei argues, “emotionality is produced through, and feeds into, political, cultural, social, economic and gender negotiations of nationhood and citizenship” (Benei, 2008, p.5). This study has highlighted the ways in which learning is much more than an intellectual exercise. Rather, it is an emotional, sensory and embodied process that is involved in the production and regulation of the nation, citizens and identities. This has implications for how Education is theorised and practiced in schools.

Beyond theories of learning, this study also has implications for how Education is organized. The findings of this study challenge the general emphasis placed on secondary and higher education in the process of nation-building (Benei, 2008). The introduction of Citizenship Education relatively late in the programme of formal studies in many countries suggests that children are ‘alien’, or at best irrelevant to political processes, including those of patriotism and nationalism. However, this study clearly illustrates that educational processes crucial to the production of local, regional and national attachments are taking place from a much earlier age. Thus, this study has implications for how Citizenship Education is organized.

Perhaps most significantly, this study ‘decentres’ the school as the most important educational institution in the production of identities. As this study has clearly shown, the school is not necessarily the most important learning site for young people, particularly in the contexts of statelessness and diaspora. Moreover, the school does not exist in isolation. Rather, it is integrated into the political, social and economic fabric of society. Therefore, discourses produced in and through schools do not carry meaning or signify on their own. Rather, they accumulate meanings across a wide variety of institutions in society, such as the family, political organizations, religious institutions and the media (Hall, 1996). In this way, all

institutions function as important learning sites for young people, and schools work together with non-formal and informal institutions to produce and regulate identities in daily life. This has important implications for the erection and maintenance of disciplinary boundaries and organizational ‘silos’ around Education and Educational inquiry and practice.

Emanating from this, this study challenges the artificial divide between the school and the community. As this study has shown, identity construction and regulation takes place formally and informally through the rules, policies and practices of the school and other institutions in the community. This blurs the social and political divisions between these ‘fields’ and renders them almost meaningless. Moreover, it destabilizes accepted power structures and notions of ‘student’ and ‘teacher’. This has important implications for how Educational spaces are constructed and for how school-community engagement is theorized and practiced.

In the next section, I make suggestions for further research on Palestinian identity.

8.5 Further Research

This study has been situated within the specific political, social, temporal and geographical context of Palestinian refugees living in south Lebanon in the absence of a Palestinian state. Due to the specific geo-political and historical processes that have shaped south Lebanon, a unique Palestinian culture has developed there. Therefore, further research is needed on Palestinian identity within different geopolitical, demographic, temporal and methodological contexts. Moreover, further research is needed on the important Educational implications that have arisen through this study.

Geo-political contexts

Lebanon’s particular political complexity, sectarianism and history of conflict and civil war mean that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon face specific problems. For example, unlike in some other countries where a large portion of Palestinian refugees

are resident (Syria, Jordan), Palestinians in Lebanon do not have social and civil rights, nor do they have access to public social services. Moreover, Palestine refugees in Lebanon are considered to be ‘foreigners’ under state law, and are, therefore, prohibited from working in more than 70 trades and professions. This explains why out of all of UNRWA’s fields of operation (including The West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syria and Jordan),

Lebanon has the highest percentage of Palestine refugees who are living in abject poverty and who are registered with the Agency's ‘special hardship’ programme (UNRWA, 2003).

Among the ‘host countries’ where Palestinian refugees are resident, Lebanon also has a unique history of conflict and warfare. As discussed in detail in Chapter 2 (Context), from 1975-1990, Lebanon was embroiled in a devastating civil war. Moreover, Israel invaded south Lebanon in 1978, again in 1982, occupying it from 1982-2000 in the South Lebanon conflict (a sub-conflict of the Lebanese Civil War), and again in 2006. As a result, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is still deployed in south Lebanon to monitor military activity between Lebanese Hezbollah, Palestinian forces and the ‘Israeli Defense Forces’ (IDF). As a result of Lebanon’s unique history of conflict, Palestinian camps in Lebanon have come under siege and bombardment, experienced vast destruction of property and been the sites of massacres, such as those that took place at Sabra and Shatila camps near Beirut. Moreover, three Palestinian camps were destroyed during the civil war and never rebuilt (Nabatieh, Dikwaneh and Jisr Al Basha camps) and one camp was destroyed in the 2007 conflict between the Palestinian faction Fatah Al Islam and the Lebanese Army (Nahr Al Bared camp) resulting in the internal displacement of thousands of Palestinian refugees within Lebanon (UNRWA, 2003). In addition, Palestinians have come to be distrusted and despised by a large portion of the Lebanese population, as they are blamed for Lebanon’s conflicts with Israel, the Lebanese Civil War and the demographic imbalance that Palestinian settlement in Lebanon has brought to the balance of power in the country.

By contrast, Palestinians in other areas of settlement have not suffered from the same social and economic hardships or experiences of war as the refugees in Lebanon. For example, all Palestine refugees in Jordan enjoy full Jordanian citizenship, and they comprise the majority of the country's population. In Syria, Palestinian refugees have full access to government services such as schools, universities and hospitals (UNRWA, 2003). Moreover, since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, both Jordan and Syria have enjoyed relative peace, unlike Lebanon, which has been embroiled in almost constant conflict. As a result of these contextual differences, research findings from a study on Palestinian identity in Lebanon may not be applicable to Palestinian refugee populations in other areas of settlement.

Besides the marked differences in lived experience between Palestinians in Lebanon and Palestinians in other countries, the unique demographics and political history of south Lebanon are significantly different from those of other parts of Lebanon. For example, only south Lebanon is primarily rural, has a majority Shi'ite population and has a history of both PLO settlement and Israeli occupation. Therefore, the ways in which Palestinians construct 'self' and 'difference' in south Lebanon may differ markedly from how Palestinians in Sunni-dominated north Lebanon or Christian-dominated East Beirut do so. Therefore, further research on Palestinian identity construction and regulation is needed both in other countries where Palestinian refugees are resident as well as in other parts of Lebanon where significant Palestinian populations are settled.

Demographic contexts

In addition to researching Palestinian identity within different geo-political contexts, it is important to look at how specific populations within the Palestinian community in south Lebanon construct and negotiate their identities.

One area for further research is how the processes of urbanization affect the construction, regulation and performance of Palestinian identities. This study has primarily focused on how Palestinian refugee youth in UNRWA refugee camps

understand their sense of self and community in the context of living within a garrisoned community and being serviced almost exclusively through UNRWA institutions. However, further research is needed to determine how Palestinian identity is understood, regulated and enacted among youth who are resident in Lebanese towns and cities. Whereas camp residents live within a largely ‘closed’ community, urban Palestinian youth have regular interaction with Lebanese and often attend Lebanese private schools. Therefore, further research is needed to understand how interaction with Lebanese affects the youths’ construction, take-up and performance of Palestinian identities.

Related to the processes of urbanization are those of socio-economic class. A minority of Palestinians have acquired Lebanese citizenship, either through intermarriage with Lebanese or through shifting notions by the Lebanese government as to who constitutes a Lebanese. Therefore, these Palestinians are much more integrated into the Lebanese community and have access to employment opportunities and government services, such as public schools. Moreover, some Palestinian families have family members who are resident in Europe or North America (see Chapter 7, New Identities). These Palestinians regularly receive remittances in foreign currency which elevates their socio-economic standing in the community in relation to others and increases their chances of gaining access to higher education. These Palestinians are also more likely to obtain visas and have opportunities for international travel. Within these contexts, further research is needed to determine how socio-economic class affects the construction of Palestinian subject positions, how they are taken up and how they are lived by young people.

Temporal contexts

In addition to researching Palestinian identities within different geo-political communities and demographic populations, it is important to research how these identities change and evolve over time. As discussed in Chapter 7 (New Identities), nations are ‘imagined’, socially constructed and performed within a specific socio-economic and geo-political context. Therefore, when environmental conditions

change over time, nations are ‘re-imagined’, reconstructed and performed differently (Anderson, 1983). In this way, Palestinian identities have continued to be shaped and transformed through the socio-historical processes of the past sixty years. Within these ideological shifts, there have been significant changes in the constructions of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ and in the performance of gender relations within Palestinian society. Moreover, new ‘hybrid’, sub-national and supra-national identities have been created in response to shifting political discourses within the context of globalisation.

Within this context of constant change and uncertainty, any research on Palestinian identity is bound to be limited to taking a ‘snapshot’ of the community at a particular moment in time. Therefore, longitudinal research must be undertaken to understand how, why and under what circumstances Palestinian youth take up specific subject positions and the impact the take up of these identities has on their life choices and experiences.

Methodological contexts

It is also important to conduct further research on Palestinian youth within different methodological contexts. As discussed in Chapter 4 (Methodology), although identity is the topic of this research study, my researcher identities proved to be the most significant and challenging factor affecting research processes and outcomes. My location in the intersecting, and often antagonistic, discourses of gender, race, class, ethnicity and religion at any given time and place regulated my access to participants, the quality of data that I was able to collect, how I interpreted the data and how I constructed knowledge from it. Moreover, my complex status as both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ to the community proved to be both advantageous and disadvantageous to me at different times and in different situations in terms of achieving my research aims.

As the researcher is always particularly located within these different discourses, the knowledge that is created through the research process is inherently ideological,

political and permeated with values, assumptions and agendas. This means that my research findings are, in part, reflective of my various identities as a Canadian, non-Arab, Christian, female and 'wife of a Palestinian'. Therefore, researchers situated differently from me in relation to these discourses would be able to construct new and different knowledge about Palestinians in Lebanon. Thus, further research on this topic is needed by other researchers in order to enrich and nuance the picture I have painted of Palestinian young people's experience of social life in refugee camps and gatherings in south Lebanon.

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Semi-structured Interview Questions - Youth

1. For you, what does it mean to be 'Palestinian'?
2. How are Palestinians different from other people?
3. How do you feel about being Palestinian?
4. If you have the chance, do you want to obtain Lebanese citizenship? Why or why not?
5. For you, what were the most important historical events affecting the Palestinian community? Why were these important?
6. For you, what are the symbols of Palestine?
7. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian man?
8. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian woman?
9. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian Muslim?
10. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian Christian?
11. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?
12. How are your ideas of being a good Palestinian different from your parent's ideas?
13. Do your interests as a 'Palestinian' ever come into conflict with your interests as a 'Muslim' or as a 'woman'? Which identity is more important for you? Why?
14. Where do you learn about 'Palestine' and being 'Palestinian'?
15. How is this different from where your parents learned about being Palestinian?

16. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young people today? Why?
17. What do you think is the best way of helping Palestinian young people to develop a strong sense of identity?
18. What are your dreams for the future?
 - What level of Education do you want to achieve?
 - What job do you want to do?
 - Where do you want to live?
 - What contribution do you want to make to:
 - your family,
 - your community,
 - your nation?

Semi-structured Interview Questions - Teachers

1. What curriculum do you follow in UNRWA schools?
2. Are there any contentious issues in the Lebanese national curriculum?
3. Is there an official History book used in primary or secondary schools? If yes, how is the history of Palestine presented?
4. Is there an official Geography book used in primary or secondary schools? If yes, how is the country to the south of Lebanon depicted?
5. Is there an official curriculum on Palestine?
6. Do you teach about Palestine in your school? If there is no official curriculum on Palestine, how do you teach it?
7. Is there official communication and cooperation between UNRWA in Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority on Education?
8. What political groups are represented in the camps in south Lebanon? Which group predominates in each of the camps?
9. Do you agree with UNRWA's official position that UNRWA schools should follow the national curriculum of the host country?
10. What effect do you think using the Lebanese national curriculum has on Palestinian young people?
11. What do you think is the best way of teaching Palestinian young people in Lebanon about Palestine?

Semi-structured Interview Questions - Parents

1. For you, what does it mean to be 'Palestinian'?
2. How are Palestinians different from other people?
3. How do you feel about being Palestinian?
4. If you have the chance, do you want to obtain Lebanese citizenship? Why or why not?
5. For you, what were the most important historical events affecting the Palestinian community? Why were these important?
6. For you, what are the symbols of Palestine?
7. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian man?
8. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian woman?
9. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian Muslim?
10. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian Christian?
11. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?
12. How are your ideas of being a good Palestinian different from your children's ideas?
13. Do your interests as a 'Palestinian' ever come into conflict with your interests as a 'Muslim' or as a 'woman'? Which identity is the most important for you? Why?
14. When you were young, where did you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?
15. How is this different from where your children learn about being Palestinian?

16. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young people today? Why?
17. What do you think is the best way of helping Palestinian young people to develop a strong sense of identity?

Semi-structured Interview Questions – NGO/Community Leaders

1. For you, what does it mean to be ‘Palestinian’?
2. How are Palestinians different from other people?
3. How do you feel about being Palestinian?
4. If you have the chance, do you want to obtain Lebanese citizenship? Why or why not?
5. For you, what were the most important historical events affecting the Palestinian community? Why were these important?
6. For you, what are the symbols of Palestine?
7. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian man?
8. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian woman?
9. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian Muslim?
10. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why? What are the characteristics of a good Palestinian Christian?
11. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?
12. How are your ideas of being a good Palestinian different from your children’s ideas?
13. Do your interests as a ‘Palestinian’ ever come into conflict with your interests as a ‘Muslim’ or as a ‘woman’? Which identity is the most important for you? Why?
14. When you were young, where did you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?
15. How is this different from where your children learn about being Palestinian?

16. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young people today? Why?
17. What do you think is the best way of helping Palestinian young people to develop a strong sense of identity?
18. What does your organization do to help young people learn about 'Palestine' and being 'Palestinian'?

Semi-structured Interview Questions - Christians

1. For you, what does it mean to be 'Palestinian'?
2. How are Palestinians different from other people?
3. How are Palestinian Christians different from Palestinian Muslims?
4. Do you have more in common with Lebanese Christians or Palestinian Muslims?
5. Do Palestinian Christians experience the same discrimination as Palestinian Muslims? In what way?
6. How do you feel about being Palestinian? If you have the chance, do you want to obtain Lebanese citizenship? Why or why not?
7. In the Palestinian Christian community, what symbols of Palestine are used?
8. When you were young, where did you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?
9. How do young Palestinian Christians learn about being Palestinian?
10. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why?
11. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why?
12. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why?
13. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why?
14. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?
15. Do your interests as a 'Palestinian' ever come into conflict with your interests as a 'Christian' or as a 'woman'?
16. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young Palestinian Christians? Why?
17. Do you think it is important for young Christians to develop a strong sense of Palestinian identity?

18. What do you think is the best way of making sure that young Palestinian Christians develop a strong sense of identity?

RRA/PLA Interview Schedule

Research Questions	Sub-Questions	Methods Menu
1. How do Palestinian youth (male and female) in Lebanon understand and perform their identities vis-à-vis 'nationality', 'gender' and 'religion'?	1.1 Introduce yourself.	<p>1) Interview your partner and introduce them to the rest of the group (name, age, camp of residence, family background, school history, personal interests and hobbies, etc.)</p> <p>2) Write 4 statements about yourself, 3 true and 1 false. The others try and guess which statement about you is false.</p> <p>3) Draw a self-portrait and write three things about you that no one knows underneath it. (Hang the portraits around the room and have the youth try and guess the person behind each portrait.)</p> <p>4) Sit in a circle of chairs with one less chair than the number of participants. The person left standing calls out a fact about themselves (e.g.: I like falafel). All participants who share this fact switch chairs, while the person in the middle also tries to sit in one of the chairs. Repeat the process with the new person standing in the middle. ('upset the fruitbasket').</p>
	1.2 Where are you from? What brought you to	1) Draw a timeline outlining the most

	Lebanon?	significant historical events affecting the community. Discuss how these events have affected different members of the community (e.g.: men, women, boys, girls, Muslims, Christians)
	1.3 Describe Palestine.	1) Draw a picture of Palestine and write 5 sentences about it. (Analyze the symbols that emerge in relation to the gender and religion of the artist.) 2) Choose an item (object, view, taste, smell, feeling) that represents Palestine for you and describe it for the group.
	1.4 What does it mean to be Palestinian?	1) Role-play/draw 'good' Palestinian men, women and Muslims/Christians engaged in typical activities. (Analyze how nationality, gender and religion are embodied and enacted by each group.) 2) Create a collage of pictures from magazines (or create a list) of 'good' Palestinian men, women and Muslims/Christians. (Analyze why each person has been identified as a 'good Palestinian'.) 3) Create human sculptures/role-play to show how your ideas of being a 'good' Palestinian compare with your parents' ideas of being a 'good' Palestinian.
	1.5 What do men do to show that they are good Palestinians?	
	1.6 Give examples of good Palestinian men.	
	1.7 What do women do to show that they are good Palestinians?	
	1.8 Give examples of good Palestinian women.	
	1.9 What do Muslims/Christians do to show that they are good Palestinians?	

	1.10 Give examples of good Palestinian Muslims/Christians.	
	1.11 What do you do to show that you are a good Palestinian? Give examples.	
	1.12 How is your idea of a 'good' Palestinian the same or different from your parents' idea of a 'good' Palestinian?	
2. How do these identities interact with one another?	2.1 How are Palestinians the same as other non-Arab people, and how are they different?	<p>1) Draw the characteristics of one group (e.g.: Palestinians) on chart paper and compare them with another (e.g.: non-Arabs). (Analyze how nationality, gender and religion are embodied and enacted by each group.)</p> <p>2) Role-play an interaction between two groups (e.g.: Palestinian women and other women) and analyze what similarities and differences are perceived to exist between them.</p> <p>3) Create cards with adjectives written on them, and draw two overlapping circles on the board/floor labelled with the names of two groups (e.g.: Palestinian Christians and Palestinian Muslims). Indicate the extent to which these two groups are perceived to be the same or different from one another by placing the cards within the circles, representing differences, or within the overlapping portion,</p>
	2.2 How are Palestinians the same as other Arab people, and how are they different?	
	2.3 How are Palestinians in Lebanon the same as Palestinians in other countries, and how are they different?	
	2.4 How are Palestinian men the same as other men, and how are they different?	
	2.5 How are Palestinian women the same as other women, and how are they different?	
	2.6 How are Palestinian women the same as Palestinian men, and how are they	

	different?	representing similarities.
	2.7 How are Palestinian Muslims/Christians the same as other Muslims/Christians, and how are they different?	
	2.8 How are Palestinian Muslims the same as Palestinian Christians, and how are they different?	
3. How are the discursive resources of 'identity' appropriated and articulated in everyday life through different institutions within the camps?	3.1 Where do you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?	<p>1) Do a transect walk around the community with the youth noting places where young people congregate and activities they are engaged in.</p> <p>2) Map the community including residential areas, community centres, schools, religious institutions and centres of popular culture. Identify which institutions (or parts of institutions) are considered to be 'Lebanese' space, 'Palestinian' space, 'male' space, 'female' space, 'adult' space, 'young peoples' space, 'Muslim' space and 'Christian' space)</p> <p>3) Identify on the map the places where you learn about Palestine. Describe what you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian from each of these different institutions. (Analyze the findings in relation to the gender and religion of the participants.)</p> <p>4) Role-play how young people learn about</p>
	3.2 What do you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian from your family?	
	3.3 How do you learn it?	
	3.4 What do you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian from your community?	
	3.5 How do you learn it?	
	3.6 What do you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian from your school?	
	3.7 How do you learn it?	
	3.8 What do you learn about Palestine and	

	being Palestinian from your mosque/church?	<p>Palestine and being Palestinian in each institutional context and discuss how this might be the same or different for your parents' generation (Analyze the findings in relation to the gender and religion of the participants.)</p> <p>5) Create a Venn diagram by cutting out paper circles of different sizes to represent different education institutions. Rank the education institutions in order of significance in teaching young people about Palestinian identity, with the largest circle representing the institution of most significance, the smallest circle representing the institution of least significance and any overlap of circles representing the degree of coordination</p>
	3.9 How do you learn it?	
	3.10 What do you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian from media and popular culture (cinema, TV, music, graphic novels, internet, radio, etc.)?	
	3.11 How do you learn it?	
	3.12 Where does this media come from, and who produces it? (Palestinian Authority, Lebanese government, American television network, etc.)	
	3.13 If you want to learn about Palestine and being Palestinian, where do you go to find information? Why?	
	3.14 How did your parents learn about Palestine and being Palestinian? How is it the same or different from your experience?	<p>1) Complete a daily activity profile of activities done by males and another one done by females. Compare the responsibilities male</p>
	3.15 What responsibilities do Palestinian males have in the family?	

	3.16 What responsibilities do Palestinian females have in the family?	<p>and females have within different institutional contexts. (Analyze the findings in relation to the religion of the participants.)</p> <p>2) Role-play what is expected of males and females in each institutional context and what happens when societal expectations are not fulfilled. Discuss how this might be the same or different for your parents' generation. (Analyze the findings in relation to the religion of the participants.)</p> <p>3) Discuss scenarios with identity dilemmas (nation/gender/family/religion) and identify the circumstances under which different subject positions are prioritized.</p> <p>4) Conduct a 'Sociogram' of male and female 'responsibilities' in different institutional contexts</p>
	3.17 Do you always do these things? Why or why not?	
	3.18 What responsibilities do Palestinian males have in the community?	
	3.19 What responsibilities do Palestinian females have in the community?	
	3.20 Do you always do these things? Why or why not?	
	3.21 What responsibilities do Palestinian males have at school?	
	3.22 What responsibilities do Palestinian females have at school?	
	3.23 Do you always do these things? Why or why not?	
	3.24 What responsibilities do Palestinian males have in the mosque/church?	
	3.25 What responsibilities do Palestinian females have in the mosque/church?	

	3.26 Do you always do these things? Why or why not?	
	3.27 How are your ideas about the responsibilities of males and females the same or different from your parents' ideas?	
	3.28 Do your responsibilities as a Palestinian, a male/female and a Muslim/Christian ever come into conflict? In what contexts?	
	3.29 What happens when you don't do what is expected of you by others in these contexts?	
4. How do these identities influence the youth's construction of goals and aspirations for the future vis-à-vis: a) the family b) the community c) the nation a) educational attainment b) career selection and achievement	4.1 In the future, what contribution do you want to make to your family? Why?	1) Role-play/draw future scenarios depicting contributions you would like to make in each institutional context. (Analyze the findings in relation to the gender and religion of the artist.)
	4.2 In the future, what contribution do you want to make to your community? Why?	
	4.3 In the future, what contribution do you want to make to your nation? Why?	
	4.4 What level of education do you want to achieve and in what subject? Why?	

	4.5 What job do you want to do in the future? Why?	
	4.6 Where do you want to live in the future? Why?	
	4.7 How are your dreams for the future the same or different from the dreams of your parents' generation?	

Sociogram Statements (sample)

Ask the youth to decide if they agree or disagree with the following statements about the 'responsibilities' of males and females in Palestinian society in different institutional contexts (1=completely disagree and 5=completely agree):

Family:

1. Females should cook and clean in the home. (agree - 8)
 - 1
 - 2 3G
 - 3
 - 4 3G, 5B
 - 5
2. Males should pay all the expenses for the home. (strongly agree - 9)
 - 1 B
 - 2 G
 - 3
 - 4 3G, 2B
 - 5 2G, 2B
3. Females should take care of children. (strongly agree - 11)
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4 3G, 2B
 - 5 3G, 3B
4. Males should control the money in the home. (agree – 5 slim margin)
 - 1 2G
 - 2 G,B
 - 3 G,B
 - 4 2G, B
 - 5 2B
5. Females should teach Palestinian culture to the family. (strongly agree - 10)
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3 B
 - 4 3G, 2B
 - 5 3G, 2B
6. Males should make decisions for the family. (11 agree)
 - 1
 - 3
 - 4 6G, 5B
 - 5
7. Wives should obey their husbands. (strongly agree – 10)
 - 1

- 2 G
- 3
- 4 3G, 2B
- 5 2G, 3B

8. If there is a divorce, there is usually a problem with the woman. (disagree – 9)

- 1 G
- 2 5G, 3B
- 3 B
- 4
- 5 B

School:

1. It is more important for boys to do well at school than girls. (6 agree)

- 1 2G, B
- 2 B
- 3 G
- 4 3G, 2B
- 5 B

2. It is more important for boys to go to university than girls. (8 agree)

- 1
- 2 G
- 3 2B
- 4 3G, 2B
- 5 2G, B

3. Boys are better at science and math than girls. (strongly agree – 9)

- 1
- 2 G, B
- 3
- 4 3G, 2B
- 5 2G, 2B

4. Girls are better at languages and social science than boys. (strongly agree – 10)

- 1
- 2 B
- 3
- 4 3G, 2B
- 5 3G, 2B

Community:

1. Community leaders should be males. (agree – 9)

- 1
- 2
- 3 2G
- 4 4G, 5B
- 5

2. It is more important for the males in a community to get the best jobs.
(agree – 9)
 - 1
 - 2 G
 - 3 B
 - 4 4G, 2B
 - 5 G, 2B
3. Females can go out at night the same as males. (strongly disagree -11)
 - 1 5G, 5B
 - 2 G
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
4. Females can go to all the same places as males in the community (internet café, coffee houses, mosque...) (strongly disagree – 10)
 - 1 3G, 4B
 - 2 3G
 - 3
 - 4 B
 - 5
5. Females can do all the same activities as males in the community (sports...) (strongly disagree – 7)
 - 1 4G, 3B
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4 2G, 2B
 - 5
6. It is the females' responsibility to protect her honour and her family's honour by dressing conservatively and not going out with boys. (strongly agree – 8)
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3 B
 - 4 G
 - 5 5G, 3B

Interview Sample #1

Camp/gathering: Rashidieh
Sex: Male
Age: 16 years old
Religious affiliation: Sunni
Political affiliation: Fatah

1. For you, what does it mean to be a Palestinian?

Why do all Lebanese live in their homeland and we live in camps? We have water leaking through the roofs of our homes in winter. Those who don't have money can't emigrate. We can't get homes, we only stay in the camp. The government doesn't allow us to buy or sell our homes.

2. How are Palestinians different from other people?

They are away from their homeland. They are good people. They still fight Israel. Lebanese have more rights. They work in teaching, hospitals and other jobs that we can't do. In international maps, there is no name for our country. They write, "Israel".

3. How do you feel about being Palestinian?

I feel happy. We still protect our families because Israel stole our homeland. I feel sad why I'm not in Palestine and other Palestinian people die. I will take Lebanese citizenship, but I will still be Palestinian. It will help me to study. I will have more rights, but I will regret it if I am in Palestine. I will take it only because I am a refugee.

4. For you, what were the most important historical events affecting the Palestinian community? Why?

Until now, it didn't come. When they put "Palestine" in the place of "Israel" in international maps. They say they will give us Palestinian land, but this is only words. I hope to return back.

5. For you, what are the symbols of Palestine?

The flag, and Yasser Arafat. He is like my father. I love him. We can't find as him. I am in Fatah, and I have friends in Hamas. But when I sit with them, we say we are Palestinian. International people try to create a problem between us,

so we won't return to Palestine. Israel killed Arafat and Sheikh Ahmed Yassine (co-founder of Hamas) because they want Palestinian people to forget Palestine and fight each other. Everyday a Palestinian child will die due to this problem. I want to say to the international world, why do you live in homelands and we don't have one?

6. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why?

My father, because he taught me about Palestine through stories and through his life and his example. He encouraged me to study.

7. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why?

Women in our society who are teachers. Female teachers are better. They teach us to search about Palestine. They teach us about Palestine and give us books about Palestine and our right to return.

8. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why?

Sheikh Ahmed Yassine, because he was a good man. He loved Arafat and Palestine. He loved all people. He built generations of fighters, and I hope this generation fights Israel and not each other as they do now. Arafat also made generations of fighters. He was a student like us.

9. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why?

I love the Christian religion, but I don't hear about them. It is like Islam. They help us to fight Israel. Bethlehem is a Christian city, and I hope to meet them there. I don't differentiate between Muslims and Christians.

10. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?

I will be a good person, not for me but for Palestine. They will say this generation will help us to go back to Palestine. When I become a man, I will help others.

11. How are your ideas of being a good Palestinian different from your parent's ideas?

When my father looks at the problems between Fatah and Hamas, he says he doesn't want to be Palestinian. But I think differently, because this in-fighting will end.

12. Do your interests as a Palestinian ever come into conflict with your interests as a Muslim?

There is no conflict.

13. Where do you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?

From my family. They tell me stories, especially my grandfather. The teacher teaches us about the history of Palestine and gives us stories about Palestine and our right to return. In this library, I read many books. On the TV, the Israelis had a competition who could kill Mohamed Durra. I watch *Filastine*, *Al Aqsa* and *Al Jazeera* stations. It is hard to find Palestine homepages, but I try. Only a very few girls use the internet.

14. How is this different from where your parents learned about being Palestinian?

They didn't go to school. They learned from their families and the wars that happened in Lebanon and with Israel.

15. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young people today? Why?

It is getting weaker. They forget Palestine. They say, "what should we do, stay without work?" They feel we will not return to Palestine. If we think about it, we will lose life. No, let us love life.

16. What do you think is the best way of helping Palestinian young people to develop a strong sense of identity?

Make festivals that relate to the past. They talk about the history of Palestine and Palestinian identity and the conditions they live in as refugees when the Israelis kill them and put them in prison. They die due to powerlessness. Some drink alcohol to forget about what Israel did to us. They make us like animals.

17. What are your dreams for the future?

I will try to reach the highest level of Education to help the Palestinian people. I want to study Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Math, because those who do this are few. We can go only to UNRWA schools and private schools, but not Lebanese government schools. I want to be an Engineer to live life and help others. I will work in Europe or America, because I can't work as a Palestinian here. I will help my siblings to study and reach higher levels than me. For my mother and father, I will give them a good life. Using the internet, I will speak with Palestinians to stop fighting each other and fight only Israel.

Interview Sample #2

Camp/gathering: Rashidieh
Sex: Female
Age: 22 years old
Religious affiliation: Sunni
Political affiliation: Fatah

1. For you, what does it mean to be a Palestinian?

I don't care about being Palestinian. It doesn't mean anything to me. Palestinians don't have any rights. I don't like being Palestinian. I sometimes wonder why I have to live as a Palestinian. Life is not easy. I say that I am Palestinian, but these are only words. I don't feel it. I have never been there. It is only in my imagination. Why do I have to suffer for a country I don't know. Most of the young people feel this. I shouldn't say this, but it is true.

2. How do you feel about being Palestinian?

I don't care about it. It's not my life. I didn't see Palestine. I would take Lebanese citizenship to become free and to get my rights.

3. Where do you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?

From my family...TV...Fatah organization.

4. How is this different from how your parents learned about being Palestinian?

They learned about being Palestinian from their father and mother. My mother and father were born in Palestine, but they came to Lebanon when they were small.

5. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why?

Abu Omar (Yasser Arafat) because he tried to get rights for the Palestinian people but he was killed by Israel.

6. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why?

I have no idea.

7. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why?

No idea.

8. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why?

No idea.

9. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?

I talk about Palestine if I have feelings about it.

10. Do your interests as a Palestinian ever come into conflict with your interests as a Muslim or as a woman?

I choose my dream as a woman. I was not born as a Palestinian. I studied these things. I want to live as a woman as any other and marry who I like. At the same time, I don't hate Palestine but I don't know it. Between living in any country and Palestine, I choose the other country. Even if we live in Palestine, we have no rights. I am born to live not born to be a Palestinian.

11. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young people today? Why?

It is weaker. We will never go back to our homeland.

12. How does having a strong Palestinian identity benefit young people today?

It doesn't help us at all. We can't travel freely. It benefits some of them because they feel it, and some they don't care. Those who work in Fatah have strong identity. I am Palestinian because they teach me that I am Palestinian, but if I am not Palestinian it is better, because you can get what you want.

13. What do you think is the best way of making sure that Palestinian young people develop a strong sense of identity?

Bring old people to talk to young people. After this, I will do nothing. I might not teach my children about Palestine.

Interview Sample #3

Camp/gathering: Rashidieh
Sex: Male
Age: 20 years old
Religious affiliation: Sunni
Political affiliation: Hamas

1. For you, what does it mean to be a Palestinian?

Before I am Palestinian, I am Muslim and Arabic. I don't say I am Palestinian because the British divided Palestine into Jordan, Syria and many countries. I don't hate British people, but I hate British politics.

2. How are Palestinians different from other people?

We are all equal, and America tried to make Palestinians different. If they return to Palestine, I might go to Jordan or another country. In Palestine, there is Israel, and they should go away. Russians moved to Palestine, which is not their right. Palestine should be free, but I don't care if I live in Palestine, Lebanon or Jordan. There is nothing different. I care more about being Muslim.

3. How do you feel about being Palestinian?

I am proud I am an Arabic, Palestinian Muslim. We are all Arab, not Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian or Jordanian. My God doesn't say I am Palestinian, he says I am Muslim. Arabs are from *ASham* (Levant) and *Al Maghrabi* (North Africa). We know who are the Arab people. It is not only the language.

4. If you have the chance, do you want to obtain Lebanese citizenship? Why or why not?

No, because I will forget Palestine, and America and Israel will become happy.

5. For you, what were the most important historical events affecting the Palestinian community? Why?

Al Nakba (the 'catastrophe'), when Israel took Palestine.

6. For you, what are the symbols of Palestine?

The *Kinanioon* (Canaanites) when they were in Palestine.

7. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why?

Those who are fighting Israel, because he kills women and children. Abdul Khadr Al Husseini. He was a *shaheed* (martyr). He became a *shaheed* because of Israel.

8. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why?

No woman.

9. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why?

All Muslims. I am Muslim in my blood.

10. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why?

Jesus. I don't have a problem with Christians, but I prefer old Christians, not from this time.

11. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?

When I show democracy.

12. How are your ideas of being a good Palestinian different from your parent's ideas?

I am more strict with my sisters than my parents because we are Muslims.

13. Do your interests as a Palestinian ever come into conflict with your interests as a Muslim or as a woman? How?

I am Muslim first. First I am a man, then I am a Muslim and then I am a Palestinian.

14. Where do you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?

From when I drank milk from my mother, I learned I was Palestinian. In school, they don't have books or lessons on Palestine, but my teacher, who was from *Dimocratiya* (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine) spoke to me about Palestine. We tried to make books about Palestine, but UNRWA didn't accept this. I also learned from the TV, especially *Al Jazeera* (Qatari-based channel) and *Al Manar* (Hezbollah channel). In other countries, they don't talk about Palestine in the media. They ignore the issue.

15. How is this different from where your parents learned about being Palestinian?

They knew about it from being born there. My grandfather saw the first war.

16. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young people today? Why?

My friends and I talk about Palestinian identity. The foreigners want the Palestinians to forget Palestine, but I love and need Palestine. The young are developing their ideas about Palestine.

17. What do you think is the best way of helping Palestinian young people to develop a strong sense of identity?

The situation teaches young people about Palestine. We can make a meeting and talk about Palestine. Fatah talks about Fatah, and Hamas talks about Hamas, not all of Palestine. When I was a student, I was Fatah. Now I am Hamas.

18. What are your dreams for the future?

I am studying to be a dentist now. My father wanted me to be a dentist, but I dreamt of studying Political Science and *Shari'a* law. But it is not possible for me to work in the UN because I will be a pawn of the US. I want all the Arabs to be united and in agreement, and I can make an organization to help them. All western countries help George Bush.

Interview Sample #4

Camp/gathering: Al Bas
Sex: Male
Age: 45 year old father (f) and 16 year old son (s)
Religious affiliation: Christian
Political affiliation: Independent

1. For you, what does it mean to be a Palestinian?

Being Palestinian is everything to me. I want to go back because we were happy there. We had our own freedom. (f)

I don't care about Palestine. I lived all my life here, and I don't want to go back. Palestine doesn't mean anything for me. Muslims follow what their families say. But we say for what? We have never been there before. We live in Lebanon and this is our country. I am Christian first. (s)

2. How are Palestinians different from other people?

Palestinians have no identity. We don't have any rights. If anybody asks about this place, they always think we are terrorists. Because we are Christians, Muslims don't accept us as Palestinians. We don't receive food or money. We are also not accepted by Lebanese. We wish we are not in an Arab country but in Europe where we will get citizenship. (f)

3. How are Palestinian Christians different from Palestinian Muslims?

We have no rights because we are Christians. Because we are Christians, Muslims don't accept us as Palestinians. We don't receive food or money. In the festivals, they give gifts only to Muslims. To work in UNRWA, you must be Muslim. (f)

4. Do you have more in common with Christian Lebanese or Muslim Palestinians?

Lebanese Christians. Most of my children have a Lebanese wife or husband. (f)

5. Do Palestinian Christians experience the same discrimination as Palestinian Muslims?

Christian Palestinians are like Muslim Palestinians. But, Christians are not telling their children about Palestine. We have suffered a lot from Palestinian identity, so why would we teach our children about it? Young Palestinian Christians are well integrated into Lebanese society. Even Lebanese Christians don't like Palestinian Christians, but because we have intermarriage, they accept us for this reason. We never talk to our children about Palestine. In a couple of generations, they will forget about Palestine. (f)

6. In the Palestinian Christian community, what symbols of Palestine are used?

Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The *kofiya* (*black and white checked scarf*) means nothing for us. We wear it only to keep warm. We go out of the camp and then only to our home, so we don't see pictures of *kofiya* and *Al Aqsa* (mosque). But we don't hate Muslims. We are neighbours, and we have good relations with them. We share sorrow and happiness.

7. How do you feel about being Palestinian?

I feel proud but I also feel lost because there is no nationality. (s)

We want Lebanese nationality for our children's future. Even if we have high education, we will not get jobs. If the young people marry Palestinians, they want to return. If not, they want to stay in Lebanon. All my children here are married to Lebanese. I want to stay with them. (f)

We would rather live in Europe because there is no peace here. In Europe, there is health insurance. There, they treat people as humans. If not Europe, I would choose Lebanon with peace. (s)

8. When you were young, where did you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?

Older people learned in UNRWA schools and from their families. Now young people don't learn in school (f)

9. How do young Palestinian Christians learn about being Palestinian?

We don't learn from school. We don't know anything about Palestine, and our families don't talk about Palestine. They ask us not to get involved in politics. We don't learn about Palestine from the TV or internet. If we use the internet, we don't search for anything about Palestine. (s)

Young people will follow their families, but because of the bad economic situation, we don't think about anything else. (f)

10. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why?

My grandfather, because he is a good person. We don't think about this. (s)

11. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why?

Hanan Ashrawi, because she is a strong woman. It is not important to have many children because of the economic situation. Christians are different. We don't expect women to stay segregated from men or stay home at night like the Muslims. (f)

12. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why?

We don't know. (f)

13. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why?

We live as Lebanese. We don't think of these things. We never interfere in politics. It's enough to think about our lives and meet our children's needs. (f)

14. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?

Our good behaviour. We don't interfere with other people. We mix with Palestinian Muslims in events. We are their neighbours. (f)

15. Do your interests as a Palestinian ever come into conflict with your interests as a Christian?

I am a Christian first, but being Palestinian means something to me. This shows we have a country and history, but it doesn't affect my life. (s)

I don't like to make troubles or interfere. I want to be a Palestinian in a peaceful way. Being Palestinian in Palestine is good, but outside Palestine, nationality means nothing. As a Palestinian born in Lebanon, we saw that Palestinians and Lebanese are not equal. We never feel happy to be Palestinian...As Christians, we love everyone. Jesus forgives Jews. We are proud of our Christianity, and we must forgive. We don't hate Israel or anyone, and the Bible teaches us to bless our enemies. (f)

16. Do you think it is important to teach Christian young people about their Palestinian identity? Why?

It is very important. (f)

I sometimes listen to my father when he talks about Palestine, but we children don't care about it. (s)

17. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young Palestinian Christians? Why?

For Muslims, yes, for Christians, no. Most Palestinian Christians are married to Lebanese. We never talk to our children about it. (f)

18. What do you think is the best way of making sure that young Palestinian Christians develop a strong sense of identity?

Teach them stories about Palestine, but Christians are not telling their children about Palestine. (f)

Interview Sample #5

Camp/gathering: Burj A-Shemali
Sex: Male
Age: 47 years old
Religious affiliation: Shi'ite
Political affiliation: Hezbollah

1. For you, what does it mean to be a Palestinian?

I was born in Palestine and my grandfather's grandfather was born there. Palestinian people don't have their rights. Palestine is for some Jews but not for the ones who immigrated from abroad. I lost 5 sons and my wife was burned with napalm during the 1982 Israeli invasion. Many countries are against us. America dictates for us. Cluster bombs kill our children. We must teach our children Palestine is our country and Zionism is our enemy.

2. How do you feel about being Palestinian?

I took Lebanese nationality. This camp is like a prison surrounded by the army with only one exit. We can't work in 70 professions. I don't feel Lebanese but I took Lebanese citizenship to be free. I have 2 daughters who are now working in a hospital, and they went to a Lebanese university. Because of this, I didn't pay for their university.

3. When you were young, where did you learn about Palestine and being Palestinian?

I learned about it from my family.

4. How does the younger generation learn about being Palestinian today?

Coordination between institutions is impossible because teachers see themselves only as employees and not as responsible for the Palestine issue. The head of UNRWA doesn't care about the poor standards in Education in Lebanon. There are 724 students in Privé in Lebanon but only 262 passed. Where do the other students go, fanaticism? Prison? Education is the only option.

5. For you, who is a good Palestinian man? Why?

He has not been born yet. Everyone who fights for Palestine. Without a homeland, you are nothing. How do others look at you? We have no honour.

Islamic Shi'ites have been fighting Israel, and Hezbollah has given us hope to defeat Israel. Hassan Nasrallah (leader of Hezbollah) is a 'good Palestinian' because he fights the Israelis. He works for Palestine more than the people in the camp. Identity doesn't mean you must be Palestinian by nationality. Humanity between people is more important than identity cards.

6. Who is a good Palestinian woman? Why?

Women in the community who work for Palestine.

7. Who is a good Palestinian Muslim? Why?

Haj Amin Al Hussein who was the leader of Muslims in Al Quds who refused to partition Palestine into Muslim and Jewish lands.

8. Who is a good Palestinian Christian? Why?

Atala Hana, a priest from Al Quds who doesn't distinguish between Muslims and Christians and who was in jail for being against the occupation. He refused to sell church land to Israel.

9. How do you show that you are a good Palestinian?

To be a good Palestinian you have to have knowledge, a profession, and be honest like the Armenians. You should be an entrepreneur and take initiative to help yourself and not sit and wait and sleep.

10. Do your interests as a Palestinian ever come into conflict with your other interests?

Both females and males are without rights. They must work together for Palestine. Fanaticism is gaining. To wear the *hijab* (Islamic head covering worn by women) is fashion and women wear it out of social pressure, not necessarily because they believe. The US and Europe are against democracy which has caused increased corruption and fanaticism in the Middle East.

11. Do you think Palestinian identity is getting stronger or weaker among young people today? Why?

Palestinian identity is getting stronger because the situation and conditions of Palestinians are getting worse. With a Palestinian identity card, you are punished more. This makes the younger generation boil from inside. There is no justice.

12. What do you think is the best way of making sure that Palestinian young people develop a strong sense of identity?

Give them spaces to play, to be free and teach them when they are playing. Try to fight both corruption and fanaticism to have power from inside. Cooperate with the Popular Committee. However, there is no unity between different Palestinian groups, such as Fatah and Hamas. 'If I am not with you exactly, I am against you'. We fly flags of all political parties instead of flying only the Lebanese and Palestinian flags. Palestinians have many political identities. The young generation should stop following political parties.

Interview Sample #6

Camp/gathering: Al Bas (m); Burj A-Shemali (f)
 Sex: Male; Female
 Age: 31 years old (m); 30 years old (f)
 Religious affiliation: Secular
 Political affiliation: Independent

1. What is expected of Palestinian males and females in Palestinian society?

A Palestinian male should work to get a good income, to get married and have a family. A woman should love her husband. She does everything to support the children. She is respected in society. She sacrifices for her family. She doesn't talk about her problems to others. She tries to give a good impression of her family. She is for one man, her husband...If a woman is not a virgin, they take it that she is a bad woman. She is often kicked out of the home and considered dead. This is why there is so much control on women's behaviour. On the contrary, mothers feel proud of their son if he has many experiences with women...If you are not married when you are young, it is weird and people make comments about you. They will doubt the man's sexuality. Women have to wait for proposals. They can never propose. The single man still finds many ways to enjoy his life. People are forced to be heterosexual and to marry...When girls become older, they feel it is shameful if they don't wear a *hijab* (Islamic headcovering worn by women) or a *chadour* (black robe worn by Shi'ite women). When they marry, they wear the *hijab* to keep their beauty for their husbands. Some families force the girls to wear a *hijab* or *chadour*. (m)

Women in our society, especially the Palestinian culture, cannot do whatever they want, because sometimes it is shameful to do this or that. But men can do whatever he wants to do to express himself. A woman has limited rights. She can take care of the children, do housework, look after her husband. She cannot be independent. She always has to follow a man, her father, her brother and her husband when she gets married. Nowadays, she can work, but in limits, but always the man complains because he sees that his wife doesn't fulfil her obligations...Women should always be a virgin. It is catastrophic when she is not. It is a sign of a good woman. The husband can make a scandal if he discovers she is not a virgin. More than 98% will ask her to leave the house. We have no open-minded man in this society. The man can do whatever he wants because he is a man. They think it is something related to honour. But a man's mistake is little compared to a woman's. Even a girl who is raped wants to have surgery to get back her virginity. They show the bed sheet to the family of the

man to prove she is a good woman. If a woman is not a virgin, maybe she can't get married...The perfect marriage age for women is 18-25 for females and 25-30 for males. If a woman doesn't marry by a certain age, she should marry whoever. Her life will be almost destroyed if she is not married. A man will marry one but then have a mistress. A woman can't do this. He doesn't want to marry more than one because of financial obligations, although the *Qu'ran* says he can have four. The single woman follows her brother and father and then her husband...Most women in society like to cover (wear the *hijab*), but some people don't follow this. There are more *hijabs* in the Palestinian society than the Lebanese society. Palestinian society is more conservative than Lebanese society, especially in the camps. Some women like to cover. There are girls wearing *hijabs* or *chadours* while their mothers are not doing so. Maybe this is because of association with Islamic movements or because of pressure from society. (f)

2. Do you always do these things? Why or why not?

Males follow the culture because they are marginally convinced. To follow the culture is good for men because they get a lot, but women don't. Men, even if they are married can go out and meet women. A woman can't live her life as she wants. The married woman is more free...Women are forced to obey the culture or rebel in secret. Even if a woman is divorced or a widow, she won't have many men coming to propose to her because she is second-hand. If someone proposes to her, he will be a widower and want someone to raise his kids and take care of the home...I don't always follow the culture because I don't believe in all that the society imposes. I take some but not all. I believe life should be harmony between couples. We discuss and decide what to do. I hate that most men still beat their wives. We are in the 21st century. Men behave like dictators. I don't care what people say. I rebel against the society. Most people think I should be married. I want to marry someone I'm convinced about, not what the society says. I don't like traditional marriage. It should be everlasting and never say goodbye, not to dump her when she gets old. Even beautiful people lose their beauty. Spiritual beauty doesn't fade. (m)

For me, I don't like to follow the society because I think I have a lot of energy inside me as a woman to express my feelings, to achieve a lot of things. In my society, there are chains around the woman. People find only in woman that her body is sometimes weak. She cannot achieve things by herself. I think woman is like man and she can do what man can do. In other side, I don't appreciate in my society when men commit mistake, they forgive and they say he is man. But for woman, when she does that, nobody will forgive her, and every time remind her of it, and it influences her whole life. But we, as a new generation, rebel against all those complications. (f)