HAQ AL AWDA:

Palestinian refugees' views on the Right of Return

"My son, houses die when their inhabitants are gone" Mahmoud Darwish 1995

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: Sobhi Albadawi

Date: 10th January 2019

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Jaber Khamees Albadawi, who kept dreaming, like millions of Palestinian refugees, to return home. To my mother, Hadia Albadawi, who's longing to return to Palestine I witnessed in her eyes and daily conversations. To all refugees around the world searching for a place to call home. To all Palestinian refugees who are longing to return to their homes in Palestine. To my lovely wife, Eman, and my beautiful children, Milad, Malik and Marcel.

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The Australia Sociology Association (TASA) Conference 2014, The Role of the United Nations and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and Right of Return.

ABSTRACT

Right of return has been a fundamental claim by Palestinian people since 1948. The 'right' refers to the political position or principle that all generations of Palestinian refugees have the right to return to the property they or their forebears left behind during the 1948 Palestinian Exodus, and following the 1967 Six-Day War. Our current understanding of the Palestinian refugee perspective of the right of return however is limited due to the potential impact of changing socio-political conditions on Palestinian refugees' views and the relative marginalisation of the refugee voice in the peace process.

The aim of this study is to examine and update Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return. Towards this aim, five aspects are given focus: the negotiation for the right of return; the centrality of the right of return claim to Palestinian refugees; compensation and the right of return claim; resettlement and the right of return claim; and the phase out of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. This aim emerged directly in response to the marginalised Palestinian refugee voice and an interest in exploring the extent to which the right of return claim remains 'sacred' to them.

Gaining access to interview refugees is challenging given the security situation and University ethics protocols. The study therefore adopted a quantitative research design including convenience sampling methods to recruit participants. The sample comprised 1200 participants from five refugee camps located in the West Bank. A self-administered survey instrument was used to facilitate the safe and confidential collection of data on the respondents' views of a broad range of issues and social conditions. The survey was also designed to collect refugees' demographic data (e.g., gender, age, education level attained etc.). This facilitated another key objective of this study; namely, to identify any significant relationships between demographic variables and refugee perceptions of the right of return claim or to its other key elements. Also considered in this thesis as a point of interest is the perceived 'sacredness' of the right of return to the Palestinian people as expressed in the literature.

This study finds that most surveyed Palestinian refugees participants living in the West Bank are committed to the right of return as recommended in Resolution 194, and that most would not accept a peace agreement that did not include the provision

for the right of return to their homeland. In addition, most surveyed Palestinian refugees reported that they would not accept compensation as a substitute for the right of return and just over half of all participants favoured resettlement in their original homes. Lastly, the surveyed Palestinian refugees overwhelmingly indicated that they wanted to remain aligned to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency until the right of return is actioned.

The main conclusion drawn from these findings is that, even after 70 years of displacement, the right of return remains an active but changing political construct among Palestinians in refugee camps located in the West Bank. Furthermore, based on the findings indicating most respondents remain committed to Resolution 194 and demonstrate a general reluctance towards accepting compensation or resettlement as a substitute, this study concludes that the right of return claim maintains a sense of sacredness among the surveyed refugees. As such, future negotiations must consider the generational narratives and ensure that the right of return claim, resettlement, and compensation particularly are not treated as mutually exclusive in the delivery of a just solution to the displacement of Palestinian refugees.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication iii
Acknowledgment iv
Supervisory Team vi
Associated Publications vii
Abstract viii
List of Figures xiii
List of Tables xiv
Glossary xv
1 Introduction 18
1.1 Understanding the Palestinian refugee right of return 18
1.2 The broader Palestinian-Israeli conflict 23
1.3 My connection to the Palestinian plight and the right of return 25
1.4 The gap in our knowledge and why it matters 33
1.5 Research questions and design of this project 36
1.6 Overview of thesis structure 37
2 Literature Review 41
2.1 Introduction 41
2.2 Orientalism and the marginalised voice 44
2.3 The right of return 48
2.3.1.2 Opposition to Resolution 194 53
2.4 The sacredness of right of return to the Palestinian refugee 55
2.5 Research perspectives 59
2.6 Resettlement and compensation 65
2.7 Political representation of the Palestinian refugees 69
2.8 Changing role of United Nations Relief and Works Agency 71
2.9 Conclusion 73
3 Research Methodology 75
3.1 Introduction 75
3.2 Entry into the field 75
3.3 Research design 81
3.4 Participant recruitment 91
3.5 Data collection 93
3.6 Data analysis 95
3.7 Ethical considerations 97

3.8 Conclusion 100
4 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Palestinian Refugees in the Occupied Territories and camps conditions 101
4.1 Introduction 101
4.2 Population characteristics of the refugee camps in the occupied territories: An overview 102
4.3 The Survey 108
4.4 Conclusion 132
5 Right of Return (*Haq Al-Awda*) 134
5.1 Introduction 134
5.2 Right of return as a historical claim: Conflicting perspectives of Al Nakba 136
5.3 Right of return as an inter-generational narrative 140
5.4 Right of return as a legal claim 145
5.5 Survey questions on the right of return 146
5.6 Conclusion 162
6 Compensation 164
6.1 Introduction 164
6.2 Overview of refugee compensation 165
6.3 Compensation as a historical claim and responsibility: Palestinian perspectives 168
6.4 Survey questions on compensation 170
6.5 Conclusion 189
7 The Refugee Camps and Attitudes towards Resettlement 191
7.1 Introduction 191
7.2 Resettlement 192
7.3 Palestinian position on resettlement 193
7.4 Israel's position on resettlement 194
7.5 Survey questions on resettlement 197
7.6 Conclusion 211
8 The Role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees 213
8.1 Introduction 213
8.2 The genesis of UNRWA 214
8.3 UNRWA in the aftermath of the 1993 peace agreement 226
8.4 UNRWA phase out 227
8.5 Survey questions on UNRWA 230
8.6 Conclusion 244

9 Conclusion 246
9.1 Introduction 246
9.2 Main Research Findings 247
9.3 Implications of the findings 251
9.4 Contribution of the study 253
9.5 Limitations of this study 254
9.6 Future research 254
10 Reference List 256
11 Appendices 310
11.1 Appendix 1: Questionnaire and cover letter (English version) 310
11.2 Appendix 2: Questionnaire and cover letter (Arabic version) 326
11.3 Appendix 3: Study advertisement (English and Arabic versions) 336
11.4 Appendix 4: Letter of granting approval from the Popular Committee to access the refugee camps 339
11.5 Appendix 5: Letter of approval from Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee 341
11.6 Appendix 6: Emails to approve study from United Nations Office – Hebron 343
11.7 Appendix 7: The politics of resettlement 348

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Distribution of study population in the West Bank by camp 2014, according to UNRWA Distribution of study population in the West Bank by camp 2014, according to UNRWA.....86
Figure 4.1: Population of registered Palestinian refugees (1948) by current location, end-2016 105
Figure 4.2: Population of registered Palestinian refugees (1948 &1967) by current location, end-2011.....106
Figure 4.3: Sample distribution by age group in surveyed camps, 2013, %.....110
Figure 4.4: Sample distribution by gender in surveyed camps, 2013, %.....112
Figure 4.5: Refugee political affiliation in the surveyed camps, 2013, %.....114
Figure 4.6: Sample distribution by area of expulsion in surveyed camps, 2013, %..117
Figure 4.7: Sample distribution by academic qualification in surveyed camps, 2013, %. 118
Figure 4.8: Sample distribution by family members per household in surveyed camps, 2013, %. 121
Figure 4.9: Sample distribution by number of rooms in surveyed camps, 2013, %..122
Figure 4.10: Sample distribution by house ownership in surveyed camps, 2013, %.123
Figure 4.11: Sample distribution by profession in surveyed camps, 2013, %.....124
Figure 4.12: Sample distribution of the number of people employed in the family in surveyed camps, 2013, %.....126
Figure 4.13: Sample distribution by monthly income in Israeli Shekels in surveyed camps, 2013, %. 127
Figure 4.14: Sample distribution by receipt of special benefits from UNRWA in surveyed camps, 2013, %.....129
Figure 4.15:Sample distribution by primary reasons for receiving special benefits from UNRWA in surveyed camps, 2013, %.....130
Figure 4.16: Sample of Palestinian refugee religious practices in surveyed camps, 2013, %. 132
Figure 5.1: Committed to the right of return as it is recommended in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194 according to age, 2013, %. 149
Figure 5.2: Commitment to the right of return as it is recommended in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194 according to level of income in Israeli Shekels, 2013, %. 151
Figure 5.3: Commitment to the right of return as it is recommended in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194 according to political affiliation, 2013, %. 153
Figure 5.4 It is not possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their native homelands according to age, 2013, %. 157
Figure 5.5 It is not possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their native homelands according to political affiliation, 2013, %. 159
Figure 5.6 It is not possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their native homelands according to income, 2013, %. 161
Figure 6.1: I would accept compensation because it is unlikely for the refugees to return back to their home-towns in 1948 by age and gender, 2013, %.....177
Figure 6.2: I would accept compensation if some refugees have already accepted compensation claims, by age of refugees, 2013, % disagree.....179

Figure 6.3: Refugees would accept compensation if the Palestinian Authority accepts it, by political affiliation, 2013, % disagree. 182
Figure 6.4: Refugees would accept compensation if the Palestinian Authority accepts it, by age, 2013, % disagree 184
Figure 6.5: Refugees would accept compensation if the Palestinian Authority accepts it, by income and gender, 2013, % disagree. 186
Figure 6.6: Refugees would accept compensation if Israel accepts it, by age, 2013, % disagree. 188
Figure 7.1: Palestinian refugee perceptions about where Palestinian refugees should be permanently settled by age, 2013,%. 199
Figure 8.1: The PA should take over UNRWA responsibilities, by age 2013, %. 231
Figure 8.2: The UNRWA is an effective monitor of problems and daily hardships faced by refugees, by level of education and gender, 2013, %. 235
Figure 8.3: Dismantling the UNRWA will diminish the Palestinian cause in the eyes of the world community; by age, 2013, %. 237
Figure 8.4: The PA should accept the withdrawal of UNRWA from refugee camps as part of a peace settlement, by political affiliation, 2013, %. 239
Figure 8.5: UNRWA should continue to function until all refugees are returned, by participants income level (Israeli Shekels), 2013, %. 242
Figure 8.6: UNRWA should continue to function until all refugees are returned, by participant age, 2013, %. 243

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Demographic variables applied in data analysis and justification 97
Table 6.1: Summary of Agreements and their main proposals 173
Table 6.2: Surveyed participants' results on four conditions of compensation, 2013, %. 174
Table 7.1: Palestinian refugee perceptions of camp conditions, resettlement, redevelopment and dismantlement 2013, %. 203
Table 7.2: Palestinian refugee perceptions of camp conditions, resettlement, redevelopment and dismantlement according to age group, disagree, 2013, %. 205
Table 7.3: Palestinian refugee perceptions of camp conditions, resettlement, redevelopment and dismantlement according to gender, agree, 2013, %. 209

GLOSSARY

ABBREVIATIONS

UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) The sole political and paramilitary organization that represents the Palestinians
PA	Palestinian Authority: The administrative organization that governs parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was formed in 1994, and has since been renamed the Palestinian National Authority (PNA)
ROR	Right of return.
UN	United Nations
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees was established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees. The Agency began operations on 1 May 1950.
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PIC	The Palestinian-Israeli conflict
UNCCP	United Nations Conciliation for Palestine
UNRPR	UN Relief for Palestinian Refugees
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
DOP	Declaration of Principles
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
SC RES	Security Council Resolution
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
IRO	International Refugee Organisation
UNRPR	United Nation Relief for Palestinian Refugees
ESM	Economic Survey Mission
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
IGOs	International Governmental Organisations

KEY TERMS

1967 Borders:	It also includes the boundaries between Israel, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and Sinai Peninsula, as negotiated in the truce agreement of the 1967 Six-Day War

Al Nakba:	The Arabic word for catastrophe, used by Arabs to refer to what is called the War of Independence by the Jews
Al Naksa:	The Arabic word for the setback which marks the displacement of many Palestinian after 1967 war that resulted in the occupation of West Bank and Gaza Strip.
Al-awda:	Arabic word for the right of return to homeland
Green Line or 1948 borders:	Also known as the 1949 Armistice Line, it was the boundary set between Israel and Jordan after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The name came from the green pencil line drawn during cease fire negotiations between the two countries. The boundaries set between Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War
Hamas	Palestinian Islamist political party that has governed the Gaza strip since 2007. Rival party of Fatah, although the two parties signed a reconciliation agreement in 2011. Considered a terrorist organization by the United States.
Intifada	Means to literally "shake off" in Arabic. The first intifada was a revolt that began in December 1987 by Palestinian Arabs to protest Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A second intifada began in September 2000 Refugee camps
Oslo Accords:	Intended to be a framework for all future negotiations between Israel and Palestine, conducted secretly in Oslo, Norway, and completed in August 1993
Resolution 194:	The United Nations General Assembly adopts Resolution 194 (III), resolving that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."
Refugee camp	A plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA for Palestinian refugees by a host government in order to accommodate Palestinian refugees.
Fatah	Palestinian National Liberation Movement
Resolution 242	This resolution deals with five principles, withdrawal of Israeli forces, peace within secure and recognized boundaries, freedom of navigation, a just settlement of the refugee problem and security measures including demilitarized zones
Resolution 338	Call upon all parties to cease fire and to start the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Understanding the Palestinian refugee right of return

The Palestinian refugee right of return has been characterised in different ways by different scholars over the years, including as a human right (e.g. Karmi 2011), a sacred right (e.g. Abu Sitta 1999), and a protected right within international law (Richter-Devroe 2013). The Palestinian right of return claim refers to the political position or principle that all generations of Palestinian refugees (around 7 million people) have the right to return to the property they or their forebears left behind during the 1948 Palestinian Exodus (Al Nakba), and following the 1967 Six-Day War (Al Naksa) (Aruri 2001). Currently there are more than seven million Palestinian refugees scattered in different locations around the world including many Arab states, the European Union and Israel itself.

Issues surrounding displaced Indigenous populations are of course not restricted to Palestinians. Indeed, like Palestinians, a number of Indigenous groups to have been dispossessed of, or displaced from, their land due to colonisation such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. In turn, they may also assert a strong connection to the land and that their right to return to the land is held as a sacred right. Regarding Palestinian refugees particularly, the extent to which their reluctance to accept an alternative outcome to the right of return is due to the belief in the 'sacredness' of the right may arguably be impacted by their inter-generational narratives, responses to what is happening on the ground, and the depth of their belief in connection to the land (i.e. Palestine).

Motivation to write this thesis emerged from consideration of the potential for Palestinian refugees to have a diminished desire to fulfil the right of return claim due to several factors. These include the length of occupation of Palestine, their protracted displacement, the ever-changing political landscape, and their possible desire to achieve a faster solution. Indeed, potential alternative outcomes to fulfilling the right of return including compensation provisions, resettlement, and maintaining the

provision of social services (e.g. United Nations Relief Work Agency [UNRWA]) may in fact be more preferable to Palestinian refugees than the possibility of not achieving the right of return. If this is the case, the sacredness of the right of return as previously characterised by some authors would arguably no longer apply. These contrasting possibilities provide a new perspective from which to investigate the extent to which the current views of refugees towards the right of return is impacted by the potential to achieve other outcomes.

Given the complex and multidimensional nature of the right of return (i.e. personal, political, legal, social dimensions), this thesis necessarily includes an examination of Palestinian refugees' current views of three key elements. They include the negotiation for the provision of compensation, proposals for the resettlement of refugees (focusing also on the continued deterioration in camp conditions), and the phase out of the UNRWA in the West Bank. To access the Palestinian refugee views, a quantitative survey instrument was conducted in 2013. Notwithstanding the subjective nature of data purporting participants' views and opinions, quantitative paradigms were intentionally adopted in response to security issues regarding accessibility to study participants. In addition, quantitative paradigms offer a new data set to our academic understanding of Palestinian refugees' views on the right of return (see chapter 3, section 3.3 for more details) as well as a novel way to represent the Palestinian refugee voice.

In fact, the need for this present examination is reinforced by the continued marginalisation or 'silencing of the voices' of the Palestinian refugee on the right of return issue. What is meant by 'silencing of the voices' in this thesis can be understood from both theoretical and empirical perspectives (see section 1.4 for more detailed explanation). Theoretically, drawing on the Orientalist perspective , one may argue that the peace negotiations appear primarily to be underpinned by Western attempts to position the Palestinian refugee as the Arab 'Other' and then to "produce" and "manage" how the refugee question is to be understood and resolved (Adib-Moghaddam 2013, p. 33). In practice, one can look to the international media for concrete examples of unbalanced reporting in which the views of Palestinians (refugees and non-refugees) are regularly subordinated to the views of Israelis (Said 2002). Additionally, Bonjour (2015) and Said (1978) respectively have pointed to

Marx's assertion that oppressed or marginalised (silenced) groups cannot represent themselves and thus must be represented as examples of the subordination / marginalisation of views. Regarding how this applies to Palestinian refugees, Ramadan (2012, p. 66) puts it succinctly as follows: "the Palestinian refugee question is not simply an abstract arithmetic subject to negotiation between Palestinian s and Israeli elites, but a lived, embedded experience of displacement, and placeless-ness, insecurity and violence, marginalisation and otherness."

Yet, the goal to examine the refugees' perspectives on these issues and thus give voice to their views was not without its challenges. Due to the pervasive security issues enveloping Palestinian refugees created by the occupation itself and its affect to silence refugee voices, gaining access to potential participants required ongoing negotiation. Moreover, the research process was characterised by strict conditions of entry, limited opportunities to access data from respondents, and restrictions around the scope of analysis. These limitations speak to why this study is important and to the value of even this somewhat limited research method to the promotion of the voice of Palestinian refugees living in occupied territories.

Given this context, this thesis primarily investigates Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return as stated in Resolution 194. The rationale for this investigation emerged in part in response to two powerful yet opposing claims regarding this right. The first claim comes from David Ben-Gurion, the first Israeli Prime Minister, who stated: *We [Israel] must do everything we can to see that they [Palestinian refugees] never do return. The old will die and the young will forget* (Nabulsi 2006). The second claim comes from Abu Sitta (2000) and is encapsulated in the title of his 1999 text, *Palestinian right of return: Sacred, legal and possible*.

To briefly clarify each claim, Ben-Gurion made his comment when referring to how Israel should respond to Palestinian refugee displacement and is clearly implying that the Palestinian refugee claim to the right of return will inevitably diminish over time. Abu Sitta, on the other hand, wrote his book around the notion that there is a sacredness with which the Palestinian refugee holds the right of return. This sacredness can be understood as having "a special type of status" in social contexts through its inevitable association with "the other world" and its "divine" implications

(Claus 1995, p. 163). Abu Sitta's notion of sacredness in relation to the right of return may then be connected to the sociology of the sacred as posited by Durkheim (2008).

Abu Sitta (1999) combines the sacredness of the return of Palestinian refugees with the view that it is both possible within the context of international relations and is legal according to international law. The clear implication of this is that the Palestinian refugee claim for their right of return will remain constant and unyielding over time. This thesis asserts that the factors to potentially 'reproduce' the sacredness of the right of return are embedded in the continuing commitment of refugees. Further exploration and explanation of the concept of sacredness is provided in Chapter 2.

This thesis seeks to investigate the continued relevance of the assertions from Abu Sitta and Ben-Gurion by examining how Palestinian refugees currently view the right of return according to Resolution 194 and its component elements in the context of their continued displacement. The strength of these views will in turn be assessed by the extent to which definitive opinions are provided by participants on the right of return. Thus, an important research theme is the extent to which the Palestinian refugee right of return can be observed to have diminished over time, if at all. This points to the possible unification of the subjective perspectives of refugees with the objective legal claim, and the social processes at the heart of the two views to construct the sacred.

Unquestionably, the issue of the Palestinian refugee right of return has been ignored by Palestinian and Israeli negotiation teams and the international community since the Declaration of Principles in 1993 between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Israeli government (Kouttab 2013). Indeed, a dramatic shift in the political momentum linked to the right of return took place when the negotiation focus moved towards establishing a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders (Kouttab 2013), a plan understood as the 'two-state solution'. It is not unreasonable to contemplate that this political shift may have resulted in older refugees being more staunchly committed to the traditional notion of return than their younger counterparts, as they are more closely connected to the impact of the Exodus and the ensuing right of return narrative. Taking this contemplation one step further, it is perhaps also reasonable to assume that younger refugees may have an understanding

of the right of return based more on political factors than direct experiences of the Exodus of 1948.

The possibility that young and old Palestinian refugees are prepared to accept an alternative to the right of return claim may suggest that they no longer identify with Palestine before 1948 and that the right of return is absent from their memory. Moreover, notwithstanding the powerful connotations surrounding words such as ‘rights’, ‘sacred’ and ‘protected’, the reality is that Palestinians are scattered in camps in Palestine and the Arab world, and are divided as a population (Miller and Samuels 2009). It is also the case that Palestinian refugees support many different political factions that serve diverse political agendas and that their leaders misguidedly imagine a long-lasting peace (ICG 2014). In this scenario, the old and young alike who are living in crowded cement complexes simply exchange the air and desire nothing else but survival.

The sacredness and protected nature of the right of return to Palestine may thus no longer be a view held by Palestinian refugees, particularly young refugees. This would arguably shape their regard for international law and United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (the legal framework for the Palestinian refugee the right of return to Palestine; hereafter Resolution 194) as well as opportunities for compensation provision and resettlement.

Conversely, Palestinian refugees’ understanding of Al Nakba (Arabic for ‘catastrophe’) and the right of return may in fact continue to shape their sense of connection to the right of return and their belief in its sacredness. As such, their belief could shape how they respond to life in refugee camps; that is, the fences surrounding the camps, the numerous checkpoints, and their physical exclusion from the wider community. These and other factors may in turn potentially engrave Palestine of 1948 into the living memory of all refugees and feed their desire to return to their home.

The Palestinian refugee narrative asserts that the declaration of the state of Israel in 1948 was the catalyst for the displacement of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland (Al Nakba) and the genesis of the Palestinian refugee problem as we know it today. Affected and displaced Palestinians sought refuge and protection in Palestine

or in host countries while waiting for the conflict to be resolved. Of course, the Palestinian refugee issue remains unresolved after 70 years as refugees continue to be subjected to extreme conditions within Palestine, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as in other host locations (Talhami 2003). The plight of Palestinian refugees is adversely impacted by the ongoing conflict in Palestine, changes to the political climate in Arab countries, and the threat of political instability within the Middle East. Notably, Resolution 194 has remained as the legal declaration of the Palestinian refugee right of return since their expulsion from Palestine in 1948. In the Palestinian narrative, right of return is linked to the right of self-determination, a notion that is central to the struggle of the Palestinian people (Bracka 2005). In the Palestinian calendar, 15 May 1948 – the day after Israel declared independence – is observed as the day of catastrophe (Bowker 2003, p. 96).

The following sections contextualise this research study by providing general details of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (PIC) and the formulation of Resolution 194 by the international community. Also established is my own connection to the Palestinian refugee plight and the right of return. The discussion then shifts to the reasons why there is the need to give voice to the Palestinian refugees on the issue of right of return (and its associated elements), before presenting the research questions that underpin this study. This chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis structure including an overview of the main topics.

1.2 The broader Palestinian-Israeli conflict

The PIC originated in the second half of the 19th century with the conception of modern Zionism – a political movement that aimed to create a Jewish state in Palestine (Frangi 1983, p. 31). In 1870, the Zionists organised large-scale European Jewish immigration, land purchase, and the construction of an exclusively Jewish colony in Palestine which was part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire (Frangi 1983, p. 29). Violent clashes between the Palestinians and the Jewish immigrants, however, started to emerge as early as 1886 (Rubenberg 2003, p. 3).

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, the League of Nations mandated authority over Palestine to the British. The Belfour Declaration of 1917 committed Britain to establish a national home for the Jewish people in

Palestine. As a result, Palestinians began to resist what they perceived to be the threat posed by Zionist colonisation (Sayigh 1979). In 1920, Palestine was placed under British rule and this continued up to 1948. Zionist colonisation of Palestine accelerated rapidly during this period on the back of crucial assistance provided by the British mandate (Said 1992, pp. 17-18). Palestinian resistance intensified but was brutally crushed by the British forces (Sayigh 1979, p. 43).

In 1936, Jews comprised 28 per cent of the total population of Palestine (Abou Lughod 1987, p. 8). The Zionist leadership developed the concept of 'transfer' – the organised movement of the indigenous population to neighbouring countries – as a form of cultural cleansing (Pappe 2006). In November 1942, the official goal of the Zionist movement became the creation of a Jewish state (Chomsky 1999, p. 94). The reaction to the anti-Semitism that had characterised Nazi Germany during World War II and the subsequent Holocaust ultimately shaped world opinion to endorse the formation of the State of Israel. In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted to partition Palestine whereby 56 per cent of the territory was allocated to the Jews for the creation of a future state (Hadawi 1970, p. 271). At this time, Jews represented a minority community comprising about 31 per cent of the population and owned around seven per cent of the land (Rubenberg 2003, p. 4). Following the partition vote, hostilities between Palestinians and the Zionist movement initially, and then against the state of Israel, erupted into a full-scale civil war (Masalha 2001). Arab states entered the war in support of Palestinians. On 15 May 1948, following the declaration of the state of Israel, large numbers of Jewish immigrants provided the population for the new State, and the post-War climate enabled Israel to assert pressure on Germany to establish the infrastructures needed to support the immigration (Kleinman 2002). By 1949, Israel had conquered 78 per cent of Palestine, with Jordan and Egypt taking control of the West Bank and Gaza, respectively. Consequently, 750,000 Palestinians fled their homes, the majority of whom were forcibly expelled (Masalha 2001, pp. 36-37).

In response to this crisis, the UNGA in 1948 passed Resolution 194 (A/RES/194 (III) 11 December 1948) which stated:

> *…the (Palestinian) refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable*

> *date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible...*

With little regard for Resolution 194, however, the Israeli cabinet denied Palestinians their repatriation rights and the destruction of many Palestinian villages continued (Morris 1987, p. 76). In fact, the Palestinian Exodus and displacement emerged as a result of the policy of forced population transfer exercised by the Zionist movement and the state of Israel. The Zionist movement considered Palestine as an empty land and the native Palestinians who lived there as invisible to them (Pappe 2006, p. 11). During the Exodus, Israeli officials continued to claim Palestinians left their homeland on orders from Arab leaders with the expectation that they would return following the liberation of Palestine (Shlaim 1999, p. 149).

A second wave of Palestinian refugees emerged as a result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and subsequent occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip (PASSIA 1994). Half of the refugees were those displaced in 1948, meaning they experienced displacement for a second time in less than two decades (Kouttab 2013). The 1967 displaced refugees are often referred to as "displaced persons" to distinguish them from the 1948 refugees (International Crisis Group [ICG] 2014 and Zureik 1996).

The consequences of the Palestinian Exodus and the second wave of refugees quickly became the focus of discussion within the international community and many plans emerged to resolve the Palestinian refugee issue. In fact, the plight of the Palestinian refugee and the geopolitical role of Palestine more broadly are still the subject of great interest to many intellectuals, politicians and sociologists at the local and global level.

1.3 My connection to the Palestinian plight and the right of return

A unique element of this thesis is the inclusion of my 'voice' throughout the exploration of pertinent issues and the discussion of the data analysis results. The justification for including my voice emerges from my personal experiences as a refugee. In turn, the primary objective underpinning the authorial intrusions is to add a subjective perspective to the points of discussion that is both authentic and based on experience. Although this may raise concerns about researcher bias, such concerns are

mitigated by my compliance at all times to social research standards and ethical obligations (see Section 3.7.1 for further details on the parameters of researcher positionality in this thesis). Moreover, it is not inevitable that researcher subjectivity precludes an objective understanding of the research phenomenon. According to Ratner (2002, p.1) "subjective processes can enhance objective comprehension of the world" provided the researcher properly "organise his subjectivity". In this thesis, I have when possible introduced my 'voice' to offer my personal views. Although I am not an ethnographer and I currently live in Australia, I think my voice adds insights or explanations to the issues or results being reported (see Section 3.7.1 for a detailed discussion of research positionality). The voice of the embedded researcher is also widely supported in the literature as providing an opportunity to both reflect on and participate in the "meaning making", and thus offer a critical consciousness to the research processes (Aluwihare-Samaranayake 2012; Friere 1993). The choice to embed my own voice into the exploration of Palestinian refugees' views thus aims to transform the researcher from objective outsider to subjective insider whose voice brings constructions of self and experience to the themes under discussion (Aluwihare-Samaranayake 2012).

I have been interested in the plight of the Palestinian refugee in Palestine since childhood. I was born in a refugee camp in the West Bank and while playing in the streets of one of the refugee camps it became evident to me that life was not normal. The streets were narrow, there was no electricity to households most of the time, and Israeli soldiers often raided the schools I attended. Because there was no high school in the refugee camp I attended a school outside the camp in a village nearby approximately 30 minutes' walking distance.

Despite the high school being within walking distance from the refugee camp I soon came to realise that there were two distinct 'identities' among the students at the school: Palestinian refugees and Palestinian non-refugees. This distinction was made explicit to me during a disagreement I had with one of the 'local' students who claimed that Palestinian refugees such as myself and my family sold their land and failed to defend it. The fellow student proceeded to claim that I was a refugee and that I will die like one. My response was to assert that we were all Palestinians and that the Israeli occupier did not differentiate between us. This incident not only caused me

confusion, it impacted my sense of identity in two ways: first, I felt the social stigma of being a ‘refugee’; and second, I started to realise that the issues of Palestinian nationalism and liberation were being left to be resolved by Palestinian refugees alone.

Some teachers at the high school were similarly judgmental. For instance, on one occasion our biology teacher lectured the students on defeat and victory, and proceeded to describe Palestinian refugees as traitors who had left their towns and villages to access supplies provided by the United Nations (UN). My immediate response was to say to the teacher that the reason why Palestinians left their homes was because Jewish troops were far too well organised, well equipped, and aggressive. The teacher of course did not appreciate my response and moved to teach the class about ethics and the proper way to address more knowledgeable adults. The teacher’s comments stayed with me and when I returned home I approached my father to ask him his views. He was not annoyed and simply replied in a soft voice: “We will go back”. These incidents are etched in my memory as the events of 1948 are no doubt etched the memories of all Palestinian refugees.

As a child, I understood the reasons underpinning our displacement and always felt proud when leaving and returning to the refugee camp. Nevertheless, my ‘identity’ as a Palestinian refugee was reflected in many daily-life activities such as having to pass through check points when entering and leaving the camp, as well as when transiting through cities. Moreover, the refugee camp was fenced off and had only two entry points, both monitored by Israeli soldiers. The camp’s physical separation from the wider Palestinian community resulted in refugees being called the people of resistance. Despite the physical exclusion forced upon refugees by the Israeli occupation for more than 70 years, a sense of belonging to homeland was a prominent feature of the narrative among Palestinian camp dwellers.

Therefore, this research study originated from my own experience, the experiences of my family, and thousands of other Palestinian refugees living in refugee camps in Palestine and around the world. These experiences initially prompted an exploration of the literature on the plight of Palestinian refugees. In turn, this led to the realisation that investigating the voice and perspectives of the Palestinian refugee and incorporating their needs and perspectives into a comprehensive account of the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict was an important topic of research interest. For Israel, the refugee problem in particular is considered a threat to its very existence as a Jewish state (Abu Sitta 1999). Scholars, negotiators and social scientists from Jordan, Israel, Western states, and Palestine have made numerous proposals to solve the refugee question. The multiplicity of views regarding the settlement of the refugee question led to the framing of the first focal point of this research: the expectations and preferences reported by the Palestinian refugee about the issue of right of return.

Given the assertion in this thesis that the Palestinian refugee voice has in many ways been marginalised on the issue of right of return, the following sections explore the nature of this marginalisation. As such, the discussion focuses on such aspects as the implications of the Oslo Agreement, the formation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the consequences of ongoing occupation. This provides a springboard into a discussion of the gaps in the literature and the subsequent formulation of the research questions.

1.3.1 Giving a voice to Palestinian refugees

Al Nakba is the story of millions of nameless and voiceless Palestinian men, women and children living in Palestine and in exile. Scholars and politicians typically attempt to represent the voice of the disadvantaged by engaging in debates about freedom of expression and the importance of opportunities for civic engagement. In relation to Palestinian refugees, however, their voice – the voice of millions – appears to remain disconnected and ignored, despite 70 years of displacement and 25 years of peace negotiations (ICG 2014).

Palestinian refugees were initially housed in tents in unfamiliar streets before later being settled in houses which lacked the basic needs for survival. Despite the passing of many years, refugees continued to carry the keys to their home in Palestine, their land deeds, and treasured small belongings as they waited to return to Palestine before 1948. Palestine was not far away, only a few kilometres, but standing between them and their homes were many checkpoints and strangers who now occupied their homes. For most refugees the journey home would take no more than 60 minutes trip, but as a matter of fact, the journey continues after more than seven decades.

The Palestinian landscape has surely changed over the 70 years since the expulsion, but, as previously mentioned, refugees continue to hold on to their household keys. The keys have been passed on from one generation to the next with the promise that they would one day be reused. The Palestinian landscape in the narratives of refugees remains the same: it is the land of honey, peace, unity and brotherhood. It is this narrative which is repeatedly told by all generations in the streets of the camps and which occupies a central place in the daily debate about the fate of all refugees (Habashi 2013).

Images of the villages and towns in Palestine before Al Nakba are engraved on the walls of the camps and in the imagination of the children. The children share stories of Al Nakba and the pain carried by their grandparents, vowing to once again return to their homeland. The narrative of connection to land and a life lived with dignity is acknowledged by all refugees. For the younger generations, however, this bond to Palestine is lived only in the realm of displacement.

As a Palestinian, I understand the extent to which the Palestinian refugee bond to Palestine is what connects all refugees and which shapes their existence. Arguably, Palestine of 1948 is a living memory for refugees which has the potential to be continually validated by the fences surrounding the camps, the numerous checkpoints, and the physical exclusion from the wider community imposed upon them. This research investigation seeks to examine the extent to which this memory shapes the active 'voice' of refugees and paves the way for current and future generations. As such, it will provide valuable insights into whether it remains stronger and more powerful than what is happening on the ground; that is, the peace negotiation process. Indeed, it is a voice which unites the past with the present. For instance, my father recounted the story of how his father, mother and their village (*Iraq almenshia*) are united as one; with the memory of the loss of one giving rise to feelings of the loss of all three. During my childhood I often heard my father and mother talking about the old village where they lived. It even seemed at times that even though my parents were physically present in the camp they were also somehow living in the village they left behind in Palestine before 1948.

Stories of Palestine before and after the expulsion also continued to be told by an older generation of refugees forming the narrative voice that connects the past with

the present (Ali 2013). Importantly, it is not unreasonable to suggest it is the connection with the past contained in the active voice, which has kept alive the Palestinian refugee pursuit of right of return despite the changing political landscape and the emergence of new generations of refugees. As Habashi (2013) remarked, oral history for Palestinian children not only illustrates past events, it also provides the tool for grasping the present and traversing the future (Habashi 2013).

The right of return has been a fundamental claim by Palestinians since 1948. As mentioned, Abu Sitta (2001, p. 197) has described the right of return as "sacred" to Palestinians, a notion which lies at the heart of this thesis. Right of return is also a core claim from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Islamist movements and the Palestinian Authority (PA) (ICG 2014). In turn, Arabic and foreign researchers have conducted empirical research to examine the right of return in order to identify the cause of the Palestinian refugee issue and its relationship to the right of return, compensation and resettlement.

Another factor to potentially influence the sacredness to which Palestinian refugees view the right of return is the lived experience of the refugee camps. The following section provides a brief description of the refugee camps and their abhorrent conditions, and how these conditions continue to be ignored by the occupying power, PLO and the PA in their ongoing negotiations.

1.3.2 The waiting game in harsh camp conditions

The insights into the conditions of refugee camps provided in this section are based on my personal experience of living in Al'Arroub camp in the West Bank, my regular visits back to the camps for both personal and research purposes, and an examination of current literature. To set the broader context, Palestinian refugee camps are all occupied to capacity (Miller and Samuels 2009). Moreover, there is no space within the perimeters of the camps for expansion. For the refugees there is virtually no private space available and all public domains are always heavily crowded (Farah 2000). Public roads, main streets, and public yards continue to be claimed by the new generation of refugees in order to extend housing units within the camp in response to the ever-increasing population (Al-Khatib et al. 2003). There is limited change in the conditions of the camps between seasons: during summer there is no natural light and houses have poor ventilation (Hanafi 2009); and, during winter it is miserably cold,

housing units have no heating, and refugees go without access to electricity on most days. Although refugees continue to suffer at the hands of the occupying power, the refugee camps nonetheless symbolise Palestinian resistance to assimilation projects (Jarar 2003). Indeed, many refugees, particularly older generation refugees, continue to wait in the camps with the belief that they may one day return to pre-1948 Palestine (Jarar 2003).

The occupying power's control of the camps and the refugees within them results in the refugees being disconnected from the social spaces inhabited by non-refugees and the opportunities for interactions with them (Talhami 2003). In addition, governance and control of the camps exclude refugees from participating in urban development which imposes further socio-economic marginalisation on refugees (ICG 2014).

One could argue that silencing the Palestinian refugee voice, allowing the continued deterioration in camp conditions, and imposing further restrictions on their mobility is a ploy by the occupying powers to pressure the Palestinian refugee to accept a political solution at the exclusion of right of return (Abu-Iyun & Murad 2006). Palestinian intellectuals, legislators and political activists have consistently called for refugees to have a voice in the negotiations with Israel, but these calls have been largely ignored. Indeed, there is yet to be a "comprehensive strategy for refugee participation" put forward (Abu-Iyun & Murad 2006, p. 47). Neither international organisations, educational institutions, Palestinian political parties, UNRWA nor host countries have given refugees in Palestine or in the diaspora the information they need to evaluate political developments. No mechanisms have been established to involve refugees in political processes.

The next section explores the broader construct of control and the limits on the refugee 'voice' as part of the strategy of occupation (Peteet 2017). As such, the discussion explores how the right of return has been minimalised or even excluded as a viable solution within the pursuit of a political solution to be replaced with greater focus on camp conditions and resettlement.

1.3.3 The problem with political solutions from above

The ongoing negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to achieve a political solution to the issue of re-settlement have further marginalised the voices of

Palestinian refugees (ICG 2014). Political and economic rights are unquestionably denied refugees as a function of being forced to live under occupation (Miller and Samuels 2009). As such, the denial of these rights limits their overall capacity to give voice to their concerns in the international arena. This marginalisation within the peace process has caused alarm among many political parties opposed to resettlement and compensation options (Samara 2000). However, this opposition is also a problem for refugees because the same political parties have their own agenda on the right of return outcome which, in turn, may not be the same as the outcomes desired by refugees and thus act to silence the refugee voice (ICG 2014). (See Literature Review Chapter for a detailed discussion of the marginalisation of the Palestinian refugee voice.)

In addition, the political elite such as highly-ranked members and leaders of the Fatah movement within refugee camps act as the authority on what settlement options are to be considered. As a result, the visions and attitudes of ordinary refugees along with their longing to return to their homes are further marginalised. The different representations of the political elites in their support of the peace process continue to create division as they call on refugees to support their leadership (ICG 2014).

Political parties who oppose the peace process and who look to defend refugees' rights have rejected for many years any proposition that excludes the right of return. As illustrated by Abu Zayyad (2009), the right of return has become a symbol of the Palestinian national struggle and a subject of competition among the different Palestinian political factions. However, following the signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993 between the PLO and the Israeli government, the question of right of return has been ignored (Kouttab 2013). The Declaration postponed discussion of the right of return by way of its relegation to UN Resolutions 242 and 338 (Lawand 1996). A dramatic shift in the political momentum subsequently took place where the focus moved towards establishing a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders (Kouttab 2013).

Since the Declaration of Principles and the formation of the PA, refugee views in general have been given little formal recognition (ICG 2014). Indeed, the PA has not conducted any referendums or any surveys of refugees, nor have they encouraged public discussion on issues within the camps (ICG 2014). This reluctance to consult

with Palestinian refugees or to seek a referendum on the issue of right of return maybe because the PA knows the Palestinian refugee will not endorse such an approach. There has been research examining this view such as the study by Shikaki (2004). He published findings of a poll conducted with refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan and Lebanon on the issue of the right of return and reported that they were not prepared to accept any attempt to exercise the right of return if it meant relocating to Israel.

Furthermore, the literature points to the difficulties refugees experience in trying to shape the progress and focus of the peace negotiations, and acknowledge that Palestinian negotiators have struggled through the years to achieve any progress on the refugee question (Kouttab 2013; Talhami 2003). The lack of progress by those representing the Palestinian refugee during the peace process has paved the way for proposals by Israeli politicians, scholars, and negotiators that do not endorse solutions in the best interests of the refugees (this issue is addressed later in Chapter Two). In fact, historical speeches from Israeli officials have maintained a strong and overt position over time regarding how the negotiations should progress in relation to the refugee question. As the late Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, argued refugees must be settled in their current locations (Peres 2003). Although this proposition was challenged by refugee advocate groups and there continue to be calls to uphold the right of return, the voice of Palestinian refugees in discussions of their future remains largely absent from the negotiations and in the media.

1.4 The gap in our knowledge and why it matters

Solutions proposed by the international community, led by the United States of America (hereafter US), have neglected the needs and the narratives of the Palestinian refugee. For instance, even before the election of Donald Trump as US President, former President, Bill Clinton proposed the following parameters in late 2000:

> *The solution to the refugee problem will have to be consistent with the two-state approach … the state of Palestine as the homeland of the Palestinian people and the state of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. Under the two-state solution, the guiding principle should be that the Palestinian state would be the focal point for the Palestinians who choose to return to the area*

without ruling out that Israel will accept some of these refugees. (Swisher 2011).

Clinton's proposal to resolve the conflict, however, appears to have been developed without explicit recognition of the views of the Palestinian refugee and their narrative of right of return to pre-1948 borders. The proposal clearly asks Palestinian refugees to relinquish their right of return claim to their original homes, with geopolitical pressures including US-Israeli relations and Iran's foreign policy for the region contributing to the marginalisation of Palestinian refugees' voice at the expense of distant, but more powerful geopolitical interests.

It may also be added that the strategies of institutions and state like actors that include the UN, PLO and PA have also contributed significantly to the silencing of the refugee voice. As stated by Malkki (1995, pp. 7-8), such practices attempt to categorise refugees as "objects" of intervention and knowledge whereby states and international agencies characterise refugees as "a problem" rather than as "ordinary people".

Debate among political leaders and international organisations on how best to manage the Palestinian refugee issue continues to focus on politically driven solutions or interventions (Ladadweh 2008). In this context, the political agenda appears to shape our understanding of the Palestinian refugee issue as absorption and integration of refugees instead of their right of return. For instance, propositions are put forward to resettle refugees by distributing them to Arab countries and the world, or for the absorption of the lowest number possible in the West Bank to preserve the demographic balance of Israel (Arzt 2006). Moreover, although some recent research studies (e.g. Beckerle 2011) have sought to give expression to the Palestinian refugee voice to ascertain how they understand the issue of right of return and what outcomes they would like to see achieved, there remains the need for a more direct and current assessment of their opinions.

Thus, two key issues emerge as valid reasons for further research which surveys refugee directly: the implications of the continued political focus on 'solutions' to the refugee problem rather than on the refugees themselves; and, as a derivative of this, the marginalisation of the refugees' voice in the literature and how this diminishes our

understanding of their current views of the right of return. To address these gaps, this study collected data on the current views of right of return from 1200 refugees living in five different refugee camps in the West Bank. The sample included refugees of different demographic profiles (e.g. age, gender and education attainment among others) who completed a take home survey to contribute new insights into the issue of right of return and what it means to them.

1.4.1 Why we need to know more about what Palestinian refugees want

It is reasonable to assert that the effects of displacement experienced by the different generations of Palestinian refugees and the harsh living conditions they continue to endure may impact their thoughts on the issues of right of return, compensation and re-settlement. This reinforces the need to identify and give expression to refugee voices by closely examining the attitudes of refugees on these issues to gain a holistic insight into their current ways of thinking. The collection of primary data on the views of Palestinian refugees across different demographic profiles on the issue of right of return can yield valuable insights into their current views of the right and its components. As a secondary outcome, the data also enables this thesis to reflect on the extent to which the right of return remains 'sacred' among Palestinian refugees of different demographic profiles (e.g. age as a function of exposure to displacement and occupation, political affiliations, gender and the like).

Notably, this study of the views of the Palestinian refugees on the right of return was conducted in 2013 after the unfolding of significant events in Palestine and in the Middle East throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. It therefore is arguably different from previous studies as it captures their views in the context of recent important geopolitical 'moments' in time. For example, data for this study was collected after the Arab Spring, which is commonly described as a dramatic political and economic event in regions of the Middle East (Masetti et al. 2013). Second, this study was conducted after the peace process which began at the Madrid Conference in 1990 and which resulted in the Israel-Palestinian Declaration of Principles of 1993. Third, it was conducted after the Palestinian Intifada (uprising) beginning in late 2000 when Israel closed its borders to prevent Palestinians from working in it factories, leading to high unemployment among refugees. The collection of data after these

world events thus offers new insights into how Palestinian refugees regard the issues of right of return and re-settlement in general.

Certainly, for this study to achieve its objective it must demonstrate the rigorous application of recognised methodology and ethical standards. As Landau and Jacobsen (2003) have stated, the study of refugees advances its academic and policy relevance by carefully considering methodological and ethical concerns. Balancing these elements offers the study more credibility when valuing the voice of participants and when discussing the veracity of their opinions. In turn, achieving this balance ensures this study does not treat participants as 'objects' for research. Lastly, this research offers a public record of Palestinian refugees' survey responses and reveals any divisions between the voices of refugees and those of their political representatives. As such, the focus in this research on the refugees' collective voice will contribute sociological insights into the effects of long periods of displacement and community marginalisation. Details of the formulation of the research questions and the rationale for the selection of the study design are presented below.

1.5 Research questions and design of this project

The occupation of Palestine by Israel has endured for 70 years. Since the event *of* Al Nakba and the subsequent displacement of tens of thousands of Palestinians from their homes, the issue of the Palestinian refugee right of return has been recognised in international law (UN Resolution 194) and embedded in the Palestinian refugee narrative. Nonetheless, our understanding of current refugees' views of the right of return remains limited, due in large part to the marginalisation of the Palestinian refugee voice in the international arena. Notably, the importance of the right of return to Palestinian refugees has been represented in significantly disparate ways; from Abu Sitta's claims of its 'sacredness', to Ben-Gurion's assertion that it will inevitably be forgotten through generational attrition. Such contrasting claims provide interesting parameters from which to investigate refugees' views on this issue. This study specifically targets refugee camps in the West Bank to examine the Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return, compensation, resettlement and phase out of UNRWA services. The reason for selecting camps in the West Bank only is due to my familiarity with the camps and the relatively easier access I had to potential participants (see Chapter Three, sections 3.2 and 3.4 for a detailed explanation of the

recruitment and site selection process). Importantly, it is not within the scope of this thesis, however, to offer any plan to for 'solving' the problem, or to examine the underlying geopolitics. Rather, it explores the refugee position on the following research questions:

Primary research question:

1. Have the Palestinian refugee views of right to return changed after so many years of displacement?

As previously established, this thesis conceptualises the right of return as a multidimensional construct including components related to compensation, resettlement and the phase out of UNRWA. The relationship between these dimensions may in turn be impacted by factors including geopolitical events, the hardships of occupation, and failure to reach a just outcome. As previously established however, accessing the participants understanding and interpretation of these aspects face to face was made impossible due to significant security concerns. Therefore, the following sub-questions were formulated as a pathway to achieving a quantitative understanding of the centrality of the right of return claim, proposals for compensation and resettlement, and the withdrawal of UNRWA services to refugees.

Sub-questions:

1. To what extent does the Palestinian refugee living in the West Bank regard right of return as the central claim?

2. To what extent do Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank accept compensation as an outcome to the exclusion of right of return?

3. To what extent does the Palestinian refugee living in the West Bank accept resettlement as an outcome to the exclusion of right of return?

4. What are the differences in perceptions towards the phase out of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency among Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank?

1.6 Overview of thesis structure

As demonstrated, Chapter One has introduced the history relevant to the research topic and provided the aims of, and rationale for, this study. Chapter Two identifies

and discusses the key issues raised in previous research studies and other literary sources related to the right of return, compensation, and resettlement of Palestinian refugees. Also, included in this literature review is an examination of the views of Palestinian and Israeli politicians as well as an exploration of key resolutions introduced by the UNGA in relation to right of return. What is established is the central position given to repatriation in the Palestinian narrative and the extent to which it is regarded as a legitimate right recognised by the international community and the UNGA.

Chapter Three outlines in detail the study design and methodology, including why quantitative research paradigms are most appropriate for such a sensitive research topic. The sample population and the various refugee camps included as sites for data collection are introduced, including how my personal connections and issues of accessibility played a role in the choice of the camps in the West Bank. This chapter also provides details of the self-report survey instrument utilised for data collection and the rationale for its use. Details of the software program used for data analysis, the reasons for its choice (i.e. practicality and efficiency) and how it was applied are also provided. This chapter concludes with details of the ethical considerations applied in this study.

The findings from the data analysis are presented across five separate chapters (Chapters Four to Eight). As an overview, Chapters Four set the scene; Chapter Five provides an overview of the right of return, Chapters Six and Seven explore the specific alternatives to the right of return, and Chapter Eight looks to the impact of the UNRWA as an important change in the institutional context. Specifically, Chapter Four presents and discusses the findings related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the Palestinian refugees and their living conditions in the surveyed camps. This dimension is discussed first to establish the broader situational context of the study and includes a focus on the impact of camp conditions on participants' attitudes towards the right of return, compensation and resettlement.

After establishing and discussing the broader contextual elements in the previous chapters, Chapter Five presents and discusses the findings related to issues specific to right of return. Specifically, data pertaining to the participants' views regarding this issue are provided and the narratives from refugees of different age groups are

discussed. The discussion is framed within the notion that right of return is both a sacred and fundamental claim of the Palestinian refugee since 1948, as well as a core claim by the PLO and the PA. As such, the extent to which the Palestinian refugee in the West Bank continues to believe in and pursue their claim of right of return is examined.

The following subsequent chapters then aim to broaden the scope of the discussion of right of return by examining its other key dimensions; namely compensation, resettlement, and phase out of UNRWA. Chapter Six presents and discusses the findings related to the Palestinian refugee view of compensation and explores the extent to which this issue is regarded as compatible or incompatible with the right of return. To facilitate this exploration, the views of the study participants along with the positions held by scholars, key decision-makers on outcomes for refugees and refugees' representatives are discussed. Particular focus is given to whether the conditions within the refugee camps are a critical factor in informing refugees' views of compensation and whether other variables such as the (generation) of refugee and/or his or her political affiliation guides their views on this issue.

Chapter Seven presents and discusses the findings on the issue of resettlement and the extent to which the Palestinian refugee about resettlement in the host location as an acceptable solution. In addition, this chapter highlights proposals made by successive Israeli governments for the resettlement of refugees in Arab states. This chapter discusses the highly problematic nature of resettlement in the current context.

Chapter Eight presents and discusses the findings related to the phase out UNRWA. It begins with a brief outline of the reasons underpinning the establishment of UNRWA and an overview of scholarly and refugees' opinions of UNRWA. The survey findings related to the Palestinian refugee perception of the effectiveness of UNRWA as an international body for monitoring and supporting their cause as well as their views on the potential barriers to the right of return as a result of the planned phase out of UNRWA are discussed. Presenting the results in this way was necessary due to the need to address each of the dimensions of right of return in depth and because the approach adopted in this thesis is to present and discuss the data analysis results concurrently.

Chapter Nine concludes this thesis with a summary of the main conclusions drawn from the research and the overall significance of the thesis findings. Notwithstanding the limitations forced upon the recruitment and data collection processes in this study by access issues, this research investigation gathered ample evidence that the right of return remains important to Palestinian refugees across all ages. In turn, the implications of these findings are discussed in detail in this chapter. Recommendations for future research on the right of return issue for Palestinian refugees, particularly an examination of the views of younger generation refugees are also provided. Finally, the limitations of this research and the barriers encountered during the research process are noted.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The Introduction chapter has established how the voice of Palestinian refugees has been marginalised in the Peace Process and alluded to the implications of this for our understanding of their views of the right of return and other relevant issues. In this chapter we look to how scholars have understood the PIC and the right of return through a review of the theoretical and research literature related to the PIC in general and the Palestinian refugee question more specifically. Its objective is to justify the central aim of this thesis; namely, to give voice to Palestinian refugees on their current perspectives on the right of return. Indeed, the Palestinian refugee voice has been largely obscured and marginalised throughout the PIC and it is important to bring their voices to the attention of the reader as the refugee is most directly affected by the conflict and their marginalisation on the ground.

The right of return has been of interest to legal and political science scholars who focus on the Palestinian refugees' right of return in the context of the PIC (e.g., Reinhart 2003; Said 1992; Masalha 2001, among many others). Given this work is, in the main geopolitical, legalistic, and highly polarised – and thus does not necessarily position the Palestinian refugee perspective at the centre of the discussion – a gap in the literature exists in this regard. In an attempt to address this gap, this chapter reviews the theoretical, general, and research literature related to current Palestinian refugee perspectives of the right of return.

This thesis aims to give voice to the refugee perspective to further our academic understanding of the current Palestinian refugee relationship to the right of return. In turn, a key aspect of the literature which is useful towards understanding how the Arab voice is marginalised more broadly is Said's theory of Orientalism. However, Orientalism does not provide a full explanation of the Palestinian refugee voice. In order to fill this gap, a review is therefore undertaken of the research literature and how it attempts to counter the marginalisation of Palestinian refugees' attitudes and opinions via empirical research. In addition, the current Palestinian refugee relationship to the right of return is addressed conceptually by applying Abu Sitta's

assertion of the "sacredness" of the right of return to Palestinian refugees is reflected in the findings reported in the research literature.

There are, of course, many other prominent Palestinian scholars and theorists who have provided valuable insights into the plight of the Palestinian refugee including Rashid Khalidi, Sami Hadawi, Nur Masalha and Joseph Massad. Masalha, for instance is a Palestinian historian who has written extensively on the forced expulsion (Al Nakba) of Palestinians from Palestine in 1948 and other core issues. In addition, Khalidi is widely acknowledged for his body of work on the Palestinian identity and nationalism in the Arab world. The works of all these authors are widely referenced in academic papers (including throughout this thesis). However, attempts are mostly made to connect the main points of the discussion to key paradigms in Orientalist theory or to Abu Sitta's claim of the sacredness of the right of return to the Palestinian refugee because of the particularly insightful perspectives from which they write about the Palestinian question.

This chapter has three sections. The first section introduces Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and discusses the insights it offers into marginalisation of the Other and the Western imperialist tools of domination. Said's importance to this thesis is not just as a theorist. As a Palestinian, a previous member of the Palestinian National Council, and as a major critic of the peace process, his voice is triply significant for the critical insights he provides on the marginalisation of the Palestinian refugee voice and its implications. Said's theory offers a clear and comprehensive way to understand how non-Western voices have been marginalised by Western powers. The scope of this section therefore includes a discussion of the Palestinian refugee right of return and its relationship to UN Resolution 194 as considered through Orientalist paradigms. In addition, a review of the academic and expert commentary on other matters related to the right of return (i.e. legality, practicality, and costs) are explored.

The second section maintains the focus on the Palestinian refugee right of return, but from the perspective of Abu Sitta's claim to its 'sacredness'. Abu Sitta's assertion of the sacredness of the right of return to Palestinian refugee provides a platform from which to better understand the depth of the conviction the refugees have towards the return to their homeland. Abu Sitta was once a member of the Palestinian National Council and his importance to this thesis is related to his background as a refugee and

his extensive body of work on the Palestinian refugee relationship to right of return in terms of its sacredness, legality, and possibility. Indeed, Abu Sitta's notion of sacredness stands out from the rest of the literature because it provides an opportunity to explore Palestinian refugees' current view of right of return not only from the legal and practical (geo-political) standpoints, but also in terms of the Palestinian refugee psyche. This section identifies and discusses the core elements of Abu Sitta's sacredness claim, including how it relates to Resolution 194. The focus in this section then shifts to a review of the empirical findings related to Palestinian refugees' perspectives on the right of return as well as understandings of blame and responsibility for the refugee issue. The focus on these aspects emerges from the argument that the right of return as expressed in Resolution 194 underpins how refugees have framed their political claims. In turn, the examination of each of these issues is informed by relevant research.

The third section reviews the literature pertaining to some of the broader issues in the PIC and the attempts by the international community to achieve of solution. As such, issue of resettlement and compensation are explored, particularly in relation to how they may present as a substitute or trade-off for the right of return. In addition, changes to the political representation of Palestinian refugees are explored, along with the phasing out of UNRWA services to Palestinian refugees. Focus is given to the implications this has for the marginalisation of the Palestinian refugee voice and their perspectives on the right of return. Indeed, the changing political landscape in the region and changes to the role of UNRWA combine to create a gap in the research literature about whether Palestinian refugee perspectives on the right of return have changed in response to changing political landscape and significant social / historical events. This possibility is a reason why we might want to re-examine the issue of Palestinian refugee attitudes. In turn, one of the aims of this present study is to update the literature by investigating these issues. Towards this aim, the structure of the empirical literature review follows the mirror design of this study's survey instrument.

2.2 Orientalism and the marginalised voice

The core assertion of this thesis is that the Palestinian refugee voice has been marginalised in the peace process to resolve the PIC. As reported by the UNGA Fourth Committee (2015), "Palestine refugees remained among the most marginalized due to Israel's ongoing occupation". This assertion is further supported in the wider literature with claims, for instance, that the ongoing failure of the peace process in combination with changing political agendas have led to "a second Palestinian 'Nakba', or catastrophe" for Palestinian refugees in the form of marginalisation of their voice and the deprivation of their basic human rights (Miller and Samuels 2009, par. 1).

There is support in the wider literature for Said's theory of orientalism theory and its paradigms to provide a useful framework to understand the misrepresentation and marginalisation of the Other. Said examines the marginalised position of the Other in the cultural formations rooted in hegemonic powers by the West (Panlay 2016). Specifically, Said's Orientalism posits that the production of knowledge of the East within falsely unifying rubrics and collective identities by the West is done so, not for purposes of co-existence and enlargement of horizons, but for purposes of dominance and control (Said 2003). In this sense, Said's Orientalism elaborates on, and warns against, the way that the knowledge of the East as constructed by the West is used as a tool for domination. Orientalism is thus relevant to the PIC because it is the broad statements and "system of ideological fictions" created by the West to explain the East that inform contemporary Western scholarship and policy initiatives on the Arab and Muslim worlds (Said 1978, p. 3). Said (1995) posited that, when considered in the context of the dispossession of Palestinians, the Palestinian voice has consistently been marginalised or, at the very least, it has always been overshadowed by an Israeli interpretation and voice. Indeed, Said (2002) and others have argued that the Palestinian voice is invariably accompanied or followed by an Israeli counterview; whereas the reverse is generally never the case. For example, Said (1979, p. 348) draws attention to the marginalisation of the Palestinian and 'Other' voice by highlighting the ways in which the Western media "remains interventionist in the Middle East" in an attempt to maintain the hegemony of Western ideas. Demonstrating the continuing nature of this marginalisation is the more recent

criticism from Baroud (2017, par. 27). Specifically, the author points out that despite Palestinians having an articulate voice, it continues to be silenced by a "campaign of misinformation, distortion, and misrepresentation by Israel and many in western media".

Orientalism is broadly characterised as a way for the West to both "produce" and "manage" the Arab 'Other' (Adib-Moghaddam 2013, p. 33). Indeed, central to Said's Orientalism is the premise that the historical 'management' and 'production' of the Orient by the West – through its political discourse, literary depictions, and cultural representations – generates a deep and recurring image of the 'Other' which it relies on to promote its own legitimacy. Arguably, Orientalism thus emerges as a system of representation which marginalises the Arab world to serve Western imperialistic goals. That is, the political and economic forces that underpin Western discourse on the Orient deliberately construct and perpetuate notions of 'otherness' and 'inferiority' to legitimise attempts by the West to subordinate the East. As stated by Said (1993, xii):

> *…classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts such as 'inferior' or 'subject races', subordinate peoples, 'dependency', expansion, and authority…The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them.*

Put more succinctly, Orientalism is a strategy of marginalisation via power regimes (Adib-Moghaddam 2013). The marginalisation of the Arab world narrative, and indeed the Palestinian narrative in the PIC, is thus a function of the Orientalist paradigms constructed by the West to dominate and to exercise its authority over the East (Said 1993, p. 3). Arabs in general and Palestinians more specifically emerge as little more than "abstract figures" in Western policy considerations which are contextualised in terms of the threat to Israel, the threat to the West, and the threat to democracy more broadly (Said 1978, p. 285). For instance, in the PIC the moral horror has largely been assigned to the methods of Palestinian resistance to occupation (e.g. suicide bombings) rather than to the deliberate and horrific military action by Israel to sustain the occupation of Palestine.

In turn, I argue that it is within the Orientalist discourse which seeks to perpetuate paradigms reliant on notions of a violent (Arab) culture that the voice of the

Palestinian people is largely marginalised on critical issues. Such issues include the forced expulsion of Palestinians from Palestine; denial of their independence; life under military occupation in over-crowded refugee camps; and the expectation Palestinians accept that Palestinian nationality means the provision of fewer essential services, movements controlled by military checkpoints, and arbitrary arrests as a daily life event. As argued by Said (1978, p. 295), the negative and "broad sweeping judgments and misrepresentations" allow little scope for understanding of the Arab on an individual, personal, or experiential level. Orientalist paradigms are thus a marginalising force in that they fail to acknowledge salient points of context and instead acknowledge only representative and generalised codes about Arabs to explain acts of resistance (Panlay 2016). Moreover, responsibility for such actions is located within the domain of culture rather than imperialist paradigms and provides a justification for further occupation and oppression (Panlay 2016). Certainly, there is a pre-eminence in the political vision of Orientalism of constructed ideological binaries and falsely unifying and excluding categories (Said 1978, pp. 43-44). In turn, this thesis argues that it is the reliance on such reductive conceptualisations and categorisations of the East by the West that underpins the latter's presumption to speak for the Arab world (Said 2001). According to Said (2001), the typically Orientalist positioning of the West as 'expert' to not only make generalised and inaccurate "cultural assertions", but also to pass judgments on the East, that marginalise the Arab voice. For Said, Orientalism has therefore marginalised the East at both the intellectual and discursive level (Adib-Moghaddam 2013).

Indeed, the subject of the Orientalist discourse namely, the Arab is in fact excluded from the discourse itself. Then, "without the power to speak, the (sub)altern remains trapped in a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Adib-Moghaddam 2013, p. 33). Cultures marginalised within the dominant Orientalist discourse are thus subjected to a power imbalance that seeks to perpetuate their exile (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2008). In turn, the Orientalist representation of Palestinians effectively suppresses "the Palestinian capacity for self-representation" (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2008, p. 121).

There is no doubt that the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the 1967 war, and the settlements built by Israel in Palestinian territory, have meant that Palestine and its people have been marginalised in the international arena (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia

2008). As such, as a Palestinian, a critic of the peace process, and as a theorist, Said provides a counterpoint from which to understand what Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2008 p. 119) refer to as the "wall of denials" of the existence of the state of Palestine and the voice of the Palestinian people. As stated by Said (1980, p. 154), the Palestinian refugee is unable to assert his identity because he is not enabled to free himself from the institutions that "repeat the fact of his exile".

However, notwithstanding the excessively limiting nature of the Orientalist discourse on the 'Other', this thesis draws on the assertion from Adib-Moghaddam (2013, p. 33), that it can never fully "shut down modes of resistance and counter-discourse". Moreover, in support of Said's (1999) claim that Palestinians have the right to perform and speak for themselves, and are entitled to relate their own history, it is my intention to demonstrate that an important part of the ongoing debate surrounding the PIC is to contribute the voice of the Palestinian refugee. It is worth noting at this point the absence of "ideas and ideologies of the Middle East itself … in Said's Orientalism" (Mart, Toker and Esen 2010, p.369). As such, there are inevitable limitations around discussions of how the issues of focus to Orientalists are presented, as well as East-West relations in the Middle East (Mart et al. 2010). Nonetheless, the insights into the marginalised 'Other' expressed in Said's Orientalism theory had implications for key aspects of the research design and survey questions applied in this thesis (Chapter Three presents more details on these research elements and their impact on the research methodology).

As stated above, Said's Orientalism lens helps to elucidate subordination of the Other via Western hegemonic views, with insights into the marginalisation of the Palestinian voice and its implications in the context of the PIC. However, questions arise as to the extent to which it helps us to specifically understand Palestinian refugee perspectives on UNGA Resolution 194. As such, the objective of the following sections is to examine the literature on Resolution 194 as a springboard to an investigation of the Palestinian refugee perspectives on the right of return.

2.3 The right of return

The importance of undertaking a brief review of the literature on the right of return for Palestinian refugees is self-evident. Arguably, the right of return is and always will be the most crucial factor in the PIC. As stated by Bracka (2005, p. 1), 'the right of return is the lung through which the Israeli–Palestinian struggle breathes'. For Palestinian refugees, the plight is fundamentally about their displacement; that is, forced removal from their homes in 1948-49 and 1967 at the hands of the Israeli occupier. The consequences of this displacement are felt by all refugees who have witnessed the failure of political negotiations to resolve this issue.

There are numerous 'voices' in the literature either 'for' or 'against' the notion of right of return for Palestinian refugees. As a generalisation, these voices either reflect or refute core Orientalist concepts such as marginalisation, domination, and denial of one's narrative in their assertions. Writers to have voiced their support for the Palestinian refugee right of return include Joseph Massad (2001), Adel Samara (2000) and Ilan Pappe (2006). For instance, Samara is a leading author and respected voice on a range of related issues including the PIC, the negotiations for peace and the plight of the Palestinian refugee. According to Samara, the right of return is a critical element in the PIC and therefore should not be compromised, irrespective of any peace negotiations and agreements which attempt to deny Palestinian refugees this right. Central to Samara's position on this issue is his belief that it is a fundamental right of Palestinian refugees to return to their own homes and properties because they represent their true heritage and identity. Samara does, however, acknowledge that some refugees may be unwilling and/or unable to return to their homes and, for them, he argues the right to restitution (Samara 1997).

Given the strength of Samara's belief in the Palestinian right of return it is not unexpected that he has grave concerns about what he sees as the failure of the peace process to fulfil this right (Samara 1997). Of particular concern to Samara are the initiatives by Palestinian intellectuals associated with the PA who have contributed to a peace process that has enabled the exclusion of the Palestinian refugee voice. Samara asserted that the intellectuals have no mandate to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian refugee as they were not elected by the refugees to do so. Indeed, Samara argued that the intellectuals and the peace process more broadly must be resisted if

total loss of the right of return is to be avoided. Moreover, Samara rejected calls the Palestinian refugee to resettle in a future Palestinian state within 1967 borders because this compromises the right of return and legitimises the occupation. Lastly, Samara (1997) rejected the idea that the Palestinian refugee should substitute the right of return for improvements in their living conditions, for which compensation is an important factor. Given the many changes to governance structures, and the implications of these changes, identified and discussed by Samara, it is thus important to re-examine Palestinian refugees' perspectives on the right of return within their contemporary context.

Conversely, a review of the literature also reveals opposition to the Palestinian refugee being granted the right of return including Benny Morris (2004), Uri Avnery (2001), Alan Dershowitz (2005), and Yaffa Zilbershats (2011). For instance, Benny Morris, is an Israeli historian renowned for a dramatic change in position on the reasons for the 1948 Exodus. Morris initially argued in his 1988 publication, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, that Israel was to blame for the Exodus. In 2004, however, he argued in a published article and interview that Israel had no role in causing the Exodus. Emerging from this latter perspective is the claim by Morris that the return of Palestinians would undermine the Jewish character of Israel. Specifically, he argued that the return of Palestinian refugees or the creation of a bi-national state could only result in the spread of violence and the potential subjugation of the Jews in a Muslim-dominated Arab state. Based on these assertions, Morris declared that the Palestinian refugee right of return needed to be weighed against the right to life and well-being of the five million Jews who live in Israel (Morris 2004).

Furthermore, Yaffa Zilbershats, Former Deputy President of the Bar-Ilan University School of Law, wrote regarding the Palestinian refugee right of return: "Return in the sense of going back to the country of origin of the refugees is not a legal right derived from the way international law developed over time" (2011 p.60). Zilbershats (2001) was referring to her understanding that right of return is granted by the general laws of human rights, nationality laws, refugee laws, or humanitarian law. On this basis, Zilbershats (2011) asserted the claims by Palestinians of a right of return according to international law were unfounded. Indeed, not only did Zilbershats (2011) declare that the UNGA and UNSC were not instruments representing a binding source of law in

international law, she concluded that Palestinians should consider the alternative solutions being proposed (i.e. resettlement or a just settlement). She based her position on the view that Israel was not legally bound by international law to permit Palestinian refugees to decide whether or not they want to return to Israeli territory. This identifies an important conflict in the nature of the law, but it is the intention of this thesis to primarily explore the symbolic, ideational and political role of the right of return. As a starting point, a closer discussion of Resolution 194 is warranted as it is inextricably linked to the right of return.

2.3.1 UNGA Resolution 194

A background understanding of Resolution 194 and its significance to the right of return is relevant to this investigation not least because of the explicit presence of the Resolution in the refugee camps included in this study. Indeed, graffiti can be found in the camps whereby '194' is represented as the 'key' to Palestinians' homes of 1948, and framed pictures of the numbers '194' can be found in many houses of Palestinian refugees. Moreover, failure by all parties to adequately define the meaning and parameters of Resolution 194 has clear implications for the peace process and a just solution for the Palestinian refugee.

Resolution 194 was adopted by the UNGA on 11 December 1948 after the expulsion of approximately 750,000 Palestinians from their homes (Masalha 2001, pp. 36-37). It defines the principles for reaching a final settlement and returning Palestinian refugees to their homes (Talhami 2003). The resolution was adopted by 35 of the 58 member countries of the UN, with the strongest opposition coming from all six Arab countries (RES 194(III)). Arab opposition to the Resolution was based on the view that accepting its conditions meant the automatic legitimacy of the state of Israel. In this sense, it may be argued that the Arab nations are resisting what Said refers to in his theory of Orientalism as a determination of the West to both 'manage' and 'produce' the oriental 'Other'. It is noted however that Resolution 194 has been affirmed by the UN over 130 times since its introduction in 1948 (Abu Sitta 2000), with the support of Arab states. Notwithstanding their support for a resolution that sees Palestinians return to their homes, some Arab countries continue to oppose any notion of the legitimacy of the state of Israel.

A review of the literature reveals a clear demarcation line regarding the perceived legitimacy / illegitimacy of Resolution 194. Support for the Resolution aims to confirm the illegality of the Palestinian refugee condition, endorse the legal legitimacy of their voice on right of return, and to provide a pathway towards resolution of the PIC. By contrast, opposition to Resolution 194 aims to demonstrate it as a misguided approach to a solution and to ensure against the misrepresentation of Israelis (See chapters One and Five for a fuller explanation of Resolution 194).

2.3.1.1 Support for Resolution 194

Support for Resolution 194 is generally strongest amongst scholars sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and supportive of the right of return. A notable case in point is Gail Boling, coordinator of the legal unit at the BADIL Resource Centre, Palestine. She strongly advocates UN Resolution 194 as a legitimate basis for the right of return and her assertions are important given they are widely cited in the literature and used by advocates to advance their political claims (see Smith 2012; Akram, Dumper, Lynk and Scobbie 2010).

The key assertion underpinning Boling's advocacy of Resolution 194 is that the reasons put forward by Israel for refusing to allow Palestinian refugees to exercise their right of return (e.g. lack of physical space, desire to keep demographic Jewish majority) have no basis in international law (Boling 2001). According to Boling (2001, p. 1), the primary function of UN Resolution 194 is to reaffirm the "international legal principles that were already binding and which required states to allow refugees to return to their places of origin". Boling based her assertion on the belief that the UN Resolution is both consistent with international law and practice, and that it provides a legitimate framework for a lasting solution to the Palestinian refugee problem.

To support her position, Boling (2001) drew attention to five key principles relevant to exercising the right of return according to Resolution 194. First, Boling pointed out that the Resolution clearly states the place to which refugees have the right to return (i.e., to their homes). Second, the Resolution makes clear that it is the individual refugee's choice as to whether to return. Thus, the Resolution explicitly confers the right of return onto the refugee as part of his or her freedom of choice. Third,

Resolution 194 makes explicit the time frame for the refugees' return (i.e., at the earliest practicable date) thus ensuring that the decision about when the Palestinian refugees may return is not determined by Israel. Fourth, Boling (2001) argued that Resolution 194 places an obligation on Israel to re-admit Palestinian refugees. Fifth, the author asserted that Resolution 194 was developed to apply to all refugees in Palestine, pointing out that although the initial drafts of paragraph 11 of the Resolution specifies 'Arab refugees', the final draft uses the broader term, 'refugees'. Notably, the key constructs underpinning Boling's position including 'rights', 'freedom of choice', and 'self-determination' etc. reflect those very elements identified by Said as being denied the 'Other' by the West in his Orientalism theory.

In addition, Boling (2001) referred to the conditions surrounding Israel's inclusion as a member state to the UN as further evidence of the legitimacy of Resolution 194 as a mechanism to support the Palestinian refugee right of return. As explained by the author, Israel's admission was "conditional upon implementation of Resolution 194" which clearly indicated the UN "considered Israel to be fully bound to ensure full implementation of the Palestinian refugees' right of return" (Boling 2001, p.2).

Terry Rempel (2009) is also a strong advocate of Resolution 194, arguing it is essential to providing the foundation for a solution based on the universal principle of equality and the fundamental rights and freedoms of all. The author points to how the Resolution not only imposes an obligation on Israel to re-admit the refugees to their homeland, but also helps to create the right conditions to facilitate their return (Rempel 2009). As he explains, Resolution 194 clearly calls on Israel to action the return of refugees without having to wait for a peace agreement between both parties of the conflict. Furthermore, it makes clear the Palestinian refugee right to return is to their homes, not just to their homeland (Rempel 2009). Notwithstanding the support for the Palestinian refugee articulated in Rempel's position, one may still feel some concern that the reliance on Israel to 'action the return of refugees' to which he refers reinforces the notion of refugee marginalisation at the hands of the occupying authority.

2.3.1.2 Opposition to Resolution 194

A review of the literature also reveals writers who question the overall legitimacy and interpretation of Resolution 194. Ruth Lapidoth (2001), regarded as an expert in international law – particularly in the Arab-Israeli conflict (Levy 2009), asserts that Resolution 194 does not prescribe a particular solution, nor dictate any particular time-frame for carrying out its recommended returns. As such, she has questioned the Arab States' interpretation of the Resolution and their reliance on it as "recognition of a wholesale right of repatriation" (Lapidoth 2001, p.235). Lapidoth (2001) primarily argued that this interpretation could not be accepted as the Resolution uses the term 'permitted' rather than 'right' in its recommendation for repatriation. To conclude her views on Resolution 194 as a supposed legitimate platform for the right of Palestinian refugees to return to Palestine, Lapidoth (2001) also pointed out that the UN also recommended the resettlement of Palestinian refugees into the economic life of the Near East.

Hertz (2009) takes a similar standpoint to Ladipoth when discussing the complexities of Resolution 194 and its relation to right of return. The author drew attention to the strong focus given by Arabs to paragraph 11 of the Resolution and its references to refugees and compensation including right of return. According to Hertz (2009), paragraph 11 of the Resolution does not guarantee Palestinian refugees the "*unconditional* Right of Return" (original italics) to the state of Israel and should therefore not be interpreted as such. In addition, Hertz (2009) argued that Resolution 194 is not in fact specific to Arab refugees. He therefore proposed that the Resolution could be applied to all refugees, including Jews. Finally, Hertz (2009) concluded his assessment of Resolution 194 by arguing that compensation to Palestinian refugees does not fall solely to Israel and therefore Arab states must share the burden because their armies invaded Israel.

The illegitimacy of interpreting Resolution 194 as a directive supporting the Palestinian refugee right of return is also raised by Shlomo Gazit (1994). Indeed, Gazit argued that UNGA Resolution 194 has no binding international standing and merely provides recommendations. In addition, he claimed that placing the blame on Israel for creating the refugee problem has no international basis. Based on these issues, Gazit (1994) further argued that not only is the Palestinian refugee right of

return impractical – because it will interfere with the demographic balance of Israel – Resolution 194 in fact attempts to interfere with and change the character of Israel, and therefore must be rejected.

When considered collectively, the voices of opposition to Resolution 194 clearly reflect Orientalist paradigms that reduce the Palestinian refugee to an abstract figure talked of in dehumanising terms such as binding legislation, provisions of compensation, and semantic differences between what is to be 'permitted' and what is a 'right'.

2.3.1.3 Implications of the different perspectives of Resolution 194

It is not surprising that Palestinian writers and supporters assert the legitimacy of Resolution 194 as a legal basis for the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland whereas Israeli writers and supporters generally assert its illegitimacy. Nonetheless, the oppositional positions regarding the UN Resolution are relevant to this present study for two reasons. First, the partisan nature of the debate highlights just how important the right of return and Resolution 194 are to people's perceptions of the PIC. Refugees then emerge as a geopolitical and legal pawn in the conflict, making it hard for them to be heard on their own terms as their voices are arguably *dangerous* because they have such big implications. Second, the inability to achieve clarity or consensus on the meaning of Resolution 194 must add to the protracted nature of the peace process and to the difficulty for Palestinians, Israelis, and international negotiators to reach a solution on the Palestinian refugee question. In turn, current camp dwellers' perceptions of right of return may be impacted by years of dispute surrounding this key resolution. Given the explicit and ongoing presence of Resolution 194 as a 'legal' platform for the right of return according to the UN, a specific item was included in the survey instrument to shed light on Palestinian refugees' current commitment to the Resolution.

The above section provides insights into the contrasting theoretical and academic views of the right of return and its legal characterisation via Resolution 194. Clearly there are distinctive and disparate schools of thought on the Palestinian refugee right of return and the realisation of Resolution 194. Notably, Orientalism can contribute to our understanding of the importance of Resolution 194 and its impact on refugees

and their marginalisation. This gives rise to the question: What are the refugees' views of the right of return, not only from a legal or political perspective, but also through the language of 'sacredness' as articulated by Abu Sitta?

An attempt to provide a comprehensive answer to this question is constrained by the lack of literature on this very issue. However, Salman Abu Sitta stands out as a voice that gives expression to why Resolution 194 is so important to the Palestinian refugees. He achieves this by drawing on and expertly conveying his experiences of being a refugee as well as by theorising on the right of return as a sacred right within the refugee narrative. Moreover, it may reasonably be assumed that he seeks to stand out as a voice for refugees on these matters based on his open admissions that he longs to return to Palestine.

The following sections explore Abu Sitta's assertion of the sacredness of the right of return to Palestinians along with its implications for Palestinian refugee identity and power.

2.4 The sacredness of right of return to the Palestinian refugee

The work of Salman Abu Sitta is vital to our interpretation of the Palestinian refugee perspective of right of return. Abu Sitta is a former member of the Palestinian National Council whose work is an exemplar case for discussion because of the insights it provides into how Palestinians continue to see the right of return as practical and possible (Abu Sitta 2001). As a generalisation, Abu Sitta (2001) argues that the right of return is an indisputable right, acknowledged and recognised by the international community, through countless resolutions. To support this assertion, Abu Sitta argued that there are three aspects to the right of return which make it a forceful and inevitable claim: it is sacred; it has a strong legal basis; and it is possible (Abu Sitta 2001, p. 197). To clarify, the author provides three explanations to support his assertion: the right of return is a legal claim in accordance with international law; that the right of return is sacred to all Palestinians; the right of return is foundationally normative to the refugee identity, and not bound specifically to individual memory or experience of expulsion; and that there is no acceptable reason why the Palestinian refugee should not return (Abu Sitta 2008, 2009). He further argues that the refugees

determination and strong will are two factors that combine with their sense of empowerment from Resolution 194 the resolution affirming the right of return of refugees to return home to their place of origin (Abu Sitta 2001, p. 197) (see section 2.4.2 for a more detailed discussion of Abu Sitta's assertions of the sacred, legal, and practical dimensions of right of return).

In terms of sacredness, Abu-Sitta (1999, p. 66) posits that the right of return is indeed sacred because it is "an indestructible core of the Palestinian psyche". Notably, this assertion is both supported and challenged in the literature. For instance, Terry Rempel (2013) supported the view posited by Abu Sitta and argued that it is vital to challenge the idea that returns are impossible.

In contrast, Alex Stein (2007) has claimed that Abu Sitta is mistaken on all three counts (the right of return is sacred, possible, and legal) asserting that it is neither racist nor unjust to deny the right of return to Palestinian refugees (this assertion is explored in greater detail below). Abu Sitta's claim of the sacredness of right of return implies that it is something above and beyond compromise to the Palestinian people. When considered from this perspective, one may argue that to waive the right of return is to compromise its sacredness. Indeed, the sacredness of the right of return is conceptualised by Abu Sitta (1999) as a holy right of Palestinians to return to their original homes in Palestine.

Durkheim's theory of religion provides a springboard for understanding Abu Sitta's assertion of the sacredness of the right of return. According to Durkheim (2008), the sacred may be characterised as an ideal or that which is awe-inspiring and transcends everyday existence. Included in this characterisation are those domains which are 'set apart' by individuals or groups based on natural and/or supernatural association such, as religious beliefs, rites, and duties (Evans 2003). Although Durkheim asserted that, the extent to which something is regarded as sacred can vary according to different religions, it is nonetheless sacred because the community has accepted it as sacred (Durkheim 2008). As such, the sacred in Durkheim's theory emerges as a unifying interest of the group which is often embodied in sacred symbols, which in the case of the Palestinian refugee, may be in the form of the key to their original homes (see chapter 5) and/or UNGA Resolution 194 (see Section 2.4.1 below). Abu Sitta proposes that the sacredness of the right of return is inextricably linked to the

sacredness of land (i.e. Palestine). In turn, the sacredness is reinforced in light of the sacrifices made by Palestinians in their effort to resist the occupation.

The 'sacred' is conceptualised in Arabic as that which is pure and divine (Owens 2013). As such, assertions of the 'sacredness' of the right of return imply in one sense that it is a divine right to Palestinians. As alluded to in Section 1.1, the sacredness of a people's connection to land is apparent across many cultures, with the Australian Aborigines presenting as another powerful example. As Rose (1996) explains, despite dispossession at the hands of European colonialists, the land is central to the relationships, economies, identities and cultural observations of Aboriginal peoples. As such, Aborigines are intent on maintaining its "spiritual value" through "storytelling, ceremony and political activism" (Rose 1996, p. 6). Thus, for Palestinians and Indigenous Australians alike, the association between homeland and what is sacred implies sacrifice to protect its sacredness. Based on this view, Abu Sitta (1999) asserts that the right of return is sacred to Palestinians because of the spiritual connection they have to their homeland, built over many generations.

Moreover Abu-Sitta's description of the Palestinian refugee right of return as "sacred, legal, possible, but particularly 'sacred', reflects a secular, nationalist framework" (Weaver 2014). In describing the Palestinian people's connection to Palestine as unbreakable, it continues as a fundamental but sacred objective since 1948. Arguably, Abu Sitta's use of the term sacred is reinforced when one considers the "warfare, suffering, and enormous social and political hardships" (Weaver 2014, p. 2) endured by Palestinian refugees over many decades. Furthermore, Abu Sitta (2000, p.15) himself accounts for his use of the word sacred in relation to the right of return in his assertion that:

> the refugee from Iqrit, who is an Israeli citizen, the refugee from Lydda, who is a Jordanian citizen, the refugee from Haifa, who is stateless in Syria or Lebanon, and the refugee from Jaffa, who is a U.S. citizen, have the same determination.

In this way, the sacredness of the right of return can be linked to notions of "identity, legitimacy, support, and power" for the Palestinian people (Richter-Devroe 2013, p. 96). In turn, the sacredness is evidenced in how the Palestinian refugee narrative on

the right of return emphasises the importance of the Palestinian refugee identity as a way to challenge political and social oppression (Richter-Devroe 2013).

Furthermore, Abu Sitta (2001) claims that the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel will not cause major displacement among Jews who wish to live in harmony. This statement can be interpreted as an attempt to convince policy makers in Israel that refugees' right of return is viable and manageable (Abu Sitta 2001, p. 197). He validated his claim by adding:

> *We have a huge database and we know who the refugees are, by name, by family, by village of origin, what they own, the limit of their land and where they are exiled today, in which camp or country. Their return is much less awkward and expensive than bringing Jewish immigrants to Palestine. Many can walk to their homes, literally within sight. Most can take a one-or two-hour bus ride. They can rebuild their homes at the exact spot of their destroyed village. Ninety percent of the village sites are still vacant. There are enough Palestinian engineers and skilled workers to build the needed one million dwelling units*.

Abu Sitta (2010) also argued for the cost-effectiveness of the right of return, citing studies that show the total cost of returning refugees could be achieved in phases which would take at most six to eight years to complete. He argued that the advantage of the right of return is that the cost of return is much cheaper than the compensation for stolen land and property, which could reach $500 billion. As stated by Abu Sitta, returning Palestinian refugees to their homeland is cheaper than the subsidy paid by the US to support Israel's economy and military, which runs to $110 billion and counting (Abu Sitta 2010).

In sum, Abu Sitta draws our focus to the importance of acknowledging the voice of Palestinian refugees to properly understanding the refugee perspective of right of return. Indeed, as a refugee, his work shows that we need to hear from refugees, and as such he provides this thesis with some key insights as to where to assign the points of focus. Abu Sitta does not explore the Palestinian refugee voice empirically, but rather he contributes to our understanding the right of return by exploring it in different terms. In turn, these different terms can be used to interpret how refugees continue to think about the right of return. This points to the need to review the

research literature which has attempted to access the voice of the Palestinian refugee to consider the findings in relation to his notion of sacredness. The following sections provide such a review of the empirical literature.

2.5 Research perspectives

A plethora of studies have been conducted on Palestinian refugees across a range of research areas. As such, a key objective of this thesis is not only to understand what existing work (which gives access to the voices of refugees) has to say, but to identify how this work can be extended through survey research. Furthermore, this chapter contributes to the literature on the Palestinian refugee perspectives of the right of return by briefly discussing how the components of the research studies relate to the conceptualisations of Orientalism and sacredness developed by Said and Abu Sitta respectively.

In turn, undertaking a review of the research findings from these studies provides value insights into the life of Palestinian refugees over the previous 40 years. However, as has been previously noted, there is presently a need to (re)capture the current voice of Palestinian refugees on the right of return in line with the current political context.

2.5.1 Established research findings on Palestinian refugees' view of the right of return

Abu Sitta supports his claim of the sacredness of the right of return by asserting that different groups of Palestinians have the same determination to return to their homeland. In turn, this is reflected in the research literature. Early studies of Palestinian refugees' views on the right of return include those by Rosemary Sayigh (1977, 1979) about Palestinians living in refugee camps in Lebanon. Sayigh (1979) wrote that the Palestinian refugees in her study described themselves as "on the road to return", signifying reversal of the Exodus of 1948 (Sayigh 1979). Sayigh (1977) also reported that the Palestinian refugees residing in camps in Lebanon suffered from both social and psychological isolation. This was primarily due to being subjected to stigmatisation simply for being refugees and for living in refugee camps. Not

unexpectedly, the author reported that such dislocation and stigmatisation impacted the Palestinian refugee notion of identity and their resolve to return to their homeland. As Sayigh (1979) explained, Palestinian refugees in camps in Lebanon during the 1970s created an anthology of identity metaphors and resistance slogans such as "struggler", "one who sacrifices", and "steadfastness".

Albarmiel (2005) also provided insights into the attitudes of the Palestinian refugee living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the issue of right of return in his study conducted during the Second Intifada. Reflecting Abu Sitta's notion of the sacredness of the right of return as a spiritual connection to homeland built over many generations, Albarmiel found the Palestinian refugee held strong memories of the cities and villages in Palestinian prior to their occupation in 1948. Albarmiel (2005) reported that the respondents in his study considered it important to adhere to Resolution 194 in order to ensure the right to return to their land. The author reported that 87% of refugee participants living in West Bank and Gaza Strip were in favour of right of return to Palestine. This outcome compares to 84.2% reported by Sha'ban (1994) discussed below and thus suggests that the proportion of refugees in favour of returning to Palestine may be increasing over time. Albarmiel (2005) explained this result by positing that the right of return is a political issue rather than demographic issue and therefore cannot be substituted with socio-economic initiatives (p. 113). Despite Albarmiel (2005) reporting the clear desire of the Palestinian refugee to realise their right of return, his study also found respondents did not believe the political negotiations would result in this outcome (Albarmiel 2005). As such, he reported the Palestinian refugee disapproves of the negotiating team because the issue of right of return was not discussed during the peace talks (Albarmiel 2005, p. 106).

Notably, Albarmiel (2005) also found many Palestinian refugees held the belief that military action was most likely to result in them returning to their homes. He asserted that Palestinian refugees believed what is taken by force must be returned by force. Indeed, he reported his respondents noted a weakness in the Palestinian negotiating position with respect to right of return. They were therefore reluctant to support the negotiation process, preferring instead to remain committed to returning to their homeland and gaining compensation (Albarmiel 2005). As with the previously reviewed studies, Albarmiel's (2005) findings suggest economic adversity does not

lead refugees to waive the right of return and accept resettlement to improve their living conditions in the camps. Indeed, the author concluded the implementation of international law, and specifically, UN Resolution 194 is fundamental to resolving the Palestinian refugee issue and the broader issue of Palestine.

Notably, Albarmiel's (2005) study was conducted during the Second Intifada at a time when the Palestinian refugee in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were under direct attacks by Israeli forces and subjected to ongoing humiliation. As such, it may be the case that his findings on the Palestinian refugee view of the right of return were particularly reflective of the ongoing hostilities. In turn, the survey implemented in this present research helps to update the findings from Albarmiel by focusing on the same issue (i.e. the relationship between socio-economic status and attitude to right of return) with refugees from the same location (i.e. West Bank). However, this present study also contributes new insights into the way changing circumstances may impact views on the right of return given it was conducted in a different socio-political climate including the collapse of the PA in Gaza and the emergence of Hamas rule.

Presenting a slightly contrasting account of the right of return – including its 'sacredness' is the study by Beckerle (2011). The author argues that Palestinian refugees believed it was not the right of return that was of paramount importance, but rather the right of every individual to choose the outcome they most desired; namely right of return, resettlement or compensation. Beckerle (2011) also found that Palestinian refugees were prepared to respect the decision of other refugees should they consider an option other than to return to Palestine before 1948. This respect emerged from the belief that refugees living in disadvantaged circumstances, particularly in refugee camps, would prefer return as a way to improve their lives, whereas well-established refugees may choose to stay in their current locations.

Lastly, a unique study conducted by Khoury and Rouhana (2011) focused on the views of right of return held by Palestinians living in Israel and what they regarded as the minimum acceptable solution to the Palestinian refugee issue. The authors reported 70.3% of respondents believed all refugees have the right of return to Israel or to be granted a choice between return and compensation.

Applying Abu Sitta's notion of sacredness to empirical research on the right of return claim is useful because a review of the literature reveals shifts in the refugees' attitudes towards this issue. Abu Sitta's use of the word sacred (as well as 'legal' and 'possible') to describe the right of return arguably implies that it will endure despite years of exile and displacement. Thus, an appreciation of Abu Sitta's representation of the relationship between the Palestinian refugee and the right of return is dependent on both history and context. Shifts in refugee attitudes towards the right of return may be related to changing socio-political circumstances, the continued failure to advance the peace process, and the deterioration in refugee camp conditions. This has arguably created a gap in the research literature as to the current Palestinian refugee perspective of the right of return. In turn, if Abu Sitta's assertion of the 'sacredness' of the right of return to the Palestinian refugee is to be understood from a contemporary perspective it is necessary to continue the literature by investigating how ongoing socio-political changes in the lives of Palestinian refugees may have impacted their views on right of return; specifically, the views of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

To fully appreciate the notion of sacredness as it applies to the right of return it is necessary to consider the displacement of Palestinian refugees from Palestine in 1948 (i.e. Al Nakba). This thesis argues that integral to this consideration is the question of who is to blame for the 1948 Exodus. Therefore, the following section provides a review of the literature on blame and responsibility for the Palestinian refugee issue.

2.5.2 Blame and responsibility for refugee issue

The issue of blame for Al Nakba and its ramifications for Palestinians remains a central element in refugee narratives passed on from generation to generation. Broadly speaking, there are two core narratives pertaining to the issue of blame: the narrative shaped by Palestinians; and the narrative shaped by the occupying power (Zayed 2013). The Palestinian refugee narrative on blame emerged from the claim that they endured deliberate expulsion from their homeland at the hands of the Zionists (Pappe 2006), whereas the occupier narrative emerged from the claim that Palestinians had weak connection to the land and that they left voluntarily (Said 2011).

Said (2011, p. 3) offers an Orientalist perspective on the occupier narrative and its justification for the colonisation of Palestine, writing:

> *Movements of colonial settlement envisaged both a subordinate and exploitative role of the natives; the Zionists were novel in that they saw the Palestinians as subordinates but excluded them from a meaningful existence: they were considered to be inconsequential nomads who 'neglected' the land before 1948.*

While it may be easy to suggest a dichotomous relationship between the views of the Palestinian refugee and the views of Israel on the issue of blame; that is, Israel is solely to blame, and the Palestinian is solely to blame, respectively findings from research suggest a more complex landscape**.** On the issue of who should be held responsible for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, Yhaya (1998, p. 56) reported that "almost all 142 refugees who answered this question blamed the Jews". Notably, those respondents who did not blame the Palestinian refugee problem on Israel pointed the finger at the British Mandate Authority, Palestinians themselves, or the international community.

In his comparative study of Palestinians (living in Israel) and Israeli Jews, Zureik (1999) also sought the respondents' opinions on the issue of blame for the refugee problem. The author reported that the majority (57%) of Palestinians in Israel blamed Jewish forces for instigating the refugee problem in 1948 and that they believed Israel was responsible for the fate of refugees. In contrast, only 31% of Israeli Jews indicated they believed it was Jewish forces that originally expelled Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, only 12% of Israeli respondents believed Israel should be held responsible for the creation of the refugee problem whereas 36% of Israeli Jewish respondents blamed Israel and Arab states jointly.

Khoury and Rouhana's (2011) study of the perceptions of blame held by Palestinians living in Israel found only 33% of respondents held the view that responsibility for the Palestinian refugee problem was Israel's alone. In contrast, 77% of respondents reported that Israel and others including the Palestinian leadership and Arab countries were responsible for the creation of the refugee issue (see Chapter Five). This result demonstrates a clear change of perspective by Palestinians (living in Israel) regarding the issue of responsibility for Al Nakba when compared to the results presented by Zureik (1999).

Despite the relatively low percentage of respondents believing Israel to be responsible for the creation of the refugee problem, the Khoury and Rouhana (2011) survey showed 75.4% of participants felt the responsibility for resolving the refugee issue lies with Israel. Furthermore, the study revealed 86.5% of respondents demanded refugees be granted the right to return to their homes. The vast majority of respondents (85.7%) also indicated that Israel was responsible for the provision of compensation to Palestinian refugees.

It is worth briefly mentioning at this point Sabbagh-Khoury's (2013) discussion of the 'security' measures embedded in military, social and political contexts to which Palestinian refugees are subjected such as land control and movement control. Similarly, Palestinian refugees are subjected to some 'controls' by the PA in response to perceived security risks such as associations with certain political groups (e.g. Hamas) or restrictions around freedom of speech on some political issues (Human Rights Watch 2018). Consideration of the 'risk' context in which Palestinian refugees live is important not only to our understanding of the way in which 'security' is used by Israel to justify its policies and actions (Sabbagh-Khoury 2013) and by the PA to 'police' the behaviours of citizens, but also to offer insights into the methodology applied in this study (see Section 3.2).

In consideration of the findings from the studies reviewed above there is compelling evidence that many Palestinian refugees 'blame' Israel for their expulsion. There is also evidence however to show Palestinian refugees do not blame Israel only. The narrative as to why Palestinians left their homeland continues to be subjected to debate and interpretation. As a child, I remember my father apportioning some blame to the Arab army, telling me that it was not organised, committed to the liberation of Palestine, and did not fight hard enough. In addition to my father's criticisms, it may also be argued that Palestinians did not have access to the right weapons to mount a legitimate response to the aggressive attacks and massacres perpetrated by Jewish forces. The issues of blame and the ongoing displacement of Palestinian refugee are linked to the broader issue of right of return in this study. Therefore, to understand current views of Palestinian refugees on the right of return the participants were asked in the survey items to reflect on, and respond directly to the issues of "blame" and of achieving a "lasting solution".

This researcher holds the same view as Abu Sitta and Samara that opposition to Resolution 194 and thus the Palestinian right of return can be interpreted as an attempt to endorse the resettlement of the Palestinian refugee to the exclusion of right return. Nonetheless, an 'objective' survey is needed to establish the extent to which this is the case. Irrespective of blame, the sacred connection to land and the right of return continues despite many years of displacement. From my perspective (See Section 1.3 for a brief explanation), this is evident from the fact that successive Israeli governments have consistently refuted the legitimacy of the Resolution while continuing their attempts to resettle Palestinian refugees in their current locations or third-party countries. The following section introduces and explores resettlement and compensation as important components of the Palestinian refugee right of return. Both of these elements are addressed in Resolution 194 and have been the focus of empirical research.

2.6 Resettlement and compensation

Two related components in the Palestinian refugee right of return issue are resettlement and compensation. As discussed above, Resolution 194 resolves that refugees should be afforded repatriation, resettlement, and economic and social rehabilitation options (UNGA Resolution 194, par. 11). Broadly speaking, resettlement refers to the schemes which aim to integrate Palestinian refugees within their host countries and thus nullify the right of return. Compensation, financial and otherwise, is embedded in the notion of economic and social rehabilitation. Researchers past and present have demonstrated a keen interest in investigating the extent to which 'return' remains central to the Palestinian refugee narrative in light of their continuing struggle to redress their expulsion from their ancestral homeland (Khalidi 1992). Indeed, a key point of interest in this study is to investigate the extent to which resettlement and compensation may have replaced the right of return as an outcome to peace in the view of the Palestinian refugee.

2.6.1 Palestinian refugees' views of resettlement

In terms of past research, Hazboun (1989) conducted a study of Palestinian refugees' views of the resettlement projects implemented by the Israeli government in Gaza Strip during the 1970s (see Resettlement Chapter). The project aimed to resettle

refugees within Palestine and thus to negate the issue of right of return. Hazboun (1989) reported that the resettlement strategy failed to mitigate opposition to occupation. This is because the refugees settled in modernised areas and rehabilitated suburbs participated in the political movements and ongoing conflict with Israeli military occupation during the First Intifada. The author indicated that clashes with Israeli soldiers intensified in this specific area more than the original camps. Notably, Hazboun (1989) established a clear association in her study between the resettlement of refugees in Palestine and the implications for the integrity of the right of return. As such, the author concluded that the Palestinian refugees continued to believe that resettlement projects should not take precedence over the right of return (Hazboun 1989). In line with Abu Sitta's notion of sacredness, this outcome reflects the deep relationship that Palestinian people have with their original homes and supports the idea of a spiritual connection to the land and their right of return. As such, resettlement projects may interfere with this connection.

Sha'ban (1994) also assigned focus to the issue of resettlement in his study of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. He found that in the absence of the right to return to 1948 borders, respondents were divided in their views of a future place of residence. The overwhelming majority of participants (82.4%) indicated that they would choose to live in Palestine. Notably, however, most respondents (69.8%) also indicated that they would not wish to remain in Lebanon even if they no longer had the option to return to Palestine (Sha'ban 1994). Hence, similar to the Hazboun (1989) study, respondents in the Sha'ban (1994) study clearly rejected resettlement as a substitute option for the right of return. It did emerge in the Sha'ban (1994) study however that 49% of elderly Palestinian refugees would choose to stay in Lebanon if unable to return to Palestine. In turn, research results such as these point to the need to investigate Abu Sitta's claims of the sacredness of the right of return. While the indications by the elderly participants in Sha'ban's study that they would choose to remain in Lebanon may primarily be due their belief that return to their homes is no longer an option, they do nonetheless present some challenges to the claims of the 'sacredness' to the right of return.

More recent empirical research by Mohsen Saleh (2006) has provided insights into how views held by Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon have changed since the

study by Sha'ban (1994). Similar to Hazboun (1989) and Sha'ban (1994), Salah (2006) focused on the refugee view of resettlement as a key issue related to right of return. He reported that 98.3% of participants did not view resettlement in Lebanon or compensation as a feasible solution (compared to 69.8% reported by Sha'ban in 1994). One explanation for the difference in outcomes is that Sha'ban (1994) conducted his study at a time when the PLO was more explicitly serving and protecting Palestinian refugees in Lebanon; in 2006, at the time of the Saleh study, such support to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was not available.

Saleh also reported that 79.6% of the participants indicated they were not willing to allow resettlement and compensation options to compromise the Palestinian refugee right of return (in fact, 81.1% of respondents were confident that they would return to Palestine). In terms of the refugees' preferences of where to return, Saleh (2006) reported 85% of participants would choose to return to historical Palestine. This result is almost the same as that reported by Sha'ban (82.4%) and demonstrates that, in general, the views of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon have changed little, if at all, over the 12-year period in relation to their rejection of resettlement in host countries. In fact, the trend in both studies was clear, refugees wanted to return to the pre-1948 hometowns in Palestine. Such results should be viewed with some caution, however, given the potential methodological issue of Palestinian refugee participants wanting to make a political point through their answers. If this was the case, there are also implications for how we may perceive the right to return as political rather than sacred.

The original homes of the Palestinian refugee should not only be regarded as an asset with economic and financial value. Rather, they are an important part of their lives and belief systems. The following section explores this claim and the extent to which compensation may have emerged as a trade-off for right of return.

2.6.2 The compensation option

Resolution 194 (III) essentially emphasises four types of compensation to Palestinian refugees: payments to those who choose not to return; payment to returnees for loss of property or material damages to property; payments related to income derived for the use of refugee property; and payment for non-material damages (BADIL 1999). Given the relationship between compensation to the Palestinian refugee and the right

of return, it is not surprising that much has been written about this outcome for refugees. For instance, Kubursi (2013) claimed compensation and right of return are complementary programs and must not be treated as mutually exclusive. He argued the principle that restitution of property and compensation for lost opportunities should be independent of whether one chooses to return to her or his homeland is a primary component of the rights of refugees. Kuburis' analysis is explicitly placed in the context of adequate compensation for loss of rights (particularly in relation to sense of identity), as well as loss of property. As such, his understanding of what comprises a just resolution includes addressing the identity needs and freedom needs of the Palestinian refugees.

The implications of compensation provision for the sacredness of the right of return are of interest to this study. On the one hand, Ginges (2005) claims that the provision of "material compensation for difficult compromises will likely backfire if those compromises involve sacred values" (p. 53). On the other hand, Molloy et al. (2014) have asserted that compensation is an important outcome as it represents for many refugees that Israel and the international community have recognised the wrongs and dispossession the Palestinian have suffered since 1948. However, Niebergall and Wuhler (2014, p. 132) have pointed out that some Palestinians perceive the provision of compensation without the right of return as a trade-off concept and therefore call on Israel to take full responsibility to provide funds for their suffering. What is clearly evident from a review of the literature is that compensation continues to signify different things to Palestinians in general and refugees particularly.

In a survey of displaced Palestinians living in Israel, Khoury and Rouhana (2011) reported 70.3% of respondents believed all refugees have the right of return to Israel, or the right to be granted a choice between return and compensation. Complicating the issue however is Israel's continued resistance to acknowledge both the compensation option and refugees' right of return. Central to Israel's resistance is the claim that the war of 1948 created refugees on both sides. Therefore, the Israeli position is that Palestinian refugees should be prepared to settle in their current locations and should give up on their demand for compensation (Brynen 1996).

Notwithstanding the importance of the findings reported in the studies discussed above, the relative paucity of recent studies of the Palestinian refugee view of

resettlement and compensation presents another significant gap in our academic understanding of Palestinian refugee perspectives on the right of return. Abu Sitta's description of the 'sacredness' of the right of return reflects the traditional Palestinian position that the right of return, resettlement, and compensation remain equally central to achieving a just solution. This study has reported, however, that negotiations for peace since the Oslo Agreement have focused on resettlement and compensation outcomes rather than the right of return in accordance with Resolution 194. As such, one of the aims of this present study is to update the literature by investigating how Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank view resettlement and compensation initiatives within the peace process. This will help to better understand if such views have impacted their perspectives on the right of return. In doing so, this study will provide a deeper understanding of the extent to which the 'sacredness' of the right of return is reflected in the modern context.

Any potential challenge to the sacredness of the right of return among Palestinian refugees through a preference for resettlement and compensation outcomes may emerge as a result of shifting political representations and changing political agendas. To clarify, it may be that the political representatives of Palestinian refugees (namely the PLO and PA), along with intellectuals associated with the PA, regard resettlement and compensation outcomes as more practical and/or achievable than realising the right of return. As such, the following section reviews relevant literature on the political representation of Palestinian refugee and its potential to influence their perspective of right of return.

2.7 Political representation of the Palestinian refugees

Palestinian refugees have been witness to numerous changes in the political parties representing them the throughout the PIC. The emergence of new political parties implies new political agendas and changes to the political landscape in the region. Immediately after the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland, political representation was adopted by Arabs with the agenda to liberate Palestine. Subsequent to this, the emergence of the PLO is acknowledged as the dominant political representative of Palestinians in general and refugees in particular (Schanzer 2008). When established in 1964, the PLO claimed that its sole objective was the liberation of Palestine. In 1974, however, the PLO endorsed a shift in its political agenda

towards a two-state solution. Moreover, in 1988 the PLO commenced secret negotiations with Israel to pursue Palestinian autonomy in West Bank and Gaza Strip. Further shifts in the political representation of the Palestinian refugee have continued via the emergence of the Hamas movement and the establishment of the PA by the PLO, with Hamas claiming the PLO and PA had 'sold out' Palestine.

Findings in previous research studies (discussed below) point to how Palestinian refugee perceptions of their political representation (e.g. the PLO) can shape their attitudes towards their situation and who is to negotiate for solutions on their behalf. Sha'ban's (1994) field study of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon provided a useful platform for gaining insights into Palestinian refugees' views of their political representation. Indeed, one of the key aims of the Sha'ban (1994) study was to identify the Palestinian refugee position regarding the Palestinian-Israeli agreement (Gaza-Jericho) and their views of the leadership of the PLO. The results of the study showed that the peace negotiations did not alter the thinking of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in relation to their goal to return to their homes. This result arguably provides some insights into the Palestinian refugee view of the PLO. According to Sha'ban (1994), 60% of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were not satisfied with the political achievements of their leadership, but they continued to support the PLO as a sole and legitimate representative. Although the author does not offer an explanation as to why Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have this attitude, it could be argued that it is because the PLO was established in Lebanon and functions as a state within the camps (Haddad 2004, p 474). As such, the PLO in Lebanon provides refugees with social, financial and political support.

In contrast to the results reported by Sha'ban (1994) regarding Palestinian refugees' views of the PLO, Beckerle (2011) reported that Palestinian refugees living in camps in Bethlehem indicated the PLO had lost touch with the needs and demands of the refugee community. In relation to the international community, refugees' views were complex and varied. For some participants, return meant moving back to their original homes, but for others the right of return was less about land and more about acknowledgment and recognition of their right.

Different generations of Palestinian refugees have experienced different types of political representation with limited political outcomes. There is a gap in the current

research literature however related to how the combination of shifts in the political representation and continued failure to reach a just solution in the peace process may have impacted the Palestinian refugee perspective of right of return. The survey instrument developed for this current research investigation has therefore included items to address this gap by accessing the Palestinian refugee voices on issues about political representation and its impact on their views of the right of return.

Another aspect of change that potentially impacts views of the right of return is related to current phase out of UNRWA. The following section identifies and discusses the key issues to emerge in the literature on the phase out of UNRWA and how it is perceived by Palestinian refugees. Focus is also given to the impact and implications of the phase out of UNRWA services and subsequent establishment of the PA in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

2.8 Changing role of United Nations Relief and Works Agency

The UNRWA is socially significant to Palestinian refugee on the basis of its original mandate in 1949 was to provide social support to refugees until a solution was reached. In 1995, however, the UNRWA services to Palestinians began to be phased out at the recommendation of international donors (See Chapter 8). The provision of services by UNRWA and how this provision has changed may ultimately impact views about the right of return. Moreover, as an international organisation, UNRWA may be examined in relation to Said's claims in his Orientalist theory of domination of the Other by Western imperialists and the marginalisation of their narrative. Since its inception, Palestinian refugees have adopted contrasting views to UNRWA. In general terms, some refugees regard UNRWA as an imperialist tool for instance (see Schiff 1995) however, other refugees are of the opinion that it helps to protect and provide much needed aid to refugees (see Bartholomeusz 2010).

Similar to the literature on the Palestinian right of return, many scholarly works have explored UNRWA's role in the Middle East and the general political, humanitarian, and socio-economic considerations (e.g. Al Husseini and Bocco 2009). However, to the best of this researcher's knowledge, there have been few studies that explicitly address the potential impact of the phase out of UNRWA services on Palestinian refugees, including refugees in West Bank and Gaza Strip. A review of the literature,

however, reveals a lack of recent research focus on Palestinians' views of the phase out of UNRWA. Certainly, past studies conducted by Sha'ban (1994) and Yhaya (1998) have contributed valuable insights into the Palestinian refugee perspective and the evaluation of UNRWA service provisions in relation to socio-economic factors and camp conditions. For instance, the Sha'ban (1994) study showed 75.6% of respondents indicated that the Agency provided only minimum services. In turn, Sha'ban (1994) drew attention to the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and revealed their state of poverty and subsequent poor quality of life, especially in light of the cuts to the services provided by UNRWA. Furthermore, the study revealed the effects of the dehumanisation and condescending manner in which the Lebanese government related to Palestinians in general (Sha'ban 1994).

Yhaya's (1998) study also revealed the majority (81%) of participants were not satisfied with the assistance provided by UNRWA, with many describing it as meaningless. The refugees' attitudes towards UNRWA services became more complex however when discussing the possible transfer of UNRWA services to PA, with 61% of respondents strongly opposed to the transfer. The implication of this outcome is that although Palestinian refugees may not be satisfied with the support provided by UNRWA in every respect, they still appear to be more trusting of the international agency than they are of the PA.

In addition, scholars have examined the Palestinian refugee response to the phase out of UNRWA services to make way for the PA to assume responsibility for Palestinian refugees. In what is arguably a reflection of marginalisation of the Other explored by Said (1995), the scholarly focus on UN organisations such as UNRWA primarily emerged from the fact they are deeply immersed in the highly-politicised context in the region (Bocco 2009) (see Chapter 8). For some refugees, UNRWA has an important role in giving them a voice and in validating their right of return in the eyes of the international community. In contrast, other refugees view the mere presence of UNRWA as the inevitable unwillingness of the international community 'to implement UNGA Resolution 194 … considered by the Palestinian refugees as a guarantee of their right of return and/or compensation' (Bocco 2009).

Despite the contributions of the research and scholarly literature, we remain relatively uninformed as to the impact of the phase out of UNRWA on the Palestinian refugees'

perspective of the right of return. The present study aims to fill this gap through the collection and analysis of quantitative survey data on this aspect. Specifically, this study will identify whether or not there is a link between the continuation/discontinuation of UNRWA as a service provider and perceptions of the right of return given the phase out and subsequent establishment of the PA in the West Bank and Gaza Strip represent a significant socio-political change in the life of the Palestinian refugee. This investigative focus on UNRWA is warned given that it is a point of connection between Palestinian refugees and the international community and that it is their "mouthpiece" on a range of issues including right of return (Al Husseini 2010, p. 6). As such, further insights into the Palestinian refugee voice on the UNRWA phase out and its impact will provide a new platform from which to explain refugees' view of the right of return.

2.9 Conclusion

This review of relevant literature outlines the basis for the assertion that the voice of Palestinian refugees about the right of return has been marginalised in the international arena. Moreover, it supports Said's assertion in his theory of Orientalism that representations of the Orient by the West according to political and economic forces are only to support its imperialistic goals (namely to dominate, restructure, and to have authority over (Said 1993, p. 3)). As Said explained, "the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (Said 1993, xiii). Notwithstanding the marginalisation of the Palestinian refugee voice in the international arena, refugees continue to affirm in their generational narrative an unwavering connection to their homeland. It is widely held that the Palestinian refugee right of return is integral to this narrative. Nowhere is this belief more explicitly stated than in Abu Sitta's description of the right of return as sacred. However, it is also reasonable to assume that the attitude of the Palestinian refugee towards the right of return may change over time in response to changing circumstances.

Arguably, this literature review has identified and discussed the main themes and issues to emerge from both scholarly and research findings pertaining to the Palestinian refugee right of return and the related issues of Resolution194, resettlement and compensation, shifting political representations, and the phase out of UNRWA. This review has also revealed that the weakness in current research regarding the Palestinian refugee voice on the right of return. This suggests the need to at least re-examine the perspectives of the Palestinian refugee on this issue in the current international context. In doing so, it is possible to build on the current research understanding of how political and social changes over time may have impacted the perspectives of current refugees living in refugee camps. Indeed, the missing voice of the Palestinian refugee on the issue of the right of return in recent studies is significant to our academic understanding of the PIC and the process towards peace.

As previously established, there is the need for more research that give more explicit recognition to the refugee voice. It is also important to acknowledge however the limitations of such research given the difficulties in accessing the study population. Therefore, this study implemented a quantitative survey instrument to support a sociological investigation into Palestinian refugees' opinions about the right of return to strengthen the evidence for the claims provided in this thesis. The following chapter discusses the methodology underpinning this research, particularly the instrument used to capture the voice of the Palestinian refugee.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter offered a literature review of previous scholarly work about the Palestinian refugee right of return and the debate around its legality, practicality, and sacredness. Focus was given there to the work of Abu Sitta. In addition, the previous chapter highlighted a central concern of this study about the marginalised Palestinian refugee voice in the PIC, as articulated by Edward Said, and argued the need for social research to gives participants the opportunity to express their views and narrate their stories. This chapter introduces the methodology of this study that examines the contemporary opinions of Palestinian refugees on the issues of right of return, compensation, resettlement, and the phase out of UNRWA services. It begins by outlining the unique challenges that confronted this researcher related to gaining access to the research sites (i.e. refugee camps), accommodating significant ethical issues (e.g. participant safety), and positionality. This is followed by the presentation of details pertaining to the research design including justification for the choice to apply quantitative research paradigms to a study of Palestinian refugee perspectives. The process of formulating the research questions is then explained, and information about the formulation of the data collection instrument and its implementation (including pilot study) is provided. This is followed by an explanation of the research site selection and participant recruitment processes, as well as the data collection and analysis processes. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations relevant to this study environment.

3.2 Entry into the field

I have been interested in the plight of the Palestinian refugee in Palestine since childhood, having lived in the West Bank and experiencing first-hand the failed negotiations to have this claim realised. Research studies on vulnerable groups such as refugees are invariably linked to a range of ethical issues given such groups typically have few rights in the eyes of state authorities, due in large part to their political affiliations and/or the lack of legal recourse available to them. Nonetheless, my initial plan was to recruit a stratified sample of refugees by accessing the UN data system so I could selectively achieve a balanced representation of participants from

different age-groups, genders, levels of education attained and household incomes. However, I soon became aware of the overreach of my recruitment plan very early in the process of seeking approval for this study. It quickly emerged that the overriding priority of the Ethics Committee from whom I was seeking approval to conduct my research was to protect the interests of Palestinian refugees first and foremost. That is, direct contact with participants was to be avoided due to the sensitive nature of the project and potential security issues.

Hence, it was quickly affirmed to me that conducting research on Palestinian refugees' perspectives of the right of return in Palestine would be complicated and require diligent attention to crucial ethical considerations. This is due to a raft of factors including the uncertainty that comes with the ongoing political instability in the region, the level of scrutiny surrounding the lives of camp residents, and the potential for them to be subjected to discrimination and marginalisation, just to name a few. Given this context, two concerns of relevance to this research investigation were the inadequate level of protection afforded potential participants by authorities, and the prospect of data security breaches.

In addition to ethics considerations, the multiple sources of 'control' in the refugee camps including the Israeli government, UNRWA, the PA and PLO can destabilise the camps and caused confusion over responsibilities. This creates a form of tension in the camps which can result in restrictions to accessing the camps and from moving around freely within the camps. Moreover, the security issues created by occupation contribute to the silencing of refugee voices by making their views difficult to access directly (further affirming the importance of this study). Hence, even the somewhat limited data collection method applied in this study is still very valuable. This is because it facilitates the generation of current data to provide insights into the impacts of the daily difficulties and humiliations living under occupation entails for refugees in the West Bank, and subsequently into their views of the right of return.

Within the context of these security concerns, accessing the refugee camps in Palestine is made slightly less tense if you are familiar with the political and social landscape, and have reliable connections. However, it was apparent to me from the outset that there were three "gatekeeping" bodies I had to successfully negotiate with to gain the level of access to Palestinian refugees I required to conduct my research.

In academic research, gatekeepers refer to people, groups or institutions that 'have the power to either grant or withhold access to a research population' (Crowhurst and Kennedy-Macfoy 2013, p. 457). According to Broadhead and Rist (1976), gatekeepers or gatekeeping more broadly influences the research endeavour in a number of ways: by limiting conditions of entry, by defining the problem area of study, by limiting access to data and respondents, and by restricting the scope of analysis.

The first gatekeeper to consider was the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Committee requires all empirical research investigations involving human participants to satisfy rigorous standards to protect participants' interests. Such approval was particularly relevant to this study given the proposed sample was people living in areas of potential conflict and extreme political tension. The initial application took considerable time to negotiate before an outcome was reached with the HREC. Specifically, adjustments needed to be made to the planned recruitment process and to the way in which the safety of the prospective participants was to be protected during data collection. As a result, the ethics approval process with the HREC involved numerous face to face meetings and online correspondence as we worked together to determine the necessary research process to mitigate the risk of harm to participants.

For instance, the approach to participant recruitment outlined in my initial application to the HREC was a point of methodological tension. It relied on the random selection of participants (a desirable recruitment strategy) from the UN data system, but also the HREC requirement that I was to have no direct access to the details of refugees and no direct contact with them (a key ethical consideration). All contact with potential recruits was to be mediated through UN officials. It was also decided during the meetings with the Committee members and via correspondence that I was to advertise for participants rather than attempt to contact them, and that the survey instrument to be used for data collection was made available to respondents at strategic community sites (see section 3.2.1 for a discussion of the implications of this approach). A refined application was subsequently submitted to the Macquarie University HREC which addressed the stipulations made by them regarding these

issues, and the application was subsequently approved (no. 5201200701). See Appendix 5 for a copy of the letter confirming Ethics approval.

The second of the gatekeepers referred to above were thus the relevant UN agencies. During the initial stages of the research process I initiated contact with the UN's Head Office in the City of Hebron – West Bank. The purpose of this contact was to gain approval to access the refugee camps and to use their offices for the data collection process. This also was a rigorous process, but one which I knew to be important because having UN approval for my study would ultimately help the refugee participants to gain a degree of trust in the survey they would be asked to complete. To explain, the UN sites are often accessed by refugees and the UN functions as an independent agency to protect the interests of refugees. Approval for this study was subsequently provided by the UN along with their offer to support the project (see Appendix 6 for a copy of the email from UN). Indeed, I was advised to maintain contact with a UN Director who was to facilitate my visits to different UN sites within the refugee camps upon my arrival to Palestine. Then, upon my arrival, the Director kept all UN offices in the five research study sites informed about my proposed data collection activities and my presence in the UN buildings.

The third of the gatekeepers of access to Palestinian refugee participants in my study were the members of the Popular Committees in each refugee camp (see Appendix 4 for a letter of approval from Popular Committee). The Popular Committee was established by the PLO after the creation of the PA in Gaza Strip and West Bank in 1994 (Tuastad 2012). The committee is typically comprised of 13 members; most of which have a history in politics and long-standing and active association to a political party. The main objective of the Popular Committee is to protect and serve the need of refugees (Bajec 2011). In other words, the committee functions as a municipal administration to provide ongoing support to individuals and is responsible for the management of utilities (e.g., water, electricity, and garbage disposal) (Hanafi 2010). Refugee camps throughout Palestine are officially governed by the Popular Committee as well as managed by the UNRWA.

3.2.1 Gatekeepers and the role of the researcher

My relationship with the Macquarie University HREC and UN gatekeepers had implications for the methodological aspects of my study; namely, the development and implementation of the data collection instrument (i.e. the quantitative survey) and the safety of the participants. For instance, the HREC called for amendments to particular survey items, citing both ethical and structural reasons for the changes. One notable example was the request by this gatekeeper to change the structure of questions 4, 14 and 15. The gatekeeper was concerned that the wording of these questions and answer options were 'leading' in the sense that potentially pointed the participant towards a response option. To address the gatekeeper's concerns, I made changes to the wording of these questions and their answer options. This was a useful process to refine the survey.

In addition, I was required to email the survey instrument to the office of the Director of the UN in Hebron before its distribution. In terms of the safety of the participants, the description above outlines how they set conditions around the nature of the contact I was to have with the participants; namely no contact. Subsequently, I advertised for participants to join my study at Community Centres and UN offices in the West Bank rather than arrange to recruit potential participants personally.

The implications of my relationship with the refugee camp gatekeepers were more related to the practical aspects of my study; namely gaining access to the refugee camps. I was born in Al Arroub refugee camp located in the south West Bank along the Hebron – Jerusalem road in the Hebron Governorate. Having spent 20 years living in Al Arroub, I knew the decision-making structures well and had developed a good relationship with the refugee camp gatekeepers. This relationship was important as they could grant or veto my access to the refugee camps to carry out my research, irrespective of the fact that I had been granted approval from the UN and my university to conduct my study (see Appendix 6).

Another important step towards achieving access to potential research participants was to discuss the research project directly with the refugee camp gatekeepers. The different factions in the political hierarchy (i.e. Hamas, PA etc.) were potential obstacles to conducting my research in the refugee camps as each faction has its own

rules and would apply its own expectations to the process. However, approaching the gatekeepers directly allowed me to avoid having to deal with different factions directly over access to the refugees. As a result, I was able to obtain official support from the head of the Popular Committee in the southern region of the West Bank in April, 2012. Approaching the gatekeepers in this way to obtain access privileges is accepted practice.

It was also important to approach the local politicians and Popular Committee members in the refugee camps in order to freely move about the camps to collect my research data. In order to undertake research of this kind, the researcher must expect to have his movements scrutinised intensely and be able to clearly explain the research processes to different officials at different times. Thankfully, I established a positive relationship early with the local leaders who subsequently came to recognise the value of the research investigation and agreed to support my methods for data collection. Without such support, my data could potentially have been confiscated at any time and my ongoing access to the refugees denied.

Thus, the reality was that it was critical for me to clearly understand the difference in the influence on the ground of secondary power structures (i.e. the gatekeepers of the Popular Committee) compared to the state power (i.e. the PA) when seeking to gain and maintain access the refugees in the camps of the West Bank. To explain, the gatekeepers of the Popular Committee maintain close ties to the refugees and are aware of family connections, as well as having ties to the PLO.

Lastly, it was also important for me to understand the implications for my study associated with having lived as a refugee in one of the camps selected as a site for data collection. I have relatives living in three of the refugee camps and this could easily lead some potential participants to question my impartiality with the data collection and analysis processes, as well as when reporting the research findings. In addition, some participants could have concerns about my ability to maintain political neutrality or to be accepted by all political factions in the camps. To overcome issues of perceived conflicts of interest in this particular study, I determined that the best (and only) course of action to take was to avoid direct contact with participants entirely. Details of how this manifested in the data collection process have been provided below in section 3.6.

3.3 Research design

Although a mixed methods approach would arguably have been ideal for this research investigation, as it would have provided access to both subjective and objective data sets to answer the research questions (thus suggesting a more holistic response), a quantitative research paradigm was ultimately applied. The reasons for adopting the quantitative research approach are explained in detail below, but essentially come down to my personal concerns over the safety of the participants and myself, the restrictions imposed by gate keepers, and because it still provided an opportunity to represent the Palestinian refugee view of the right of return claim.

Valuable insights have already been gained into the Palestinian refugee perspective of the right of return through qualitative research studies (e.g., Yahya 1998, and Beckerle 2011). However, both changing and extenuating circumstances mean there are new questions to ask the Palestinian refugee about their perspectives of the right of return in light of the potential influences of resettlement pressures, the possibility of compensation, shifting political representation, and the phase out of UNRWA. The changing circumstances referred to include the continued failure to reach a peace agreement, the protracted occupation, deteriorating camp conditions, and the Intifadas, etc. In turn, the Palestinian refugee perspective on how these issues may impact the right of return can be effectively examined using quantitative research methods. Indeed, such methods are often deployed in social settings to test perspectives on social and political realities by employing empirical statements to gather evidence (Burns and Grove 2005).

A quantitative research design was also regarded as the most suitable for this study because it allows for an objective examination of the Palestinian refugee perspectives. Quantitative research is fundamentally about the deployment of formal, objective, and systematic processes to collect numerical data in order to deduce the truth about the research topic of interest (Collins 2010). As such, from an epistemological perspective, the researcher and research phenomenon are independent entities (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

As alluded to above, a priority factor influencing the design of this research investigation was participant safety. As McDowell (2013) points out, research studies

involving displaced people often carry an increased risk of harm to all stakeholders in the research process. Accordingly, a review of all procedures from a research ethics perspective was integral to identifying the risks and ensuring that the appropriate safeguards were in place to minimise potential harm and to facilitate a positive research process. In turn, the collection of quantitative (primarily objective) data – as opposed to qualitative (primarily subjective) data – was vital to this research for two reasons. First, it helped to address issues regarding researcher conflicts of interest related to interpersonal relationships such as family and community connections. My attachment to this research topic and participants has already been well established (see Chapter 1) and any attempt to interview participants directly for instance may compromise the integrity of the research findings. Second, the choice to apply quantitative research paradigms, as well as to avoid direct contact with participants through the use of a self-administered survey, allowed me to lay a foundation in this thesis of researcher objectivity and neutrality in terms of data collection and analysis. Establishing this objectivity was important as it gave me the confidence and scope to offer some reflections on aspects of the participants' responses based on personal experience without compromising the data results. The importance of researcher objectivity should not be understated, and was further evidenced through the need for me to engage with the relevant gatekeepers including UN officials and local Palestinian Committees gain access to the research site. As is discussed later in greater details, these gatekeepers were adamant about the need for me to clarify my interest in the research investigation and to explain how I would remain neutral regarding the generation of research findings.

The development of a qualitative data collection instrument was deemed inappropriate for this study for two key reasons: first is the sensitive nature of the subject matter; and second, the possible concerns some Palestinian refugees may have about voicing their opinions and attitudes on the issue of right of return. Qualitative data collection methods, particularly one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions, typically require the researcher to make an audio-recording of the participants' comments or to generate copious researcher notes. Thus, it is reasonable to assert that potential participants may be very sceptical and feel uneasy about having their views tape-recorded, and the issues around guarantying their safety that this implied.

Finally, a quantitative research design was selected because it afforded the inclusion of a large study sample (n=1200). Although randomised selection was not applied during recruitment (opting instead to apply convenience sampling methods), the combination of quantitative data collection and a large sample size helped to enhance the reliability of the research findings. Quantitative research aims to explore the relationships among variables, which, as indicated above, refers in this study to the potential for demographic variable to impact Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return, resettlement, compensation, shifting political representation, and the phase out of UNRWA. A study design reflecting quantitative research paradigms including the administration of a survey with a limited range of predetermined responses (Denzin and Lincoln 1994) ensured the data collected could be analysed for its implications for Palestinian refugees in general.

3.3.1 Research questions

The multiplicity of views regarding the settlement of Palestinian refugees led to the focal point of this research being directed towards Palestinian refugees' current thoughts about right of return. This is not a simple issue to examine however as the right of return claim for Palestinians – and indeed the international community – is both complex and multidimensional (see the Introduction and Chapter Five). On this basis, and following an extensive review of the literature, four sub-questions were further developed to delineate the social, political and economic factors to potentially shape Palestinian refugees' perceptions of right of return.

The main question in this research investigation is:

1. What is the contemporary perspective of right to return among Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank?

This question emerges from the lack of current research literature on the Palestinian refugee view of the right of return in light of shifting political representation is particularly significant. This is because right of return has long been viewed as 'sacred' (Abu Sitta 2001) to Palestinian refugees. In turn, one of the aims of this research is to update the literature by investigating how recent shifts in the political representation of Palestinian refugees may have impacted their views on right of return; specifically, the views of Palestinian refugees living in West Bank and Gaza

Strip. To answer the main research question, a number of sub-questions are put forward at a broader and more conceptual level. These sub-questions were identified in the literature review where the findings from the research investigations of Palestinian refugees living in various locations suggested a diversity of view on the right of return and its peripheral elements; namely, resettlement, compensation, political representation and UNRWA service provision.

Sub-questions:

1. To what extent do Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank regard the right of return as the central claim?
2. To what extent do Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank accept compensation as an outcome to the exclusion of the right of return?
3. To what extent do Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank accept resettlement as an outcome to the exclusion of the right of return?
4. What are the differences in perceptions towards the phase out of the UNRWA among Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank?

These research questions were designed to act as a starting point from which a survey tool could be derived for the elicitation of data that could make critical contributions to our understanding and analysis. In fact, by exploring the above questions from the perspectives of Palestinian refugees, this research has the potential to inform and enhance our academic understanding of Palestinian refugee voices in relation to the right of return.

The following sections describe the refugee camps comprising the study setting and the recruitment of the study sample.

3.3.2 Study setting

This study took place in the West Bank in Palestine. According to UNRWA records, there are (19) nineteen official refugee camps and (4) four unofficial camps in the occupied West Bank. The collective refugee population in these camps as of 2014 was 221,328 people (UNRWA 2014).

Of the (19) nineteen official refugee camps in this region, five (5) were included in this study: (3) three in the City of Bethlehem ((Dheisha, Aida, and Al'Azzeh); and (2)

two in Hebron in South Palestine (Al' Arroub and Fawwar). The decision to include these particular camps as the sites for the research was linked to two key factors. First, these camps were the ones with which I was most familiar and with which I had the most connections with gatekeepers. Second, conducting my research in some of the other camps, particularly those located in the north of Palestine, would have involved traveling with the research data every day, and having to pass through many checkpoints. I believed that incorporating these elements into the research process would have increased the risk for a breach in data security.

The Deheisha camp was established soon after Al Nakba in 1949 within the borders of Bethlehem and extends for 0.31 square kilometres (UNRWA 2010). The camp inhabitants came from 46 villages in Jerusalem and Hebron (ARIJ 2010). Since 1997, the camp has been governed by members of the Popular Committee appointed by the PA and PLO (ARIJ 2010).

The Aida refugee camp was established in 1950 and is located between the towns of Bethlehem and Beit Jala. The camp inhabitants originally came from 43 villages and cities destroyed in 1948 and 1967 in Western Jerusalem and Western Hebron (ARIJ 2010). Aida covers a small area of 0.71 square kilometres (UNRWA 2010) and is bordered by a wall on its northern and eastern sides which segregates it from Jerusalem (ARIJ 2010). As with all of the camps, Aida is governed by an appointed Popular Committee. Al'Azzeh camp was established in 1950 in the city of Bethlehem and covers 0.02 square kilometres. The camp inhabitants originally came from the destroyed villages of Beit Jibrin in the western hills of Hebron (UNRWA 2010). The camp is governed by the Popular Committee appointed by the PLO (ARIJ 2010).

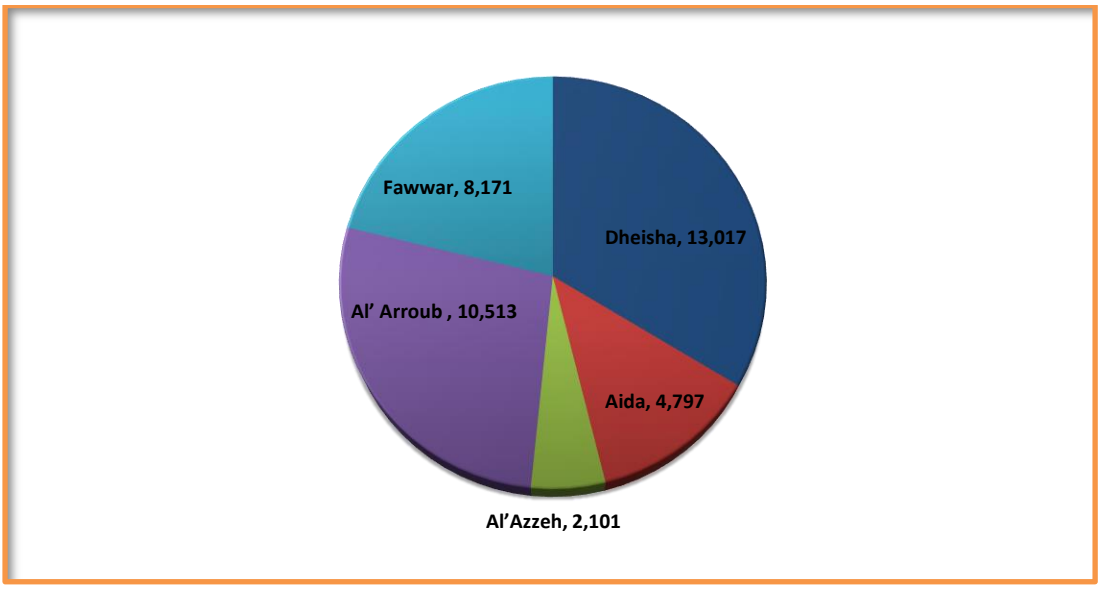
Al Arroub camp was established in 1949, 15 kilometres south of Bethlehem (UNRWA 2010). The inhabitants originally fled from 33 villages in Ramleh, Hebron and Gaza. The camp is developed on 0.24 square kilometres (UNRWA 2010) and has been governed by the Popular Committee appointed by the PLO and PA (ARIJ 2009).

Finally, Fawwar refugee camp was established in 1950 on 0.27 square kilometres of land. It is located 10 kilometres south of Hebron and comprises camp dwellers from 18 villages in Gaza, Hebron and Beersheeva (UNRWA 2010). Residents of Fawwar camp first settled in Arroub camp for two years prior to moving to Fawwar (ARIJ

2009). Similar to the other four other camp, Fawwar is governed by the Popular Committee appointed by the PLO.

The total refugee population of the five camps is 38,599 people: Dheisha (n = 13,017); Aida n = 4,797; Al'Azzeh (n = 2,101); Al' Al Arroub (n = 10,513); and Fawwar (n = 8,171) (UNRWA 2014). Figure 3.1 presents the population distribution of each camp.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of study population in the West Bank by camp 2014, according to UNRWA Distribution of study population in the West Bank by camp 2014, according to UNRWA



Source: UNRWA 2014

3.3.3 Instrumentation

A survey instrument was used for data collection in this study (see Appendix 1). As discussed above, studies with a quantitative design rely on the collection and analysis of numerical data and statistics in order to provide statements about the target population from which the sample is taken (Punch 2006, p. 101). Although quantitative research methods operate without the narrative detail of qualitative methods, this approach offers an objective explanation of the research phenomenon (Payne and Payne 2004, p. 182) to balance this researcher's subjective input.

A number of data collection instruments have been developed to examine refugees' views of right of return and compensation in general (e.g. Sha'ban (1994) and Saleh (2006) and Albarmiel (2005). To the best of this researcher's knowledge, however, none have been developed to measure the impact of the phase out of UNRWA services, resettlement and compensation pressures, and changing political representations and agendas on the Palestinian refugee perspective of the right return – adding further weight to the argument for more quantitative research on these issues.

Therefore, in order to answer the main research question and sub-questions in this study, a self-administered survey instrument was developed. The survey was structured in such a way as to support the collection of rich quantitative data on each of the 'dimensions' of right of return located in the sub-questions (i.e., the concept of right of return, resettlement, compensation etc.). As such, the survey consisted of six sections with 130 items in total. Section one of the survey aimed to collect data on the issue of right of return (sub-question one). Section two focused on data collection about resettlement schemes (sub-question three). Section three included items related to the issue of compensation to Palestinian refugees (sub-question two). Section four included items related to the role of the UN in serving the refugee camps (sub-question four). Section five of the survey was designed for the collection of demographic information. This sequence reflected the sequence of the research sub-question. Section six sought the participants' demographic information including age, marital status, income, level of education, gender and political affiliation.

The survey was also designed in a way that enabled respondents to answer the items without having to seek clarification or search for answers. That is, closed-ended items were included that required participants to provide their answer by selecting from five-point Likert-scale options with ranges including Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree for sections one, two, three and four. This type of scaling is known as the semantic autonomy of response categories, which is the most common application amongst researcher in the field of sociology (Corbetta 2003, pp. 165-166). Section five on demographic characteristics required participants to simply select the most correct answer from the list of options.

The survey items were adopted and/or adapted from survey instruments used for data collection in previous studies of Palestinian refugees such as Yuchtman-Yaar and Hermann (1999), Elia Zureik (1999) and Jarar (1993) and Hassan Albarmel's (2005). Moreover, they were kept concise and relevant to maximise participant response rates. The instrument was originally written in English and later translated into Arabic by this researcher, who has workplace experience in translation. The translated version was then given to a university colleague with a PhD in Arabic studies for review. He recommended minor changes only, which were subsequently made to the instrument. The instrument was translated into Arabic to overcome language barriers and to support the study participants to better comprehend the meaning of each of the items. In general, the language used was simple and avoids jargon and thus the items are more likely to be similarly interpreted by all participants (Payne and Payne 2004, p. 186).

An important priority when designing the survey instrument was participation anonymity and data confidentiality. Therefore, the design did not allow respondents to identify themselves by name or address. This is because there is a tendency amongst Palestinian refugees to be very sensitive to and concerned about providing their thoughts and attitudes on the right of return question. Therefore, the priority was to ensure respondent anonymity in order to help them to feel more relaxed about answering the survey items (May 2011, p. 103). Protecting the data they provided was also of importance. As a result, to ensure that the participants felt at ease and the data they provided could not be traced back, much of my time in the early phase of the research focused on this issue. Actions to this end included selecting appropriate locations for participants to access and return the surveys and ensuring I remained 'absent' from the process etc. (see Data collection section for further details).

As such, the self-administered quantitative survey instrument had the advantage providing the participants with the opportunity to consider their responses and to compete it at their own pace. This is important as it increased the potential to obtain a significant number of fully completed surveys with rich quantitative data to improve the reliability and generalisability of the study findings (McKnight; McKnight; Sidani and Figueredo 2007, p. 73).

3.3.3.1 Validity of the survey instrument

Given the sensitivity of the issue of the Palestinian refugee right of return and the risks to participants associated with providing their perspective on this issue, a vital research consideration was to minimise the risk for research bias in the design and development of the study instrument. Polit and Hungler (1995) claim the validity of an instrument is the degree to which it measures what it is intended to measure. To strengthen the validity of the survey instrument administered in this study, a review of its instructions, items, language, and layout was conducted by four experts in the field of social research and refugee studies, particularly. As previously established, the survey was also reviewed by a panel of supervisors as well as the HREC of Macquarie University to identify any problems or ambiguities in the language, survey items, or layout of the survey.

The items in the survey instrument were either adopted directly (i.e. word for word) or adapted slightly (i.e. minor changes to wording) from survey instruments used in previous survey research on Palestinian refugees (see Albarmiel 2005; Jarrar 2003; Yuchtman-Yaar and Hermann (1999) and Zureik 1999). The rationale for adopting / adapting the survey items employed by these authors was that they were effective in collecting reliable and reportable data on refugees' attitudes to the right of return, resettlement, and integration. Although the survey instruments of each of these authors were employed in different data collection formats; that is, phone and face-to-face surveys for (Zureik 1999), and face-to-face surveys for (Albarmiel, 2005), the items included in the instruments were suitable for this study in that presented as successful examples for use in survey research on Palestinian refugees' views. Furthermore, other research studies to have utilised these survey instruments include (Riccardo Bocco 2010, Nur Massalha 2005).

3.3.4 Piloting the survey

Any instrument to be used for data collection on refugee's current perspectives of the right of return must take into consideration the level of literacy among potential participants. As such, pilot studies should provide insight into the research issues being studied and provide information about relevant field questions (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002).

The term ‘pilot study’ refers to conducting a mini version of the proposed full-scale study to determine the usefulness of the data collection instruments. That is, it is the process by which the research instruments (e.g., surveys or interview schedules) are pre-tested for their suitability to answer the research question (Baker 1994, p. 182). As such, pilot tests of a survey etc. are generally conducted on a small sample or on a group of colleagues or friends. The aim of this testing process is to detect any flaws in the data collection instrument including whether respondents find it difficult to follow the instructions, to complete their responses in the allocated time (is appropriate), or to understand the meaning of particular terms or items (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002). Feedback from the pilot study participants as well as an analysis of the participants’ responses will then guide the researcher as to the necessary amendments required to the data collection instruments prior to their use in the main research investigation (Moore 2000, p. 115). In this way, conducting a pilot study helps the researcher to: avoid future complications when conducting the research in earnest; maximise the response rates from participants; and minimise participant error rates (Brown, Cozby, Kee and Worden 1999, p. 172; McKnight, McKnight, Sidani and Figueredo 2007, p. 74).

In this study, the survey instrument was thoroughly pilot tested prior to commencing field work. The aim of the pilot study was to identify any flaws in the language and layout of the instrument that may lead to participant confusion and invalid responses. Following receipt of approval in March 2013 from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), I emailed the survey to five (5) refugees in the West Bank who were known to me. The participant group comprised a teacher, a community worker, elderly person with limited literacy, a local leader, and a doctor. In the email, I requested that they complete the survey and return it to me along with feedback on the survey structure, the clarity of the survey instructions and items, any difficulties or irrelevant questions, and the general layout and level of language used. The feedback I received was that the language of the survey was simple and the survey itself covered very important issues. No respondents reported that they experienced any difficulties in understanding the statements. In fact, it was suggested that I introduce more open questions in relation to the British mandate in causing the refugee problem. However, this suggestion for the collection of qualitative data was beyond the scope of this study. It is worth mentioning that the survey responses from

the five pilot study participants were not included in the final sample of response for data analysis in the main study.

3.4 Participant recruitment

3.4.1 Convenience sampling

Surveying all Palestinian refugees for their perspectives of the right of return is of course both logistically and practically difficult. As discussed in Section 3.2, of paramount importance to this researcher was to address the range of security issues related to participant safety (e.g. level of protection provided by authorities, concerns about data breaches and the implications for participants) and the associated ethics considerations. For this reason, a convenience sampling technique was employed in this study. Convenience sampling is a recognised non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Brynen 2004). Specifically, refugee camps in the cities of Hebron and Bethlehem were targeted because I am familiar with the five refugee camps in these cities and I have family members living in two of the camps. It is worth noting the ethical concerns associated with this approach including the risk of producing a biased sample from a group of potential participants who share the same values and beliefs.

The directors of Community Centres, Refugees Local Committee Centres, Health Centres, and UN offices located in each of the five camps were contacted either by email or in person to seek permission to display the flyers that described the aims and purpose of this study (see Appendix 3). The directors from 20 centres and community agencies located in the southern region of the West Bank agreed to display the flyers to facilitate participant recruitment. In addition, some agencies – particularly women's centres – supported participant recruitment by making known the availability of the questionnaires before and after workshops held on unrelated matters. To further support the recruitment process I continued visiting the health centres and women centres to distribute surveys.

The directors also agreed to make available to potential participants (regular clients / customers) an envelope containing a cover letter (see Appendixes 1, English version and 2, Arabic version) outlining the aims and purpose of the study along with a copy of the survey instrument for data collection. I also provided a short overview

regarding the length of the survey, the name of the university, the supervisor in charge of my research, and UN approval to conduct the research.

A total of 1,200 Palestinian refugees aged between 18 and 75 years volunteered to participate in this study. Participant consent for participation was indicated by the return of the survey. This approach to gaining consent for participation was adopted in response to the general participant safety and access issues discussed above. The main advantage of using this method was that it endorsed the security requirements attached to this study; namely, no research contact with the participants. In addition, it allowed the participants to defer giving their consent until the end of the data collection process thus affording them a sense of empowerment in the management of their data. Conversely, the main disadvantage of this approach is that it did not allow for any type of researcher-participant connection to be established to facilitate the research processes. Specifically, there was not an opportunity for the participants to seek clarification or further explanation regarding the research aims, procedures or any other aspects of the research methodology directly from this researcher. Details of the study's aims and procedures were of course provided in the Cover Letter issued to the participants. However, the lack of face-to-face engagement with participants has implications for the 'informed' nature of the consent provided by them given that information clarity and accuracy about study specifics is more effectively achieved through this process (Lentz et al. 2016).

Lastly, it is noted that the convenience sampling recruitment method applied in this study in response to the security issues discussed above is associated with increased potential for representation bias. Hence, the generalisability of the main findings to the Palestinian refugee population more broadly is limited. To overcome representation bias issues, this thesis acknowledges that it is often the procedure to weight the study sample using post-stratification methods to improve the level of inference (Couper, Dever and Gile 2013). It was not possible, however, to apply this weighting method in this study because of the lack of available data pinpointing the demographic characteristics of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank. This researcher did access data provided by reputable agencies such as UNRWA, BADIL and the Palestine Bureau of Statistics with the intention to weight the study sample. However, the data was largely inadequate for this purpose as it reported on the entire

Palestinian refugee population (i.e. living in all areas of Palestine and host locations). As such, specific population data pertaining to the West Bank was not available. To the best of this researcher's knowledge and efforts, no such demographic data is available. Therefore, it was not possible to weight the study sample against location-specific population data.

As an alternative, three factors were incorporated into the study design to address this issue: first, a large study sample was achieved, based on the implicit assumption that a large sample can, to some extent help, reduce potential representation bias (Couper et al. 2013). Second, several demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, and political affiliation just to name a few) were applied to offer a form of population representation on key outcomes from the data analysis. Third, explicit and detailed explanations were provided to validate the steps taken to overcome the sample weight issue. Given that "researchers can live with biases, provided they aren't too large for the purpose at hand" (Couper et al. 2013, p.25), such steps were deemed reasonable for this study.

3.5 Data collection

Use of a self-administered survey was advantageous to this study as it supported the collection of a large data set in a short time period that would not have been possible via participant interviews.

A common method employed for data collection in quantitative social research is the survey questionnaire (Bryman 1984, p. 88; Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2006, p. 117). Approximately 3000 copies of the survey instrument for data collection were distributed among the 20 centres. Of the 3,000 copies, 12,00 were completed and returned and were eligible for inclusion in the data analysis process. The data collection period was for two months from March 2013 to May 2013. Participant typically completed the questionnaire at home at their convenience within the data collection period.

Through the flyer and cover letter the participants were asked to return the completed questionnaire to collection points at the local UN Office, Local Committee Offices, and local agencies organised by the researcher. I also supplied a stamped self-addressed envelope to all participants to allow them to post their completed

questionnaire. Respondents in each centre were asked to seal their completed survey in the individual provided envelope and return it to the nominated Centre. The collection points were organised in consultation with all agencies with the aim to provide the participants with a drop-off point that was convenient and easily accessible to them.

The completed questionnaires were stored in a concealed confidential box accessible only to the researcher. To conclude the data collection process, the participants' responses were reviewed in preparation for analysis. Each survey response was allocated a number to endorse confidentiality. In addition, the five Likert-scale options in sections one, two and four (i.e. strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree, and strongly disagree) were reduced to three options; namely 'agree', 'neither' and 'disagree'). This transformation was conducted in order to achieve stronger percentage outcomes from the statistical procedures for data analysis.

3.5.1 Self-administered questionnaires

Data collection via self-administered survey enabled the respondents to complete each of the survey sections and items by themselves (if they so choose) and at their convenience (May 2011, p. 104).

Surveys in general can be distributed and/or administered in different ways (More 2000, p. 108). Most often it is distributed directly to the respondents via email or by post (More 2000, p. 108). In this study however the survey was distributed through community centres frequented by Palestinian refugees. The rationale for this distribution method relates to issues of security and confidentiality. As explained below in the section on data collection, given the postal system in the West Bank (and all other regions in Palestine) is jointly controlled and maintained by the Palestinian and Israeli authorities, I thought that due to the highly sensitive nature of the data to be collected, it was better to be left in the hands of the participants themselves. As a result, individual sealable envelopes were left at the survey pick up points (see Participant Recruitment section 3.4) which allowed the participants to have full control over their access to the survey and the return of the survey once completed.

In addition, this survey distribution method did not require contacting participants direct to administer the instrument (Gliner and Morgan 2000, p. 339). Not contacting

participants directly ensured compliance with the ethical requirement to mitigate risk of harm to participants as a result of their participation. Moreover, the absence of the researcher-interviewer in a self-completed survey is advantageous in that it reduces the risk of research bias (Corbetta 2003, p. 147). Furthermore, this method for distributing the survey instrument allowed the participants to read through the survey in advance before deciding whether or not to complete it (More 2000, p. 109). This technique also allows anonymity during the process of completion (Dane 1990, p. 133).

There were, however, complications related to the processes surrounding to preparation of the participants' survey responses for analysis. I initially intended (with approval) to transfer the data set from Palestine to Australia by scanning the contents of the hard copy responses and then destroying the original copies. I soon discovered during data the collection process that this approach was not feasible as I was unable to access a suitable scanner to complete this job. As a result, I contacted the ethics committee proposing the transfer of data via DHL services. Upon approval from the Macquarie University HREC the data was shipped to Australia via DHL services.

3.6 Data analysis

According to Payne and Payne (2004, p. 188), the advantage of closed-ended questions is that the process of coding is made easier.

3.6.1 Coding questionnaires, question, and data

Prior to data entry, each returned survey questionnaire was assigned a unique code to ensure participant anonymity and to differentiate each survey in preparation for data entry. Microsoft Software Package for Statistical Analysis (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyse the data in this study. The rationale for using this software was that it is acknowledged as useful for the comprehensive analysis of data. SPSS can take data from any file and use them to generate tabulated reports, charts and plots of distributions and trends. It can also provide descriptive statistics and complex statistical analysis. Furthermore, SPSS makes statistical analysis more accessible for a researcher reading any type of chart. Lastly, SPSS version supports the data analysis

process by making dynamic modifications that are reflected immediately in the viewer window. The researcher is also able to change from bar to lines, switch variables, add error bars, separate bars into clusters, change the bins of a histogram, and modify that chart appearance all with few mouse clicks (Simon 1998, p. 7)

Entering the data into SPSS entailed two steps: defining the variables and their values for analysis; and then entering the data relevant to each variable (May 2011, p. 122). Participants' response choices were allocated a number from 1 to 3. It is important to note here that this required conversion of the five-point variable range presented in the survey to a three-point variable range. That is, the range: strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neither = 3, disagree = 2, strongly disagree = 1 was converted to agree = 3, neither = 2, disagree = 1. Collapsing 'strongly agree' and 'agree' together, and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' together was undertaken to support a more robust statistical analysis. The process to collapse the collected data into simpler dichotomous scales is accepted practice in empirical research studies during data analysis because of the simplification benefits it can provide to the data computations (Jeong and Lee 2016). It is acknowledged that this process can involve some information loss and is therefore of more use to understand the direction of opinion rather than the intensity of opinion. For this reason, the full range of opinions were considered when this supported a more comprehensive analysis. Lastly, the data were cleaned for coding errors through a standardised cleaning process using single and multiple field frequency analysis.

3.6.2 Applying demographic variable in the data analysis

The participants' responses relating to their political characteristics, the right of return claim, compensation, resettlement, and the phase out of UNRWA services were also analysed according to one or more demographic variables: age, gender, political affiliation, level of income, level of education and religious practices. Each of the variables and the justification for their inclusion in the data analysis process is presented in Table 3.1 below. Overall, each variable was integrated into the data analysis to determine whether it is associated with a particular view towards, or expectations of, the issue in question (e.g. the right of return, compensation etc.).

Table 3.1: Demographic variables applied in data analysis and justification

Variable	Justification
Age	Research studies of the psychological consequences of forced displacement show that "adjustment significantly varied depending on age, degree of war exposure, and quality of post-conflict resources" (Atallah 2017, p. 3). One may infer from these results that different age groups of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank will most-likely have different experiences of occupation and the impact of displacement.
Gender	Eddin (2015) claims that Palestinian women refugees have a distinct experience of displacement compared to their male counterparts. This claim is reflected to some degree in the assertions that female refugees have a different primary role in refugee camps as 'reproducers' of the nation and national identity, and bearers of the collective (Abdo 2000; Hanafi, 2011); and that female refugees are generally demonstrate their political presence in different ways to their male counterparts (Peteet 2013).
Political affiliation	Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016) reminds us that it is difficult not to consider statelessness as an issue of politics and the stateless as a 'political subjects'. The political landscape in and around Palestine has shifted significantly over the last 70 years, including the emergence and decline of political parties of diverse political platforms and in the political representation of refugees. Such changes in the political system in Palestine may play a leading role in the Palestinian refugees' understanding of the politics of the right of return and the negotiation processes towards a solution (Erskine et al., 2017).
Level of income	Level of income is applied as criteria by the UN to control access to social services to Palestinian refugees. In addition, it is considered as a key determinant of political preference (Buhlmann & Freitag 2006).
Education level	Education plays an integral role in assisting refugees to gain employment and to improving their living conditions (Bocco et al. 2007). In addition, education might influence political and social attitudes.
Religious practices	The literature asserts that stakeholders in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict incorporate religion into their politics (Mitchell 2017). Also of relevance to this study is the ways in which the incorporation of religion into the Palestinian refugee narrative is associated with a moral legitimacy and sacred value to the right of return.

3.7 Ethical considerations

According to Israel and Hay (2006), researchers are expected to behave ethically in their research relationship with participants, and to be guided by accepted research principles. One of the key ethical considerations in any research is the acquisition of informed consent from participants. As discussed above, participant consent was

implied if he or she chose to return a completed survey. To ensure informed consent was achieved, each survey had an attached cover letter (see Appendixes 1 and 2) that explained the purpose and aim of the study. Following Denscombe's (2010, pp. 69-70) suggestion, the request for consent from potential participants in this study was clearly stated and supported with the provision of relevant information about the researcher conducting the study and the affiliated University.

The cover letter also stated that the participants were under no obligation to complete the survey once started. However, respondents were informed that they could not withdraw their consent after returning their survey because it would be impossible to know which survey had been submitted by which participant given the protocols followed to ensure participant anonymity.

In addition to informed consent, taking the necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risk of harm to participants as a result of their participation is a priority ethical consideration. Indeed, it is ethically mandatory to prevent psychological or physical harm to respondents (Brown, Cozby, Kee and Worden 1999, p. 153). This researcher acknowledges that the focus of the research investigation, perhaps more than other social research investigations, may lead the participants to experience emotional distress. Unquestionably, living within a repressive system and having to deal with both the Israeli authority and the PA as part of daily life may create distrust toward the official institutions. Ethical consideration on this issue was demonstrated in this study through the information provided in the cover letter. Participants were informed that if the survey should bring about feelings of discomfort or fear of the authorities in general then refer to the contact details for UNRWA counselling services provided in the cover letter to discuss their concerns and to be referred for counselling if required.

Data confidentiality is a third priority ethical consideration (Kaiser 2009). Firstly, the cover letter to participants clearly stated that they were not to include any identity markers on their completed survey (e.g. names, locations, etc.). Secondly, participants were assured that all responses provided by them were to be used for the purposes of this research only. Thus, under no circumstances would their data be made available to other parties.

3.7.1 Positionality

Positionality is an important issue in field research and refers to the particular conditions of a social situation. In social research more specifically, it draws attention to the 'position' of the researcher in relation to the research participants and research setting. As such, it alludes to such elements as the insider/outsider status of the researcher as well as other more general conditions such as gender, race and class (Ospina, Dodge, Foldy and Hofmann-Pinilla 2008).

In fact, conducting research across communities and social groups, researchers' positionality may appear somewhat challenging. This complexity is related to sensitivity factors and the ethical aspects of the research which continue to develop throughout the research process. It is without doubt that my lived experiences as a refugee in a camp in the West Bank, and the strong connection I have with my family who continue to live in one of the refugee camps, has impacted the research process. As mentioned in Chapter One, this research investigation emerged from personal interest. As such, I was aware of the need to ensure that my desire to accommodate my research interests did not override my ethical obligations to the participants throughout the entire research process.

Smith (1999) quite rightly points out that a researcher's identity and interests influence "ways of thinking critically about their processes, their relationships with participants, and the quality and richness of their data and analysis" (p. 137). These issues related to researcher identity were made apparent to during a conversation with a Director of one of the camps. During the conversation, a female camp dweller approached me when it became apparent to her that I was conducting the study of Palestinian refugees' current perspectives of right of return. This camp dweller had in fact consented to participate in the study by completing the survey and this prompted her to walk up and accuse me of being soft with my questions. She then went on to encourage me to conduct interviews to learn more about the refugee narrative. Hence, although it is unquestionably important to gain a deeper understanding of the refugee narrative regarding the expulsion through interviews, as I articulated above, the sensitivity of the research topic and the circumstances surrounding the recruitment of participants highlighted the tensions around 'voice', 'silence' and 'objectivity' throughout the study.

3.8 Conclusion

This aim of this research investigation was to gain rich data pertaining to Palestinian refugees' perspectives on the right of return. Researching representatives of a population who continue to be displaced within their own country and who are forced to live under occupation is understandably difficult. This chapter addresses the methodology underpinning my research investigation to address these difficulties as well as to collect rich data and to perform a robust analysis of the data to answer the key research questions. Specifically, it established the uniqueness of the survey instrument for the collection of rich data in terms of its multiple components and its administration. In addition, a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the data was carried out using SPSS. Lastly, this chapter provided full details of the procedures undertaken to obtain Ethics approval for my study and the actions undertaken to ensure all ethical obligations were fulfilled. I faced many challenges regarding access to the research sites which contributed to methodological tension between the research desire for representativeness and the need to respond to crucial ethical considerations. The procedures undertaken to ultimately overcome this tension included negotiation on the study design with the Macquarie University HREC and the UN body, relationship building with the camp gatekeepers, researcher positionality to avoid perceptions of bias, and utilisation of my personal connections to refugees living in the camps. As a result, a unique and very impressive data set was produced that provides insights into West Bank Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return claim that is not available anywhere else. This goes some way to balancing the issues discussed about the need to rely on a convenience sample for recruitment. The next chapter presents and discusses the results on the demographic characteristics of the Palestinian refugees participating in this study.

4 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND CAMPS CONDITIONS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have collectively established the background of this research investigation, the prominent themes and issues on the Palestinian claim to the right of return evident in the literature, and the methodology employed to answer the research questions. The following chapters now report and discuss the main research findings, beginning here with the results on the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample. Subsequent chapters report and discuss the findings for the participants' views of the right of return claim, compensation and resettlement, as well as their response to the phase out of UNRWA services.

The socio-demographic variables in the survey instrument for data collection were age and generation, gender, political affiliation, educational attainment, workforce participation, profession and income, household organization (including house ownership, number of rooms, number of people in the house), the area of expulsion, (1948 or 1967), and perceived benefits from UNRWA. The analysis relies primarily on data gathered during April-May- 2013. However, it should be noted that 'generation' was originally included as a variable because it would allow this thesis to develop generational profiles of the participants. This was considered as important because refugees commonly identify their refugee-hood from a generational perspective. This includes the implied status that each generation has and the authority that first and second generation refugees particularly add to the refugee narrative.

Generation was subsequently discounted in the analysis, however, when it was discovered that some participants aged 18-24 years mistakenly referred to themselves as 'first-generation' refugees, thus rendering the data unusable for its intended purpose. As a result, the age variable was applied as the primary (and only) generation marker in the analysis of participants' responses. This variable presented as a reasonable substitute for generation as it supported the intention in this thesis to

examine how factors such as years of displacement, length of occupation experience, level of exposure to camp conditions and the like impacted refugees' views of the right of return.

This chapter has two sections. The first section provides an overview of the population characteristics of the refugee camps in the occupied territories including the West Bank specifically and the Arab States more broadly. In particular, I discuss how the socio-demographic characteristics of refugees in the refugee camps have changed since the 1993 signing of the Declaration of Principles. The discussion of the period before and after the Oslo Agreement provides further insight into the conditions experienced by Palestinian refugees and the nature of their interactions with the governing authority. Following the Agreement many Palestinian refugees left the camps to take up employment opportunities with the PA. In addition, many Palestinian returnees settled in refugee camps following the Agreement due to social and financial reasons.

The second section presents and discusses the survey results for the socio-demographic variables of interest. The broader socio-demographic characteristics of the refugee camps are compared to the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample. This overview and comparison is worthwhile given the key objective of this study to explore how refugees' views of right of return may be impacted by such factors as age, gender, years of occupation, etc. In addition, the overview introduces the relevant socio-demographic characteristics used to support the discussion and analysis of results in the later chapters. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main socio-demographic characteristics of Palestinian refugees living in refugee camps in the West Bank and the primary implications for this research.

4.2 Population characteristics of the refugee camps in the occupied territories: An overview

The population in Palestine in 1948 was 1.37 million persons. It was estimated that in 2012, the worldwide population of Palestinians was 11.6 million (PCPS 2013). As of 31 January 2016, UNRWA estimated the total number of registered refugees was 5.3 million (UNRWA 2016). Registration eligibility was granted to persons whose place of residence was Palestine from 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost all

possessions and livelihood opportunities due to the 1948 displacement. The registration of refugees and their descendants (referred to as Registered Refugees) entitled them to access to UNRWA services (UNRWA 2006).

It is important to note, however, that the figures provided by UNRWA figures are based on internal reports indicating the number of refugees who are eligible for support services (PCBS2016). As a result, they do not include Palestinian refugees who have not formally registered with the Agency. Palestinian refugees are registered in UNRWA's 58 official camps in three host states: Jordan, Lebanon and Syria (Krafft and Elwan 2007, p. 135). In addition, approximately, 200,000 Palestinian refugees reside in 17 unofficial camps in the occupied territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria (Badil 2012, p. 9). The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) revealed that of the 11.6 million Palestinians worldwide, just less than half (45.7%) were refugees. The figure is probably much higher given that, even though there are 5.3 million Palestinians currently registered with the UNWRA, as previously mentioned, many remain unregistered and undocumented (PCBS 2016). Palestinians are considered by some as having the largest and longest-standing refugee population globally and are subsequently in constant need of humanitarian assistance (Brynen 2007).

Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, have the same rights as non-Palestinian refugee residents who already lived in these areas prior to the expulsion (Badil 2009, p. 32). In addition, Israeli civil and military law applies to both refugees and non-refugees (Baker and Mata 2011). Since the 1993 Oslo Agreement, the Palestinian Department of Residence has worked in collaboration with Israeli authorities and the PA's Ministry of Civil Affairs. This is despite the fact that Israeli authorities maintain exclusive control over Palestinian residency in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and resident entry to and exit from the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (Badil 2009, p. 32).

Prior to the Oslo Agreement in 1993, Palestinian residency was controlled through the use of identity cards issued by Israeli authorities; that is, Palestinians living in the West Bank carried orange identity cards and those in the Gaza Strip carried maroon cards (Loewenstein 2006, p. 24; Souri 2011, p. 222). Following the establishment of the PA, Palestinians living in the West Bank carried green identity cards issued by the

PA and approved by the Israeli government (Lyon 2011, p. 50). However, Palestinians living in East Jerusalem continue to carry blue Israeli identity cards or permits to remain in Israel (Souri 2011, p. 223). The identity cards contain personal information including the names, date of birth, and place of residence of its holder (Lyon 2011, p. 53; Souri 2011, p. 222). Irrespective of its colour, the identity card is an important document when moving from door to door. Personally, I remember my parents reminding us to carry our identity cards when leaving to go to school, work and the market.

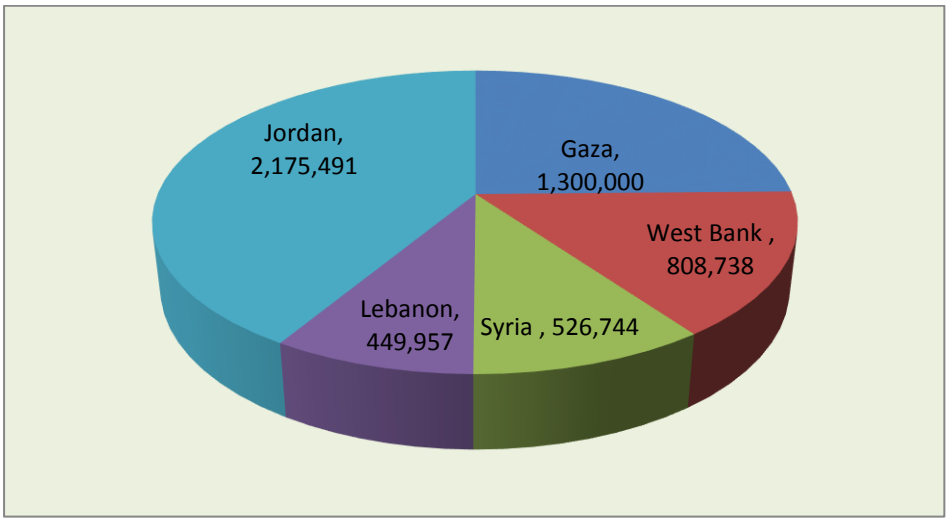
In general, Palestinians face security checks and restrictions during departure and return when crossing the border between Egypt and Jordan (Lyon 2011). In addition, Palestinians have no right of passage between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and face many restrictions as a result of prohibitions enforced in militarised areas (Badil 2009, p. 35). At this point it is worth mentioning that Palestinian refugees in the territories occupied in 1967 enjoyed the same employment rights, education, and property rights enjoyed by non-refugees (Badil 2009, p. 39).

Palestinian refugees are spread across different areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Arab states, and in exiled locations. In fact, the conditions for the Palestinian refugees in the Arab world are subject to change from time to time, and there are differences from one Arab country to another. In general, the situation of Palestinian refugees is negatively affected by the changing political climate and political life in Arab countries (Zureik 1998, p. 38). For example, the negative impact of the civil crisis in Syria has meant Palestinian refugees have been subjected to harsh conditions. Subsequently, thousands have fled Syria to neighbouring Arab countries and to other countries throughout Europe (Hamoud 2012). However, the focus of this thesis is Palestinian refugees in the West Bank. Therefore, the following section offers more detail about Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and, in particular, the sample group of this study.

An outline of the population of registered Palestinian refugees by their current location is provided in Figure 4.1. It shows that by the end of 2016, approximately 1,979,580 registered refugees were residing in Jordan, followed by 1,167,572 in Gaza, 727,471 in the West Bank, 486,946 in Syria and 436,154 in Lebanon. It is worth

mentioning that the number of Palestinian refugees in Syria may have changed due to the current conflict.

Figure 4.1: Population of registered Palestinian refugees (1948) by current location, end-2016



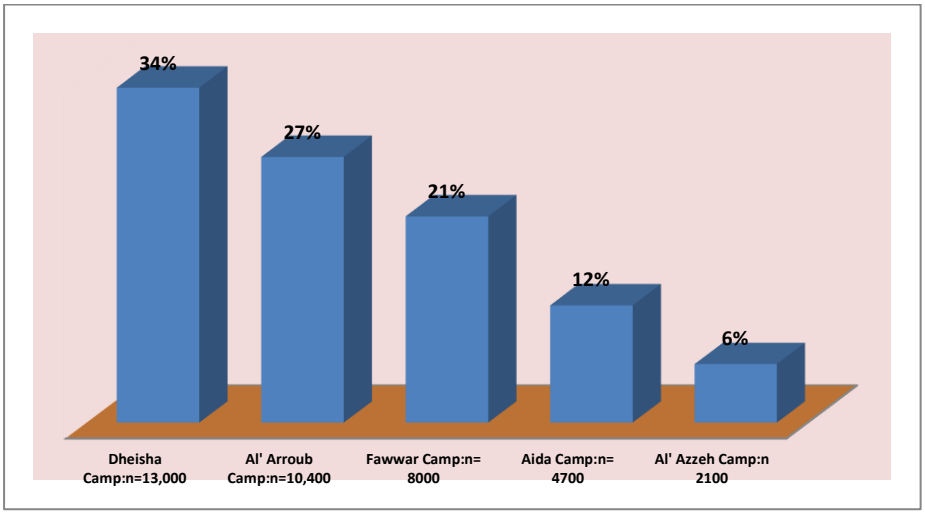
Source: UNRWA, 2016

According to UNRWA records, in December 2011 there were (19) nineteen official refugee camps and (4) four unofficial camps in the occupied West Bank with a combined total population of 727, 471 people. Some of the refugee camps in the West Bank are surrounded by Israeli settlements and controlled by Israeli military (Talhami 2003, p. 124).

The total population across the five refugee camps included in this study is 39,201 people. The population breakdown for each camp is provided below and in Figure 4.2:

- Dheisha 13, 000 residents (34%);
- Aida 4,700 residents (12%);
- Al'Azzeh - 2,101residents (6%) within the borders of Bethlehem;
- Al' Arroub 10,400 residents (27%); and
- Fawwar 8000 residents (21%) in Hebron area (UNRWA 2011).

Figure 4.2: Population of registered Palestinian refugees (1948 &1967) by current location, end-2011



Source: UNRWA 2014

These refugee camps began as places for Palestinian refugees to live following the *Al Nakba*. It was at this time that Palestinians were driven out from their villages by Zionists in 1948 (Abu Sitta 2007). The UNRWA later commenced building housing units for refugees according to their family size and needs (Rueff and Viaro 2010, p. 339). Since their establishment in 1949 the camps remain supervised by the UNRWA, which provides essential services including health, education and humanitarian assistance (Jacobsen and Bauer 2007).

The camps were built on limited land provided by the host governments. In the West Bank, the land was leased from Palestinian land owners. The lease conditions and the limited amount of land proved to be problematic for the development of housing units in general (Rueff and Viaro 2010, p. 339). During the 1950s the UNRWA offered each family one 80-100-square metre plot on which to build a unit with one 12-metre-squared room and sanitary service (Rueff and Vairo 2010, p. 344). If the size of the family was large, the UNRWA would provide additional units. For instance, a family of six to eight members was allocated a two-room unit (Rueff and Viaro 2010, p. 344).

Originally, refugee camps comprised tents and barracks, but during the late 1950s and early 1960s refugees were housed in single room units made of concrete (Rueff and Viaro 2010, p. 340). Refugees were encouraged to build their own housing units from

bricks and asbestos with the support of UNRWA (Marshy 1999). It is worth briefly noting at this point the claim by Al-Khatib (2003) that the housing conditions of refugees, particularly in relation to the materials out of which they are built, have had a directed impact on the physical health of refugees. Camps residents originated from the same villages, surrounding areas and cities prior to the Exodus. The option to extend the house was now available to refugees and they began to construct extra rooms and internal toilets (Marshy 1999). This form of temporary accommodation has lasted for sixty-nine years and thus remains in place today.

According to Wiles (2010), refugee camps lacked fresh water until the 1960s, from which time the UNRWA built water taps in public spaces. In fact, refugees relied on public tap water until the early 1980s, and people had to wait in line to get their daily water supply (Wiles 2010, p. 5). In most cases the water taps were managed by UNRWA officers who controlled its use. The lack of a sewerage network and other public utilities were the main reason for flooded streets and homes (Farah 2000).

Refugee camps today are all built and occupied to capacity, which means that there is no space available for expansion. In the past, however, refugees undertook to build additional units which exceeded one storey and much needed internal toilets (Al-Kahib et al 2003, p. 316), while paying little attention to building safety regulations (Farah 2000). Each refugee camp includes schools, clinics and other building services. Importantly, some building services are located inside the refugee camp where space permits, but some crucial services are located outside the camps in neighbouring areas (Rueff and Viaro 2010).

At present, private spaces in refugee camps are too limited and the public domains are too crowded. In most camps, public squares have disappeared due to the unauthorised and unmonitored development of housing units. This trend was on the rise during the first and second Intifada where refugees extended their houses at the expense of public space. Public roads and main streets and public yards were claimed by the new generation of refugees in order to re-build housing units within the camp (Al-Khatib el al 2003). As a result, many of the houses in the camps are unsafe and may present environmental issues. Hanafi (2009) described the buildings in refugee camps in occupied Palestinian territories as having narrow alleys with no natural light and with poor ventilation.

Streets in the refugee camps are named after villages and cities in Palestine before 1948. In addition, some areas within the camps are known to be occupied by a certain family such as Al'Azzeh refugee camp within the city of Bethlehem. Families are familiar with each other and are involved in each other's affairs. In fact, the shape of the camps offers dwellers limited privacy and this is linked to problems of intimacy in gender relations. However, this physical setting also created more solid relationships and extended kinship ties as people from the same village in Palestine prior 1948 generally continued to live in the same houses in the camps.

4.3 The Survey

The section in the survey instrument dedicated to demographic characteristics sought to collect data on the participants' ages, gender, political affiliations, levels of income, levels of education and religious practices. The objective underpinning their inclusion in the survey was to determine whether particular participant characteristics were subsequently associated with their views of the right of return and its related components.

4.3.1 Age and generational profiles of refugees in the sample

When talking to Palestinian refugees living in camps in the West Bank they will often refer to their age, not only as a number, but also in generational terms. Beginning with the age of Al Nakba or first generation refugees (born before 1948), generational identification progresses through the years with the second generation born after 1948, and the third and fourth generations born of second and third generation refugees respectively (Zureik and Suleiman 2013).

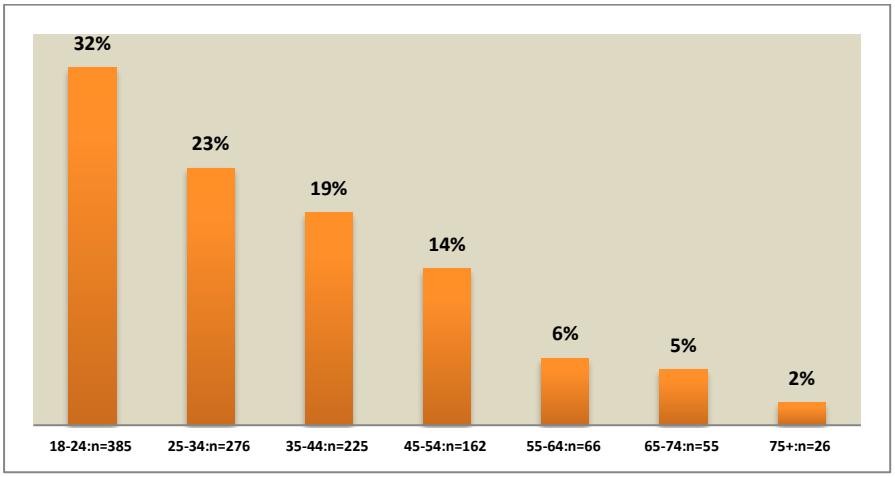
Referring to themselves in this way maintains their connection to Al Nakba and the Palestinian refugee narrative of right of return. As a third generation refugee, I appreciate the potency with which these references to generation symbolise the ongoing suffering and displacement endured by Palestinian refugees. Indeed, for Palestinians living in refugee camps, 1948 marks both an end and a re-birth, and with this re-birth, the beginning of the Palestinian refugee narrative of the catastrophe of 1948 and the longing to return to their homeland.

A specific section was included in the survey to collect data pertaining to the socio-demographic profiles of the participants. This was included to later explore the relationship between these demographic factors and their views of the right of return. Specifically, this chapter reports the participants indications of age group, area of expulsion, level of education, gender, housing arrangement and family size, income and profession, type of assistance received from UNRWA, and religious practices. The implications of the reported results are also discussed.

The sample distribution by age group is presented first in Figure 4.3. Palestinian refugees are generally characterised as a young population (Abu-Libdeh 2007; Bocco et al. 2005), with UNRWA (2010) reporting that approximately 20% of refugees are aged between 15 and 24 years. Figure 4.3 shows that the percentage figure for the youngest cohort in this study (i.e. 18-24 year-olds) is 32.2%, higher than the similar figure from UNRWA in 2010. In addition, 23.1% are aged between 25-34 years, thus showing more than 50% of participants are of relative young age; that is, from 18-34 years. By contrast, 2.2% of participants are aged 75 years and above. Participants in the oldest age-group experienced the 1948 catastrophe (*Al Nakba).* Due to the recruitment process, sampling methods, and ethical limitations, the majority of the sample was young participants. Young participants often attended UNRWA centres and local committees centre and other agencies that were used as recruitment sites more than older participants which reflected in this sample. Based on this researcher's observations, younger refugees regarded the local refugee centres as social sites where they could get together and interact. However, the study sample does also include older participants who received the questionnaire from UNRWA centres and clinics where they go to receive their daily treatment and to access support services.
The number of Palestinian refugees within each age category is of course an outcome of fertility rates. It is notable, however, that fertility rates have also been linked to the Palestinian claim for the right of return. Palestinians consider a high birth rate as important to both their survival and their resistance towards Israel (Donati, Hamam and Medda 2000, p. 848). Indeed, the association between the birth rate and the right of return claim manifests in quite unique and personal ways among Palestinian refugees. I recall a news report in late 2015 where a young Palestinian boy was shot by the Israeli soldiers in Al Aroub refugee camp. In the report, the mother of the

young boy stated that she had given birth to nine boys in order to liberate Palestine and return to her old village in 1948 (Palestinian Media Monitoring, 2015).

Figure 4.3: Sample distribution by age group in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1195

In addition, there is a belief among Palestinians that the younger generation is responsible for the well-being of the older generation. For instance, parents maintain traditional views that fertility and child birth are a source of community strength and social security. The strength is increased when children participate in the workforce and earn an income that contributes to improvement in economic conditions. Similar to other societies with challenging living conditions, this belief and practice among Palestinian refugees is extended to include the notion of continuing the family bloodline by increasing the birth rate, particularly the birth of sons (Donati, Hamam and Medda 2000, p. 848).

4.3.2 The gender profile of refugees

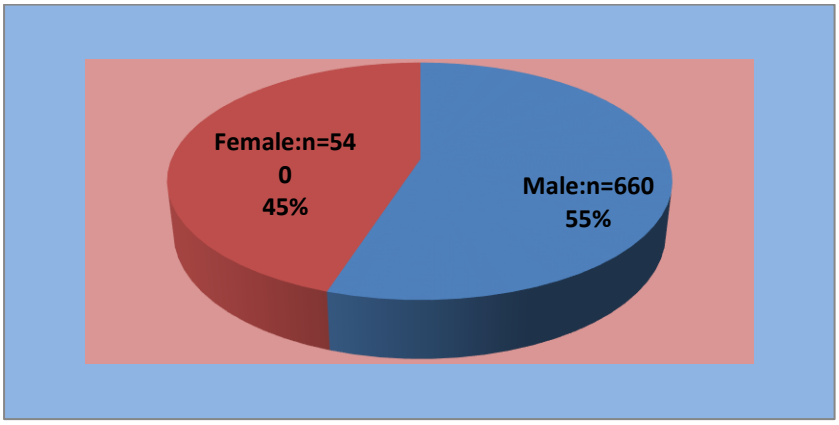
The 1948 catastrophe and ongoing occupation of Palestine did not differentiate between men and women. In fact, both genders are subjected to the same pain. Men and women continue to carry and pass on the narrative of return. As a result, women and men have typically shared same determination to resist occupation. Here, my memory takes me to the camp again where marches included young, old, males and females from different political parties. Palestinian women would prepare the stones

for the males to throw and sometimes stand between Israeli soldiers and young Palestinians to prevent an arrest.

Gender based analysis of the survey result ensures the findings are representative of the perspectives of men and women. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2015), males comprise 50.8 percent of the total population compared to 49.2 percent for females. In other words, a sex ratio of 103:100 (i.e. 103 males for every 100 females) (PCBS 2015). Of course, both genders are exposed to the same pain that comes with living under the same occupation. However, claims such as those made by Faraj (2015, p. 1): "To be a refugee is hard, but to be a woman and a refugee is the hardest of all" pose interesting considerations as to the potential experiential differences of refugee-hood based on gender. For instance, while in no way diminishing the struggles experienced by male refugees in Palestine, Faraj clarifies her comment with reference to the difficulties woman experience when forced to live, work, raise children, and continue the Palestinian struggle when their husbands or brothers have been arrested or killed. Similarly, Emudd (2007, p. 1) suggests a key gender implication of refugee-hood is that "the impact of armed conflict will affect men and women differently due to the different roles they occupy in society." In turn, this research contributes to our understanding of how women's experiences of refugee-hood and life in refugee camps are similar or different to men's experiences.

Figure 4.4 shows the gender distribution of surveyed Palestinian refugees living in the refugee camp in West Bank in 2013 was 55% male and 45% female. Due to cultural and religious norms in Palestine that privilege male participation on the examination of socio-political affairs, there was some possibility that the difference in gender participation rate in this study would be larger. After identifying this risk, a strategy was implemented to address this concern whereby the survey was distributed at women centres in addition to UNRWA offices and health centres. The almost equal gender representation in this study proved that this strategy was at least partially successful.

Figure 4.4: Sample distribution by gender in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,200

4.3.3 Political affiliations of Palestinian refugees

The political characteristics of Palestinian refugees reflect the political environment within Palestine and host locations. Since Al Nakba many events have significantly contributed to the formation of these characteristics. There is no doubt that regional and global politics and the ongoing conflicts within the occupied territories have played an integral role. The political realisation of dispossession and displacement has contributed to the development of Palestinian national movements which aim to resist the colonisation of Palestine and the Zionist movement in particular. Young and old have joined the political struggle to advocate the full and legitimate rights of Palestinians and to call for the liberation of their historical land (Rosenfeld 2004). Most Palestinian political movements have emerged in refugee camps and have advocated for the right of return and the liberation of Palestine via military struggle (Mohammad 1999; Suleiman 2001).

Alongside the emergence of these political movements has been the emergence of Palestinian political identity. This identity was mostly shaped by refugees' experiences of military occupation and ongoing displacement (Mohammad 1999). Indeed, dispossession, exile, and ongoing occupation paved the way for Palestinian political movements to draw on the Palestinian political identity to wrest control of the Palestinian struggle from the Arab states (Mohammad 1999). This was particularly the case after the 1967 war and Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Gerner 1994; Schanzer 2008).

Overall, the emergent political parties adopted armed struggle as the primary strategy to liberate Palestine and to exercise the right of return (Suleiman 2001). In other words, Palestinian political movements began to emphasise Palestinian nationalist ideology rather than Arabism (Pipes 1987). Palestinian political movements assumed armed struggle to be the only way to liberate Palestine and resist the occupation (Schulz and Hammer 2003). In turn, recruitment of members to political movements during the late 1960s was largely undertaken to facilitate this aim (Farah 2013). This phase was an attempt to unify the Palestinian people and offer an alternative to the defeat of Arab armies. In addition, the Palestinians were against having their future decided through Arab states (Cobban 1984).

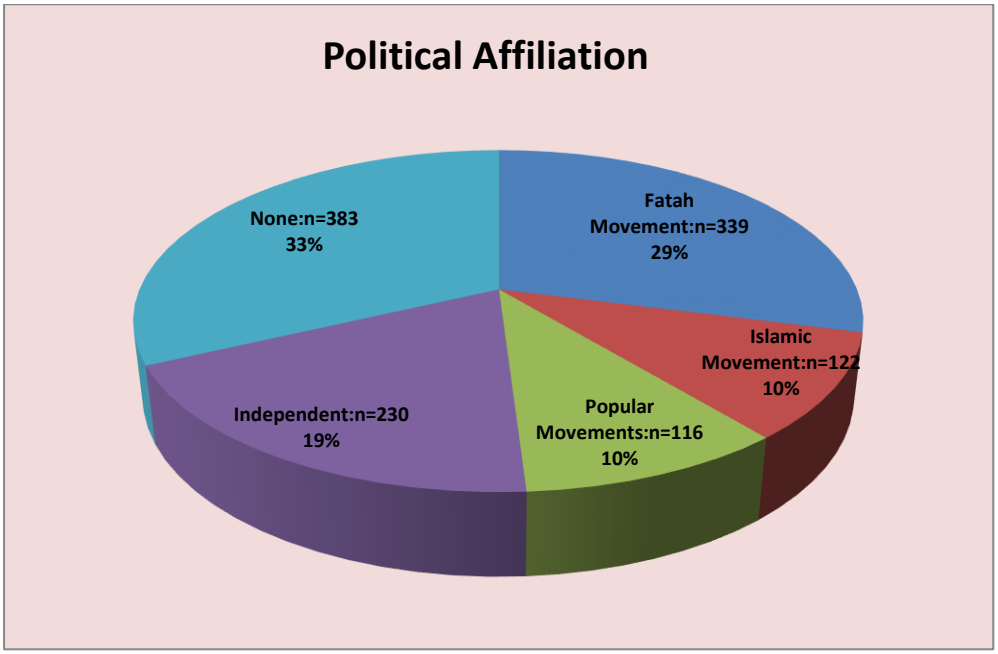
Figure 4.5 present the data analysis results for the political characteristics of the Palestinian refugee participants' political affiliations. The politics questions were based on items included in long-established surveys of Palestinian refugees' political characteristics (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1). The purpose of the data analyses pertaining to political affiliation specifically is to determine if there is an identifiable association between the political party / movement to which the refugee is affiliated and the way he or she perceives the right of return claim. This is important for consideration given the significant shifts in the political landscape in and around Palestine discussed above combined with the Palestinian refugees' reliance on their political representatives to negotiate for their interests.

The results in Figure 4.5 should be considered in relation to the prevailing politics of the time when the survey was administered. At this time, Fatah was, and continues to be, the dominant party within the PA and the PLO. Moreover, Hamas had only a limited presence in the West Bank due to the coup led by the party in Gaza in 2007 which resulted in it achieving dominance in that area. The presence of other (minor) parties at this time was also limited due to the restrictions placed on these parties by the PA (e.g. not being permitted to conduct political action against Israel). It was therefore expected that the political affiliations reported by the participants would reflect these political dynamics.

The results in Figure 4.5 show that 33% of participants report having no political affiliation, 28% of participants support the Fatah party, 10% Islamic Movements, 19% Independent, and 10% support the left-wing parties. The 33% 'no political affiliation'

outcome is somewhat surprising given the political culture within the refugee camps. In turn, the result may be due to the participants treating the survey question with caution as a result of not being certain about its source. Therefore, one may suggest refugees choose not to disclose their political affiliation because they continue to live under the Israeli occupation and are worried about the consequences of openly acknowledging their political beliefs. Furthermore, they may fear the PA as a result of the agreement between the PA and the Israeli government to maintain peace and security in the refugee camps. Another interpretation of the result is that some refugees may choose to affiliate with a non-government agency rather than a political party. It is possible to argue that political parties and unions continue to face internal challenges as some member affiliates shift their allegiances to non-government agencies such as The Palestinian Commission for Refugees Right Protection and Defence for Children International. A key driver of this shift is the reassignment of some political leaders to non-government agencies. In addition, refugees may believe the political factions have failed to fulfil the needs of Palestinians following the Oslo Agreement.

Figure 4.5: Refugee political affiliation in the surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,190

Choice among diverse political parties is a reality for refugees. Certainly, politics and political ideology are commonly acknowledged as core elements of influence over the peace process (Lybarger 2007). Also, the left wing parties in particular have a strong presence in three refugee camps; namely Deheisha, Aida, and Al Azzeh. However, it may be the case that the participants believe there is no significant difference between the major political parties on the right of return claim (William 2006). Zayed (2013) even argues that Palestinian refugees' position on right of return is more about their connection to land than about an affiliation to one particular brand of politics or another.

The relatively high percentage (28%) of political affiliation for Fatah reported by respondents may be explained due to the leading position the movement presently has in the PIC. Fatah is the main political force within the PA and subsequently has the strongest voice in the peace process (Nabulsi 2009). Moreover, Fatah's secular strategy to include all Palestinians irrespective of religion may appeal to some refugees (Schanzer 2008). A recent poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 4 and 6 June 2015 found that if elections had been held at that time and all political factions participated, 72% of respondents indicated they would participate in such elections. Of those respondents, 35% indicated they would vote for Hamas, 39% would vote for Fatah, 11% would vote for all other third parties combined, and 16% were undecided. In June 2014, just prior to the Gaza war, the vote for Hamas stood at 32% and Fatah 40%.

The relatively high percentage of political affiliation for Fatah reported by respondents in this study is reflective of the PSR survey results given political identification is arguably a higher bar than voting among Palestinian refugees. It is important to note however that the survey of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank only in this study is a key difference to the PSR survey in that refugees in the West Bank may be reluctant to acknowledge affiliation to political parties other than Fatah due to fear of consequence. Nonetheless, the similarity in the results does provide some insight into the reach of Fatah as a dominant source of political influence throughout Palestine – due primarily to its association with the PA. In turn,

this insight is important given the argument in this thesis that different political parties give different weight to the pursuit of the right of return.

4.3.4 Area of expulsion profile

Similar to the references to generation as a descriptive identifier of their occupation, Palestinian refugees also refer to area of expulsion to symbolize the destruction of Palestinian society. Two distinct areas of expulsion are referred to: the green line of 1948 (Al Nakba) and the 1967 borders (Al Naksa). While many historical events which mark the persecution of Palestinians are celebrated by them in sadness, these two events are of particular significance in the Palestinian refugee narrative and their ongoing resistance to occupation. Examining the area of expulsion was undertaken to identify any distinctive geographic features of the refugee population and to examine whether participants became refugees as a result of 1948 or 1967 wars.

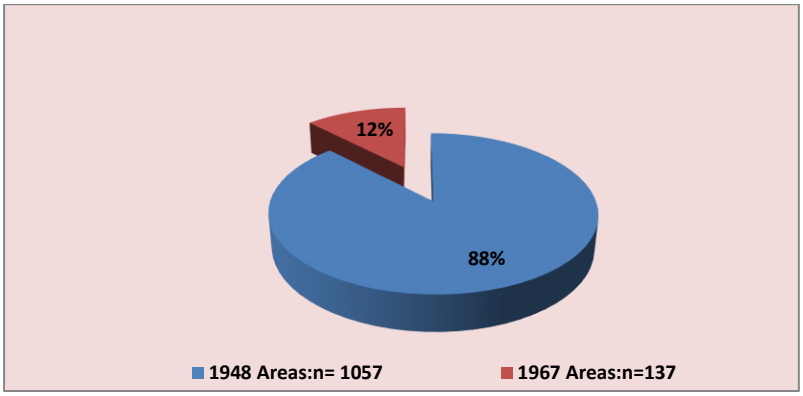
Figure 4.6 clarifies the distribution of participants according to the area of Exodus. It shows 88.5% of respondents stated they originated from Palestine prior to 1948, whereas only 11.5% originated from Palestinian regions demarcated in 1967. In fact, the largest group of displaced Palestinian is made up of those who were forced to flee in 1948 and their descendants. In contrast to the age demographic results, the area of Exodus results do mirror the actual population fairly closely as indicated in the UNRWA survey (see Section 4.3).

Overall, Badil (2012) reported that the total number of 1948 refugees is approximately 5,825,853 at the end of 2011, and that the total number of 1967 refugees was 1,022,546. The overwhelming majority of those surveyed by Badil were expelled in 1948, and as such they share this experience and the common narrative to subsequently evolve. By contrast, the total number of refugees living in the five refugee camps in the West Bank selected for inclusion in this was approximately 37,000 in 2013. Of the 1,200 refugee participants in this study, 88% were from 1948 displacement and 12% were from 1967 displacement.

Refugees living in the West Bank and elsewhere continue to refer to themselves as “coming from” their original home villages (Bisharat 2001, p. 214). This practice remains evident during official dealings with government agencies where refugees refer to their area of Exodus after confirming their current location. Refugees continue

to hold onto to the keys to their homes and to display them in their current dwelling as a symbol of their determination of return to Palestine (Bisharat 2001, p. 214).

Figure 4.6: Sample distribution by area of expulsion in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1,194

4.3.5 The education profile of refugees

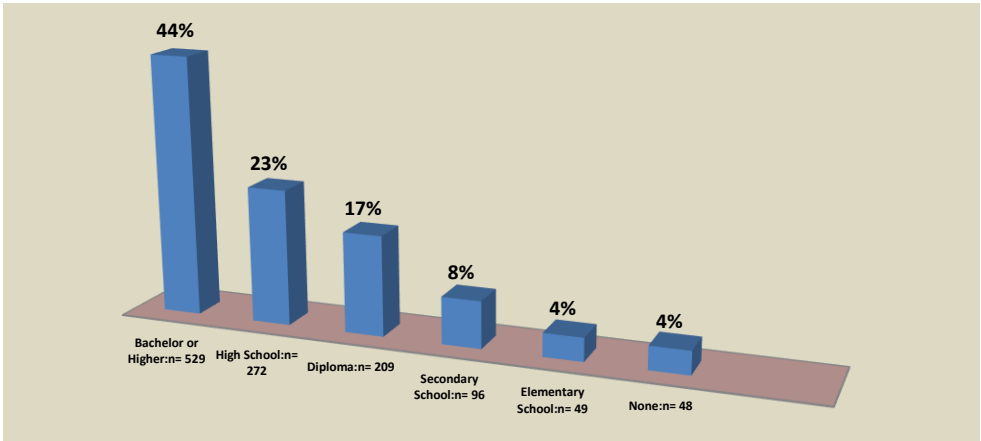
No doubt Al Nakba and its implications caused major destruction and ruptured the stability of the Palestinian society. However, such was the will of Palestinians after becoming refugees that they transformed the refugee camps into places of learning. In fact, education was the only 'weapon' the Palestinians could arm themselves with, and through education they have reached the four corners of the world. I remember my parents encouraging my brothers and me to gain an education to 'defeat the occupier'. Most refugees living in refugee camps worked hard to send their children to universities around the world (Alzaroo and Hunt 2003 and; Rosenfeld 2004). Therefore, when walking through the streets of the refugee camps, you will see medical clinics run by doctors who have been living in the refugee camps.

The UNRWA is the major provider of primary level education in the refugee camps (Badil 2012). Schools are entirely funded by UNRWA and all refugee children are encouraged to participate. As a result, nearly all refugee children of elementary school age are enrolled in school (Jacobsen 2003, p. 79). In each of the five refugee camps included as research sites in this study, there are only two elementary schools up to sixth grade, and two secondary schools up to ninth grade. All schools are gender specific; that is, schools for boys only and schools for girls only. Refugee students attended high school in local villages and cities beyond ninth grade. Due to

overcrowded high schools in nearby villages, children in the refugee camps are often sent to different schools in various towns. Since the establishment of the PA in 1993, however, high schools have been built in some refugee camps.

In the survey, the level of education attained was included as a variable for analysis based on the assumption that a person's educational background can influence their attitudes and perceptions. The value of education in Palestinian society – and indeed, in most societies around the world – is associated with social privileges and financial advancement. As mentioned above, Palestinians link education to the concept of liberation and resistance to occupation policies. Indeed, during the 1980s, Israel closed down many universities and other education institutions in response to political activism by students, thus significantly reducing the number of Palestinian graduates (Bruhn 2006). In fact, through the PLO Palestinians were encouraged to gain education within Palestine and overseas (Bruhn 2006).

Figure 4.7: Sample distribution by academic qualification in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n = 1,200

Figure 4.7 shows the academic qualifications of participants. Approximately 4.0% of participants indicated they received no education, 4.1% achieved a basic (elementary-preparatory) education level, 8.0% completed preparatory school, 22.7% completed secondary school, 17.4% presented with a diploma degree, and 43.8% have a bachelor's degree or above.

It is often the case in survey research that there is an over-representation of participants with more education attainment, and this study reflects this outcome. For instance, Badil (2015) reported that 30% of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank had acquired a Bachelor's degree or above in 2015. In this study, the percentage of participants with a Bachelor's degree or above was 44%, thus suggesting a slight over-representation. However, the generally high level of education among Palestinians – both refugees and non-refugees – is supported in findings presented by Jacobsen (2003) that show that literacy rates among Palestinian refugees are considerably higher than for populations in Arab states. Jacobsen's (2003) study found that camp refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are more educated than non-camp refugees. In addition, education played an important role in assisting refugees to gain employment and to improve their living conditions. For instance, findings in a study by Bocco et al. (2007) of the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank showed that people of lower education attainment are more likely to receive an income below median level.

4.3.6 Profile of housing arrangement and family size

In the blink of an eye the Palestinian people found themselves scattered in different locations throughout Palestine and surrounding Arab States, and forced to live in harsh conditions and in crowded places with limited access to basic needs. Some lived within a stone's throw of their original homes, while others were far further removed. Irrespective of their new location, the new life forced upon all Palestinians was bereft of the quality of life they knew prior to 1948. With no land to call their own and no open, spaces - the new reality was the harsh living conditions of the refugee camps full of Palestinians from different villages and towns. Nothing is worse than starting again under forced conditions, knowing that the 'start' is also the 'end' of what many Palestinians thought of as 'Paradise' and the beginning of ongoing struggle.

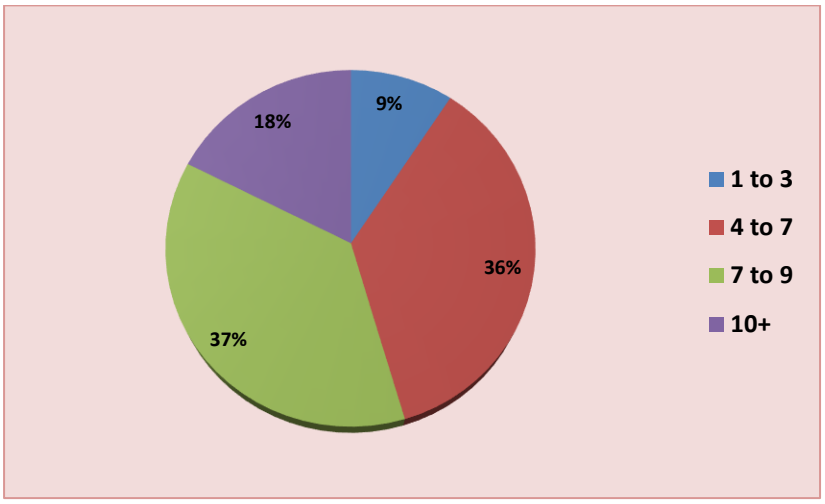
The beginning of their struggle was marked by efforts to reunite with their kin to live together within the same household. As a result, the household generally comprises grandparents, parents and children under one roof where in most cases they share the same meals and food provisions. Figure 4.6 clarifies the distribution of the sample by size of family. The largest share (37 %) of participants came from families of between

7-9 members, 36% with 4-6 members, and 18% from households of 10 members and above.

Thus, this study shows Palestinian refugees living in West Bank are somewhat disadvantaged economically and are subjected to crowded living conditions. Moreover, the housing units in the camp are small, with two to three rooms per household (Banat 2010). The survey results in this study related to the relatively crowded living condition particularly are reflective of the broader Palestinian refugees population in the West Bank, with the PCBS (2007) reporting up to 11.4% of the people living in households with three or more persons per room. At this time, the average family size was 5.8 people in Palestinian territories; 6.5 and 5.5 people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, respectively (Ajluni 2010).

In fact, the continued growth in the size of the family household and the subsequent overcrowding this generates is expected to continue due to high birth rates among Palestinian refugee women (Abu-Libdeh 2007). Overcrowding also has implications for women's privacy and their ability to spend time alone. The confined place limits women's daily movements which affects their position and influence in society (Marshy 1999). Furthermore, overcrowding results in psychological and social problems including physical abuse directed towards women and children (Farah 2000) and thus may have important implications for Palestinian refugee perspectives on the right of return.

Figure 4.8: Sample distribution by family members per household in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1,188

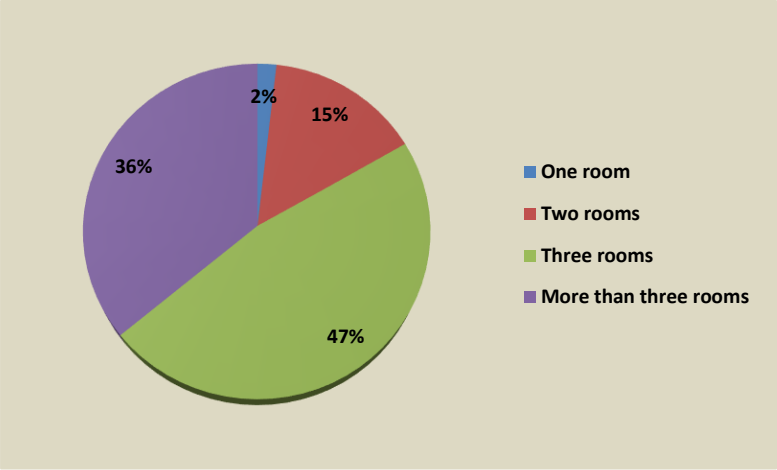
The living conditions in the West Bank refugee camps are grossly inadequate and the population density within the camps is much higher than non-camp areas. This density negatively impacts social relationships within the camps, and often conflict occurs due to lack of privacy and the proximity of neighbours (Marshy 1999). In addition, the lack of local parks and play areas for children is a significant factor in social conflict between families. In the refugee camps children use streets and laneways as play grounds and in most cases they are subjected to traffic incidents and public interference.

The ongoing conflict among refugees within camps resulted in the creation of committees in each camp to deal with daily conflict. This social policing strategy promotes interventions to end conflict between families on the basis that the root cause of the problem is often beyond the control of ordinary people. In addition, overcrowding and constricted housing space makes it difficult for UNRWA garbage removal trucks to operate. In summary, the high number of people in households and subsequent overcrowding impacts social relationship and present potential resentments among families and individuals. These problems, in turn, may emerge in attitudes to resettlement.

In the case of the West Bank, the housing problem cannot be solved because of restrictions involved by the governing authority. In the Fawar and Arroub refugee

camps, dwellers continue to be exposed to check points and Israeli armed vehicles, and they are barred from building outside the camps (Talhami 2003, p. 124). As such, the movements of dwellers in both camps are subject to Israel security law. Permission must be sought before building outside the camp and in recent months many housing units were demolished in both areas due to Israeli restrictions.

Figure 4.9: Sample distribution by number of rooms in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,196

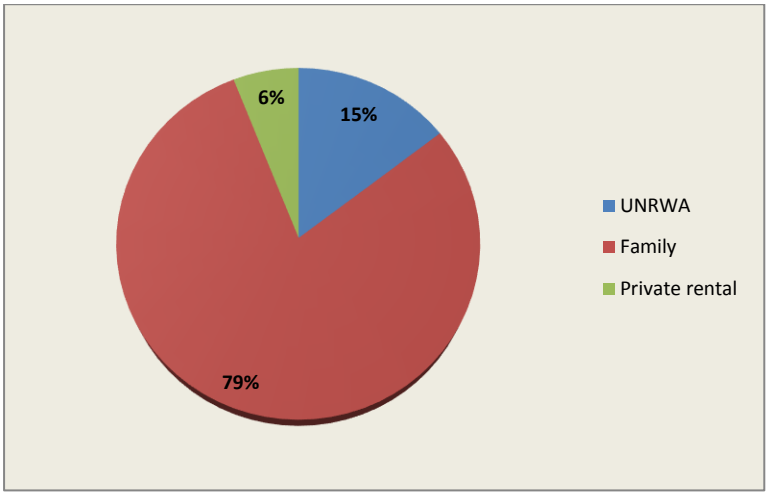
Figure 4.9 highlights the distribution of respondents by the number of the rooms (e.g. bedrooms, bathroom, living room and kitchen) in the household. It shows 47% of participants indicated they have three-bedroom accommodation, 15% have two-bedroom accommodation, and 36% have more than three bedrooms in the house.

Since the establishment of refugee camps the majority refugees remain as camp dwellers (Farah 2000). Refugees with the financial capacity to do so, relocate to urban areas to establish a new life (Hanafi 2009, p. 500). However, the majority of refugees are unable to relocate and continue to be in need of ongoing support. Following the 1948 Exodus, both shelters and housing units were built in the refugee camps by UNRWA to provide for refugee needs following the 1948 Exodus. Subsequently, during the mid- to late-1950s UNRWA worked towards re-developing refugee housing to provide stronger and more permanent structures (Bocco et al.2005).

Figure 4.10 highlights distribution figures in relation to housing provided by UNRWA. The overwhelming majority (79%) of participants indicated their houses

were family owned; whereas 15% indicated their house was provided by the UNRWA, and 6% of participants reported their houses were privately rented.

Figure 4.10: Sample distribution by house ownership in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 201; n= 1,192

Refugee camps in the West Bank have been built on land leased by UNRWA from private owners. In addition, UNRWA provided services and infrastructures such as sewage, water and electricity (Jocobsen 2003, p. 59). The majority of dwellings in the camps were built from concrete blocks and cement roofing, and were constructed by local refugees. However, the Israeli government continued to enforce regulations and security measures on housing construction (Bocco and Zureik 2007, p. 91).

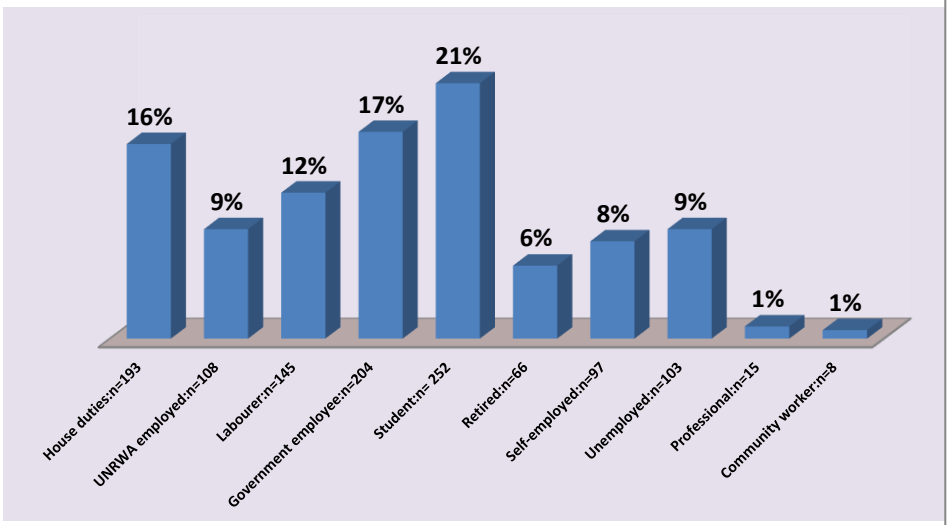
In relation to infrastructure amenities, refugee camps depend on Israel for water supply and electricity. A 2003 survey conducted by the Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Centre (Shaml) on the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Palestinian Territory indicated that camp dwellers thought their homes were too small for their family's needs, and that the camps did not meet their basic needs. The majority of surveyed participants indicated their willingness to move out of the camp to search for better living conditions (Hanafi 2009). In sum, the results show that the living conditions for Palestinian refugees can be characterised as large numbers of people living in small houses that are largely family owned.

4.3.7 Profile of the income and professions of the respondents

The 1948 Exodus forced refugees to find new types of employment, but there were only limited choices available. Put simply, the majority of refugees went from being self-employed and business owners to hired workers. Limited opportunities meant some refugees had no choice but to work as hired hands on the very lands that once belonged to their family. Others worked on construction sites on their land to build housing units for new settlers. Despite these difficult circumstances, however, the refugees sought work wherever they could in order to earn an income to feed their families.

This section analyses aspects of household members' incomes, their distribution, and level of income. In addition, this section attempts to compare refugees' income with the incomes of non-refugees by analysing employment participation data on both groups. Figure 4.11 presents the distribution of the participants by profession or current activity. It shows 17% of participants are government employees, 16% are caretakers of the house, 12 % are labourers 9% are unemployed, and 21% are students. This indicates that participants are highly dependent on waged employment for their income.

Figure 4.11: Sample distribution by profession in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



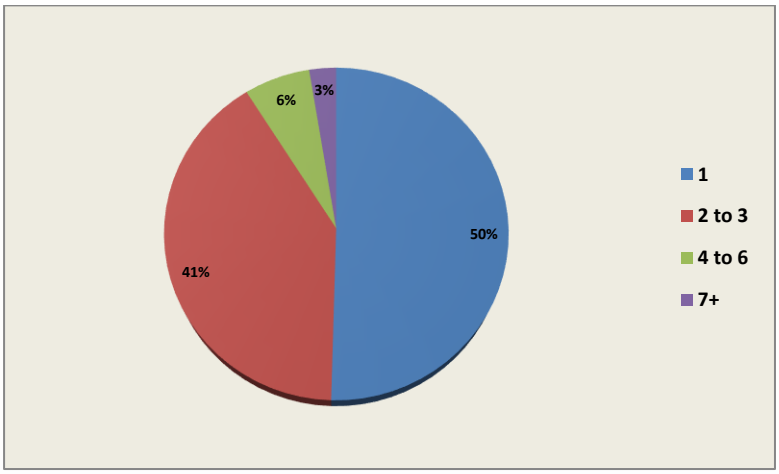
Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,191

The government sector is the highest employment provider in the sampled refugee camps. The private sector is the second highest, with the UNRWA listed as the lowest employment provider for refugees. The findings of this study relate to some extent to Hanafi's (2009) statement that camp dwellers work for the PA or are employed by international organisations.

Indeed the majority of refugees and camp residents participate in work outside of the camps (Banat 2010), particularly in nearby villages and Israeli settlements that include farming and construction work. However, since the beginning of the Second Intifada, refugee workforce participation has decreased due to security measures imposed by Israel. As a result, three in four household members were living under the poverty line in 2002 (Abu-Libdeh 2007). The implications of this for welfare provision to refugees in the camps are discussed in Section 4.3.8 below.

Figure 4.12 clarifies the distribution of the number of people employed in the family. In terms of working family members per household, half (50%) of all families reported only one family member was in paid work, 41% of families reported two to three people were in paid work, and 3% of families reported more than seven members working in the family. Participation in the work force in the West Bank requires political stability and free access to the workplace. In general, Palestinian refugees have relied on Arab states for work, particularly the Gulf States. This was subject, however, to political stability and free access to and from the Gulf States. In addition, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip access the Israeli labour market based on conditions imposed by Israel security forces and intelligence.

Figure 4.12: Sample distribution of the number of people employed in the family in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



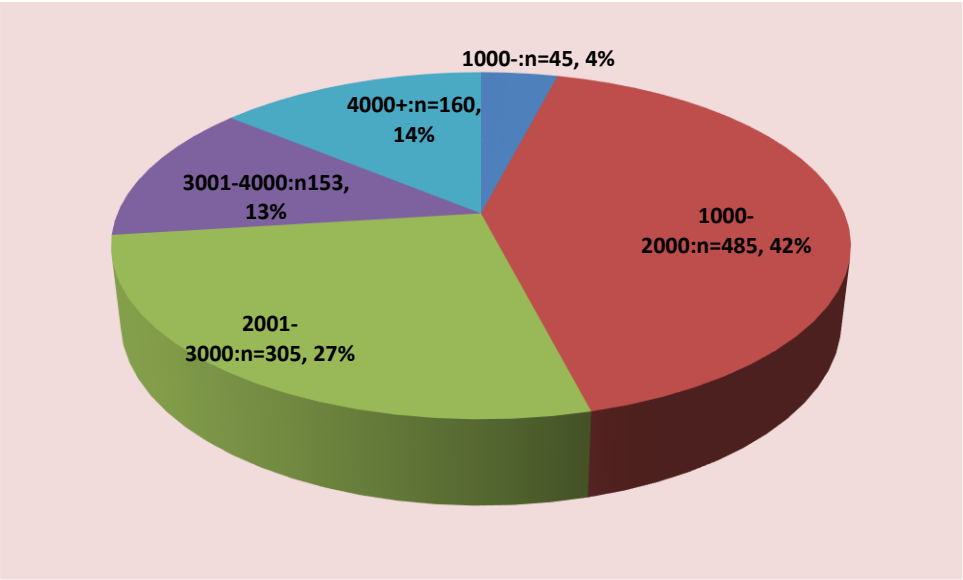
Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1,164

More restrictions on the movement of Palestinians were implemented during the First and Second Intifada where those with political affiliations were banned from entering Israel for work. In addition, Israel continued to block access to the West Bank and Gaza Strip and prevented workers from reaching their work places. Following the Oslo Agreement, however, refugees' participation in the work force increased in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as in PA institutions. The increase in workplace participation was not limited to educated people, where the majority of employed by the PA are politically active. Initial recruitment focused on security personal, police and intelligence workers, positions which required a basic level of education. However, Egset (2003) argued labour force participation in the West Bank increased on the basis of improvements in people's qualifications and education level attainment, particularly among women.

According to a survey conducted by the UNRWA, FAFO, WFP and PA (2012), the unemployment rate among refugees was higher than among non-refugees in 2012. The report linked the higher unemployment rate among refugees to the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as to the restrictions imposed upon the movement of Palestinian refugees by the occupying power. Even though, these events would undoubtedly impact the employment rate among non-refugees also. In addition, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) revealed the percentage of poor households in refugee camps was higher than for non-refugee households outside the

camps. Moreover, the unemployment rate among Palestinian refugees aged 15 years and over in 2012 was 27.9% compared to 19.8% for non-refugees (PCBS 2013).

Figure 4.13: Sample distribution by monthly income in Israeli Shekels in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,148

According to the 2013 UNRWA report, 1.2 million Palestinian refugees live in absolute poverty, and a further 700,000 live in abject poverty unable to meet their most basic food needs (UNRWA 2013a para.2). As of the beginning of 2013, 292,000 Palestine refugees from over 70,000 families received assistance from the Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP), which provides basic food commodities along with modest supplemental cash assistance (UNRWA 2013b, para.1).

Figure 4.12 shows the monthly income for 3.9% of participants was less than 1,000 Shekels (approximately US$275), for 42% of participants it was between 1,000-2,000 Shekels approximately US$275-550), for 27% of participants it was between 2001-3,000 Shekels per month (approximately US$550-800), for 13% of participants it was between 3,001-4,000 (approximately US$800-1,100) Shekels, and 13.9% of participants had a monthly income of more than 4,000 Shekels (above US$1,100). Wages for employed Palestinians continue to decline, and official figures show 25 percent of Palestinians currently live in poverty (World Bank 2015). Moreover, the UNRWA reported in 2016 that 487,500 refugees live below the abject-poverty line

and that almost one million Palestinian refugees are dependent on food assistance (UNRWA 2016).

4.3.8 Profile of UNRWA services and assistance

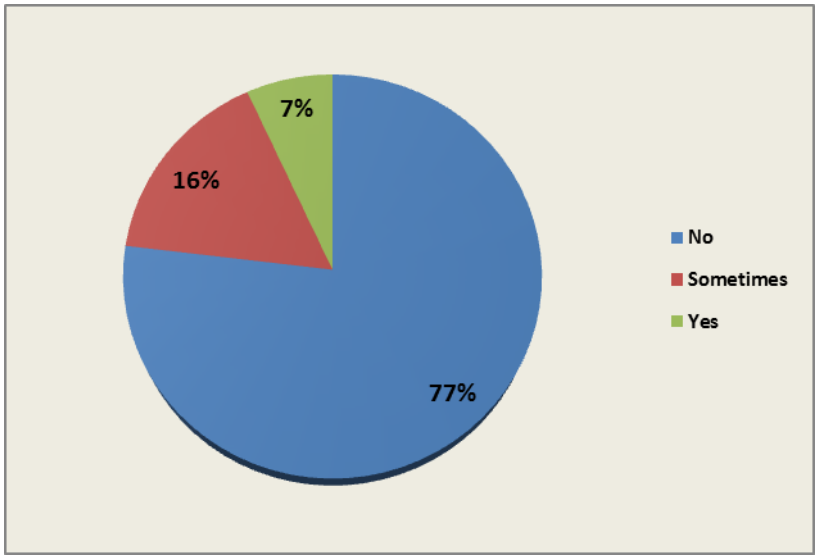
UNRWA services were never deployed as a way to compensate Palestinian refugees for the loss of their homes or for the loss of mothers or brothers who disappeared during the Exodus. UNRWA was established by the international community and commenced the provision of services to Palestinians refugees in the immediate wake of the mass displacement of Palestinians. We should note at this point that there remains a variety of views about the motivation underpinning the provision of services and the adequacy of the services themselves. Certainly, some Palestinian refugees considered UNRWA to be part of the problem (See Chapter 9 for more details). Irrespective of different views and positions, the intervention by the agency is proof of the effects of Al Nakba and the need at times for refugees to be supported in difficult circumstances. Since the mid-1990s, however, there has been a gradual phase-out of UNRWA support services in refugee camps, with those services replaced by services managed by the PA. This reflects the changing political landscape in the region; an important area of focus in this study. Indeed, specific focus is given in this research investigation to the phase out of UNRWA services across the five West Bank refugee camps in its attempt to update our understanding of Palestinian refugees' perspectives of the right of return.

The UNRWA for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was established in December 1949. As is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, the agency is a relief and human development agency originally intended to provide jobs on public works projects and direct relief for Palestinian who fled or were expelled from Palestine in 1948. Today it provides education (primary school level and secondary school level up to Year 9, only), health care, social services and emergency aid to approximately 5 million Palestinian refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars and their descendants. The agency operates in five fields that include Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, as well as those in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (UNRWA operations are discussed in more detail in Chapter nine).

The phase-out of UNRWA services in recent years has impacted the provision of health services and social services in particular. For instance, for more than 60 years UNRWA provided comprehensive health care services to Palestinian refugees. Today, however, it is far more difficult for refugees to access many healthcare services leading many refugees to self-fund or seek support from the PA when confronted with major health issues (BADIL 2015). Similarly, for many years UNRWA ensured access to all Palestinian refugees to monthly food provision, whereas food provisions today are provided by UNRWA only to Palestinian refugees who "are unable to meet their basic food needs" (UNRWA 2016,p.1).

Hence, UNRWA services are today primarily linked to the provision of special benefits to Palestinian refugees in most need through emergency and social safety net programs (UNRWA 2016). In light of this the survey instrument in this study included an item for data collection to determine the distribution of Palestinian refugees in receipt of special benefits from UNRWA.

Figure 4.14: Sample distribution by receipt of special benefits from UNRWA in surveyed camps, 2013, %.

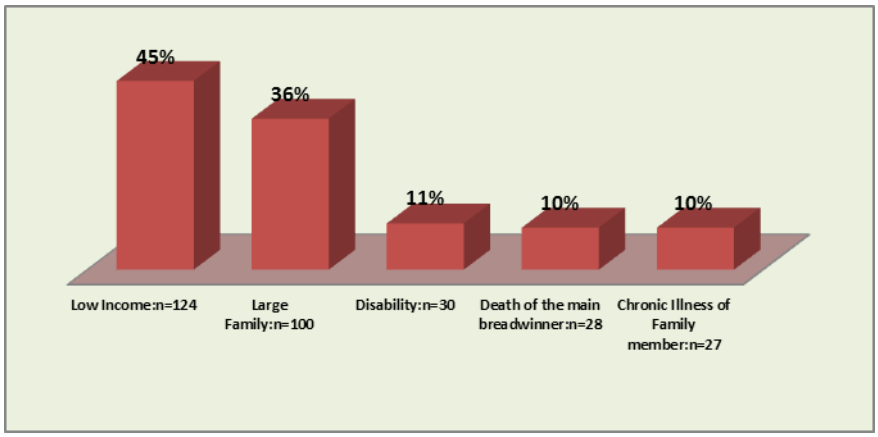


Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,200

Figure 4.14 shows participant distribution according to receipt of special benefits from UNRWA. As indicated, 77% of participants reported they were not in receipt of benefits from the UNRWA, 16% were sometimes in receipt of services, and 7%

reported they received special benefits only (e.g. one-off access to health care or receipt of a food voucher, etc.) from the agency.

Figure 4.15:Sample distribution by primary reasons for receiving special benefits from UNRWA in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,200

Figure 4.15 clarifies participant distributions according to the primary reason for receipt of special benefits from UNRWA ranked in descending order. It shows the order as low income (45%), large family (36%), disabled family members (11%), death of the main breadwinner (10%), and chronic illness of a family member (10%).

4.3.9 Religious practices

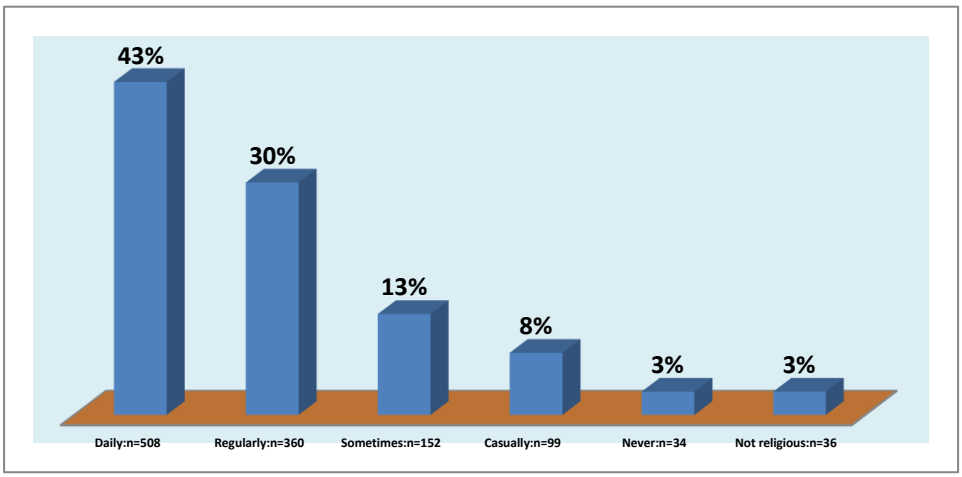
Prior the expulsion in 1948, the overwhelming majority of the population of Palestine was Sunni Muslim (Al-Kayyali 1999, p.38), with minority groups including Christians, Druze and Shiite Muslims, all of whom spoke Arabic (Said 2001, p. 236; McCarthy 1988, p. 10). All groups were living in villages and depended on agriculture and farming animal for their income and daily living provisions (Pappe 2004). Presently, Palestinians residing in refugee camps in the West Bank are mostly Muslims (Shehabi et al. 2016). Of course, Christian Palestinians were also displaced during 1948 and 1967. However, they do not generally reside in refugee camps in the West Bank, having resettled instead in the major cities in Palestine and host locations (Sabella 1996).

In term of religious establishments, there are mosques in the refugee camps as well as charity organisations. Mosques are managed according to Palestinian law. To explain, the PA and the Hamas government in Gaza unquestionably bear a duty to uphold religious freedom within the territory. Notably, a number of sensitive religious sites in the occupied territories are not under PA control, including all of the holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem, the Ibrahimi Mosque (Tomb of the Patriarchs) in Hebron, and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem (Shehabi et al. 2016).

The rationale for including a question in the survey instrument on the religious practices of the participants was based on the belief that religion is a relevant demographic characteristic to consider and because of centrality to the PIC. Religion is commonly linked in the literature to other constructs including self-identity and national identity (Mitchell 2017). If, as Mitchell claims, that both the Palestinians and the Israelis "have incorporated religion in their respective national identity and approach to the conflict" (p. 2), then profiling and attempting to understand the extent of the religiosity of the study sample is important for two outcomes. First, the results can help to inform the interpretation of the findings related to Palestinians' views the rights of return claim and its component parts. Second, they can be a factor for consideration in the discussion of the extent to which the right of return may still be considered to be 'sacred' among Palestinian refugees.

Figure 4.16 reports the level at which the surveyed participants practice their religions. It shows that 43 percent of participants engaged in religious practices on a daily basis, and that 30 percent of participants considered themselves to be regular worshippers (on most, but not all days of the week). Conversely, only 3 percent of participants indicated they were not religious, with a further 3 percent reporting that they were religious, but did not actively practice their religion.

Figure 4.16: Sample of Palestinian refugee religious practices in surveyed camps, 2013, %.



Source: Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,189

Religious practices among refugees and Palestinians in general are similar to most Arab states, for instance, the obligation to pray, to pay zakat etc. However, one could argue that there is special connection between religiosity and the liberation movement in Palestine. Vicente Pèrez (2014) argues that Islam has been intertwined with Palestinian nationalism in ways that have privileged particular ideas about the national homeland and fight for liberation. While many suggest that Islamist politics is incompatible with nationalism, Vicente Perez argues that Hamas and its supporters have yet to abandon the framework of nationalism despite tension between both concepts. This thesis accepts the notion that religion can play a role in nationalism as evidenced in the Islamist and secular parties' aims to liberate Palestinian land and to defend the right of Palestinians. Moreover, the 'sacred' overtones in this relationship are alluded to in Smith's (2000, p.795) claim that 'religious traditions, and especially beliefs about the sacred, underpin and suffuse to a greater or lesser degree the national identities of the populations of constituent states'.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided a snap-shot of the socio-demographic characteristics of Palestinian refugees living in five refugee camps located in the West Bank. The socio-demographic variables included age, gender, political affiliation, income, profession, generation of expulsion, area of expulsion, level of education attained, housing

situation, and receipt of UNRWA services. Importantly, the survey results related to living conditions were compared to other available data to draw attention to the extent to which they may have deteriorated (or improved) over time. In terms of the study population, the results show participants are generally poor, but well educated, relatively balanced in terms of no political affiliation compared to acknowledged political affiliation, young and relatively religious. The key differences between the demographics of the survey population and the broader population of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank are related to the larger representation of younger aged participants and those with a tertiary education qualification. There may also be a difference between the results for Palestinian refugees reporting 'no political affiliation', however, this is difficult to verify given the lack of available population-wide data due to the sensitivity of the issue. Thus, the representativeness of the study sample to the broader refugee population in the West Bank is reflected to a greater extent in some demographic areas than in others, and is subsequently addressed at times in the discussion of the results.

As discussed in the subsequent chapters, the demographic characteristics of the sample including the camp conditions proves important to the findings later reported in this study. For instance, the relationship between refugee demographic characteristics and camp living conditions has shaped the importance the surveyed refugees placed on compensation (discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.4); camp redevelopment options versus the right of return claim (discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.6); and the perceived need for UNRWA to continue to have a role in improving camp conditions (Chapter 8, Section 8.5.1) Hence, this snap-shot of the demographic characteristics provides a description of the refugee participants and their refugee experience. This proved useful to the exploration and interpretation of Palestinian refugees' current views of the right of return presented in the following chapter.

5 RIGHT OF RETURN (*HAQ AL-AWDA*)

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the demographic characteristics of Palestinian refugees in the surveyed camps. The main findings were that the sample represented a relative balance between the genders and that most participants were aged between 18 and 35 years; most reported non-political affiliation, and of those that did indicate an affiliation, the highest percentage was for the Fatah movement; older participants originated from Palestine prior to1948; most had received higher-level education and were employed; and that the majority of participants engaged in religious practices daily or regularly. In addition, the chapter discussed the impact of the camp conditions on refugee attitudes towards the right of return, compensation and resettlement. What was made apparent is that camp conditions continue to be a significant reminder of refugees' Exodus. Moreover, despite harsh living conditions, this was seemingly not perceived by Palestinian refugees to be a deterrent to their pursing a return to their original homes in Palestine prior 1948.

To build upon the insights gleaned about the participants' demographic characteristics, this chapter aims to elucidate Palestinian refugees' current views of the right of return after many decades of displacement in order to answer the main research question as well as research sub-question 1. This is important to lay the foundation for an in-depth discussion of other dimensions of the right of return including compensation, resettlement, and the phase out of UNRWA in the following chapters. A salient point of interest in this thesis is whether refugees' current level of commitment to the right of return claim, including their willingness to support an alternative outcome, reflects our understanding of the historical, intergenerational and legal bases of the claim. Different experiences of displacement, occupation and the changing political dynamics in the region have implications for the way in which different generations of Palestinian refugee view the right of return. For older aged refugees, the right of return is arguably tied to their expulsion and its consequences. For the descendants of these refugees however – some as young as 18 years of age, it

may be that the right of return is understood in relation to different factors more representative of their own life experiences. As such, there are potential implications to explore regarding the extent to which the right of return remains a central claim among all Palestinian refugees; that is, the extent if their commitment to the claim and subsequent willingness to support an alternative outcome.

Ben Gurion, the first Israeli Prime Minister, alludes to these implications in his statement, "*The old will die and the young will forget*" in reference to Palestinian refugees (Nabulsi 2006). This provocative assertion provides a useful platform from which to explore current Palestinian refugees' perspectives of the right of return claim. In addition, the extent to which the right of return remains a central claim among Palestinian refugees provides further scope to contemplate its 'sacredness', 'legality', and 'possibility' (Abu Sitta 1999) in the refugee narrative passed to from one generation to the next.

Ben Gurion's statement frames my initial discussion of the right of return. Specifically, the discussion is comprised of three interrelated themes: historical claims, intergenerational narratives, and legal frameworks (contextualised around international law), each of which was used to inform the wording of the survey questions on the right of return. To clarify, the two survey items reported and discussed in this chapter pertain to the participants' commitment to the right of return claim and their preparedness to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the return. This thesis asserts that the notions of 'commitment' and 'willingness to accept an alternative in relation to the right of return claim are linked to historical, intergenerational and legal elements in the sense that they may shape these outcomes.

In terms of chapter structure, a discussion of right of return as an historical claim by Palestinian refugees is first undertaken which includes the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland in 1948 and the debate over who is held responsible for this expulsion. This is followed by an exploration of intergenerational narratives, which have embedded in them notion of commitment to the right of return into the future. Particular focus is given in this section how memories of older-aged Palestinian refugees are passed onto following generations, and each age-group's perception of right of return as contextualised within sacredness and legal paradigms, as well as its

practical application. The discussion is supported by relevant historical and political context and their implications. The 'legality' of the right of return claim as expressed in Resolution 194 is then discussed to also contribute to our understanding of the contextual factors that may influence participants' view of the right. It is worth mentioning that the survey instrument in this study included 26 questions on the right of return and associated UN resolutions. Collectively, the questions canvassed participants' views on political representation for negotiating the right of return, how realisation of the right would impact Israel, who is responsible for the refugee problem of 1948, the right of refugees to stay living in the camps if they choose to do so, and others. The analysis of the data generated through 26 questions produced some interesting results related to refugees' views of diverse and at times quite specific aspects of the right of return claim. For instance, they revealed an unwillingness of many participants to accept the PLO as the chief negotiator of the right of return on their behalf; the view that many participants blame Israel for the 1948 Exodus and thus the need for the right of return claim.

However, given that thesis has the primary objective to examine refugees' current views of the right of return claim and its relate elements (compensation etc.), the data deemed most useful to produce valuable insights into the right of return question were those related to the level of commitment to the right of return indicated by the participating refugees along with their views of possible alternative outcomes. For this reason, only the results for two of the 26 questions are presented and discussed in detail in this chapter; that is, the two to provide the most useful data into these two aspects and thus support a more targeted and robust answer to the main research question. This approach also leaves open the opportunity to explore other dimensions of Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return in subsequent publications post completion of this thesis. Details of the survey questionnaire and fieldwork are discussed in the Methodology chapter (see Appendixes 1 for the English copy of the questionnaire).

5.2 Right of return as a historical claim: Conflicting perspectives of Al Nakba

Seventy years after the 1948 Exodus the refugee problem and its consequences continue to be narrated, often from polarised perspectives. Central to the narrated consequences is the claim by Palestinian refugees that they have endured and continue

to endure deliberate expulsion from their homeland at the hands of the Zionists. This raises questions as to whether the claim remains a living memory in the minds of refugees as well as in their practices and political debates. Although many years have passed and the landscape of Palestine has changed, few would deny that the right of return claim continues to transition from one generation to the next. Of interest, therefore, is whether there are discernible changes in the views of the right of return claim held by refugees of different ages, genders, education levels etc. along with their views of how the refugee question may be resolved.

In support of the primary objective of this thesis to explore the differences in views amongst Palestinians of the right of return claim, the following section further explores the opinions related to the causes of the Palestinian Exodus in 1948. It is noted that Sections 2.3 and 2.5 of the Literature Review focused on the question of blame for Al Nakba as discussed in both the general and research literature. The following sections aim to build on this discussion by providing a more detailed context for refugee views on the right of return and the nature of the ongoing contestation of that view. By adding to our understanding of the two narratives surrounding the historical claim of *Al Nakba*, further elucidation of the context for the survey questions on Palestinian refugees' commitment to the right of return or willingness to accept an alternative outcome is provided.

5.2.1 Israel to blame for Al Nakba

The context for refugee views of the right of return is established to a large extent around the belief that the 1948 Palestinian Exodus was primarily planned and created by the Zionist movement with the aim to colonise Palestine (Zayed 2013). As such, the Zionist movement – and later Israel more broadly – has been blamed for the creation of the refugee problem, and the Palestinian insistence on this position is not a unique one (Wright 1989). The rationale underpinning the colonisation motif is arguably captured in the 1917 statement from Zionist thinker, Leo Motzkin (cited in Pappe 2006):

> *Our thought is that the colonization of Palestine has to go in two directions: Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel and the resettlement of the Arab of Eretz Israel in an area outside the country. The transfer of so many Arabs may seem at first unacceptable economically, but is nonetheless practical. It does not require too much money to resettle a Palestinian village on another land.*

Colonisation is firmly embedded in the theory of Orientalism and the notion held by the West (Europe) that its (self-proclaimed) superiority afforded it the authority to advance its own interests over the interests of the so-called inferior 'Other' (Said 2003). As such, Palestinians may draw a connection between Motzkin's 'thoughts' about the 'excluded presence' (Said 1979 p. 29) of Palestinians – their expulsion from Palestine – and the subsequent actions of Israel when assigning blame for Al Nakba. The position held by some Palestinians may also be explained by the policy of forced population transfer and ethnic cleansing exercised by the Zionist movement and the state of Israel (Kanaana 2000). As stated by Pappe (2006, p. 11), the Zionist movement considered Palestine an empty land and the native Palestinians who lived there as invisible people.

Walid Khalidi (1988) also posited that Arab inhabitants tried to defend their land right up to March 1948 as Zionist forces intensified their tactics and subjected Palestine to a series of operations known as "Plan Dalet": the Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine (Khalidi 1988). As previously mentioned, this contrasts with the view maintained by Israeli officials that Arab inhabitant left Palestine on orders from the Arab leaders (Khalidi 1999).

The position assigning blame to Israel for Al Nakba can also be explained through reference to statements by Ben Gurion. For instance, in October 1948, Ben Gurion made the provocative claim that "The Arabs of Eretz Israel have but one function left, to run away" (Morris 1987, p. 89). As founder of the transfer policy, Ben Gurion always claimed there was no place for Palestinians in the state of Israel. The aggressive approach endorsed by Ben Gurion was further evident when he stated: "We should prevent Arab return at any cost" (Masalha 1992, pp. 191-192). These statements calling for the removal of all Palestinians from Palestine and the re-distribution of their land and property among the newly arrived Jews (Abu Sitta 2001) are significant to the position that Israel is to blame for *Al Nakba*. For instance, Peres in 1993 continued to deny Palestinian refugees' their right of return by arguing that the 'disappearance' of the Palestinian towns and villages made it difficult to re-establish them to their former state.

In terms of how potential disagreements that might shape changing refugee attitudes towards the right of return, Orientalist notions that point to colonialist convictions of

superiority and the related dynamics of occupation in which Indigenous populations are subjected to subordination and potential elimination (Lloyd 2012) may come into play. Kanaana (2000) argued that the expulsion of Palestinians and the de-Arabization of the country was not an historical accident or due to the weakness of Arabs. Rather, it was a consequence of Zionist ideology that called for the establishment of a wholly and exclusively Jewish State. This reflects Pappe's (2006) assertion that the aim of the expulsion was to cause the evacuation of as many Palestinian residents as possible. It also supports the claim from Finkelstein (2008, p. xii) that the evacuation of refugees included indiscriminate massacres against the civilian Arab community.

Said (2003, p. 22) argued that Moshe Dayan, Israel's Major General commander during the Exodus, affirmed Israel's role in creating the refugee problem through his statements such as: "There is no place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population" and "We took them by force, do not forget that". In addition, there is the view that successive Israeli governments have accepted no responsibility for what happened to Palestinians in and after 1948 (Said 2003, p. 32). According to Said, the Israelis used the same propaganda claims that Palestinians left due to the demands of Arab leaders (2003, p. 32).

5.2.2 Palestinians to blame for Al Nakba

The contestation of the view that Israel is to blame for Al Nakba is that Palestinians themselves are responsible (i.e. to blame) for their movement out of Palestine in 1948. For instance, many Israeli officials and scholars since 1948 have continued to claim that Palestinians left Palestine of their own accord. Such claims are based on several different assertions including that Palestinians and Arab states refused to accept the partition plan (UN Resolution 181) and instead decided to wage a war against Jewish forces (Carew-Miller 2014), and that Palestinians were ordered by Arab leaders to leave Palestine with the expectation they would return following their victory (Shlaim 1999, p. 149). Although these positions are claimed by some to do little more than to blame the victims (e.g., Said 2001) they nonetheless have some support. In terms of the latter assertion, Theodor Herzl (cited in Kanaana 2000), founder of the Zionist movement in Israel, has claimed that Arab leaders and Palestinians are both to blame for the current Palestinian's refugee problem. That is, the event of 1948 would not

have occurred if the Arab armies and leaders did not get involved (Kanaana 2000; Finkelstein 2008).

Shimon Peres (1993), the former Prime Minister of Israel, also stated that Arabs living in the region fled their homes before the establishment of Israeli institutions and the Israeli Defence Force, particularly. He claimed the Arab states within the region were the main reason for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. Peres further argued that the claims made by Arab states to the contrary were untrue and therefore Israeli troops did not force Palestinians from their homes (Peres 1993). In his book *The New Middle East,* Peres (1993) attempted to shift blame for the evacuation and its consequences onto Arab states and their leaders, and even onto the victims for continuing to flee their homes despite having witnessed or heard about the ongoing systemic massacres. According to his account, Arab leaders failed to host the Palestinian refugees and offer them a permanent home as Israel had done when it absorbed Jewish war refugees.

The claims discussed above that Palestinians are to blame for Al Nakba were considered when formulating the survey items for data collection. This perspective arguably provides a mechanism to Israel which frees it from having to accept responsibility for any of the consequences of *Al Nakba*, which in turn, may influence refugee attitudes towards the right of return claim.

Thus, the many complexities surrounding Al Nakba and its causes mean it may not be as simple as choosing between Israel and Palestinians. Nonetheless, disagreements over the 'blame' for Al Nakba have the potential to shape changing refugee attitudes towards the right of return. With this in mind, the following section explores how the relationship between the Palestinian refugee narrative throughout the generations and the right of return claim.

5.3 Right of return as an inter-generational narrative

The intergenerational narrative of the Palestinian refugee comprises the second element of right of return. This thesis suggests there are **two** reasons why refugees continue to preserve this historical claim irrespective of their age. First is the ongoing occupation of Palestine, which remains a constant reminder of denial of homeland. As a result, all age groups maintain a collective desire to return to their homeland. The

underlying assumption here is oppression preserves a sense of collective identity (Pierce 2012). The second reason is that older refugees have consciously and actively passed on the *Haq Al-Awda* narrative to preserve among younger refugees a commitment to a Palestinian homeland.

This narrative carries a moral obligation for younger refugees particularly to liberate Palestine. Arguably, it represents the notion of sacredness suggested by Abu Sitta when alluding to relationship between the Palestinian refugee and the right of return. To explain, Durkheim (2008) posits that sacredness originates from humanity's experience of moral authority whereby people feel that the moral truths which they perceive exist outside the self are more worthy than personal preferences. However, the right of return is fundamentally a territorial claim in the Palestinian refugee struggle built around the idea of a return to one's original Palestinian 'home'. As such, the practical realities of right of return have been impacted by physical changes to landscape of Palestine and shifts in political objectives.

5.3.1 Ongoing Al Nakba: Ongoing Occupation

The difficult living conditions experienced by all Palestinian refugees due to ongoing occupation serves to be a strong reminder of the Exodus. Palestinian refugees around the world are prevented from returning to Palestine by the occupying power (BADIL 2011). In turn, there is compelling evidence in the literature that they feel disconnected from their loved ones and that family reunifications are virtually impossible because of ongoing displacement caused and maintained by the same occupying power (BADIL 2011). Kunz (1981, p. 46) argues however that 'refugees rarely remain consumed about their homes and past unless they are irrevocably broken by trials in the host countries'. This thesis agrees with Kunz on this point and stresses the need to better understand how being permanently subjected to occupation and harsh living conditions in the West Bank influences these Palestinian refugees' views of the past, and consequently, their commitment to the right of return.

Embedded in the refugee narrative is the claim that Al Nakba has not ended, given that Israel continues to control both the displacement of Palestinian refugees and their opportunities for resettlement (Saloul 2012). Moreover, writers have described the impact of Al Nakba on some refugees as traumatic given the lost sense of belonging

and connection to the land. For instance, Mohatt et al. (2014) described how the historical trauma may be given a *narrative representation* in the way it connects histories of group-experienced traumatic events to present day experiences and contexts, including the contemporary health of a group or community.

A person need only visit any one of the refugee camps to witness the deplorable conditions and thus understand how the oppression and displacement of refugees helps to sustain the Al Nakba narrative. For me, as a third-generation refugee, Al Nakba is an ongoing narrative that tells of the destruction of Palestine and the displacement of my parents and grandparents, and thousands of other Palestinians. I have never seen my village, but through the stories of my parents and other elderly people from the refugee camps, I have come to know its landscape, borders, lifestyle and people.

As one young refugee from the West Bank wrote in *Our Voice: Refugee Youth Magazine* (2010); "Al Nakba *is what our grandparents lived through, but it is also what we live through today".* This sentiment very much matches the work of Mahmoud Darwish (2012), affirming young people connect to the land through their parents' and grandparents' narratives. He writes:

> *We are the grandchildren of the beginning*
> *We are the descendants of the beginning*
> *We only see the beginning* (Darwish 2012, p. 29)

5.3.2 Inter-generational narratives and the moral commitment to right of return

If Abu Sitta's characterisation of the right of return as 'sacred' to Palestinian refugees is valid, it must surely rely on the moral commitment and responsibility of Palestinians to historical Palestine to be reaffirmed from one generation to the next. It is relatively well established that older-aged refugees, particularly (also referred to as the 'catastrophe' generation) find it hard to accept any push for assimilation imposed upon them by host societies (Abu Ramadan 2011, p. 15). Furthermore, Farah (2015) has asserted that the vocalisation of this refusal to assimilate by older refugees in turn helps younger refugees to connect to the Palestinian identity and enforces a moral commitment from them to liberate Palestine and so restore Palestinian dignity.

There are also many real-world examples of how the Palestinian connection to homeland continues to be a part of the refugee narrative and which arguably reflect the notion of sacredness associated with the right of return. Older refugees for instance traditionally leave their land titles to family members and many continue to carry the original keys to their homes. In fact, Chapter 8 discusses the findings that the impact from the loss of their homes is a significant reason why many older refugees reject propositions to resettle in other homes, irrespective of their design (for further details see Section 8.6). Furthermore, most older refugees constantly reminisce about living in their homes in Palestine and, as a Palestinian refugee, I understand that it is this living memory that contributes to what they see as the uniqueness of their identity. When one considers that physical objects can become imbued with the power of the collectiveness, thereby emerging as sacred and serving as a strong physical social presence (Durkheim 2008), the actions of refugees to use their physical objects in this way is reflects a degree of sacredness. Moreover, the fact that many refugees hold onto symbolic objects representing their home may be regarded as a way for them to validate their claim and connection to the land; that is, to say that Palestine had its people and was not an empty land as Zionists claim (see Chapter Two).

In addition, symbols of unity are a dominant motif in novels, poetry and films, and national songs continue to include references to home and to a return to pre-1948 Palestine. Calls for the liberation of Palestine and Arab nationalism are also commonly given creative expression (e.g. I did not forget the home of my parents and I will return to my homeland by Abu Arab).

This longing to return to homeland can reasonably be described as being akin to a will and testament (reflective of Abu Sitta's notion of sacred) for many older-aged refugees; and an obligation which is potentially passed down from one generation to the next. As poetically described by Hassan Almrani; "*don't give up the key … don't die in the bed of exile … there is a new Nazis came from far away to sleep in your bed"*. This poetic cry reaffirms the message to refugees of all ages that right of return is everyone's responsibility and calls upon them to remain committed to its realisation. The implication is that the narrative of return among Palestinian refugees of all ages has a consistent meaning; namely, the physical return to their land and towns and not to alternative locations decided by others. In turn, any actions by

younger refugees which compromise this outcome may be viewed as a serious betrayal of their duty to Palestine.

This discussion provides a useful platform to explore the extent to which the moral commitment to the restoration and liberation of Palestine remains strong among Palestinian refugees when asked about their views of right of return – thus also reflecting its continued sacredness. Specifically, the refugees' current views of right of return and their commitment to it may be better understood by exploring whether they would agree to a peace deal that did not include the right of return provision, the extent to which they regard remaining living in the refugee camps as a national duty, and how committed they remain to Resolution 194 as the pathway for return.

Interestingly, an expression of the sacredness and moral obligation to return to Palestine pre-1948 occurred during the data gathering process. One participant wrote on the back of his survey form: "We are going back to our village, if we don't make it, our children and grandchildren will … we will not accept less no matter how long we stay in the camps". It is declarations such as this that appear to present a clear challenge to the legitimacy of Ben Gurion's claim that the "young will forget" and which add further weight to the need to investigate the extent to which the right of return to Palestine before 1948 still resides in the minds of most refugees.

Importantly, the examination of the Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return in this study – and the subsequent assumption it makes about the extent to which it remains sacred – is predicated on the understanding that most refugees are aware that the reality they knew of Palestine pre-1948 ended with *Al Nakba.* Indeed, Palestinians know that their homes no longer physically exist, but the keys and other objects connected to their homes remain as symbols of their determination to pursue their right of return. As my mother said, "When I return I will build a door to fit the key". Arguably, this has important implications for younger refugees particularly and their understanding of right of return (and perhaps even its sacredness), having known no other life than what they have experienced in refugee camps. As stated by an elderly participant in a study of refugee narratives conducted in the West Bank by Lajee Centre in 2010:

> *The new generation should not surrender to Israeli occupation, and must remain advocates for their right of return. When they grow up, they should not*

forget their stolen rights since the Nakba. They should teach their children as they learned from us about their villages, and about the Nakba, so the right of return will stay rooted in the depths of generations to come.

In short, this thesis aims to add a quantitative understanding to the sense of moral obligation to a return to Palestine alluded to in the statement above by including items in the survey instrument which examine refugees' current commitment to right of return. Given the right of return takes on different forms in the narratives of refugees, one may ask whether a commitment to the right of return manifests as an inherited generational obligation to a return to the "*land"* of Palestine before 1948. The realisation of the right of return for Palestinian refugees outside of their intergenerational narratives is tied to Resolution 194 as a legal right enshrined in several UN resolutions and international human rights instruments, most notably UN Resolution 194. The survey of participants then attempts to further examine the link between the history of, and politics around, the right of return claim as it is represented in Resolution 194 by investigating their commitment to the Resolution and whether they believed it was possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include Resolution 194 as an outcome.

5.4 Right of return as a legal claim

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, this researcher's conceptualisation of the right of return claim is based upon three interrelated elements: historical claims, intergenerational narratives, and the legal claim as manifest in Resolution 194. Discussion of the right of return as a legal claim follows the discussion of the other two elements because, unlike these two elements, the legal claim is ostensibly an external aspect of the right of return granted to, rather than generated by, the Palestinian refugees. Several references have been made in this to Abu Sitta's (2001) assertion of the right of return as a legal right; a position anchored in several UN resolutions, particularly UNGA resolution 194 as the focus point of this study. Through this resolution, the right of return is framed as a question of human rights and human dignity for the Palestinian refugees (Bracka 2005). As such, this thesis seeks further insights into the ways in which the "sacred" and the "legal" is associated with Palestinian refugees view of the right of return and thus must be protected under international law (Abu Sitta 2001). Interestingly, Joas (2013) draws a connection

between the sacred and the legal in international law in the context of preserving human rights and human dignity. As explained by the author, one's belief in human rights and universal human dignity emerges from the process of sacralisation in which the view that every human being is sacred is institutionalised in law.

UN Resolution 194 is a protective mechanism with the overarching objective to legitimise the Palestinian people's right of return in the eyes of the international community. The Resolution grants a legal right to Palestinian refugees and their descendants to settle in Israel and to reclaim the homes and land occupied by Israel in 1948 (Richter-Devroe2012). The need for a legal claim is warranted given the generally accepted claims from human rights agencies that the displacement of Palestinians in 1948 was illegal because the principles of humanitarian law prohibit the transfer of civilian populations to the control of an occupier (Akram 2001). The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1948 also gave explicit provisions affirming the right of return to persons forced from their homes by hostilities (Akram 2001). Clearly, the right of return is interpreted as an overarching legal right granted to Palestinian refugees through international institutions via human rights law. In turn, it was important for the survey instrument in this study to include a question seeking indications from the participants as to their level of commitment to Resolution 194 as the pathway towards their return to Palestine.

5.5 Survey questions on the right of return

The comprehensive discussion of the legal claim surrounding the Palestinian refugee right of return provided above (see Section 5.4 and Section 2.3.1) affirmed that Palestinian refugees have the legal right under international law to return to their home regardless if they left their country on their own volition or against their will (Lawland 1996; Rampel 2009). This has implications for a resolution to the refugee question via implementation of international law – specifically Resolution 194 (Boyle 2011) and gives rise to considerations of whether the legal claim influences refugees' commitment to the right of return claim or preparedness to accept alternative outcomes. Moreover, previous discussions of the historical claim to this right (see Section 2.5.2 and Section 5.2) and the role of intergenerational narratives (see Section 2.4 and Section 5.3) in shaping the sacredness of the claim similarly give rise to considerations about refugees' commitment to the right of return outcome. Therefore,

the survey instrument applied in this study included two items specifically focusing on the right of return claim. Each item is described and explained below, but they essentially combine to access the refugee participants' level of commitment to Resolution 194 and their willingness to accept an outcome that does not include the right of return.

5.5.1 Refugee commitment to Resolution 194 and right of return

Resolution 194 is understood by refugees to be central to their right of return claim. The strength of this association has in turn been explicitly illustrated in diverse ways including references to the Resolution in graffiti on camp walls as well as through the dissemination of leaflets which attest to the Resolution as a legal claim. Indeed, as Bracka (2005) points out, the Resolution is expressed by many Palestinian refugees as an affirmation of their right of return. As such, the failure to action Resolution 194 may arguably be considered a demonstration of non-compliance to international law by the international community and a denial of Palestinian refugees their right of return.

Given the many years of displacement endured by all refugees and the failure of the international community to action Resolution 194, questions may reasonably be asked as to the extent to which refugees remain committed to the Resolution as a solution. In this sense, a strong commitment to Resolution 194 would suggest the right of return retains its sacredness among refugee; whereas one might also reasonably argue that a weak level of commitment to Resolution 194 implies a diminishment in the sacredness with which the right is held.

The following section reports and discusses the results for the two survey items pertaining to the Palestinian refugees' level of commitment to the right of return as defined in Resolution 194. The first item included in the survey of participants was:

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

I am committed to the right of return as it is recommended in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194.

The participants' commitment to the right of return as articulated in Resolution 194 is analysed according to four variables of interest: age, gender, political affiliation, and income.

This researcher-developed question also emerged from the recognition that right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes is linked in the literature to international law and natural justice (Akram 2001). However, there are clear difficulties involved in implementing this right as it is expressed in Resolution 194 given the realities on the ground since 1948 (Swisher 2011). Furthermore, the work of Abu Sitta and his assertion of the sacredness of the right of return to Palestinian refugees was considered. Abu Sitta's assertion of the possibility of the right of return in logistical terms was previously established. However, even if the right of return is a logistical possibility, if Palestinian refugees are not committed to Resolution 194 as the pathway to a return to homeland, then both the legal and indeed the sacred nature of the right of return is questionable. Conversely, a high level of commitment to the implementation of Resolution 194 from the surveyed respondents would point to the implications of the Palestinian refugee voice being marginalised on this issue and give weight to Abu Sitta's sacredness claim.

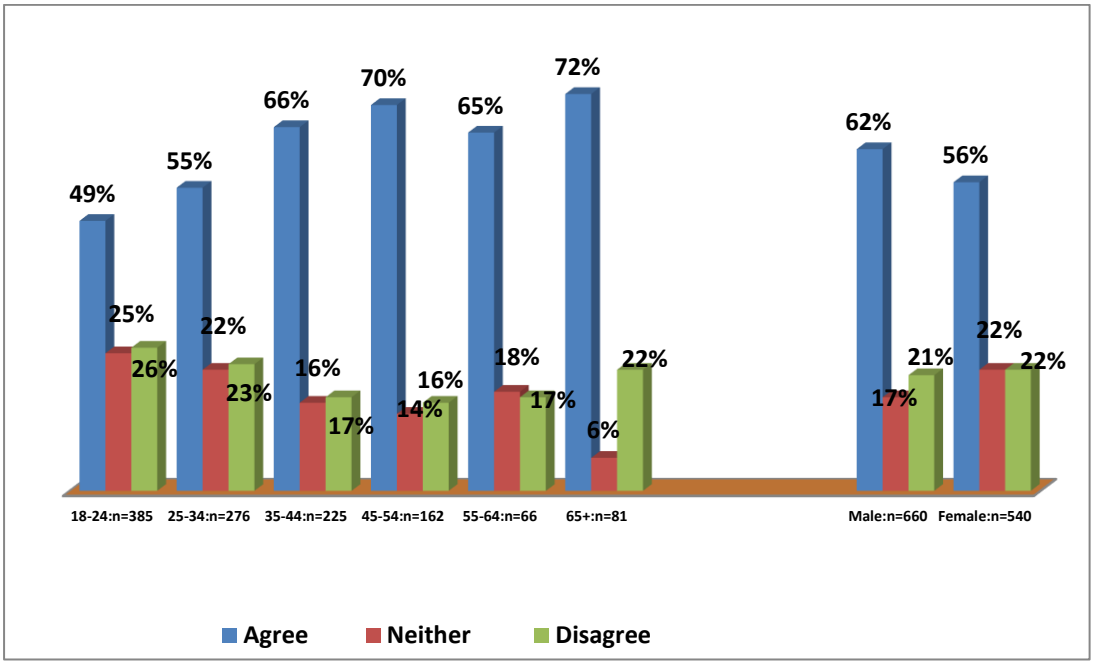
Figure 5.1 presents the results for the survey item on commitment to Resolution 194 according to age. However, when the data results are considered overall, they show that most participants (60%) indicated a commitment to the right of return as it is stated in Resolution 194, with (21%) indicating they were not committed to the realisation of the Resolution, and (19%) indicating neither commitment nor non-commitment. It is worth mentioning here that a weighted sample which corrected for the age of the population would likely demonstrate even higher support for Resolution 194. The following section breakdown the survey results according to the variables of interest.

In relation to age, the highest percentage amounts indicating agreement with the proposition were for participants aged 65+ (72%) who experienced the Exodus, followed by 70% of participants aged between 45 and 55 years. A lower percentage (49%) of younger participants aged between 18-24 years also agreed with the proposition. Assuming a random sample, these differences would be highly

significant (Gamma=0.20; p<0.01); that is, support for Resolution 194 increases with age.

Thus, it is clearly evident there is some variation in the commitment of Palestinian refugees to Resolution 194 according to age (ranging from 49% to 72%). Figure 5.1 also show the highest percentage of surveyed refugees who indicated 'disagree' to the proposition that they were committed to Resolution 194 to realise their right of return was for the 18-24 year-old age group (26%) followed by the 25-34-year-old age group (23%). Notably, this age group also recorded the highest percentage outcomes for the 'neither' option in response to the proposition at 25% and 22%, respectively indicated a less definitive opinion than many of their older counterparts.

Figure 5.1: Committed to the right of return as it is recommended in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194 according to age, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1,195

Notwithstanding this difference, the results show that a clear overall percentage of refugees consider it important to remain committed to Resolution 194 to ensure their right to return. In terms of the lower percentage of younger participants indicating a commitment to Resolution 194 compared to older participants, one possible explanation is that younger refugees have less developed political orientations at this

stage in their lives. For instance, Parry, Moyser and Day (1992) theorise that although the impulse towards political participation develops during young adulthood, it generally peaks during middle age. The results reported above may reflect this age-based political orientation trajectory and thus account for the different views of Resolution 194 by the younger participants. This explanation for the results is further supported to some extent by the number of younger participants who answered 'neither' to indicate their commitment (or not) to Resolution 194. The percentage consistently decreases across the age groups: 18- to 24-years-old through to 45-54-year-olds. This decrease in the 'neither' response is mirrored by a consistent decrease in the 'disagree' response for these age ranges.

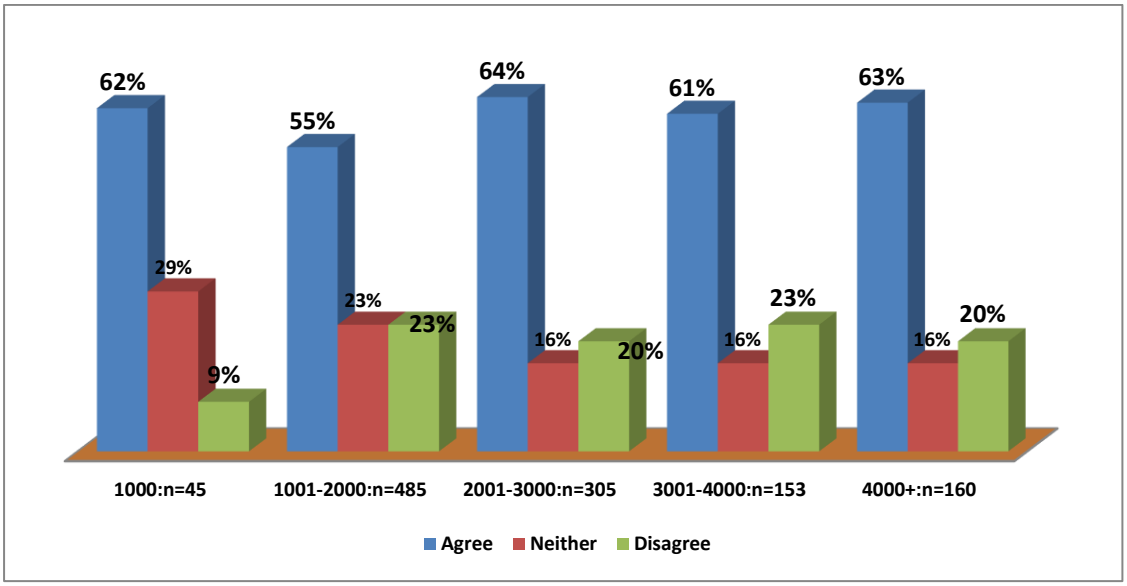
Another possible explanation for this outcome is that younger Palestinian refugees are increasingly less clear about the legal definition of Resolution 194 and its implementation potential. In contrast, the responses by older participants across most questions on this issue reflects a general trend in their being more definitive in their views of the legality of Resolution 194 and how it relates to the prospect of returning home or to living in their place of exile or displacement as permanent outcasts. However, it is also worth noting that younger aged Palestinian refugees continue to demonstrate their commitment to the right of return and arguably continue to maintain the sacredness of this right through their activism.

Figure 5.1 also shows the level of commitment among Palestinian refugees to the right of return as recommended by Resolution 194 varied according to gender. The Figure shows 62% and 56% of all surveyed male and female participants, respectively indicated 'agree' to the proposition that they were committed to Resolution 194 to realise their right of return. In terms of gender of the respondents who disagreed with the proposition, 21% of males and 22% of females indicated this position. Lastly, 17% of males and 22% of females indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposition. The relative similarity in the outcomes for each gender is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the gender-related results and arguably reinforces the notion that the right of return claim transcends any gender considerations or pressures. However, the difference in the percentage results for each gender may also indicate that "political socialization differences between men and

women have not disappeared despite female increases in resources and other forms of political activity such as voting" (Atkeson and Rapoport 2003, p.495).

Given that older aged respondents appears to be less likely than their younger counterparts to indicate uncertainty about their commitment to the right of return regarding as recommended in Resolution 194, it is worthwhile investigating whether other demographic characteristics (i.e. level of income and political affiliation) are associated with a wider range of views on this issue. Figure 5.2 presents the results for this survey item according to the income level of the participants. The range of income level among the participants was from 1,000 to 4,000+ Shekels per month. Similar to the results for gender as a variable, Figure 5.2 shows that there was relative consistency among participants in their commitment to the right of return as recommended in the UN Resolution 194 across income level. That is, the majority of participants across all income levels indicated ‘agree’ with the proposition that they were committed to the right of return as expressed in Resolution 194. The highest percentage was for the 2,001-3,000 shekel per month (64%), whereas the lowest percentage was for 1,001-2,000 shekel per month (55%). The income level to most ‘disagree’ with the proposition was those earning less than 1,000 Shekel per month (9%), whereas the level of disagreement among all other income level groups was relatively similar, ranging from 20-24%.

Figure 5.2: Commitment to the right of return as it is recommended in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194 according to level of income in Israeli Shekels, 2013, %.



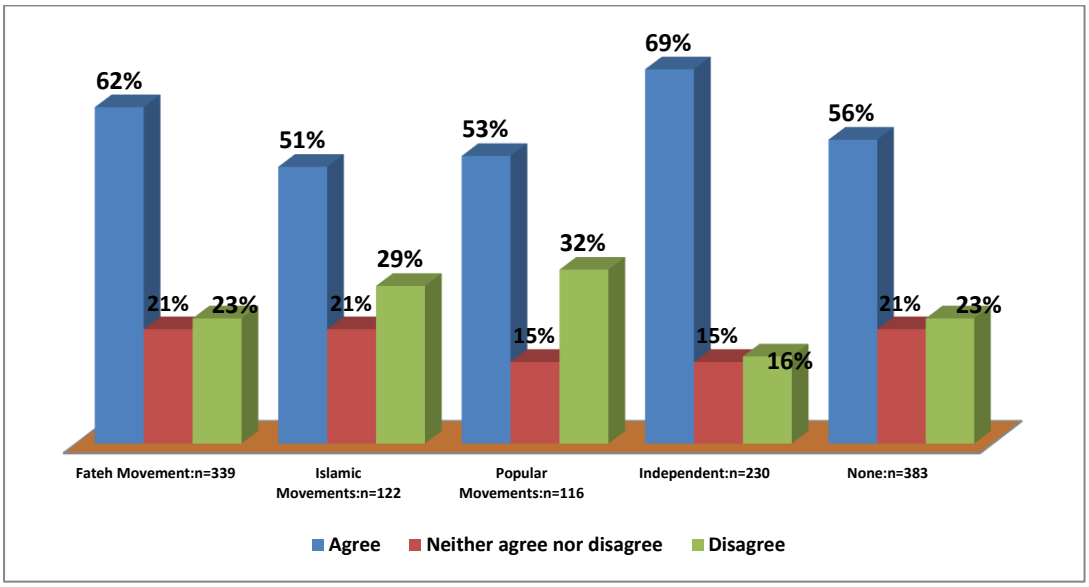
Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1,148

The relative consistency in the ‘agree’ results across all income levels suggest that the level of commitment to the right of return as stated in Resolution 194 among Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank is not correlated to the socio-economic circumstances they experience. Irrespective of their level of income, the results suggest that they continue to show commitment to the right of return. Although the extent of this commitment may be related to income level, as evidenced in the much lower percentage level for ‘disagree’ among surveyed participants earning less than 1,000 Shekels per month, caution should be demonstrated in attributing too much significance to the outcome given the very small number of participants in this income bracket. Rather, it may be that refugees at the lowest income level endure the harshest of living conditions and regard the prospect of a return to Palestine as the most likely pathway towards economic relief.

In general, these findings suggest that many refugees have not allowed socio-economic deprivation to influence their views regarding their commitment to the right of return. Indeed, it may be the case that some refugees regard their economic deprivation due to displacement and the subsequent loss of identity, social status, and disempowerment as the cornerstone to their commitment to the right of return according to Resolution 194.

In addition to level of income as an important variable for consideration when trying to gain new insights into refugees’ commitment to their right of return, their political affiliations may also influence their level of commitment given the link between political processes and the liberation of Palestine (Suleiman 1999). Like the results for each age group, the analysis of this survey item according to the respondents’ political affiliations revealed relatively inconsistent wide gap in the percentage outcomes was a range of large.

Figure 5.3: Commitment to the right of return as it is recommended in the UN General Assembly Resolution 194 according to political affiliation, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1,190

In terms of the breakdown of results according to specific political affiliations, Figure 5.3 shows the highest percentage of respondents to 'agree' with the proposition was for those who regard themselves as 'Independent' (69%), followed by those indicating affiliation to Fatah (62%). Somewhat expectedly was the relatively high percentage of surveyed participants indicating 'no political affiliation' (56%). This result may speak to the security and safety issues around refugee participation identified throughout this thesis. That is, some participants may have indicated 'none' for this question despite having some political affiliation to avoid some potential repercussion. Alternatively, the high 'none' response for political affiliation may be due to the participants' belief that there is no significant difference between the major political parties on the issue right of return (William 2006). As Zayed (2013), argues Palestinian refugees' position on right of return is more about their connection to land than about an affiliation to one particular brand of politics or another.

The Figure also shows that the lowest percentage level to indicate 'agree' was for those participants indicating affiliation with Islamic Movement such as Islamic Movements (51%) and popular parties (53%). To account for this result, it is worth considering the lack of trust Islamic Movements and popular parties hold towards the West. Although most political parties refer to the liberation of Palestine and the right

of return claim in their Charter, left wing parties in particular regard the UN as having failed Palestinians since 1948 and point to the non-binding nature of the Resolution. This may in turn be reflected in the political affiliates of these parties indicating a lower-level of commitment to the resolutions proposed by the UN.

As established in Chapter 4, most political parties articulate in their Charter that the right of return must be exercised via liberation. As stated by Suleiman (1999), the idea of return has been the primary driving force of the contemporary Palestinian militant movements. However, there are clear distinctions among the parties as to how the 'liberation' of Palestine should be achieved (Suleiman 1999). Islamic Movements (i.e. Hamas) and Popular Movements emphasise Palestine as sacred land and therefore refuse to allow any Palestine land to be compromised or conceded, irrespective of the causes, the political pressures, and the length of occupation. Leaders of the Popular Front, for instance, assert the view that what was taken by force will be returned by force only (Khouri 2005). The findings in Figure 5.3 may therefore offer a quantitative representation these views, which were expressed subjectively by Aida camp refugees in Our Voice Journal (2010,p.32); namely, that the UN is "a politicised agency which meets the wishes of the West towards blurring the Palestinian identity for refugees to end the issue of return". What also may help to explain the lower percentage level results for commitment to the right of return according to Resolution 194 among respondents affiliated to Islamic Movements and Popular Movements is that hundreds of Resolutions designed to support Palestinians have been issues by the UN without implementation, suggesting a show of support to Israel (Our Voice Journal 2010).

Considering the results reported above indicate a high level of commitment to Resolution 194 among respondents overall as well as according to the nominated variables, it is worthwhile reflecting on what they suggest about the sacredness with which the right of return claim is held. Based on these results, this thesis posits that refugees continue to reproduce the sacredness of the right of return. To clarify, the findings suggest the 'sacredness' of the claim given their commitment to Resolution 194 beyond the longevity of displacement and the inaction of the international community to deliver them this right.

The next section introduces and discusses the data results also related to sub-question 1 on the centrality of the right of return claim to Palestinian refugees. To unpack and offer some explanation to the results reported and discussed above, focus is given to the Palestinian refugees' preparedness to accept an outcome to the peace negotiations that does not realise the right of return claim.

5.5.2 Accepting an outcome that excludes the right of return

The intergenerational narratives among Palestinian refugees have the potential to shape their views about the importance of achieving right of return according to Resolution 194 in any negotiated peace agreement (Richter-Devroe 2013). As stated by Karmi (2011, par. 4), "the right of Palestinian return is enshrined in international law and historical precedent, and affirmed repeatedly by the UN Resolution 194". Given this condition, a key theme to be considered is the notion that there cannot be just peace achieved without the return of Palestinians to their homeland. As noted previously, Israel rejects the association between justice and right of return and argues such an outcome is a threat to its existence. Furthermore, western policy-makers have by and large been prepared to accept this argument, perhaps based on the view that "justice is a subjective construct [and] allowing it to become a subject of negotiation would only perpetuate the conflict" (Peled and Rouhana 2004, p. 317).

However, opposing this position is the that assertion in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights that people who leave their homes – irrespective of the reasons – are afforded the absolute right to return to their homes (1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights). These opposing positions have implications for the relationship between the intergenerational narratives of refugees and the right of return given the claim in this thesis that return to homeland is essentially a sacred pursuit. From this perspective, the right of return must be viewed as an individual right that only the refugees themselves can negotiate away (Karmi 2011), and that any outcome that did not meet the Palestinian demand on this issue could not be considered as just (Peled and Rouhana 2004).

The survey item exploring the relation between intergenerational narratives and the outcomes of negotiations focused on the degree to which refugees were prepared to accept a peace agreement that does not include their right of return to their homeland.

The participants' positions on whether they would accept a peace agreement which did not include the right of return were examined through the following question (Figure 5.4):

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

It is not possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their native homelands.

This researcher-developed question primarily emerged from the work of Abu Sitta. As previously established, he asserts the 'possibility' of the right of return, referring of course to the logistics of actually conducting the return. However, Abu Sitta's assertion of the logistical possibility of the return of Palestinians to their homeland could only be 'tested' if the peace agreement included a provision for the right of return of Palestinian refugees. The purpose of collecting and analysing data pertaining to the link between a negotiated peace agreement and the presence of the right of return is to determine if there is an identifiable link between the acceptance of a peace agreement and the provision of right of return. This helps to establish the 'possibility' of the right of return as related to a peace agreement as well as to use the results to further contemplate the extent to which the right of return remains a 'sacred' goal of Palestinian refugees.

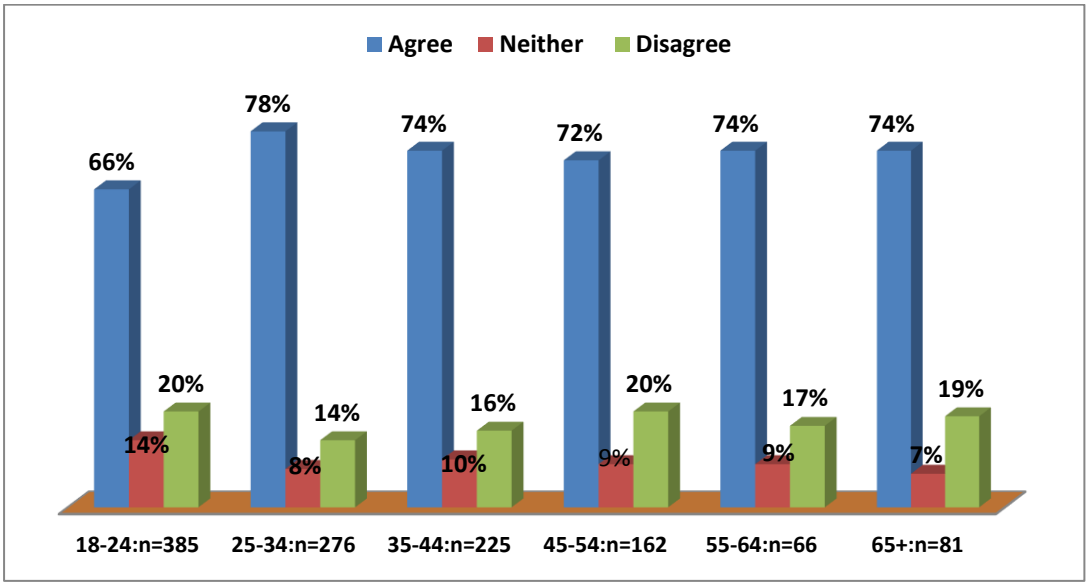
The participants' preparedness to accept an 'alternative' to the right of return is analysed according to four variables of interest: age, political affiliation, income and religious practices.

Overall, Figure 5.4 indicates that most surveyed respondents (72%) indicated that it was not possible accept a peace agreement that did not include the provision for the right of return of the Palestinian refugee to their homeland. In contrast, 18% indicated they would be willing to accept a negotiated outcome that did not include the right of return, and 10% indicated they were neither willing nor unwilling to accept such an outcome. The following section breaks down the survey results according to the variables of interest.

The majority of participants (74% to 78%) aged 25 to 65+ years old indicated their unwillingness to accept a peace agreement that did not include the right of return. A

slightly lower outcome (66%) was reported for 18-24 year-olds, which requires some consideration. This thesis introduced Ben Gurion's assertion that "the young will forget" as a type of entry point for assessing refugees' current view of the right of return, and to speculate on the extent to which the right remains sacred. The lower percentage results for 18-24-year-olds may on the one hand be interpreted as giving weight to Ben Gurion's assertion. On the other hand, when all of the survey responses are considered collectively, the results for the youngest age-group may be interpreted as their being less definitive in their views compared to older refugees, and thus have a higher tendency to respond with 'neither' (the highest percentage across all age group) to survey items, of which the lower percentage outcomes for other items is a product. Therefore, we should caution against interpreting the result as conclusive evidence that the young are indeed forgetting the importance of right of return. In fact, given that the majority of participants in each age group indicated an unwillingness to accept an outcome that did not include the right of return, it may reasonably be suggested that the sense of sacredness with which the right is held remains strong among the surveyed refugees. It is worth noting that a slight difference emerged in the results for each gender, notwithstanding that the difference was small.

Figure 5.4 It is not possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their native homelands according to age, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1,195

These results reinforce the notion that questions surrounding the possibility of return under the peace process remain valid to Palestinian refugees even after many years of peace negotiation. However, the reality on the ground indicates that realisation of the right of return is far from likely as a just agreement is yet to be reached. In fact, the ongoing pursuit of a peace agreement effectively postpones the resolution of the refugee issue by relegating it to future negotiations which are to lead to 'a permanent settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. These resolutions commit the parties to an obligation to negotiate in good faith only for an agreement on how to resolve the refugee problem. In fact, the UN Resolution 242 talks about a "just settlement" to the refugee problem without addressing the specific solution that appears in UN General Assembly resolution 194 which continue to be basis of the right of return.

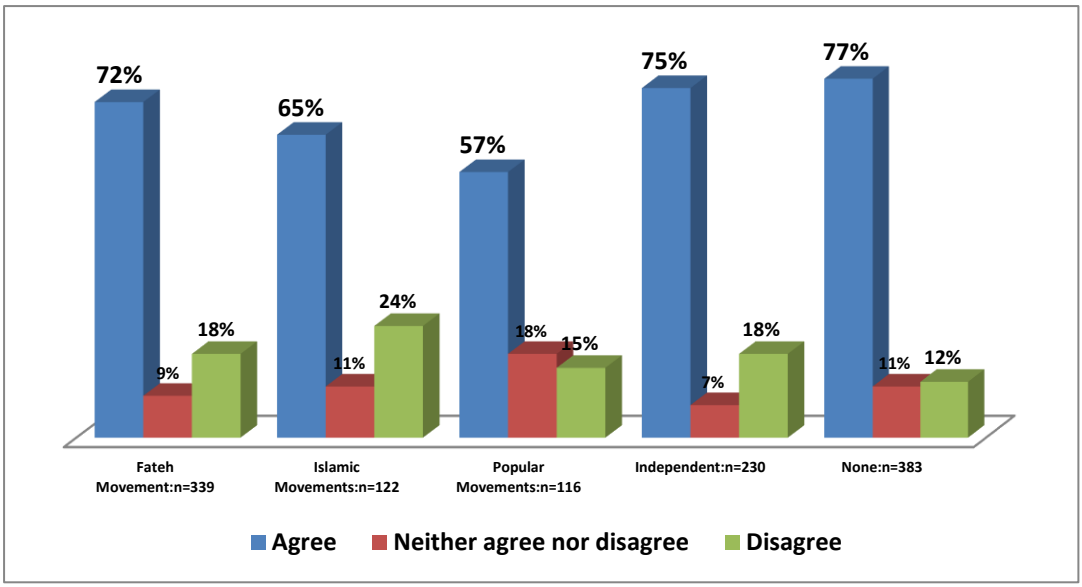
Claims from Israeli scholars and public figures that most villages and property left behind in 1948 were destroyed, occupied by settlers, or transformed add further weight to claims that the return of refugees is impossible (Lawland 1996). As Don Peretz (1993 p.73) states, “well-informed Palestinians are aware that conditions have so changed ... that an actual return is no longer possible”. He claims that they envisage a return to a small enclave, or to the West Bank or Gaza, or to be satisfied with a token return (known as *Lam Shaml*). However, as Abu Sitta (1999) points out, it is difficult to confirm that such statements were made on any significant scale and it is likely that the opposite view is more widely held by Palestinian refugees.

To explore the possible factors influencing the Palestinian refugees’ preparedness to accept a peace agreement which does not include the return to their homeland, their political affiliation and level of income was also included as independent variables for analysis. If the opportunity was given to refugees to resettle or to accept another form of return, would it be taken? Is it the case that the more a Palestinian refugee has a secure political position/association with the PA or a higher income, the more he/she will accept a soft solution (i.e. some compromise on right of return)? Conversely, it’s the case that if the Palestinian refugee does not have a secure political position or adequate income, the more he/she will desire a solution without compromise? Maybe

this group of refugees is committed only to right of return as recommended in Resolution 194 or even rejects the peace process with a preference for armed struggle.

Figure 5.5 shows that the percentages of respondents to 'agree' with the proposition were high across all political categories (i.e. Independent, (75%); Fatah, (72%); Islamic Movements, (65%); Popular Movements, (57%); and no political affiliation (77%).

Figure 5.5 It is not possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their native homelands according to political affiliation, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1,195

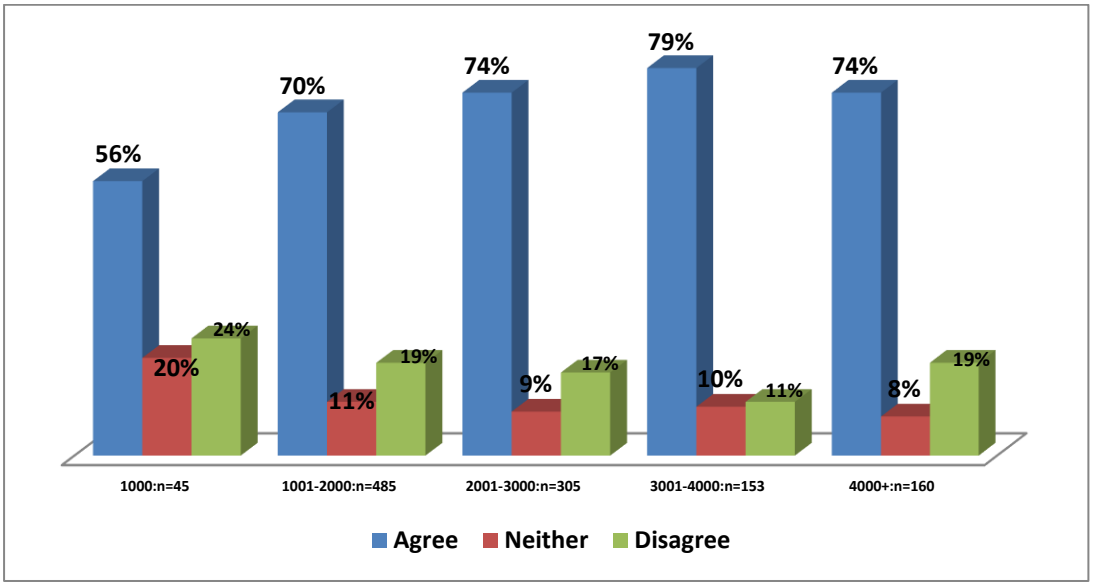
One explanation for the overall lower percentage outcomes for respondents indicating affiliation to Islamic Movements and Popular Movements is the ideology-based refusal by these parties to negotiate with Israel and the view that the right of return is only realised through the liberation of Palestine. The Islamic movements' opposition to the peace process has been demonstrated through military action, particular during 1990s. In addition, the Popular Movements have also opposed the peace process and challenge the PLO and Fatah leadership's right to negotiate the right of return. This opposition is very much reflected in their political vision and activities within the refugee camps inside Palestine and in exile. This opposition was affirmed by PFLP leader, Ahmad Sadat, in 2010 when he called on the PLO to end its negotiations with

Israel and to consider a one state solution as a possible option (Haartz 2010). Moreover, the higher percentage outcomes for respondents indicating affiliation to Fatah, Independent or no political affiliation suggest that political affiliation is in fact not a significant influence on Palestinian refugees' willingness to accept peace at the exclusion of right of return.

Second, regarding income level, it was reported above that the income level of the participants ranged from 1,000 to 4,000+ shekel per month. Figure 6.6 shows the highest percentage of participants (79%) to agree with the proposition that it was not possible to accept a negotiated outcome that did not include the right of return was among those earning 3,001-4,000 shekel per month; whereas the lowest percentage (56%) was for those earning -1,000 shekel per month. Perhaps not surprisingly, the income level of participants to most 'disagree' with the proposition was those earning less than -1,000 Shekel per month (24%).

This outcome is quite different to the outcomes for the respondents' 'commitment' to Resolution 194 when level of income is the main consideration. To clarify, the respondents' willingness to 'accept' an outcome other than the right of return demonstrates much greater variability in relation to income level compared to the relatively consistent results across all income levels for their 'commitment' to the right of return. In turn, it is difficult to account for this difference.

Figure 5.6 It is not possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their native homelands according to income, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,148

When the results relating to the two survey items on the right of return are considered together; that is, the refugees' 'acceptance' of a peace deal without a provision for right of return and their level of 'commitment' to the right of return as defined by UN Resolution 194, an important difference emerges. While most participants across all age groups indicated they were committed to only accepting a peace deal which included a right of return provision, there was less consistency in the commitment across the age groups to Resolution 194 as the right of return mechanism. For instance, 66% of surveyed refugees aged 18-24 years indicated they could not accept a peace deal that did not include a right of return provision (see section 5.2), but only 49% of participants from this age group indicated a commitment to Resolution 194 for their right of return as recommended by the UN. This may suggest that younger refugees are less certain of the design and intent of Resolution 194 – which is not totally unexpected for younger people; a conclusion which appears to be consistent with the findings for the older respondents. For example, 72% of surveyed refugees aged 65+ years indicated they could not accept a peace deal that did not include a right of return provision, with 72% also indicating a commitment to Resolution 194. To explain this result, one could argue that younger refugees perceive UNGA Resolution 194 as limiting, and as a result they believe that the liberation of Palestine

requires greater attention than the resolution. Alternatively, it may be that younger refugees are yet to fully understand the implications of a commitment to Resolution 194 due to the fact that this age range is associated with still-developing political orientations (Parry et al. 1992). This interpretation is supported to some degree in the claim from Richter-Devroe (2013) that younger Palestinian refugees are more inclined to associate right of return to broader struggles for justice than their older counterparts. In addition, younger refugees arguably consider the international community and resolutions affirmed by the UN to have failed in their attempt to secure the rights of Palestinians since 1948.

Similar to the first survey item (Section 5.5.1), the implications of the second survey item results for the extent to which the right of return claim remains 'sacred' among Palestinian refugees was given consideration. The results indicating the surveyed refugees were by and large unwilling to accept a peace agreement at the exclusion of the right of return provision further reflects the sacredness with which the right of return claim is held.

5.6 Conclusion

The Palestinian refugee right of return is a complex and multifaceted construct involving multiple stakeholders; namely refugees, Israel, international organisations, the international community, and scholars and politicians. To manage this complexity, this chapter first discussed three interrelated elements of the right of return: return as a historical claim, return as an intergenerational narrative, and return as a legal claim (i.e. Resolution 194). These elements speak to the extent to which refugees retain the right of return as a central claim and as a potential outcome of the negotiation process. As such, they reflect the focus on refugees' commitment to Resolution 194 and their willingness to accept an outcome that excluded the right of return in the two survey questions. The main findings show that most Palestinian refugees would not accept a peace deal that did not include the right of return provision, and that they remain committed to Resolution 194 as the legal claim for their right of return. Moreover, the implications of these findings for our understanding of refugees' views of the right of return claim were highlighted and discussed. It was subsequently asserted that the right of return maintains a central and indeed sacred position in the refugee intergenerational narrative.

It is apparent that the right of return – and the implied notion of returning to Palestine pre-1948 – manifests in different ways among the different refugee age groups. Indeed, although there is a clear commitment to the right of return claim among the majority of surveyed refugees, there is evidence to show that the level of commitment is slightly lower among younger participants compared to the older participants. Perhaps older refugees conceptualise the notion of return according to the language of 1948 (i.e. nothing less than a return to hometown); whereas, younger refugees conceptualise the notion of return more as an ongoing struggle for justice against the occupying power. Notwithstanding the potential for refugees of different age groups to generally express different levels of commitment to the right of return or a willingness to accept an outcome that does not include this right, the results and discussion above provide a springboard into the next two chapters specifically, an exploration of the participants' views of the possible alternatives or additions return (i.e. compensation and resettlement options).

Although, the findings in this study related to the legal claim in particular Resolution 194 associated with the right of return are important to our understanding of the refugees' current views of the right of return, they do not provide the whole picture. The right to return is of course contextualised within many years of occupation and displacement for Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank (and elsewhere). Moreover, within Resolution 194 are provisions for the payment of compensation to refugees and the resettlement of refugees in current locations. Both these components of Resolution 194, along with the recent attempts to phase out UNRWA services, have significant implications for the way in which Palestinian refugees view the right of return as understood as a return to homeland. As such, to provide a more comprehensive representation of Palestinian refugees' views of right of return, the following chapters present and discuss the survey findings related to each of these dimensions, respectively for their implications for the Palestinian right of return.

6 COMPENSATION

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the Palestinian Camp Survey data on the right of return as it applied to Palestinian refugees and also discussed the Palestinian refugee view of the different socio-political dimensions (e.g. legal, intergenerational, etc.) impacting this right. This chapter extends the analysis by exploring the participants' views of the relationship between compensation as a component of Resolution 194 and their commitment to the right of return. Pursuing this focus may also provide insights into the sacredness of the right of return to the study cohort based on the extent to which they may be prepared to accept compensation as a substitute for the right of return. Compensation is not only a principal issue in the PIC; it is a fundamental issue in international law (Lee 1986). As such, the first section of this chapter provides a brief overview of the significance of the compensation claim. Specific reference is made to UNGA Resolution 194 which continues to be one of the most cited resolutions in relation to the historical claims of Palestinians (El-Malak 2013).

The second section focuses on the Palestinian perspective about compensation in general. It explores the links between the social, political and economic elements of the Palestinian refugee issue. In addition, the refugee attitudes are examined on the subject of whether they would accept compensation at the exclusion of right of return or whether they should seek a combined solution. The third section identifies and discusses compensation as a settlement issue during the peace process. This thesis claims both Palestinians and Israelis continue to debate the claim for compensation based on disparate historical narratives. Therefore, the claim for compensation is inextricably linked to how the Palestinian refugee issue is to progress on the issues of right of return and refugee settlements. This chapter addresses a number of key issues. It begins by focusing on the historical background of compensation in order to demonstrate how it is contextualised around the right of return claim as expressed in Resolution 194. This is followed by an exploration of what compensation has traditionally meant to Palestinian refugees in terms of what they are to be compensated for, and the role of the PA in determining compensation outcomes.

Responses to four survey items are then reported and discussed. The items consider the link between compensation and a return to homeland, and accepting compensation if other refugees, Israel and the PA agree to a compensation outcome.

The participants' willingness to accept compensation under the four prescribed conditions is then analysed according to variables of interest: age, gender, political affiliation, and income. This chapter therefore helps to answer the primary research question and research sub-question 2 by providing insights into the current perspectives of the refugee participants living in the West Bank about compensation and its relationship to the right of return. In doing so, it is anticipated that a clearer understanding of the role and tactics of the PA in negotiating for compensation on behalf of Palestinian refugees will be achieved, along with an updated perspective on refugees' views of Israel's role in paying compensation, and their overall level of opposition to compensation despite it being advanced by the PA.

6.2 Overview of refugee compensation

In the wake of the 1947-1948 Palestinian displacement the issue of compensation was raised by UN mediator, Count Folke Berndaotte (Peretz 1995, p. 2). Berndaotte put forward a number of recommendations to the UN which included a payment for the property of refugees who did not wish to return to their homes as well as a payment to refugees for loss of, or damage to, their property who did wish to return to their homes (Hassawi 2008). In response, the UN adopted the proposal subsequently incorporated into UNGAR 194 on 11 December, 1948 (Peretz 1995, p. 2). As part of this resolution, the UNGA instructed the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) to set up a refugee office to assess for, and arrange payment of, compensation (Klinov 2002). The committee included experts from Turkey, France and the US who provided estimates of the value of abandoned property in Palestine (Klinov 2002 and Hassawi 2008). On this point, it is perhaps worth noting that the values were kept secret (i.e. not published) and remains unpaid by the UNCCP (Fischback 2013). Sixty-eight years later UNGAR 194 continues to be one of the most cited resolutions in support of the refugee question (El-Malak 2013, p. 61). The Resolution has increasingly been both interpreted and quoted as the basis for the rights of the Palestinian refugee and has been reaffirmed every year since 1949.

Resolution 194 (III) emphasised four types of compensation: payments to those who choose not to return; payment to returnees for loss of property or material damages to property; payments related to income derived for the use of refugee property; and payment for non-material damages (BADIL 1999). In addition, the UN mediator asserted that the government of Israel was liable for the restoration of Arab properties to their original owners and that it must provide financial compensation to owners whose property was destroyed (Peretz 1995, p. 8). Therefore, the UNCCP argued that if refugees could be resettled and/or repatriated, the major obstacle to a peace settlement would be removed (Dumper 2007, p. 147). In 1950, the UNCCP (1951; Chapter 1, no. 5) formalised a report which read, in part:

The Conciliation Commission, while fully recognising the extreme urgency of the refugee question, both the humanitarian and political points of view, did not consider it possible to separate any one problem from the rest of the peace negotiations of final settlements.

Between 1949 and 1962 international efforts to resolve the refugee issue favoured compensation and stressed that an international fund be created to serve this purpose. In fact, the early approach by the international community in some ways reflects current proposals from scholars and negotiation teams linked to the peace process. Current proposals include specific details and analysis of compensation eligibility criteria, a topic discussed further into this chapter. In addition, current proposals (some of which have been accepted by Palestinians and the international community, but rejected by Israel) directly address the issue of compensation.

The issue of compensation continues to be discussed by government officials and scholars, and a range of ideas and thoughts regarding solutions and frameworks have been proposed by social and political scientists in recent decades. Notably, two core elements emerge in discussions of the issue of compensation: that full restitution including social and citizenship rights should be the only outcome (i.e. the return of refugees to their proprieties); and that compensation provided to refugees should include a public apology by Israel, a well-funded reconciliation program, and a generous financial payment (Brynen 2006; Samy 2010). The results in this current study (discussed in a latter section) show that compensation claims continue to be linked by Palestinian refugees to a return to Palestine prior 1948.

Expectations around compensation are tied to the general acceptance that refugees were forced to leave their land, homes, farms, shops, factories, jobs, financial assets and other belongings (Hilal and Senechal 2013, p. 132). In turn, prominent Palestinian voices argue that both a lump sum payment for violations of individual rights and loss of property and acceptance of responsibility by the occupier for the creation of the refugee problem must be forthcoming (Abu Sitta 1999). This view was further developed by Shahira Samy (2010) who claimed that compensation and an apology are inextricably tied together as a form of redress. An apology implies acknowledgment of the injustice which continues to be denied by successive Israeli governments.

Also implied in the Palestinian requirement for an apology is the moral importance of redressing refugee suffering while maintaining the refugee right of return (Samy 2010). Indeed, since Al Nakba, and the adoption of Resolution 194, the Palestinian narrative has come to symbolise a direct link between their right of return and the issue of compensation. As a result, any offer of lump-sum financial compensation as an alternative to right of return would be for many Palestinian refugees a mark of defeat.

Although there are diverse points of view at the international and local level regarding compensation to Palestinian refugees, calls for compensation as an alternative option to right of return continue to be rejected. For example, Kuburis (2013) argues that compensation and right of return are complementary programs and must not be treated as mutually exclusive. As Kubursi explains, the principle that restitution of property and compensation for lost opportunities should be independent of whether one chooses to return or not to her or his homeland is a primary component of the rights of refugees. Kuburis' argument is explicitly placed in the context of adequate compensation for loss of rights (particularly in relation to sense of identity), as well as loss of property.

Kubursi traces the steps that led to the compensation recommendation and notes the principle of compensation is not about the actual payment, but rather adequate payments that satisfy the needs of people who are willing to accept it. In this case, compensation for loss of rights and identity as well as loss of property remains the only option for as long as losses continue to be experienced by Palestinians. The

following section provides further exploration of the Palestinian refugees' perspectives on the issue of compensation as a historical claim related to their long-standing displacement.

6.3 Compensation as a historical claim and responsibility: Palestinian perspectives

The Palestinian refugee narrative about compensation is very much linked to Al Nakba and its consequences. Compensation is important to refugees, not only for its financial value but also for narrative validation. For refugees, compensation represents both Israel's and the international community's recognition of the wrongs and dispossession they have suffered since 1948 (Molloy et al. 2014). There are, calls on Israel to fully compensate them for their suffering (Niebergall and Wuhler 2014, p. 132). Lynk (2003) argues that in line with international law, Israel should bear the primary responsibility for compensation. Lynk justified this argument on the basis that Israel caused the Palestinian refugee problem and because it used Palestinian properties, homes and lands for the benefit of Israeli citizens. In fact, this claim is very much articulated by many refugees and a sentiment I heard expressed many times during my childhood was; 'Israel caused it and therefore Israel must pay for it'.

In terms of the wider literature, Brynen (2013) points out that Palestinians view compensation paid by Israel as an acknowledgement of its responsibility for property seizure and for the suffering caused to refugees. This idea was also considered by Terry Rempel (1999) who argued that compensation implies the recognition by a state that it committed a wrongful act. It is therefore possible to argue that the affirmation of compensation claims is relevant to the historical injustices inflicted on people or individuals. Therefore, the grounds upon which claims for redress are made for historical injustices are important to the victims to overcome the past and help surviving.

Massagee (2013) applies this perspective to Palestinian refugees, identifying them as victims who have suffered since the expulsion and displacement from their country. In turn, the author argues that Israel should have adopted two forms of reparations: material and symbolic to acknowledge and apologise for the forced displacement of Palestinians. However, Abu Sitta (1999) argues that compensation at the exclusion of

right of return is an attempt to end the refugee question and show that the implementation of the right of return is almost impossible. He argues that accepting an apology from Israel as a form of compensation only satisfies the agenda of Israel; namely, not to acknowledge a Palestinian state and to continue its settlement building program and does nothing to advance the right of Palestinians to self-determination as embedded in Resolution 194 (Palestinian Return Centre 2017).

Notwithstanding Palestinian refugees' views of the importance of compensation as both a financial and moral response to the refugee situation, it should be noted that many refugees are of the view that compensation alone is inadequate as it does not afford moral recognition to refugees' rights and historic claims (Bekerle 2011, p. 4). Assad Abdul Rahman (2003), former head of the refugee department in charge of the refugee file in the final status negotiations, reflected this sentiment in his statement:

The Palestinians want Israel to take moral and legal responsibility for the refugee crisis. UNGAR 194 must be accepted so that all refugees are guaranteed the right of return, and by return we mean to Israel. Refugees who choose to return and those who do not must be compensated. Host countries must also be compensated.

The Palestinian position was articulated further by Zureik (1996) who confirmed the connection between relevant UN Resolutions and a solution to the refugee problem. Zureik claims that compensation must not be treated as the only, or even the most compelling, solution to the refugee problem. Therefore, he considers compensation in the context of UNGAR 194 (Abdo 2000). According to Zureik, Israel "should bear the expenses of compensation for it represents the other side of resettlement compensation; that is, the adoption of resettlement instead of returning" (Zureik 1996, p. 152). Zureik further indicates that Israeli attitudes toward the issue of compensation emerged in 1949 (Zureik 1996, pp. 97-98). One of their proposals was the restoration of Gaza from Egypt and the resettlement of the refugees there. This allowed for the return of 100,000 refugees and resettlement based on the security standards and conditions of Israeli.

As such, Barakat (1999) illustrated that:

> *Palestinian refugees are entitled to compensation in accordance with UN resolutions. However, the rights of the refugees are not restricted to the right to compensation and cannot be undermined by it. Israel shoulders the core*

> *responsibility for allocating the financial resources for an international fund to be established for compensating the refugees. This fund should be administered by a UN body similar to the one that administered claims in the Gulf War.*

It is well documented that Israel has been unwilling to accept the Palestinian position that it is solely responsible for financial compensation to refugees for both material loss and personal suffering (Peters and Gal 2009, p. 597). Rather, Israel argues Palestinian refugees should be given the option to resettle in the host country and have access to a rehabilitation fund to support the development of their place of residence (Peters and Gal 2009, p. 597).

6.4 Survey questions on compensation

An important objective of this research study was to obtain current perspectives on compensation held by Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank in addition to their perspective on how compensation may be linked to the issues on the right of return.

In 2000, the Camp David conference explored the possibility for an international fund to be established to facilitate the compensation and resettlement of Palestinian refugees in their host countries (Schulz 2003, p. 152). Israel, the US and Europe were to be the main contributors to the scheme (Dumper 2007, p. 69). Israel offered to contribute to compensation payments, but again refused to recognise UNGAR 194 or to accept responsibility for the creation of the refugee problem (Dumper 2007). The Camp David proposal stated that the basis for compensation would be limited to property rights, where a Palestinian who either became a refugee in 1948 or due to the 1948 expulsion may within an agreed period of time; submit one sole claim for the purpose of compensation for his or her property (Peters and Gal 2009, p. 598). However, Israel stipulated that the funds should also be available to Jews who immigrated to Israel from Arab states during the 1950s (Schulz 2003, p. 152).

In terms of the media accounts of Palestinian refugees' views of compensation, in 2008, Aljazerra reporter Awad Alroujob published a report based on interviews with older-aged refugees living in the refugee camps in the West Bank. One participant stated that she wanted her body to be buried in the town cemetery and that she

strongly rejected the compensation option. Other interviewees also threatened to walk away if the issue of compensation continued to be raised because it offended them. Alroujob reported that there was general consensus among refugees that compensation was an offensive subject and should be refused on all grounds. However, it may be the case that younger generation refugees may want to establish a new and unique identity that is separate to the Palestinian refugee identity of the past, one which relinquishes the sacredness of right of return for the provision of compensation.

Based on the complex nature of the themes and issues discussed in the sections above, the aim is to provide some analysis of the way in which the different aspects of compensation (embedded in each item) relate to each other. This will also provide a better understanding of the 'conditions' under which refugees are most opposed and less opposed to compensation as an outcome. Towards this 'big picture' insight, and to give voice to the circumstances under which Palestinian refugees might accept compensation as an outcome, the participants were asked to indicate their position on the following four items in the survey:

I would accept compensation because it is unlikely for refugees to return back to their home-towns in 1948.

I would accept compensation if some refugees have already accepted compensation claims.

I would accept compensation as a solution if it was accepted by the Palestinian Authority.

Regardless of whether you personally agree or disagree with compensation, would you accept compensation if Israel accepts to pay for it.

All four survey items were developed by this researcher in consideration of two factors. First, the Camp David and other compensation schemes proposed throughout the protracted peace process. Second, the key issues to emerge from the review of the literature on the relation between compensation and the right of return.

Regarding the first survey item, Palestinian refugees whose homes no longer exist, or who choose not to exercise the right of return, are entitled to adequate compensation (Samy 2010). However, the reality on the ground suggests that, since the late 1990s, a number of proposals for compensation have been put forward by Israel and western countries aimed precisely at preventing the right of Palestinian return to Israel. In this way, compensation may be viewed by Palestinian refugees as an acceptable outcome based on the belief that a return to their homeland is an increasingly unlikely prospect. Conversely, it is also argued that restitution of property and compensation for lost opportunities should be independent of whether one chooses to return or not (Kubursi 2013).

The second 'compensation' survey item emerged from the consideration as to whether refugees living in the West Bank believe the inhumane living conditions and the lost sense of belonging to homeland they feel can be redressed through compensation, particularly if other refugees are prepared to accept compensation. No doubt, some Palestinians who are well-settled in their current location may consider compensation to be an acceptable outcome if others accept it, as may refugees who view compensation as a valid and necessary means to improve their quality of life. Hence, the relationship between the right of return and compensation, and indeed the extent to which the right of return claim remains 'sacred', may be related to the daily social conditions experienced by all Palestinian refugees.

The third compensation item is in response to ongoing negotiations among Palestinian and Israeli representatives, and representatives of the international community, regarding the Palestinian refugee right to return to their homes, the creation of an international fund to compensate refugees for loss of material property, rehabilitation of refugee camps, and the resettlement of refugees in host nations. This process has produced many proposals and discussions about compensation and the right of return, and all conclude that compensation for refugees is an important part of a comprehensive agreement (Niebergall and Wuhler 2014, p. 132). Table 6.1 provides a summary of the negotiated agreements on compensation and their main proposals:

Table 6.1: Summary of Agreements and their main proposals

Agreement	Main proposals
The Beilin–Abu Mazen Understanding of 1995	• Attempted to lay down an informal road map towards achieving fair compensation (Gal 2013). • Required Israel to acknowledge the moral and material suffering caused to the Palestinian people by the war of 1947-1949. • Israel must acknowledge the Palestinian refugee right of return to a future Palestinian state; rather than the Palestine of 1948 (JVL 2005). • Both parties were to agree on the establishment of an International Commission for Palestinian Refugees (ICPR) (JVL 2005).
Taba negotiations in 2001	• The Taba talks proposed three types of compensation payment: fixed per capita payment; property-based claims; and collective funds for communal development and infrastructural projects (Dumper 2007, p. 153). • Focus on the rehabilitation of refugees and compensation modalities (Samy 2010, p. 26). • Palestinian delegation demanded restitution for loss of or damage to refugee property, which Israel rejected (Samy 2010). • Israel proposed compensation programs for displacement and material loss only.
The Ayalon–Nusseibeh Plan of September 2002	• Proposed compensation payments only to refugees who are willing to give up their right of return and willing to remain in host locations. • The plan acknowledged the issue of resettlement to a third country as a compensation matter (Dumper 2007, p. 69).
The Geneva Accord in 2003	• Refugees were deemed entitled to compensation on the basis of both their refugee status and for property loss as a consequence of displacement (Brynen 2004). • The Accord proposed a comprehensive development and rehabilitation program for Palestinian refugees in host countries (Dumper 2007, p. 68).
The Annapolis meeting in 2007	• Attended by 40 countries including Arab states. • Refugee problem framed by Israeli Prime Minister, Olmert, as a humanitarian issue caused by a natural disaster and which required welfare-based assistance. As such, he proposed the creation of an international fund that would compensate Palestinians for their suffering.

Representing the Palestinian refugee in the negotiation process is the PA. However, the strength of the position held by the PA towards right of return remains a topic of

debate. This may be reflected in the extent to which the surveyed Palestinian refugees show support for the PA in managing compensation outcomes. This research investigation therefore sought to collect up-to-date data on the refugees' views of compensation as a negotiated solution by the PA. The compensation claim for Palestinian refugees is recognised in international law and the third survey item aims to assist this research investigation to draw insightful conclusions about how Palestinian refugees position compensation against right of return as a negotiated solution.

Finally, the item focusing on Palestinian refugee willingness to accept compensation if Israel agrees to pay it was included on the basis of Israel's claim that compensation should be part of a general peace deal (Samy 2010). It is important to note however, that Israel also asserts that any compensation fund must be utilised to relocate refugees (Samy 2010, p. 373). In contrast, Palestinians continue to claim that Israel must bear full responsibility for compensation payments including to individual claimants to reflect the real value of the properties the refugees left behind (Dumber 2007, p. 148). As established above, compensation and the right of return are generally considered as complementary components that cannot be separated or used as substitutes (Kubursi 2013). This carries the implication that the right of return claim cannot be resolved solely through financial values.

The overall results for these survey items are presented in Table 6.2

Table 6.2: Surveyed participants' results on four conditions of compensation, 2013, %.

Survey items	Agree	Neither	Disagree
I would accept compensation because it is unlikely for refugees to return back to their home-towns in 1948.	223 19%	108 9%	869 72%
I would accept compensation if some refugees have already accepted compensation claims	196 16%	156 13%	848 71%
I would accept compensation as a solution if it was accepted by the Palestinian Authority.	216 18%	184 15%	800 68%
Regardless of whether you personally agree or disagree with compensation, would you accept compensation if Israel accepts to pay it?	133 11%	139 12%	928 77%

Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,200

Table 6.2 shows high percentages of participants were not willing to accept compensation as an outcome irrespective of each of the four ‘conditions’ placed upon its provision. Regarding the acceptance of compensation if return to their home towns in 1948 is unlikely, 72% of surveyed refugees rejected this proposition. Around 19% of participants indicated, however, that they would accept compensation on these grounds, with around 9% of participants indicating neither agree or disagree. A possible explanation for the result showing a majority of participants prepared to reject compensation even under this condition is that they hold the view that the right of return is a fundamental right that represents something of greater value than money (Kubursi 2013).

The aggregated result provided in Table 6.2 also shows that 71% of the surveyed Palestinian refugees disagreed with the proposition that they would accept compensation if some refugees have already accepted compensation claims. Overall, 67% of the surveyed participants disagreed with the proposition to accept compensation even if compensation payments are agreed to by the PA. Lastly, the findings presented in the Table 6.2 indicate that 77% of participants indicated that they would not agree to accept compensation payment even if Israel agreed to its provision. The higher percentage outcome indicating ‘disagree’ is in clear contrast to just 11% of participants indicating ‘agree’ to the proposition, with 12% indicating neither ‘disagree’ nor ‘agree. One explanation for the survey results on the issue of accepting compensation if Israel accepts it is that many ordinary Palestinians, politicians and public figures claim the recommendation in UN Resolution 149 should be respected; that is, compensation is not considered as an alternative to the right of return.

Arguably, Palestinian refugees regard compensation payments by Israel as an attempt to bribe or to buy them off. At the very least, it may be regarded as an insult to suggest that they can be compensated for the years of suffering and displacement. To explain, I remember my parents saying that Palestine and their village in particular were not for sale and therefore they were not considering compensation without return to their hometown. Israel continues to claim that compensation should be part of a general peace deal (Samy 2010). In addition, Israel asserts that any compensation fund must also be utilised to relocate refugees (Samy 2010, p. 373). In contrast,

Palestinians continue to claim that Israel must bear full responsibility for compensation payments including to individual claimants to reflect the real value of the properties the refugees left behind (Dumber 2007, p. 148).

In sum, the 'disagree' expressed by the majority of surveyed participants for all four 'conditions' under which compensation may be possible outcome gives further weight to the claim that the right of return has long been, and continues to be, held as a 'sacred' claim by Palestinian refugees (Abu Sitta 1999).

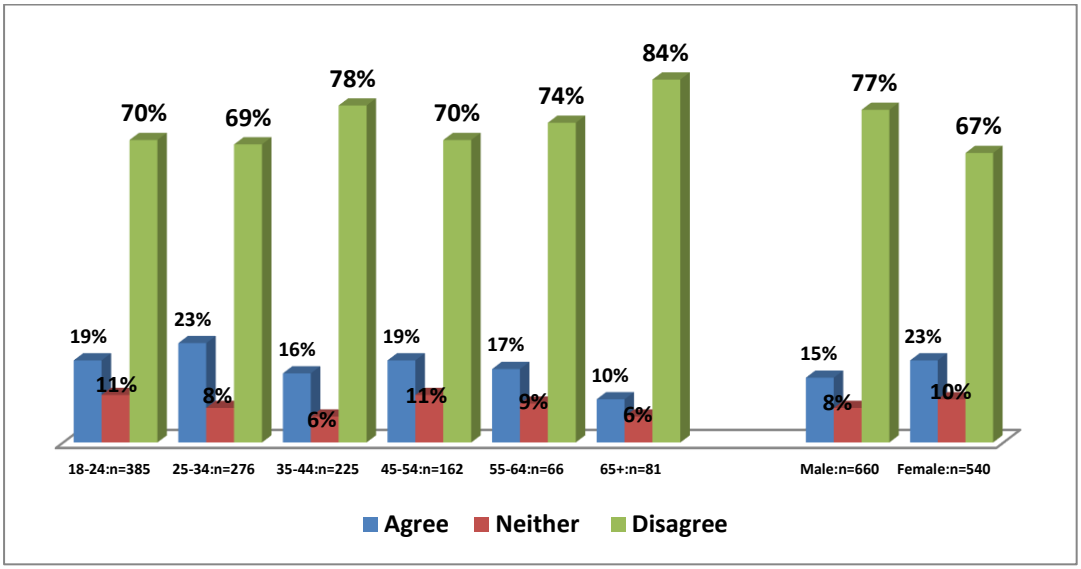
The following sections breakdown the survey results according to the stated variables of interest.

6.4.1 Accepting compensation because it is unlikely for refugees to return back to their home-towns in 1948, by age and gender

The participants' responses to this item are reported both from overall outcomes as well as according to age and gender. Similar to the explanation provided for previous chapters, age was selected as a variably to determine whether there are markedly different views of the importance or role of compensation in the peace process across different age groups of refugees. Gender was also selected to determine if there are significant differences between male and female refugees on the compensation issue, and, if so, to explore the implications are for their views of the right of return claim.

Looking at the results by age group, relatively small percentage differences are apparent. Participants aged 65+ years emerged as the highest percentage (84%) of respondents who disagreed with the proposition. Participants aged 35-44 years represented the second highest proportion (78%) to disagree. Participants aged 55-64 years were at 74% disagreement with the proposition followed by participants aged 18-24 years at 70% and participants aged 25-34 years at 69% disagreement.

Figure 6.1: I would accept compensation because it is unlikely for the refugees to return back to their home-towns in 1948 by age and gender, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n= 1200

Arguably, the relatively small difference in outcomes for the youngest participants (18-24 year olds) compared to the oldest participants (65+ years) regarding the proposition to accept compensation (i.e. 70% to 84%) may be due to factors apart from 'close-proximity' to the Exodus. It is not surprising to find that older refugees particularly might be opposed to accepting compensation (at the exclusion of the right of return to their homeland) given their first-hand experiences of life as refugees shortly after the Exodus. Younger refugees, of course, are far more removed from the realities of the Exodus event, but nonetheless experience its consequences similar to their older counterparts. It is also the likely case that older refugees encourage the younger refugees to stay connected to the struggle to restore Palestine. The vocalisation of this desire from older refugees may in turn help younger refugees to connect to the Palestinian identity as well as enforce a moral commitment from them to liberate Palestine and so restore Palestinian dignity.

Figure 6.1 shows that 77% of male participants and 67% of female participants disagreed with the proposition to accept compensation because it is unlikely that they will return back to their home-towns in 1948. It was not anticipated that there would be a substantial difference between the genders in terms of their responses to this proposition. Moreover, assuming a random sample, these differences would be even more significant (Gamma=0.091; $p<0.031$); that is, the level of opposition to

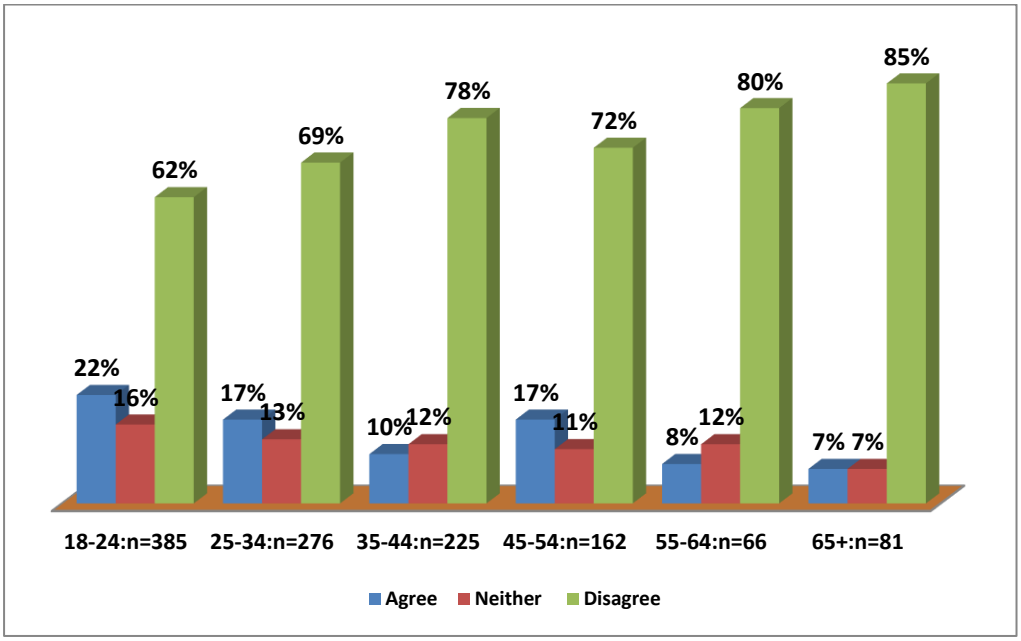
compensation as a substitute for the right of return would be more pronounced between both genders.

Focus was given to the gender variable as this researcher was mindful that female refugees may perceive a different balance in the dynamic between compensation and returning to their home-towns in 1948 compared to male refugees. This is because they "experience refugee status differently than their male counterparts" economically, politically, and socio-culturally (Abdo 2000, para. 14). To clarify, Abdo (2000) asserts that discussions and decisions about outcomes for Palestinian refugees have tended to reflect a gender gap and subordinate position for Palestinian women due to their perceived inferior status as refugees. If this is the perceived reality for Palestinian women living in the West Bank, then they may be more inclined to agree to a compensation claim if they believe returning to their home is unlikely. This was reflected in the results to some degree, with 23% of the surveyed female refugees indicating they would accept compensation on these terms compared to only 15% of the surveyed male refugees. However, the relatively small difference in the percentage outcomes for each gender is perhaps of greater significance, with both Palestinian men and women committed to the right of return outcome.

6.4.2 Accepting compensation if some refugees have already accepted compensation claims, by age

Different age groups have their own experiences and understandings of Al Nakba and its consequences, which in turn may influence how they conceptualise compensation as an outcome. Writers such as Khalil (2011) have pointed to the relationship between the socio-economic conditions within which a person is situated and the person's preparedness to compromise their rights to achieve a better outcome. Add to this the assertion from White (2013, p. 217) that generational thinking can emerge as a type of master-narrative on which actors of similar ages "seek to reshape prevalent conceptions of obligation, collective action and community". When these factors are considered together, there is the potential for refugees of different age groups to have quite disparate views of compensation and its function.

Figure 6.2: I would accept compensation if some refugees have already accepted compensation claims, by age of refugees, 2013, % disagree.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1195

When the results are considered by age group, it is notable that large majorities in each age group indicated disagreement with the proposition, with the pattern for disagreement also increasing with age. For instance, the Figure shows that 78% to 85% of participants aged 35-65+ years disagree with the proposition, compared with 62% to 69% of participants aged 18-34-years.

The results presented in Figures 6.2 and 6.3 may suggest that Palestinian refugees view the concept of compensation as a form of trade-off that compromises the right of return. Moreover, the similar percentage amounts for each age group reported in the results for the previous question suggest that most Palestinian refugees view the decisions made by other refugees regarding compensation are largely irrelevant to their own decision making on the issue. Most participants in this study (55%) were aged 18 to 34 years. This percentage outcome is slightly higher than the overall percentage of 18 to 34-year-old Palestinian refugees living in the refugee camps included in this study (UNRWA 2010). The results show that the younger-aged participants expressed less conservative views towards compensation than their older counterparts. This may be due to their different experiences of the outcomes of the Exodus and ongoing displacement, which are central to the Palestinian narrative.

Similar to the explanation provided in Sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 when the age-related differences in the commitment to the right of return were discussed. The participants' different life experiences have likely influenced their views of compensation in this context. Overall, the result suggests younger respondents (i.e. 18-34-year-olds) are more open to accepting a compensation provision than older respondents (as expected). Furthermore, the results show that the younger the participant, the more likely they are to consider this outcome (22% among 19-24-year-olds and 17% of 25-34-year-olds). Notwithstanding that younger respondents were three times more likely to reject compensation than support it compared to some older age groups (i.e. 55+ year-olds), younger participants indicated overwhelmingly their unwillingness to accept compensation as a substitute to the right of return. This suggests the intergenerational narratives among Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank view the right of return as sacred to some degree.

During the writing of this thesis I continued to have conversations with my relatives who experienced the 1948 Exodus and who continue to live in one of the refugee camps. With regards to compensation, one relative remarked, "Compensation is the easy solution and I would not accept it no matter what. I lived my entire life wanting to return to my village and I will not accept less even if they give me millions…. I would choose my village because my family spirits and my childhood are there, not here". The relative concluded that nothing can compensate for the loss of Palestine, the suffering, and destroyed childhoods.

In summary, Palestinian refugees across all age groups continue to preserve the right of return despite proposals of compensation. There is weak evidence to show younger generations might approach the question of compensation differently. However, I have previously argued that such differences among the generations may, in fact, simply reflect the different stages they are at in the development of their political orientations.

The relatively consistent result across the different age groups that suggest compensation is not an acceptable outcome, even if accepted by other refugees, may be due to the inhumane conditions for all refugees and to the ongoing occupation of Palestinian land. These results suggest compensation continues to be linked by the Palestinian refugee to a return to Palestine 1948. Moreover, the overall high 'disagree'

results irrespective of age for both the survey items (i.e. discussed in 6.2 and 6.3) arguably sheds some light on the sacredness with which the right of return is held among Palestinian refugees even to this day.

The following section further explores the Palestinian refugee view of compensation in the context of political representation in the negotiation process; that is, the participants views of the PA as the best party to negotiate for compensation on their behalf.

6.4.3 Accepting compensation as a solution if it was accepted by the Palestinian Authority; by political affiliation, age, income level, and income

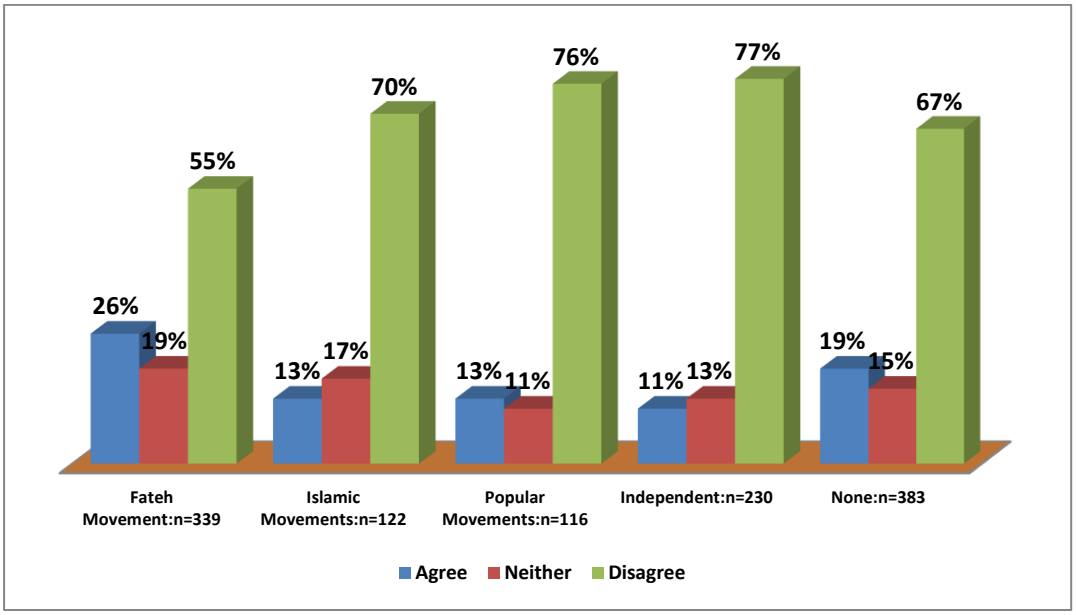
The responses to the compensation and the PA items are analysed according to the participants' political affiliation, age, income level, and gender (see Table 3.1 for an explanation of the relevance of these variables to this study). To begin, political affiliation is an important variable for consideration here because the political system in Palestine plays a leading role in the Palestinian refugees' understanding of the politics of the right of return and the negotiation processes towards a solution (Erskine et al 2017). Different political parties have different positions on the Palestinian right of return and analysing the data against this variable will provide further insights into the association between political affiliation and right of return (as examined in Chapter 5) through the lens of compensation as a possible solution. Hence, understanding the refugees' views of compensation in the context of political affiliation will help to shed light on the reasons why Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank might accept compensation as a substitute outcome for right of return (which is the focus of research sub-question three).

Figure 6.3 reveals that 67% of respondents reporting no political affiliation were prepared to reject compensation even if accepted by the PA. Participants who indicated an independent political affiliation recorded the highest percentage of disagreement with the proposition (77%), followed by the respondents who reported affiliation with Popular Movements (76%). Respondents with an affiliation with Islamic Movements recorded disagreement with the proposition at 70%), with participants reporting no political affiliation showing 67% disagreement. The lowest

level of disagreement with the proposition (55%) was recorded for participants affiliated with Fatah.

The relatively high level of disagreement with the proposition by participants indicating affiliation with the Fatah Movement is a somewhat interesting finding given the close ties between Fatah and the PA. However, it may explained by the following factors.

Figure 6.3: Refugees would accept compensation if the Palestinian Authority accepts it, by political affiliation, 2013, % disagree.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1190

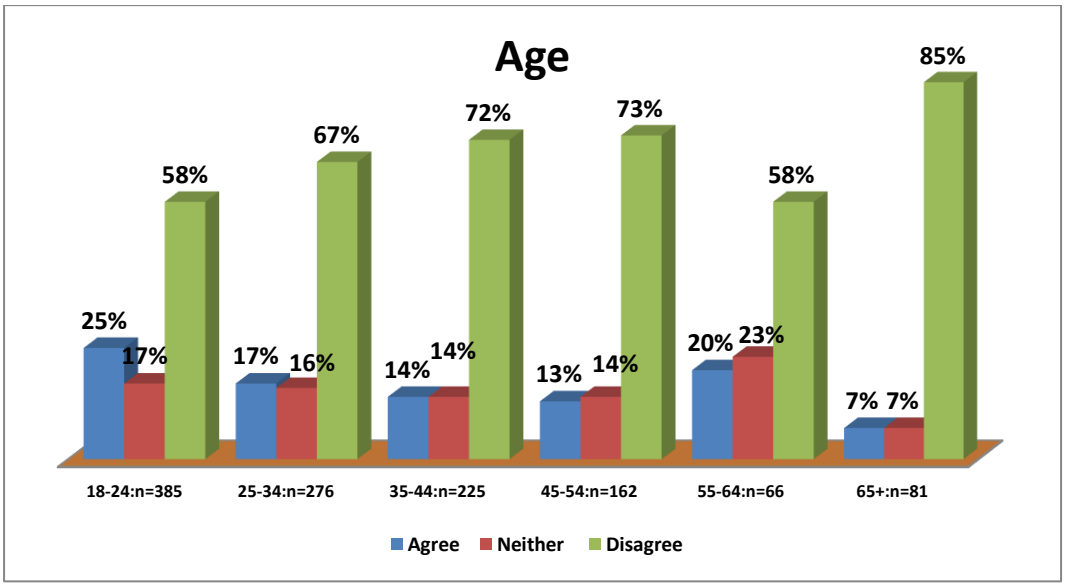
First, even though Fatah leadership has signed a range of agreements with successive Israeli governments supporting compensation and resettlement, there is a new wave of Fatah supporters who disagree with the Fatah leadership in relation to the refugee question or the peace process in general. Second, the disassociation between Fatah's political teaching and the views of those affiliated with the movement suggest the latter are motivated by the cause and not only by the Party's agenda. This argument is supported by the fact that Fatah militant group, Al-Aqsa Brigades, fought alongside other parties in the last war in Gaza in 2014 irrespective of the Fatah leadership agenda. Third, the high level of disagreement with the proposition among Fatah affiliates may simply reflect a broader population trend. Palestinian refugees are, by and large, hesitant to accept any proposal made in relation to compensation because of

the lack of clarity that remains around the refugee issue and political settlement. Certainly, it is irrefutable that life in the refugee camps has shaped the political identities of the refugees and that most have accepted the view of the political party to which they are aligned. However, it is also the case that refugees in general view the provision of compensation only as a manipulation of their right of return. As such, the issue of the right of return remains active even among refugees affiliated to the Fatah movement.

Overall, respondent unwillingness to accept compensation even if successfully negotiated by the PA emerges. This is despite affiliation to one political party or another and is thus reflective of the generational narrative discussed above. Moreover, it may also be argued that the relatively unified voice of the participants in their rejection of compensation as a substitute for the right of return reflects the sacredness of the right within the context of conflict resolution.

I also examined whether participants would accept compensation if it is accepted by the PA according to the age of refugees. Age differences; clarify whether compensation is growing in significance across different generations. Figure 6.4 shows that participants aged 65+ most likely (85%) to disagree with accepting compensation even if the PA accepts it. Between 67% and 73% of participants aged 25-54 years represented the next highest proportion disagreeing with the proposition, followed by 58% of 18-24-year-olds representing the lowest proportion to disagree. Similar to previous results, participants aged 65+ years were most definitive in their opinion (as evidenced in the 7% ‘neither’ response). However, somewhat unexpectedly, participants aged 55-64 years represented the age group with the least definitive position on this issue (as evidenced in the 23% ‘neither’ response).

Figure 6.4: Refugees would accept compensation if the Palestinian Authority accepts it, by age, 2013, % disagree



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1,192

The unpreparedness of the refugees to accept compensation even if accepted by the PA may correlate with their daily interactions and experiences with the PA. As highlighted above, the level of disagreement is highest among older refugees which imply the lowest level of trust towards the PA among this age group. One possible explanation for this is that they have endured both the displacement from their homeland in addition to years of disappointment in the negotiation process.

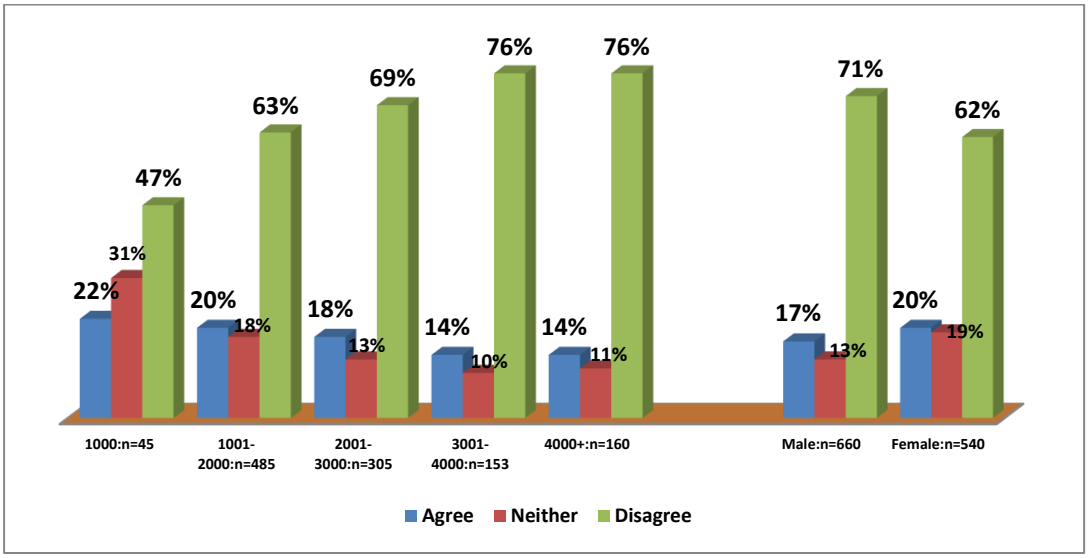
Moreover, Al Husseini (1999) has argued that the absence of clear estimates about the compensation amounts, as well as the lack of assurance that the refugees will be the direct beneficiaries of the payments – and not the host countries – has resulted in refugees developing negative attitudes towards compensation as managed by the PA (Al Husseini 1999). This view appears to be validated in the result in Figure 6.4 where most participants indicated they would not accept compensation even if the Palestinian Authority accepted it.

The results presented in Figure 6.4 allow two conclusions to be drawn about the perspectives of Palestinian refugees. First, no generation of refugee simply accepts proposals made by the PA regardless of the consequences. Second, there appears to be a general level of distrust among all generations of refugee towards the legitimacy of PA to negotiate compensation outcomes on their behalf. In turn, this distrust may be linked to their perceptions of how the peace process is progressing on the ground.

The results are perhaps suggestive of the fundamental need for the PA to acknowledge the 'voice' of the refugee on matters of crucial importance to them (e.g., issues related to settlement outcomes and political gains). Only in this way will Palestinian refugee believe their interests are truly being served. In other words, the Authority must earn the trust of the refugees to make decisions that will benefit those for whom they are advocating. Lastly, the results presented in Figure 6.4 of course do not necessarily represent the views of all Palestinian refugees in Palestine or in exile. They do nonetheless indicate the popular sentiment among the study participants that the way in which the PA is managing the issues of the right of return and compensation needs to change.

The results for this survey item on compensation were also analysed according to gender. The justification for selecting gender as a variable for analysis has been provided in Table 3.1 (Methodology chapter). This was done to explore for evidence of the marginalisation of refugee women and whether women have different views to men on the issue of compensation. Such difference could emerge because women may be more cautious about expressing disagreement or more tolerant of compromise.

Figure 6.5: Refugees would accept compensation if the Palestinian Authority accepts it, by income and gender, 2013, % disagree.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,148

On income differences, it is notable that participants with high income disagreed with the proposition (76%) more substantially than participants with low income (47%). This is arguably not surprising given that compensation is viewed as an important mechanism to address the suffering of Palestinian refugees (Brynen, 2013). However, similar to the implications of the 'neither' response discussed in Section 5.5.2, the main reason for the decline in 'disagree' for the income variable (and also for the gender variable results discussed below) is the change in 'neither' rather than in 'agree'. Also worth considering, however, is the link between the sense of vulnerability felt by lower income and poor job security refugees and the potential for compensation to provide some form of protection against ongoing hardship (Pérez 2011).

In terms of gender, data in Figure 6.5 shows 71% of male participants and 62% of female participants disagreed with the proposition. This relatively high level of consensus among both genders suggests participants may fear further financial exclusion at the hands of the PA. Regarding female respondents specifically, some may have indicated 'disagree' based on their concerns about their status on this issue. Concerns may emerge based on comments by scholars that because almost all documentation will appear under the names of male refugees, females may be excluded from components of the compensation payout (Abdo 2000). Concerns about

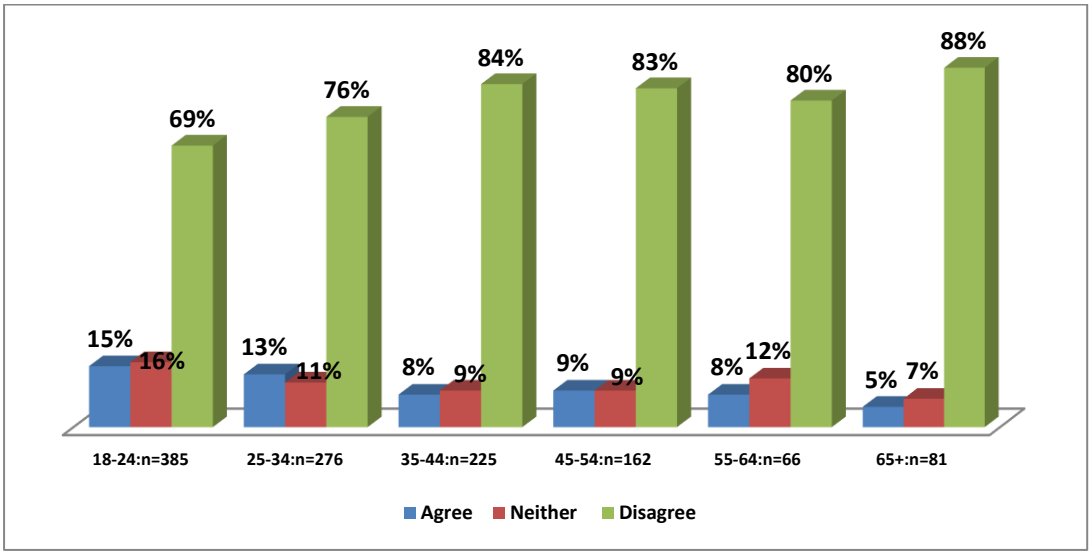
being excluded in this way have certainly led female activists to propose that non-government and non-official gender based organisations supervise the preparation of compensation claims (Abdo 2000). In this regard, Brynen (2013) argues that a per capita compensation system would more equally distribute the allocated compensation to men and women. This is unlike the claim-based methods where male refugees have a privileged position in ownership and inheritance laws (Brynen 2013, p. 268). The inheritance system in Islamic law and the distribution of wealth may not grant women and men equal status, rights and conditions in the event of compensation. This is irrespective of the fact that women and men have equally experienced the conditions of refugee-hood and the daily suffering due to the 1948 Exodus.

Consideration of the sacredness of the right of return to both genders, by all age groups, and irrespective of political affiliation – along with the extent of their losses due to the Exodus – may further help to explain why there is much less acceptance of compensation if it is proposed as a substitute for this right.

6.4.4 Accepting compensation from Israel if Israel accepts to pay it, by age

Throughout the peace process, Israeli officials considered compensation provisions to be paid to Palestinians as a demonstration of goodwill and as a humane response (Gal 2013). In addition, compensation was to be provided as an alternative to the right of return, with the amount of compensation to be fixed and modest, and not based on the value of property abandoned in 1948 (Peretz 1995; Hassawi 2008, p.222). Israel did state as a condition, however, that all parties accept that the compensation payout was to be the last claim against the state of Israel. It is noted that Abu Sitta (1999) argues Palestinian refugees should have both the right of return and access to compensation, with those who do not wish to return being entitled to compensation for their land as well for their property. He thus refutes the notion of “return or compensation” and claims it is misleading.

Figure 6.6: Refugees would accept compensation if Israel accepts it, by age, 2013, % disagree.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1200

Figure 6.6 reports the results to the survey item canvassing whether participants would accept compensation from Israel if Israel accepts to pay it. The results identify the proportions of participants according to age who agreed, disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposition. The Figure shows older participants were most likely (88%) to disagree with the proposition. Still, the majority of 18-24 year-old participants (69%) also disagreed with the proposition. These results suggest a lack of trust by the surveyed refugees towards Israel in relation to the payment of compensation. This lack of trust may in turn correlate to their daily interactions with the occupying forces, the inadequacy of proposals by Israel on the Palestinian refugee right of return claim, and their experiences of general hardship on the ground.

It is noted that the level of disagreement was most pronounced among older participants. This appears to be consistent with other reported results where older refugees are generally unwilling to concede any ground at all if it is at the expense of the right of return (see for example Section 5.5.1 results reporting the age-related differences among surveyed refugees on their commitment to Resolution 194). Furthermore, the result showing fewer younger surveyed refugees (18-34 year-olds) disagreed with the proposition to accept compensation if Israel agrees to pay it may be due to having known no other way of life outside of the refugee camp experience.

Overall, however, the results suggest that refugees across all age groups are generally opposed to accepting compensation even it is agreed to by Israel. By and large, refugees are hesitant to accept a compensation proposal because of the lack of clarity that remains around the refugee issue and political settlement (Brynen 2013). Furthermore, in my experiences refugees living in the West Bank view the provision of compensation prior to reaching a solution as manipulating the right of return issue and as a symbolic mark of defeat. This is reflected in Samara's (2014) assertion that compensation for financial hardship is not an alternative option to a return to one's homeland. Samara rejects the idea of allowing compensation to override the right of return and argues that while compensation may be a national right it is not an individual right which may be exercised at the expense of right of return.

6.5 Conclusion

The debate over compensation and right of return continues to have a central position in the narratives of Palestinians who are living in refugee camps in Palestine or in exile. In fact, the debate appears to become sharper as time goes by. In light of this, this chapter introduced and discussed participants' responses to four survey questions designed to examine the current attitudes held by Palestinian refugees towards compensation and whether it can be accepted to the exclusion of the right of return.

The finding reported in this chapter was that refugees are less focused on Israel paying compensation and more focused on ensuring that compensation is not delivered at the expense of the right of return. Indeed, when the Palestinian refugees' views on the conditions under which compensation should be accepted were canvassed, it emerged that most refugees across all age groups were not prepared to accept compensation if it was unlikely that they would return to their home-towns in 1948. In addition, most refugees across all age groups would not accept compensation even if some refugees had already accepted compensation claims. Notably, participants aged 65-74 years were the most likely to disagree with both propositions. These findings reflect strong opposition among the surveyed refugees to negotiating or accepting compensation at all, and that this opposition is barely mitigated even where compensation is advanced by the PA and accepted by other refugees. When

reflecting on these findings in relation to key demographic variables, it emerged that these views are somewhat less strongly held by younger refugees and woen; older refugees and those reporting affiliation to independent political parties are less likely to accept compensation as a solution, and there is no substantial difference between the genders on the compensation issue.

Overall, most participants refused the concept of compensation at the exclusion of right of return and thus the research sub-question as to the extent to which Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank accept compensation as an outcome to the exclusion of right of return was clearly answered. Furthermore, this chapter highlighted the literature pointing to Israel's rejection out of hand the Palestinian demands for compensation based on the associated obligation for Israel to accept responsibility for the refugee issue and the occupation of Palestinian territory. As such, the Palestinian refugee claim for compensation have thus far enjoyed little recognition or legitimacy throughout the negotiations. The following chapter will examine participants view regarding the resettlement option as a last element of right of right of return.

7 THE REFUGEE CAMPS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS RESETTLEMENT

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the issue of compensation and its implications for Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return. The findings indicated that there was a general level of hostility among the surveyed Palestinian refugees towards negotiating compensation and that this is consistent with anxieties over trading off compensation for the right of return. This chapter discusses resettlement as a resolution option for the Palestinian refugee and its impact on the right of return. Clarifying the current perspectives of the Palestinian refugee on resettlement is crucial to this research thesis. Resettlement has always been a primary issue in the PIC and is inextricably linked to international law through UN Resolution 194 and to the broader issue of the right of return. As such, resettlement is similar to the issue of compensation in that it remains one of the main alternative options to right of return presented to the Palestinian refugees as a possible resolution. This chapter begins by defining and explaining resettlement in the context of the Palestinian refugee situation. This is followed by brief background information including the conflicting positions held by Palestinians and Israelis on the matter of resettlement. The chapter then discusses the attempts by the Israeli government and international bodies to resettle Palestinians in host states and other locations soon after the Exodus. A broader discussion on these elements provides the contextual framework to explore Palestinian refugees' views of resettlement more directly.

Indeed, a key objective in this thesis towards answering the stated research questions is to elucidate the views of Palestinian refugees on the issue of permanent resettlement. Therefore, given the proposals by successive Israeli governments for the resettlement of refugees in Arab states or host locations in general, and the lack of current data on the Palestinian refugees' views on this issue, the participants were asked to respond to two survey items: where Palestinian refugees should be permanently settled; and what their attitudes are with respect to resettlement and camps conditions (including camp redevelopment). To understand the Palestinian

refugee views on these issues more closely, their responses to these survey items have been analysed according to age and gender. Resettlement is included as a key component of Resolution 194. This chapter therefore provides insights into the current perspective of the Palestinian refugee living in the West Bank regarding resettlement and its relationship to the right of return.

7.2 Resettlement

Resettlement in a third country is promoted by the UNHCR (2002, p. 3) in partnership with the international community as one of the "three durable solutions to the plight of refugees" – along with safe and dignified voluntary repatriation to one's country-of-origin and integration in the host country. As such, resettlement is conceptualised as one of the key pillars in the system of international protection, as well as a lasting solution, for refugees who are unable to voluntary repatriate or integration into the host country. Resettlement is therefore purported by the UNHCR (2002, p. 3) to be "the concrete expression of a commitment to refugee protection and to the promotion of human rights".

In the context of the PIC, resettlement emerges as a "possible political solution to the Palestinian refugee problem" that involves the full integration of Palestinian refugees into the economic and social life of the host country (Masriyeh-Hazboun 1995, p. 1). As Goodwin-Gill (1990, p. 38) explains, if resettlement is to be successful, it is integration that "allows the refugee to attain a degree of self-sufficiency, to participate in the social and economic life of the community and to retain what might be described [...] as a degree of personal identity and integrity". It is not surprising therefore that resettlement is broadly associated with numerous distinct but interrelated dimensions including economic (e.g. employment and housing); health (e.g. physical and psychological); socio-cultural (e.g. support networks); and spatial (e.g. local and regional settlement) (Fozdar and Hartley 2013).

When considered in relation to the peace process negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis, the resettlement of refugees is envisioned by Israel as integration into other Arab nations, whereas for the surveyed Palestinian refugees, resettlement is envisioned as a return to their homeland or integration into the West Bank – or into host locations for those refugees living elsewhere (Masriyeh- Hazboun 1995). Notably, the literature commonly points to the Palestinian refugee issue from Israel's

perspective as a fundamental economic problem that may be resolved through resettlement into third-party countries (Masriyeh- Hazboun 1995). Of interest to this thesis, however, is whether Palestinian refugees think of resettlement as a possible solution (according to Resolution 194) and, if so, what implications this has for the Palestinian right of return.

7.3 Palestinian position on resettlement

The resettlement of Palestinian refugees is articulated in UN Resolution 194 (Peretz 1993). There are, however, differences in opinions among officials, particularly PA President, Mahmoud Abbas, and the elite leadership group within the organisation as to how resettlement should be realised. Throughout the peace process, most Palestinian refugees have continued to refuse the option of resettlement in pursuit of their right of return. However, the official position of the PA is to establish a Palestinian state which involves the return of Palestinian refugees to this state and the resettlement of displaced and exiled Palestinians in their current locations.

The official position of the PA emerged from negotiations with the Israeli government and other semi-official parties (i.e. Palestinian scholars) throughout the peace process and during secret talks. As such, in 1995 the Belin–Abu Mazen document (MidEastWeb 2003) proposed financial and economic support be provided to Palestinian refugees residing in refugee camps to support their resettlement and rehabilitation. In addition, the document stressed the need for the Israeli government and PA to continue to work with Arab governments to resolve the issue of resettling refugee populations within Arab states (MidEastWeb 2003).

Several solutions were proposed according to the official position (i.e. from the PA leadership) and the semi-official position (i.e. Palestinian scholars and elite) on the resettlement issue. They included projects to improve the living conditions of refugees in the form of rehabilitation and resettlement in Sinai, Jordan and Latin America for instance (see Section 8.4.1) at the exclusion of right of return (Mehsin 2011). Palestinians however have continued to reject these proposals, irrespective of their source (the PA, scholars and the elite) as evidenced by the rejection of the Geneva Accord in 2002. In this instance, criticism of the attempt in the Geneva Accord to

waive right of return in favour of resettlement was voiced by different political groups including the Fatah movement (Brynen 2004).

Resettlement in Arabic is translated as *tawtiin* and is used when reference is made to the integration of refugees into their host location rather than into a third country (Dumper 2007). For Palestinian refugees, *tawtiin* carries a negative connotation as it implies relinquishing the right of return. Moreover, most political parties are of the same view, as revealed in the statement from Ramzi Rabah, a senior member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine:

> *That the party rejects the change or interference of the refugee camps, as well they resist its liquidation or the transfer of refugees from it under rehabilitation projects.* (cited in Samara 2000, p. 92; researcher's translation)

Official opposition to resettlement schemes that overrule the right of return is also clearly voiced by the Hamas leadership. Ismael Haniyeh, Vice President of Hamas, rejects the idea of resettlement of Palestinian refugees within Jordan or any other host location (Middle East Monitor 2014). In addition, Haniyeh claims that resettlement projects aim to end the Palestinian cause (Middle East Monitor 2014). Even though resettlement schemes continue to feature in Palestinian-Israeli official and semi-official negotiations, refugees generally view these schemes as evidence of the political agenda to eliminate right of return (Abd Rabbeh 1996).

7.4 Israel's position on resettlement

The issue of the resettlement of Palestinian refugees continues to be a significant topic of major debate among politicians and scholars in Israel. How Palestinians were to be resettled understandably received great attention soon after 1948 and a number of different schemes to resettle refugees were attempted at this time. Given the lack of success in these attempts and the highly charged political nature of the issue, however, resettlement has remained an active agenda item during the peace process. The ongoing debate among scholars and officials offers limited solutions given their insistence on separating resettlement from right of return. This is important because central to the argument in this thesis is that resettlement is an integral aspect of right of return as stated in Resolution 194.

Arguably, all of the resettlement schemes proposed by successive Israeli government have been motivated by political conditions on the ground. Indeed, the schemes denied the return of refugees to their homeland and attempted to settle the issue on the expense of Arab states and the international community in general.

7.4.1 Palestinian refugee resettlement schemes by Israeli governments

Successive governments of Israel have sought from the beginning to resolve the Palestinian refugee issue through the resettlement of refugees in host Arab countries (Eickelman and Ginat 2001). One need only consider the following comment from Shlomo Gazit, a retired Major General in the Israeli army, for evidence of this intent. He claims that "refugees must resettle in countries that have a similar religious and cultural background" (Gazit 2001, p. 237) to appreciate this sentiment. Israeli government officials pursued resettlement projects and secret plans that aimed to transfer Palestinian refugees from camps in Jordan, West Bank, Lebanon and Gaza to locations in North Africa (Masalha 2010). Masriyeh-Hazboun (1996) argues these resettlement proposals were made to put an end to the refugee camps because they represented a visible reminder of the Exodus and a focal point of Palestinian identity. The assumption is that dismantling of refugee camps and the reshuffling of refugees to urban areas will end refugees' connection to their homeland (Masriyeh-Hazboun 1995).

Some of the resettlement initiatives concentrated on removing refugees from Gaza to minimise overpopulation of the camp. For instance, in the 1950s, the Israeli government attempted to relocate and resettle Palestinian refugees in Arab states in particular including Egypt, Syria and Iraq (Al Husseini 2007). In addition, during this era Israeli diplomats stressed the need to resettled Palestinian refugees away from the shores of Palestine (Masalha 2010). The plan was to resettle up to 4,000 Arabs from Israel and a similar number of refugees from neighbouring Arab States in Italian-held Libya and Somalia (Masalha 2010, p. 130). This scheme was secretly negotiated between senior Israeli officials and was motivated by the political and economic conditions in Libya during at this time (Talhami 2003). The plan was aborted, however, due to unwanted publicity which impacted Zionist agents in Libya (Masalha 2010, p. 141).

In contrast, a scheme to resettle Palestinian refugees from the Gaza Strip to the Sinai was accepted by the Egyptian government due to international pressure and to avoid a war with Israel (Mehisn 2011). The scheme was endorsed by UNRWA and involved the resettlement of 12,000 families without relinquishing their right of return (Mehisn 2011). The scheme was short-lived however as Palestinians took to the streets in an uprising to demonstrate their disapproval (Mehisn 2011). The collapse of the Sinai scheme did not mark the end, however, and resettlement schemes via the transfer of refugee populations outside of their homeland continued. For instance, a proposal was put forward to resettle refugees in Jordan with the promise of economic aid and development projects (Telhami 2003). According to Abu Sitta (2000), the Jordanian government accepted the proposal provided Israel withdrew to the partition plan borders which allocated 54% of the land to the Jewish state. In addition, further attempts were undertaken to resettle Palestinian refugees in Latin America (Klich 1996). Indeed, a proposal was put forward to exchange Palestinians for Argentinian Jews, a preferred option among many Israelis as Argentina has no common borders with Israel (Klich 1996).

There have been numerous plans, most of which have failed and/or been staunchly resisted, which may have impacted refugee attitudes and thus may inform the analysis of the survey data. For instance, soon after the commencement of the peace process between the PLO and Israeli government during the 1990s, the Sholomo Gazit project was proposed. This proposal argued for the resettlement of some 1948 refugees and 1967 refugees to the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Mehsin 2011). According to Gazit (1995), the resettlement process could take up to five years as it was necessary to build new homes for the refugees. As part of the proposal the refugees would have an independent municipality and be provide with assistance to build new homes. Health, social services, and education would be provided in the West Bank by UNRWA. Gazit suggested replacing Resolution 194 with a new UNGA resolution which recognised the pain suffered by Palestinians since *Al Nakba*, and which acknowledged the need for Israel to actively participate in rehabilitation programs for refugees. Gazit also proposed that this new resolution must be supported by Israel. In this proposal, however, Gazit called on Palestinians to renounce their right of return in absolute terms (Zureik 1996, pp. 115 -116). In contrast, Shimon Peres (1993) argued for a phase solution where Israel accepts the relocation of some refugees into Israel under

the family reunification scheme, while also allowing a substantial number of refugees to return to a future Palestinian state.

Unquestionably, Gazit's proposal called for compromise by both parties on the issue of Palestinians' right of return. However, under the leadership of Ariel Sharon, the Israeli position shifted towards an unfeasible solution. Sharon's solution again ignored the refugees' right of return claim and instead involved only the renovation of refugee camps and the rehabilitation of refugees with the help of the international community (Edwan 2005). In addition, the Sharon government considered the exchange of territories with Jordan, Egypt and Syria to resettle the refugees (Edwan 2005). Appendix 7 provides a detailed discussion of the political agendas underlining the various resettlement schemes proposed by Israel as presented in the literature.

7.5 Survey questions on resettlement

Many refugees living in camps have resided there for a long time and been prevented from returning to their original homes. Moreover, camp conditions are generally acknowledged as insufficient to lead a normal life and contribute to the economic and social marginalisation of refugees (El Sakka 2011). As a result, camp refugees may feel a sense of dislocation from the rest of the Palestinian society. Furthermore, as Hanafi (2010) points out, the highly restrictive governance of the refugee camps has contributed to the deterioration of camp conditions and the manipulation of the urban environment in the name of security. Lastly, the refugee camps are also acknowledged as a reminder of the ethnic cleansing and dispossession of the indigenous people by the Zionists in 1948 (Masalha 2010).

As such, they play an important role in refugee identity formation and socio-political existence. Indeed, despite the discrimination and harsh living conditions, the camps have emerged as unique settings that symbolise the Palestinian revolutionary and political movement (El Sakka 2011).

7.5.1 Where to settle?

To gain new insights into the current views of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank on where Palestinian refugees should be permanently resettled, the following item was included in the survey of participants

Where should Palestinian refugees be permanently settled?

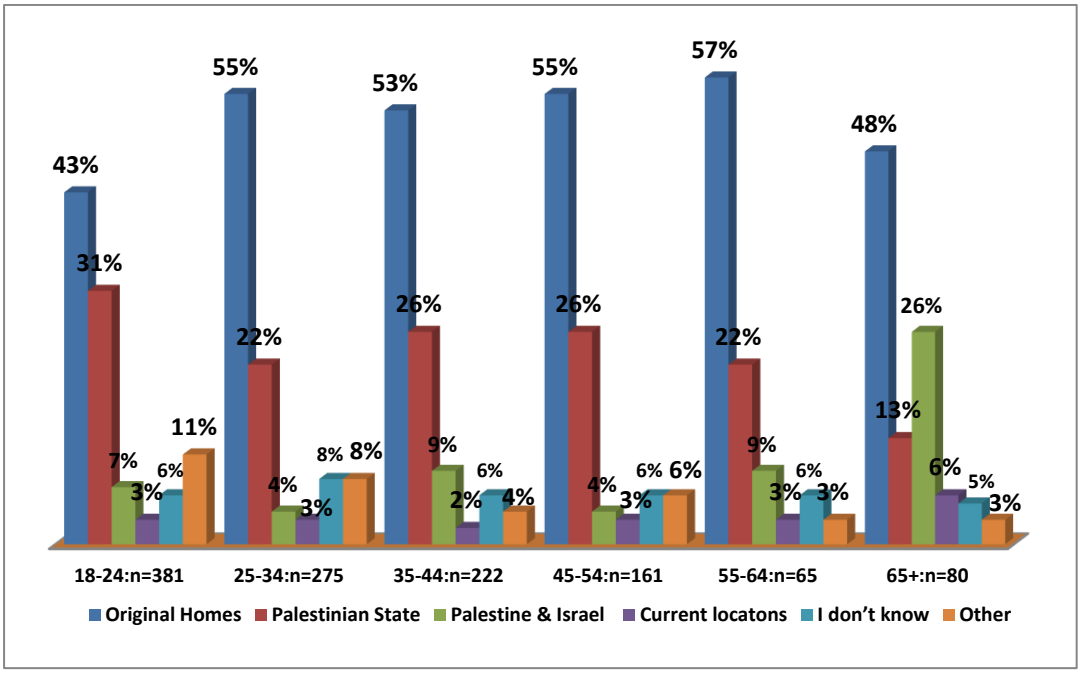
The options put to the participants included resettlement within Israel, a future Palestinian state, within either a future Palestinian state or Israel, their current locations (i.e. refugee camps), or elsewhere. The rationale for including this item in the survey emerges from the possibility that refugees' conceptualisations of resettlement according to Resolution 194 may be subject to change due to their continued economic and social marginalisation.

Figure 7.1 shows that 51% of the surveyed refugees overall favoured resettlement in their original homes. In addition, 23% of surveyed refugees nominated resettlement within Palestinian State as their preferred choice. This is in stark contrast to just 3% of respondents who favoured 'current location' as the resettlement option. This outcome is not surprising and is generally supported in the wider literature. Ali (2013) for example highlight refugees' attachment to their original homes and assert that the past continues to reinforce itself in the present, and this unending circle is reflected in the narrative of Al Nakba which continues to be told in different forms. Furthermore, the camp is a form of connection to their original homes for many refugees as they see and smell Palestine before 1948 through the camp.

In terms of the outcomes by age group, the survey results show that most respondents across all age groups want resettlement in their original homes (51%), with the second highest response being resettlement in a Palestinian state. For the 65+ years-old respondents, their second preference was for resettlement in their homes in what is now Israel. This different outcome may be explained by the fact that some older refugees may be prepared to accept resettlement so long as they are returned to their homeland regardless of the state authority. However, 'current location' as the preferred option for resettlement was not the least chosen outcome for participants aged 65+, which is somewhat contrary to expectations. This may be due the fact that some older refugees feel established within the camps and see the return to their homeland as potentially involving a return to Israel or living directly under Israeli authority. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that older refugees hold out little hope for significant change after so many years of exile and displacement. Lastly, the different results for the 65+ age group may reflect the fact that the concept of

resettlement is not acceptable to some refugees because of its potential to compromise the right of return as granted by Resolution 194.

Figure 7.1: Palestinian refugee perceptions about where Palestinian refugees should be permanently settled by age, 2013,%.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n = 1,184

Interestingly, 53-57% of all surveyed participants aged 25-64 years indicated that they preferred to resettle to their *original homes* inside Israel. Although '*original homes*' was the preferred resettlement choice for 18-24 years also, it was not a majority choice (43%), with their second most preferred resettlement option (i.e. the *Palestinian state*) at 31%. The lack of majority choice in this age group for resettlement in their original homes or in a future Palestinian state may be because they do not have direct experience of pre-1948 village life and believe life outside the refugee camps may offer them stability, provided it is an outcome of the right of return. This implies that refugees of different age groups will consider resettlement differently in some cases.

What is arguably more insightful is the consistently low support for 'current location' across all age groups. Participants may view permanent settlement other than in their original home or Palestinian State as a form of betrayal to the cause and to the people. Malkki (2001) illustrates this view in her research of Hutu refugees in western

Tanzania. She points out that refugee status was valued and protected as a sign of the ultimate temporariness of exile and of the refusal to become naturalised; that is, to put down roots in a place to which one did not belong.

The next section presents and discusses the survey data results pertaining to Palestinian refugees' views of camp conditions and resettlement, redevelopment, or dismantlement of the camps.

7.5.2 Resettlement, redevelopment, or dismantlement?

Refugee camps were established soon after the Exodus as a temporary settlement to receive people fleeing from the attack of Zionist groups. The camps are subject to constant expansion however to host new generations of refugees (Badil 2009). The camps are integral to refugees' sense of identity and belonging, despite their harsh conditions (Gabiam 2012, p. 153). This identity is based on social relationships which in most cases is associated with village life before 1948. Malkki (2001) describes the naturalised identity between people and place is reflected and created in the course of others. This naturalisation of identity based on the camps and the people within them may demonstrate the emotional ties the refugees have to Palestine before the Exodus.

The conditions of refugee camps continue to deteriorate due to lack of aid from international donors, miserable living conditions, and highly restrictive control by Israeli authority (Talhami 2003). Several plans by the Israeli government to resettle Palestinian refugees in the West Bank by dismantling the camps and replacing them with new housing units have emerged since 1967 (Zureik 2002; Masriyeh-Hazboun 1996). Such plans were direct Israeli measures to promote security in response to political and revolutionary acts conducted by Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank (Masriyeh-Hazboun 1995). In fact, these projects may appear as another form of displacement and social dislocation. Shifting the refugees to another location within the West Bank or improving housing unit conditions does not satisfy the needs of many Palestinians who have been waiting to return to their original homes since 1948. Thus, relocating refugees to another location is a failure to address the real issue and ignores the authentic refugee narrative and their longing to return to their hometowns. The rejection of these resettlement plans is evident in the refugees' movements and actions. As Ali (2013) pointed out, during the 2011 "March of Return"

commemorating Al Nakba and the rejection of resettlement. In addition, this march marked refugees' clear refusal of resettlement as an alternative to them exercising their right of return.

Since the establishment of the PA, refugee camps have been managed by the Popular Committee. Under the management of this Committee, new development and rehabilitation projects have focused on redeveloping the camps (ICG 2014). It is argued that rehabilitation programs do not waive the refugee right of return or resettlement in the current camps (Hanafi 2010). Moreover, politicians view new development projects as attempts to enhance the living conditions in the camps until a solution is reached (Yahya 1999). In contrast, a number of refugee movements have been mobilised within the West Bank and Gaza Strip that resist the rehabilitation projects and clearly call for right of return to be exercised (Massad 1999).

For some, the camps represent ongoing suffering, difficult living conditions, and stalled mobility and development. For others, the camps are associated with their sense of identity and belonging connected directly to the political cause and the Exodus of 1948. To these refugees, living in the camp is a national duty that preserves the right of return and symbolises the Exodus. Moreover, a sense of belonging to Palestine, particularly to one's home before the Exodus, does not end despite years of displacement. As such Poole (1999) argues, a nation involves a conception of the community to which the members of the nation belong. Therefore, it is somewhat naïve of politicians to believe that refugee commitment to the right of return to Palestine can simply be met with resettlement in a different geographical location. The reality for Palestinian refugees is that the West Bank is surrounded by Israeli settlements that prevent a viable Palestinian state. Nusseibeh (2001) even called on Palestinian refugees to replace the dream of the past with a new dream for the future—a dream which requires them, however, to give up their right of return (Ben-Meir 2008).

The merits of preserving the right of return through the refusal to develop the refugee camps continue to be an issue of debate. For instance, Jalal Al-Husseini (2010) argues that Palestinian refugees no longer see the sustainable improvement to the camp living conditions as a substitute to the right of return. The notion of the camp as a space that preserves the right of return may therefore have different meanings to refugees of

different ages. It is therefore important to determine how this reality impacts the opinion of refugees as to the capacity of the West Bank to accommodate more refugees.

The survey instrument therefore included six items relating to refugees' perceptions of different camp-related outcomes including the implementation of residential projects, dismantling versus redeveloping the camps, and the suitability of resettling new refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. These two locations were included specifically because they have been targeted as resettlement locations. The participants provided 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'disagree' responses.

The rationale for these survey items is that a future state of Palestine very much depends on a peace settlement for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, particularly in relation to their borders and the refugee camps. Moreover, as emphasised above, there are conflicting politics on how to deal with resettlement and the ever-increasing number of Palestinian refugees residing in the camps. Therefore, the issue of resettlement within a future Palestinian state may hinder the peace process if an agreement cannot be reached that satisfies the ongoing needs of refugees. In addition, support for the option to resettle refugees in the West Bank may be dwindling as the current data attempts to highlight. The rejection of this outcome is associated with the issue of right of return and the refugees' attachment to their original homes.

At a glance, the data presented in Table 7.1 shows most participants (46%) agreed with the proposition to develop new residential projects compared to 38% disagree (item 1). Regarding camp conditions, 47% disagreed that the camps should be dismantled compared to 38% indicating 'agree' (item 2). Similarly, 46% disagreed that the camps should be redeveloped compared to 38% indicating 'agree' (item 3). Although the results for items 2 and 3 appear to contradict the results for item 1, this difference may reflect the view held by many refugees that refraining from dismantling / redeveloping the current camps is a way to preserve their refugee status until they can exercise their right of return. In addition, the participants' views of the adequacy of refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza to accommodate more people via the resettlement of new refugees were explored (items 4 and 6 in the Table below):

Table 7.1: Palestinian refugee perceptions of camp conditions, resettlement, redevelopment and dismantlement 2013, %.

Statement	Agree	Neither	Disagree
A new residential project should be developed instead of the current camps	556 46%	194 16%	450 38%
The refugee camps should be dismantled.	452 38%	185 15%	563 47%
It is possible to redevelop the refugee camps to be able to continue living in them	462 38%	184 15%	554 46%
The West Bank can accommodate a large number of repatriated refugee	285 24%	201 17%	714 60%
The Gaza Strip can accommodate a large number of repatriated refugee	183 15%	161 13%	856 71%
The condition of the refugee camps is adequate for accommodating new refugees	217 18%	147 12%	836 70%

Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n = 1,200

To account for the similar number of respondents indicating a preference for camp redevelopment or camp dismantlement, it may be worthwhile to consider the notion of resistance to occupation more broadly. Put simply, remaining in the refugee camps despite the harsh conditions may be understood in terms of refugee pride and resistance towards the occupying power. As pointed out by Schiocchet (2012, p.67), there is view among some Palestinian refugees that the camps' "existence = resistance". This sense of identity and belonging to the cause as represented through the existence of the camps continues to assign great importance to the right of return narrative. In this narrative, memories of the Exodus and its consequences are engraved in the minds of refugees and Al Nakba survivors (Ali 2013). In fact, some refugees had the opportunity to move out of the camp and resettle in more urbanised areas. They chose to remain in the camps, however, to maintain their family ties and their connection to their places of origin (Eickelman and Ginat 2001, p. 142). These findings present as clear opposition to proposals made by various scholars (e.g. Arzt 1996) and politicians (e.g. Yigal Allon and Shalomo Gazit 2001) about the resettlement of refugees within a future Palestinian state.

The findings related to the inadequacy of the camp to accommodate new returnees support the assertion from scholars (e.g. Zureik 2002) that some refugees continue to reject the plans by successive Israeli governments after 1967 to settle refugees in the West Bank camps. The participants' sense of empowerment to reject the resettlement plans is based on their perceptions of the current conditions on the camps in addition to their longing to return to their original land.

Table 7.2 presents the data results for the participants' perceptions of camp conditions, resettlement, redevelopment and dismantlement according to age group. When the results are considered overall, it is notable that there is an (albeit relatively inconsistent) age gradient to the percentage outcomes for almost all of the survey items. For example, from 60% to 79% of respondents across all age groups disagreed with the proposition that camp conditions are adequate for accommodating new refugees. Alternatively, from 5% (65+ years) to 16% (18-24 year-olds) of surveyed refugees indicated 'neither' for this response which again suggests that younger refugees are less definitive in their views on this outcome compared to their older refugees.

Indeed, the lower numbers of 18-24 year-olds (60%) indicating 'disagree' is difficult to explain given that all age group of Palestinian refugees are subjected to the same camp conditions. However, the disparate results for the 18-24 year-old group are reflective of outcomes reported for other survey items. For instance, it was reported above that only 49% 18-24 year-olds indicated a commitment to the right of return as articulated in Resolution 194 compared to 72% of 65+ year-olds (see Section 6.5.1). In addition, it was reported above that only 62% of 18-24 year-olds indicated they disagreed with the proposition to accept compensation compared to 85% of 65+ year-olds (see Section 7.4.2).

Table 7.2: Palestinian refugee perceptions of camp conditions, resettlement, redevelopment and dismantlement according to age group, disagree, 2013, %.

	AGE					
	18-24 n=385	25-34 n=276	35-44 n=22	45-54 n=16	55-64 n=66	65+ n=81
A new residential project should be developed instead of the current camps						
Agree	52	48	44	44	47	27
Neither	19	19	14	12	12	10
Disagree	29	33	42	44	41	63
The refugee camps should be dismantled.						
Agree	31	35	47	48	42	22
Neither	20	20	10	13	9	8
Disagree	49	45	44	39	49	70
It is possible to redevelop the refugee camps to be able to continue living in them						
Agree	46	43	30	34	38	24
Neither	20	15	15	12	10	6
Disagree	35	42	55	54	52	70
The West Bank is able to accommodate a large number of repatriated refugee						
Agree	23	25	25	22	26	16
Neither	20	17	16	12	18	14
Disagree	57	58	59	66	56	70
The Gaza Strip is able to accommodate a large number of repatriated refugees						
Agree	18	18	11	9	14	12
Neither	16	13	13	11	9	14
Disagree	66	69	76	80	77	74
The condition of the refugee camps is adequate for accommodating new refugees						
Agree	24	17	15	10	12	19
Neither	16	15	7	11	11	5
Disagree	60	68	78	79	77	76

Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n = 1,200

In terms of the proposition that a new residential project should be developed instead of the current camps, more than twice as many surveyed refugees aged 65+ than refugees aged 18-24 years disagreed with the proposition (63% versus 29%). To explain this outcome, one may consider the assertion from Yahya (1999) that projects supporting the development of camps to facilitate the re-settlement of refugees within them are a form of displacement and an interruption to the refugee narrative of the present. This is reflected in the findings from his study of refugees in the West bank

and Gaza Strip which also clearly indicate that older generation refugees have the desire to remain in their current residence. In addition, life in the refugee camps is an integral component in the refugees' collective memory of the return narrative. As such, many refugees oppose their development as a form of resettlement. As Ali (2013) explains, for many refugees an end to the Exodus will only take place when the refugee right of return is exercised. In turn, developing the camps will not provide a resolution to the right of return claim.

Lastly, the result related to the issue of dismantling the camps is worth discussing. Camp dismantlement as an option of resettlement is well-canvassed in the literature and what is typically acknowledged is that the visibility of the refugee camps is a constant reminder of the Exodus and need to resolve the issue. As argued by Masalha (2010), the camps are highly visible and are a hugely symbolic reminder of the ethnic cleansing that unfolded. Furthermore, Bowker (2003) posits that many local and international actors are inclined to view the existence of the camps and UNRWA's role in them as a significant factor in the refugees' dream of return. Masriyeh-Hazboun (1996) also asserts that Israel seeks to dismantle the refugee camps because they continue to be a constant reminder of the refugee problem. Al Zbin (2007) also highlights the significance of the camps, claiming they remind refugees of their right of return and their connection to the land. The results presented in Table 7.2 on the proposition that the "refugee camps should be dismantled" should be considered in light of these views. As shown in the Table, a clear majority (70%) of respondents aged 65+ disagreed with the proposition compared to only a minority of participants from all other age groups (ranging from 39% for those 45-54 years to 49% for those aged18-24 years).

Although this result is tempered to some extent, however, by the small number of respondents aged 65+ in the study sample, the reluctance by older refugees to dismantle the camps is a phenomenon also highlighted by Ginat and Eickelman (2001). The authors discuss how older inhabitants of the camps oppose changes to camp life and refuse to build settlements outside the camps as a result of their determination to return to their villages in Palestine before 1948 (Eickelman and Ginat 2001, p. 141). Indeed, the refugee narrative is directly associated with the

condition of the camps in that living in the camp is regarded as a type of honour by most refugees (Mehsin 2011).

Therefore, the proposition to relocate or dismantle their homes is a vexed issue to some degree for the camp dwellers. The camps empower the refugee claim of return to Palestine before the Exodus (Mehsin 2011). They do this by imposing pressure on Israel and the international community to respect the right of return claim in any resolution to the refugee problem. In fact, the camps are still regarded by many refugees as temporary living arrangements until they are returned to their original homes.

The dismantling of the refugee camps and resettling refugees comfortably in other areas may thus be regarded as an attempt to diminish the refugee the refugee right of return claim (Masalha 2010). For this reason, there is not a majority view among refugees to accept changes to the camps, and that fact may explain the reason why many see the importance instead of living in the current conditions to maintain their identity and the right of return to their homeland. This conclusion reflects findings by Yahya (1999) that, despite the harsh conditions in the camps, many refugees remain unwilling to change residence unless they were granted the right to return to their homes and towns.

The results in Table 7.2 compliments to some extent the findings presented in previous studies of refugees conducted in Jordan and Lebanon. As a number of researchers have noted in the literature older- aged refugees are not open to the idea of renovating their homes. Rather, most are prepared to accept the harsh living conditions and wait to return to their homes as a way of rejecting resettlement proposals (Gabiam 2012). In contrast, younger refugees are more in favour of building new residential projects as a way to improve their living conditions. Farah (2009) asserts that younger refugees in Jordanian camps more easily differentiate between their efforts to improve their livelihood and their political positions—in contrast to their parent and grandparents. Improvements to living conditions are associated with the idea of moving out of the camp and rebuilding a new life in neighbouring communities. Notably, the proposition put to the refugees implies a number of economic and social factors are at work. For instance, achieving economic stability may lead younger refugees to move out of the camp despite their refugee

status remaining with them (Zaid 2013). Relocation from the refugee camp to a major city or surrounding area may thus allow them to escape the harsh living conditions but not their identities as refugees (Zaid 2013).

The participants' perceptions of resettlement and camp conditions related to the seven items were also analysed according to gender. The findings presented in Table 7.3 show the level of agreement by Palestinian men and women refugees towards the stated propositions. Overall, it is evident that there is relative alignment between the genders regarding the percentage outcomes for each proposition. In terms of the greatest difference, there was 8% difference for the statement, it is 'possible to redevelop the refugee camps to be able to continue living in them' (43% for females versus 35% for males). There was also a 7% difference by gender on the proposition that the living conditions of the camps in (comparison with other areas in the West Bank) are adequate (35% for female versus 28% for males); and a 7% difference for the proposition that a new residential project should be developed instead of the current camps (50% for female versus 47% for males).

Table 7.3: Palestinian refugee perceptions of camp conditions, resettlement, redevelopment and dismantlement according to gender, agree, 2013, %.

Statement	Gender					
	Male: n=660			Female: n= 540		
	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Agree	Neither	Disagree
A new residential project should be developed instead of the current camps	43	17	40	50	16	34
The refugee camps should be dismantled.	39	15	46	36	16	48
It is possible to redevelop the refugee camps to be able to continue living in them	35	16	49	43	15	42
The living conditions of the camps in comparison with other areas in the West Bank are adequate	28	19	59	35	16	49
The West Bank is able to accommodate a large number of repatriated refugee	24	16	60	24	17	60
The Gaza Strip is able to	15	11	73	15	16	69
accommodate a large number of repatriated refugees	18	12	70	18	12	70
The condition of the refugee camps is adequate for accommodating new refugees	43	17	40	50	16	34

Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n = 1,200

These findings indicate that female participants were generally more accepting of camp redevelopment as a future action compared to male participants. Two explanations may be posited to account for this outcome. First, it may be the case that

the surveyed Palestinian women have developed a unique connection to the camp based on family connections and networks which have evolved over time. Therefore, staying in the camps may be viewed as acceptable by them under certain conditions. Second, it may be that the surveyed female respondents feel redevelopment of the camps will enhance their living standards over the short and medium term. This claim is based on the reality that the women more than the men experience the problems of cramped living (i.e. privacy, cooking and rearing children) on a daily basis.

To qualify this assertion, notwithstanding the reasonable assertion that both women and men have suffered from the Exodus and the ongoing occupation, the underlying assumption in this thesis is there are general gender-based differences in the experiences of displacement. For instance, it is widely acknowledged that the crowdedness of refugee camps does not offer Palestinian women the privacy they need (Afifi et al. 2016). Therefore, they may regard initiatives to redevelop the camps as a way to achieve better living conditions for their family as well as for themselves. What I argue, however, is that the Palestinian women participants' greater willingness to consider camp redevelopment as an acceptable future action should not necessarily be interpreted as a greater willingness to forego their right of return.

In short, the Palestinian refugees may see the refugee camps in 'proxy' ways that carry different meanings. For, some, it represents the symbolism of the cause that must stay until the right of return is achieved. For others, it means the connection to the past and the evidence of the Exodus. When talking to my younger brother about his connection to the land he said "the camp is where I grew up, I would rather live here and die here, here I formed my relationships, attended school and started my family". The camp carries my father's memory that I will not touch unless we return to our original village. His statement made realise that the camps continue to exist because of the failure to exercise the right of return.

7.6 Conclusion

The issue of the resettlement of Palestinian refugee has been apparent since Al Nakba and the creation of the first refugee camps. Proposed solutions have focused on developing the camps to improve living conditions or on dismantling the camps altogether. In addition, solutions have focused on granting refugees citizenship within current host states. As such, the central issue of the Palestinian claim of right to return to their original homes has not been addressed. Indeed, despite many proposals to resettle refugees they have invariably excluded the right of return claim and as the findings presented in this chapter clearly indicated, have been rejected by Palestinian refugees. Seven items were included in the survey instrument to access the current views of the Palestinian refugee on the issue of resettlement. As a whole, the items covered the topics of where to resettle; the current conditions of camps for resettlement; the suitability of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for resettlement; and the options to dismantle or redevelop current camps, or to develop new camps for resettlement.

The findings reported in this chapter show just over half of the surveyed refugees favoured resettlement in their original homes, and that most were inclined to reject proposals to change camp conditions. When the results are considered according to age group, older refugees mostly reject propositions that support relocation from the camps or to redevelop the camps, despite the harsh living conditions within the camps. This outcome was explained with references to the nature of attachment to the camp, the refugee sense of identity, their understanding of the refugee narrative, and the significance to the right of return.

In terms of the younger refugees, this chapter suggests that they demonstrate a different kind of connection to camps and, possibly, did not necessarily perceive developing the camps as an automatic dismissal of the right of return. Notwithstanding these differences in perceptions among the age groups, the discussion of the findings demonstrated that refugees of all ages consider the political and social outcomes of any proposed changes to camp conditions. Irrespective of whether the changes to camp conditions are associated with the accommodation of new refugees or returnees, dismantling the camps, or undertaking development

projects, the implications that such changes have for the right of return have been discussed.

The following chapter shifts the focus to the withdrawal of UNRWA services and its implications. Data analysis results are presented and discussed in relation to such factors as refugees' views of who should take over the provision of services, the importance of UNRWA as a platform for recognition of the refugee plight in the international community, and the implications for the Palestinian right of return.

8 THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

8.1 Introduction

Chapter seven examined the views of Palestinian refugees about where to resettle, new development project options, changing camps conditions, and the adequacy of the camps to accommodate new refugees. On some measures, respondents did not present a uniform view about each of these issues and outcomes. However, most indicated a preference for resettlement within their original homes or a Palestinian State, and generally regarded the camps as unable to accommodate an increase in refugee numbers. Chapter eight further examines refugee attitudes towards the role of the UNRWA, particularly after the UNGA's recommendation to phase out the agency in 1995.

Including a focus on UNRWA is integral to this thesis given the importance of its role to provide assistance to Palestine refugees. The recent decision by President Trump to cut $200 million in funding to UNRWA has renewed attention on the exact nature and importance of this assistance, which includes the creation of jobs for refugees, the provision of education and healthcare, and in supporting their local integration (Abu Sneineh 2018; Ferris 2011). In addition, it has been previously established that UNRWA plays a key role in bringing international recognition to the humanitarian response to the plight of Palestinian refugees (Bocco 2009). The phase out of UNRWA has implications for "the dignity and human security of millions of Palestine refugees, in need of emergency food assistance and other support" (Abu Sneineh 2018, para. 2). Examining the attitudes of Palestinian refugees on the phase out of UNRWA is thus important to more fully understand how they envisage international support and indeed the extent to which their voice is heard on the issue of the right of return. A number of quantitative studies have examined refugee attitudes to the right of return and compensation. However, none have measured refugee perceptions of how attempts to phase out UNRWA services may impact on the Palestinian right of return claim. In addition, several arguments have been put forward in relation to UNRWA and its involvement in the refugee question. This thesis therefore seeks to present new data on Palestinian refugees' perspectives of the UNRWA phase out and its implications for their right of return (research sub-question 4).

This chapter has three sections. The first section provides a brief background of the establishment of UNRWA. The second section then presents an overview of scholarly and refugee opinions towards UNRWA to provide a context to understand what refugees think about UNRWA. Contrasting opinions have therefore been canvassed; namely, the extent to which UNRWA may be perceived as a tool designed by imperialist regimes to dominate and block the Palestinian refugee narrative; and the extent to which UNRWA is perceived as an important and beneficial agency for the promotion of refugee dignity and wellbeing. The third section aims to give voice to Palestinian refugees by reporting and discussing their views on UNRWA, specifically, how its planned phase out may diminish its role as a monitor of refugees' problems and daily hardships, presenting potential barriers to their right of return. The three sections combine to provide a comprehensive evaluation of refugees' attitudes to the UNRWA services following the Oslo Accords. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of how refugees continue to claim the right of return to their former homes despite attempts to phase out the UNRWA.

8.2 The genesis of UNRWA

The UNRWA is the international agency primarily responsible for the care of Palestinian refugees. It was established in 1949 after a number of other international attempts to respond to the developing humanitarian crisis highlighted the need for a development agency. This section will explain how and why the UNRWA was established.

Soon after the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from historical Palestine in 1948, the UN Secretary General referred the issue to the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). However, according to Bowker (2003, p. 124), the IRO's limited resources and mandate forced it to decline to manage Palestinian refugees. As a result, the UN established the UN Disaster Relief Project to coordinate and distribute aid. This agency was replaced after only three months by the United Nations Relief for Palestinian Refugees (UNRPR) (Schiff 1995, p. 15). The UNRPR was established to facilitate relief work and to coordinate the field operations among international institutions. However, in December 1948, the UNGA passed Resolution 194 which

called for the establishment of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) (Bowker 2003, p. 125).

In 1949, the UNCCP initiated talks with Arab states and Israel to reach a long-term solution to the refugee issue. The Arab states argued that Israel must accept the right of return as expressed in Resolution 194 (Beckerle 2011, p. 52). Israel was not prepared to accept the repatriation of refugees, however, and insisted at the time that the issue was not open to negotiation. The UNCCP continued to make efforts to reach an agreement on the refugee issue (Goddard 2009, p. 480). At the Lausanne Conference in 1949, the commission submitted a statement to the Israeli government and Arab states affirming the right of return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with UNGA Resolution 194 (Jarrar 2003). The UNCCP, however, found the effort from the Israeli government to be unsatisfactory (UNCCP 1949).

In response, the UNCCP established the Economic Survey Mission (ESM). This was a UN appointed panel of international experts sent to the region late in 1949. The panel's brief was to investigate the economic measures required for resettlement, repatriation and rehabilitation of refugees in host countries, and the economic impact of the conflict over Palestine (Shabaneh 2012, p. 494). The ESM concluded that refugees were most seriously affected by the economic disturbance caused by the Exodus (Jarrar 2003, p. 70). In turn, the ESM delivered extensive recommendations including a call for the UN to establish an agency to initiate works programs, facilitate the repatriation and resettlement of refugees, manage relief operations, and negotiate with host countries (Schiff 1995, p. 20). Jarrar (2003, p.71) argues that the recommendations made by the ESM aimed to integrate refugees into the host countries through an economic development.

The UNRWA was established in accordance with UNGA Resolution 302 (IV) on 8 December, 1949 after the 1948 war and the creation of the State of Israel (Boco 2010, p. 231). The resolution was passed unopposed, supported by the Arab states and Israel, with only the Soviet Union and South Africa abstaining (Takkenberg 1998). The agency provided direct relief to Palestinian refugees and facilitated their economic integration into host countries and occupied territories (Rempel 2009, p. 413).

Since its establishment, the agency's focus has been on three key areas: education, health, and social services (Lindsay 2009, p. 5). In addition, the agency has provided extensive support and employment services to Palestinian refugees in its five regions of operation: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip (Farah 2010). The agency was founded to temporarily manage other issues related to refugees such as attempts at integration and resettlement options (Schiff 1995, p. 4). The permanency of what was initially believed to be a temporary displacement has resulted in the continued offer of aid by the UNRWA to Palestinian refugees now in their fourth generation.

The UNRWA does not have the mandate to protect Palestinian refugees (Rempel and Badil 2000). Rather, as a relief agency its mandate is limited to assurances of civil and social rights for refugees in host countries and occupied territories. Nonetheless, its presence provides a bridge between the plight of refugees and the international response. UNRWA continues to be endorsed by the international community every three years (Weighill 1995, p. 261). This, according to McCann (2008), represents proof of Palestinian refugees' perceptions of their right to return to their homeland. In summary, the UNRWA was established to support Palestinian refugees across five regions. It was established that the primary focus of the agency's support was directed towards health, education and social services. Views about the work and formation of the agency, however, continue to be a subject of ongoing debate. The following section examines a number of the crucial arguments made by different parties pertaining to the intention and work of the UNRWA in general.

8.2.1 Conflicting views of UNRWA's mandate

There are disparate views concerning the function of the UNRWA. For instance, some critics bluntly argue the agency does little more than attempt to resolve the refugee problem through assimilation and resettlement projects within host countries (Bowker 2003, p. 127). In addition, the agency is regarded by some as an imperialist tool created only to end the debate over refugees (Schiff 1995, p. 5). Israeli officials and some public figures also claim the UNRWA operates as a barrier to the peace process through the promotion of anti-Israel sentiment. In contrast, others have a positive regard for the UNRWA and argue it has made an important contribution to the protection and provision of aid to refugees (Bartholomeusz 2010). It is also the case,

however, that the attitudes towards the UNRWA continue to change over time, as will be demonstrated in the results of this study.

The following section discusses the views of the UNRWA from both an ideological and a functional perspective. The discussion of ideology focuses primarily on the concept of imperialism, whereas the discussion of the functional aspect of UNRWA focuses primarily on the work of the agency and its refugee support structures.

8.2.2 NGOs as imperialist institutions

The worldwide presence of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and International Governmental Organisations (IGOs) is significant, particularly in developing countries where most organisations have links to donor states. Dependency theorists argue international organisations facilitate the creation and maintenance of dependency relations and may be viewed as agents of penetration (Karns and Mingst 2004, p. 55). Moreover, they argue the perceived aim of the agency is to promote the donor state's vision and political power. As such, leaders of NGOs may be perceived as imperialist agents who aim to support the interests of the donor states.

NGOs are supported and financed by international donors, mainly Western sovereign states. Notwithstanding the fact that many agencies support the marginalised and/or the poor, their motives are often viewed with suspicion because their agenda is not determined locally (Samara 2001). Samara (2001, p.237) illustrated this point in his remark:

> *The NGOs have been used as a cover to hide the ugly face of imperialist regimes in the countries of the Third World that suffered greatly from western capitalist colonialism, later imperialism, and currently globalization.*

Thus, the mission of NGOs is open to interpretation. On the one hand, they criticise human rights violations while, on the other hand, they compete with social-political movements by attempting to control or guide popular movements towards conceding to dominant donor agendas (Petras 1999).

8.2.3 UNRWA as an imperialist NGO

The UNRWA is an NGO under the governance of the UN and is widely observed to have an important role in both the humanitarian response to the Palestinian refugee

issue as well as to achieving regional security and stability (United Nations 2009). Given the influence of the traditional five imperialist powers in the UNSC;US, UK, France, China, and Russia (Morley 2016), UNRWA may be regarded as a mechanism for imperialism and somewhat detached from the Palestinian refugee cause (Bartholomeusz 2010; Bowker 2003). Indeed, an underlying assumption in the UN sanctioned support for refugees is that the three main Western donor states within UNRWA (i.e. the US, Canada and the UK) know what is best for Palestinian refugees rather than the refugees themselves (Samara 2011). This is demonstrated in the way that donor states determine the distribution of aid to refugees based on their view of the stability of the political environment.

Wadi (2014) argues the UNRWA is an imperialist agency by way of its role in representing the UN's dominant position in the shaping the prevailing discourse on the refugee issues. The broader issue related to the relationship between discourse and domination is addressed by Edward Said in his assertion that, "The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (Said 1994, xiii). In this context, Wadi (2014) explains that the agency manipulated Palestine history and cooperated with oppressive institutions and the settler-colonial state. The author develops this argument through the claim that UNRWA uses its position to reinforce the dominant narrative by way of erasing the memories of refugees. According to Wadi, the process of blocking the refugee narrative was evident in the Agency's textbooks which focused on convincing Palestinian students to accept the Zionist narrative (Wadi 2014).

Critics of the organisation are primarily scholars; however, there is the view among some refugees also that the UNRWA was created as an agent to carry out an imperialist agenda (Wadi 2014). This view emerged in response to what some saw as a lack of resistance from refugees and a dependence on UNRWA handouts (Farah 2012). Rather than providing refugees with a platform from which to combat the occupation of their land, UNRWA was blamed for offering social services that ultimately increased their level of dependency on the Agency.

UNRWA was accused of not sharing the same objectives as refugees; that is, the pursuit of the right to return and self-determination (Bowker 2003). Scholars asserted

the aim was to resettle refugees in countries of the diaspora and to provide employment opportunities rather than grant them the right to return to their homes (McCann 2008). This is evident following the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations during the Madrid and Oslo Accords, where the UNRWA shifted its position from providing essential services and humanitarian assistance to refugees to supporting PA institutions in order to support the Peace Implementation Program (Bartholomeusz 2010, p. 463). This is despite the fact that the issue of refugees was excluded from the Israeli-Palestinian negotiation and arguably implied that the Palestinian refugee issue was fundamentally social rather than political in nature.

It has also been claimed the UNRWA's education policy undermined refugee right of return by contributing to the dispersion of about one-third of the refugees in the 1960s and the 1970s (Elnajjar 1993, p. 34). Elnajjar's (1993, p. 47) study claimed refugee emigration was planned by the UNRWA in an attempt to solve the refugee problem by offering refugees training and education and by finding employment for them abroad (p. 47). In fact, the cynical view was that the aim of the Agency was to provide economic stability and employment to refugees to prevent conflict with Israel (Samara 2000). Indeed, some authors have also pointed to the claims from refugees that the UNRWA conspired to deny Palestinian refugees control over their own future and that they were excluded from policy formulation and decision making (Viorst 1989, p. 13).

As such, some refugees and scholars regard the agency as part of the problem, not its solution (Schiff 1995, p. 10). Indeed, refugees' resentment of UNRWA emerged during late 1970s and early 1980s when it first reduced, and then terminated, its rations services (Schiff 1995). For instance, a study by Ben-Porath (1971) presented findings to show many Palestinians during the 1970s viewed the UNRWA as an NGO that weakened their determination to return to their homes.

In addition, some commentators such as Samara (2000) claimed that issues related to refugees that fell outside of the UNRWA's jurisdiction were not addressed. Instead, they were of the view the UNRWA operated for the benefit of Israel and aimed to resettle refugees in the countries of the diaspora rather than grant them the right of return (Samara 2000; Pape 2006). Furthermore, it is evident that the donor states, particularly the UK and USA, aimed to find economic solutions and used the Agency

to reduce violence, by offering employment stability to make the refugees feel more comfortable (Schiff 1995, p. 140).

Refugees' attitudes to UNRWA may also be impacted by the definition of Palestinian refugee endorsed by the NGO. Scholars have pointed to the problematic nature of UNRWA's definition; that is, how it assigns Palestinian refugees a special status in contrast to other refugee groups and how it excludes them from international recognition (Weighill 1995, p. 263). To clarify, UNRWA defined a Palestinian refugee as a person who resided within natural Palestine from 1 June, 1946 to 15 May, 1948; who lost his/her home and means of livelihood in the 1948 war; and who took refuge in 1948 in one of the countries where the UNRWA provided assistance (Dale 1974, p. 586). Palestinian refugees who matched the UNRWA definition were eligible for Agency assistance if they: registered with the UNRWA; were living in the regions under UNRWA operations; and were in need of assistance (UNGA re, 302 (IV), 8 Dec, 1949). UNRWA also registered Palestinian refugees' descendants according to the male family line (Goddard 2009, p. 293), as well as persons in need of support who first became refugees as a result of the 1967 conflict. Thus, some Palestinian refugees may perceive that UNRWA's definition does not represent all refugees (e.g. female refugees and Palestinian refugees living in Iraq and Egypt) and that there is inequitable access to assistance.

It is worth noting that the term "Palestinian refugee" as used by UNRWA was never formalised by the UN (Goddard 2009, p. 481). Indeed, the definition used in practice evolved independently to that used by the UNHCR after it was established by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The normative version of the UNRWA definition as indicated above applied only to those who took refuge in one of the countries where UNRWA provided relief (Jarrar 2003, p. 34).

The UNRWA definition of Palestinian refugee in practice is thus both more restrictive and more inclusive than the 1951 UNHCR definition. For example, the UNRWA definition excludes persons taking refuge in countries other than Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Goddard 2009, p. 482), yet it includes descendants of refugees as well as the refugees themselves (though UNHCR also provides support for children of refugees in many cases).

Furthermore, Palestinian refugees receiving relief support from the UNRWA are explicitly excluded from the 1951 Convention, depriving them of some of the benefits of that Convention such as a range of legal protections. As such, Tekenberge (2003, p. 96) argued, the UNRWA definition of "refugee" is limited to the Palestinian who left Palestine due to the 1948 conflict and excluded refugees from the West Bank who were forced to leave after the 1967 War. A 2002 decision of UNHCR, however, made it clear that the 1951 Convention applies at least to Palestinian refugees who need support, but who fail to fit UNRWA working definition (Kagan 2010, p. 516).

It should be noted, however, that defenders of UNRWA claim that Palestinian refugees are stateless and as such they are ineligible for refugee benefits under the common UNHCR definition of refugee. In addition, other defenders of UNRWA such as Feldman (2012, p. 338) argued the definition by the Agency was introduced to decrease the resistance to its role and to determine UNRWA's aid regime by helping to identify persons eligible for aid services.

Notwithstanding that successive governments in Israel have maintained strong opposition to UNRWA and its mission (discussed in the following section), the definition of Palestinian Refugee by UNRWA may frame refugee views of its phase out (addressed in the survey) because it has impacted some refugees' capacity to access its services and benefits.

8.2.4 Israel's view of UNRWA

Notwithstanding the necessity of the support services provided by UNRWA to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it may be the case that some refugees regard the NGO as part of the problem to their realisation of the right of return claim rather than part of the solution. As outlined in the following discussion, there are assertions among Israeli scholars and politicians, as well as some Palestinian activists and scholars, that its services can be used as a political tool and subsequently disrupt the peace process, and that it does more to maintain the status quo than to drive the peace process to a just solution. Of interest to this thesis is the extent to which the views of Palestinian refugees about the phase out of UNRWA reflect this argument.

Israeli officials assert the UNRWA has become a refugees' advocate agency that has exceeded its mandate and which has lost its focus on its responsibility for the provision of aid (Schiff 1995). Such criticism of the Agency by Israeli scholars and political figures continues to surface despite conditions in refugee camps remaining unchanged. Nachmias (2012) pointed out the UNRWA was established as a temporary agency to help bring relief to the plight of refugees. According to the author, rather than help to resolve the refugee issue, the agency exacerbated the problem and established itself into a permanent organisation (Nachmias 2012, p. 27). In addition, he argued that Arab states saw in the UNRWA an important Agency that could be used against Israel as well as a cash generator (Nachmias 2012, p. 33). Further claims were made that the agency has been paying for refugees to remain refugees, to reproduce, and to continue living in refugee camps (Bernstam 2010).

The relationship between Israel and the UNRWA took a more negative turn following the First *Intifada* in 1987. Israeli government officials claimed UNRWA operations in the occupied territories were highly politicised and promoted anti-Israel propaganda (Spiegel 2012, p. 62). According to Spiegel, the agency provided school textbooks to young refugees that demonised Israel, and adopted the refugees' uncompromising demand (Spiegel 2012, p. 62). According to former Israeli ambassador to the UN, Dore Gold, in 2004:

> *Although education was one of the fields in which UNRWA was supposed to provide aid, the agency did nothing to alter Palestinian education texts that glorified violence and continuing war against Israel.*

To build its argument against UNRWA even further, the Israeli government accused the agency of having ties with Hamas. In line with this argument, the Israeli authorities accused UNRWA of allowing Hamas operatives to use its facilities both as "human shields and areas of operation" (Spiegel 2012, p. 63). Further claims were made that UNRWA staff had been caught smuggling arms and aiding terrorists (Wines 2003). The Agency received further criticism from the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) when a video was released during May 2004 showing an armed Palestinian carrying an injured person to an UNRWA ambulance (Adelman and Barkan 2013). In addition, the IDF intensified its attack on the UNRWA when it claimed that militant groups used UNRWA vehicles to fire rockets into Israel (Haaretz 2004).

The Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, Danny Aylan, reiterated his concerns about the function of UNRWA by claiming the Agency was part of the problem, not the solution (Romirowsky and Brackman 2012). He argued the Agency radicalises Palestinians and supports their victimisation narrative (Romirowsky and Brackman 2012). Therefore, he asked for all UNRWA operations to be terminated in order to reach a solution to the refugee issue. Ayalon's argument, however, ignored the fact that Palestinians continued to be displaced due to Israel's position of non-negotiation on the role that UNRWA could play in the right of return issue. As a result, Israel during peace negotiations demanded the termination of UNRWA and supported the transition of its services to PA institutions.

Although these negative perceptions of UNRWA exist among many Israeli scholars and some Palestinian activists, it is true to say that UNRWA is subject to very different criticisms from within each side of the conflict. In fact, this present study claims that the views of many refugees have shifted towards a far more moderate regard for UNRWA as a result of current developments and the absence of a solution to the refugee question. This following section provides details of the more supportive views of UNRWA.

8.2.5 UNRWA as a support institution

A positive view of the UNRWA is evident among many scholars and refugees. Shabaneh (2012) argued that, despite the Agency's efforts, there was limited political mandate and restricted official policy. UNRWA's educational programs also unintentionally contributed to the formation and reconstruction of Palestinian identity in ways that support the reconstruction of Palestinian nationalism (Shabaneh 2012, p. 495). To illustrate his point, Shabaneh (2012) stated that teachers and students at UNRWA schools in refugee camps interacted in a way that favoured their narrative rather than the host country's official story. The interaction among generations of refugees in UNRWA schools enabled refugees to resist assimilation and integration into locations of exile (Shabaneh 2012, p. 494). Claims such as these imply the UNRWA operated as a site of resistance and was, therefore, operating in a way that was contrary to the view of the agency as a colonialist site.

In addition, Brynen (2009) argued that the UNRWA plays a significant role in attending to crisis and emergency needs that cannot be met by other organisations (Brynen 2009). He explained that the refugee population would be more vulnerable, underdeveloped and radicalised without the UNRWA intervention (Brynen 2009). In addition, the UNRWA's education, health, relief, and social services have developed the human potential of Palestine refugees, enabling them to be self-reliant members of the societies in which they live (Brynen 2009). Dismantling the UNRWA will not solve the Palestinian refugee problem and their ongoing displacement (McCann 2003). Indeed, the inability of parties involved in the conflict to solve the refugee issue only increases the pressure on the UNRWA to remain active.

The Agency is currently considered as a symbol of the international community's commitment to the refugees (Shiblak 2009) and, as such, a platform for the refugee voice. Therefore, many refugees believe the UNRWA must remain involved in their cause until a just solution is found. In this respect, the agency is a powerful presence on the ground; a presence which shapes and directs the lives of Palestinian refugees (Peters and Gal 2010, p. 601). In addition, reports filed by the UNRWA on refugees' conditions in the occupied territories are regarded by the international community and media agencies as both useful and objective (Peter and Gal 2010, p. 604).

Politically, the UNRWA also keeps the Palestinians' national struggle alive. Al Husseini (2010) purported, UNRWA's services were important to ensure the continued existence of the refugee camps which were later to be used as recruiting grounds for the PLO. As Gabiam (2012) described, the role of UNRWA as a relief organisation managed to highlight the everyday suffering of Palestinian refugees that were embedded in their political claims. From this perspective, in the absence of an affective Palestinian body during the 1950s and 1960s it was evident that the UNRWA assumed many of the functions of a welfare government. Indeed, the agency did not limit its operations to the provision of public services, but also employed many refugees in various positions (Farah 2010, p. 396). Furthermore, the exclusion of refugees from the peace process thrust the UNRWA back onto central stage where it played a role in assisting refugees to indirectly negotiate their political and legal rights ignored in the PLO–Israel negotiation process (Farah 2010).

Since 1980 the UNRWA has offered Palestinian refugees protection through the Refugee Affairs Officers (RAO) program in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Batholomeusz 2010). Kagan (2010) affirms this point in his remark:

> *UNRWA operations aimed at protecting the general welfare of Palestinian refugee communities have grown significantly since the 1980s, while the failure of the UN to promote a durable solution for Palestinians is not the result of any formal limitation on UNRWA's mandate.*

In addition, the Agency facilitated the repatriation of some 363 Palestinian refugees stranded on the Egyptian borders after the Camp David Accords (Badil 2000). Moreover, the Agency has provided assistance to refugees outside of its scope of operations, particularly after their expulsion from host states (Rempel 2000). For instance, UNRWA provided welfare support to thousands of Palestinian refugees expelled by the Libyan government to the borders of Libya and Egypt in response to the UN Security Council embargo (Takkenberg 2003, p. 197). Economically, Palestine's weakening economy and the growing demands of refugees lead to the increase in demand for UNRWA services (Gunnarsdottir 2006). In response, UNRWA provided ongoing relief and social services.

Since its establishment, the Agency has developed and maintained a registration system to record information about individual refugees. The registration information includes family names, codes to identify place of origin, and its structure before the expulsion in 1948 (Rempel 2000). More recently, the revised definition of Palestinian refugees by UNRWA during the peace process in 1992, which removed the "need" and "initial flight" criteria, offered a further opportunity for non-registered refugees to register with UNRWA (Rempel 2000). As such, Takkenberg (2003) argued the new revision opened the door for refugees to register with UNRWA and, as a result, the Agency received many requests from refugees to be registered. However, due to the peace process, and particularly after the Oslo agreement, proposals were discussed in order to transfer UNRWA services to the PA.

The above sections have delineated the key structures of the UNRWA and its development and involvement in the lives of Palestinian refugees over the past 66 years. However, a significant turning point in the level and nature of the agency's objectives occurred following the Oslo Accord in 1993. The following section discusses this shift and the impact it had on the attitudes of Palestinian refugees.

8.3 UNRWA in the aftermath of the 1993 peace agreement

The PLO and Israel signed the Oslo Accord in 1993, which marked the start of the official peace process between the PLO and Israel. The Accord followed ongoing secret talks between the PLO and Israel. Subsequently, the Oslo Accord paved the way for a new debate about the future of UNRWA among international donors, Israel and within UNRWA (Rempel 2000). Indeed, following the Oslo Accords, the UNRWA altered its approach to the management of refugees by transferring its grants and funds over to PA institutions in order to support the peace initiative within the occupied territory (Rempel 2000).

In 1995, the UNGA discussed the phase out of UNRWA and launched a new initiative called the Peace Implementation Program (Schiff 1995, p. 283). In turn, a report published by the Agency in 1995 visioned the resolution of the refugee problem by the end of the peace process (Bocco 2010). Subsequently, the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO presented the opportunity to remove the UNRWA from the Palestinian refugee issue (Samara 2000).

However, this outcome suggested the readiness of the PA to assume responsibility for the refugees as well as UNRWA's readiness to shift its responsibilities to the PA. Furthermore, there was the implication that the transfer of the refugee issue from the jurisdiction of an international agency (i.e. the UNRWA) to that of the local authority would solve the refugee problem. Feldman regarded the changes to the provision of UNRWA services as a lessening of the international commitment to a just solution to their problem (Feldman 2012, p. 31). This assertion was supported in the call made by the Union of Refugees and refugee representatives for the UNRWA to remain involved in the refugees cause until a final solution is reached (Al Husseini and Bocco 2010, p. 271).

A possible explanation for the reluctance demonstrated by the Palestinian refugees to accept the transfer of responsibility from the UNRWA to the PA relates to the key issue of right to return. That is, there is the view that this critical issue will shift from the international domain to the diplomatic affairs between the Palestinians and the Israelis (Samara 2000, p. 23). Therefore, the diplomatic issue becomes far more complicated when the international community disavows its responsibility towards

the Palestinian cause and leaves the negotiations to Israeli and Palestinian negotiators alone and major powers such as the quartet. However, the transfer to UNRWA services to the PA was strongly opposed by refugee residents and their representatives (Bocco 2010, p. 241). On the other hand, the debate surrounding the urgent need to transfer UNRWA services to the PA moved to a different level. Bernstam (2010) argued the UNRWA contributed to ongoing obstacles to peace in the Middle East and should be abolished immediately. Furthermore, UNRWA's critics argue the agency lacks effectiveness and efficiency and call for funding bodies to re-direct the funds to more appropriate agencies (Schiff 1989, p. 68). This view is consistent with the views of Israeli officials and scholars.

8.4 UNRWA phase out

UNRWA was, of course, not abolished immediately, but there continues to be a gradual phase out of its services. Following the Madrid Conference in 1991 and the subsequent three years of negotiations, the PLO and Israel signed the Declaration of Principles (DoP) in September 1993. This Declaration envisaged the establishment of the PA and the UNRWA began to transition its operations in accordance with Resolution 302 of the Declaration. The overall purpose of UNRWA shifted in order to leave the region and to give priority to projects which rehabilitate refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through the provision of social infrastructures (Al Husseini and Bocco 2010, p. 269). The Agency initiated community development programs which focused on women, children, rehabilitation, and income generation funds such as granting loans for refugees. This eventually led to their phasing out of services such as the provision of rations and support for medical expenses to allow the agency to leave Palestine. In response to the peace process, the Agency relocated its headquarters from Vienna to Gaza (Talhami 2003, p. 135) between 1994 and 1996 in order to facilitate better contact with the PA (Singer 2002, p. 197).

This transition progressed under the banner of the implementation of peace between Israel and Palestine, particularly after the creation of the Oslo Agreement. This transition aimed to promote socioeconomic infrastructure development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by improving the condition of the camps and through job creation schemes (Al Husseini and Bocco 2010, p. 269). However, concerning signs for Palestinian refugees emerged during this transition beginning in 1995 when

UNRWA shifted its support to the PA and commenced withdrawal of some of its services. The provision of healthcare and financial support services were withdrawn while other services continue to be renewed every three years. These services were a tangible reminder of UNRWA objective to harmonise its work with the requirements of the Oslo Agreement. This was irrespective of the fact that the NGO was struggling financially in its capacity to provide relief.

The phase out of the Palestinian refugee tutelage program commenced in 1995 when UNRWA reduced its services in the education and employment sectors. This action was due to pressure from donor states (mainly the US) and the political pressures mounted by Canada and the US to find a solution to the refugee issue that bypasses Resolution 194. In addition, the donor states re-directed financial support to the PA for infrastructural development on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They also offered funds to host countries to rehabilitate refugees rather than return them to their homes (Khalaf 2013). Moreover, major international donors, such as US and Canada shared Israel's position on the refugees' right of return (Farah 2012, p. 4). The US/Canada policy initiatives have remained consistent to this day.

8.4.1 Implications of the phase out

The establishment of the PA provided the opportunity for international donors to transfer their support to PA institutions rather than the UNRWA (ICG 2014). This placed the UNRWA in an awkward position in that it resulted in the initiation of tough measures to withdraw refugee support services (Dumper 2016). Reduction in the provision of financial services also served to create the perception among some refugees that UNRWA was preparing to completely withdraw its support and, with it, their right of return as a potential outcome ((ICG 2014).).

In March 2000, the Norwegian government commissioned the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies to conduct a study of the impact of UNRWA's financial situation on refugees and the future financing of services to refugees. The purpose of the study was to further understand: the relationship between trends in living conditions among refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, West Bank and Gaza Strip; UNRWA expenditure and its level of service provision; and the actual choices made

by refugees in response to UNRWA's growing series of cost-containment measures (Jacobsen 2000, p. 15).

The study showed refugees' living conditions were similar to the general living conditions of others in the same country (Jacobsen 2000, p. 15, p. 7). The similarity found between refugees and non-refugees was the same in the other host countries except for Lebanon. The study reported that refugees' living conditions in Lebanon were of a lower standard than the general living conditions of the national population. The main indicators of poor refugee housing conditions were overcrowding and a squalid environment. In addition, data from the study showed refugees of low socio-economic status, old-age, and those residing in camps or gathering in Lebanon were most at-risk of poor health outcomes. Furthermore, unemployment rates for refugees living in camps were marginally higher than for nationals living outside of the camps and that many refugees used providers other than UNRWA. Predictably, UNRWA was used less in countries where refugees have access to governmental and private services. The population using UNRWA services was therefore smaller than for the total registered population of refugees in the UNRWA's different fields of operation. In Lebanon, for example, refugees relied heavily on UNRWA services because they lacked access to other providers.

It has been asserted that the reduction of UNRWA services within the current political and economic crisis in the Middle East will further subject Palestinian refugees to aggression and rootlessness. As argued by Brynen (2010), the UNRWA prevented starvation and provided humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip, which was vital as a response to Hamas control and the Israeli-Egyptian embargo. On this point Schiff (1989, p. 73) concluded that UNRWA was caught between the occupiers and the occupied, and faced criticism from both sides. In terms of the refugees, however, the deadlock in the peace process and the conditions on the ground have potentially become political symbols of their determination not to compromise before a just solution (e.g. their right of return) can be reached by all parties. Hence, the current changes to the structure of UNRWA have implications for Palestinian refugees and their perceptions of the right of return claim. The next section reports and discusses Palestinian refugees' attitudes towards the dismantling of UNRWA and their views of its implications for their cause.

8.5 Survey questions on UNRWA

Prior to the creation of the PLO, UNRWA acted as an active representative for Palestinians on the international stage (al-Husseini 2000, p. 53). Research completed by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) during 2013 evaluated the progress and effectiveness of UNRWA services in host countries, reporting at the time that the phase-out of services was regarded by refugees as a direct threat to their cause (ICAI 2013). Furthermore, the findings of the report indicated that the continuation of UNRWA services was critical in stabilising long-term settlements within the region and to providing a platform for the negotiation process (ICAI 2013). The report concluded that the withdrawal of UNRWA services had the potential to lead to civil unrest in host countries and that the lack of progress in the peace process indicated Palestinian refugees [continued] to be reliant on UNRWA for public services and to protect their rights, including the right to return (ICAI 2013, p. 23).

This study included four items in the survey instrument to investigate Palestinian refugees' attitudes towards the dismantling of UNRWA. In doing so, this thesis seeks to extend upon the findings of the ICAI (2013) Report and thus provides new insights into Palestinian refugees' attitudes towards, and views of, UNRWA in light of the ongoing changes to the agency taking place.

8.5.1 UNRWA or the PA?

Palestinian refugees have traditionally perceived an association between the realisation of the right of return claim and the ongoing presence of UNRWA (Shiblak 2009). The phase out of UNRWA services to be taken up by the PA may be viewed by refugees as part of the eradication of the right of return claim. To gain new insights into the views of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank on the phase out of the UNRWA, the following proposition was included as a survey item:

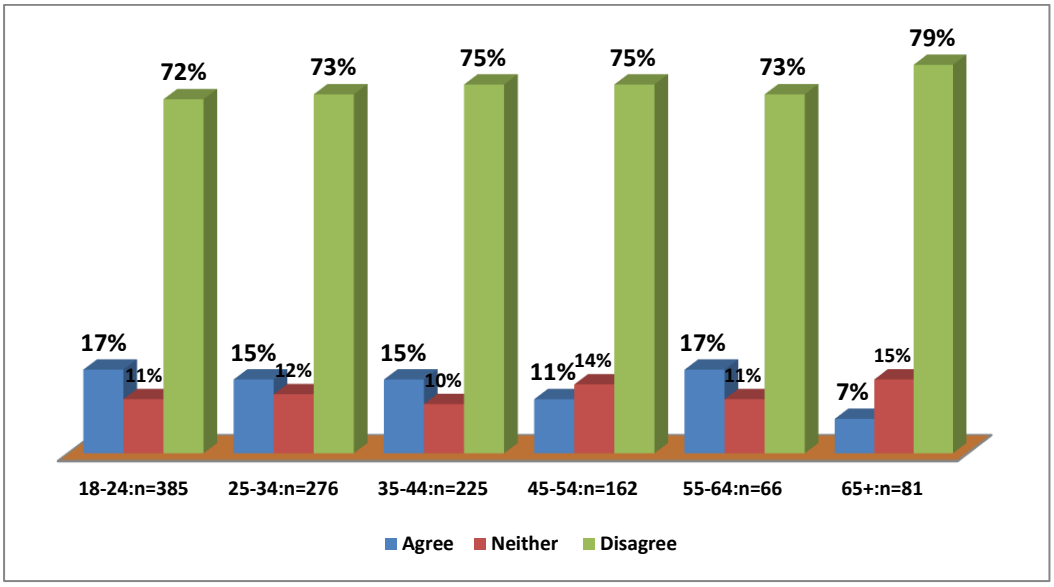
The PA should take over UNRWA responsibilities?

The rationale for this survey item is based on the study conducted by Ben-Porath during the early 1970s. Specifically, this study illustrated the role of UNRWA in the economic activities of refugees and the influence of its assistance on refugee integration and dependency. The author claimed refugees became dependent on

UNRWA and were more inclined to hold to their refugee identity (1970, p. 53). Examining refugees' current views of whether the PA should assume the role of UNRWA in the provision of services therefore sheds light on the extent to which they perceive the PA as adequately fulfilling this role.

Figure 8.1 presents data to show that the majority of participants (75%) disagreed with the withdrawal of UNRWA services and the shift in its responsibilities to the PA. Interestingly, there was a relatively even result for those indicating 'agree' or 'neither'.

Figure 8.1: The PA should take over UNRWA responsibilities, by age 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1,200

When the participants' responses are analysed according to age, there is a consistent level of 'disagreement' indicated by all age groups, with those aged 65+ years showing a slightly higher level of disagreement than their younger counterparts. The consistency of disagreement among participants for the proposition that the PA take over the responsibilities of UNRWA is most likely related to UNRWA's status as a NGO within the UN and its connection to the right of return. Indeed, this result may suggest that the surveyed refugees believe the provision of services to Palestinian refugees should remain a matter for the international community (i.e. UNRWA) rather than the Palestinian community (i.e. the PA) to ensure that the focus of the international community remains directed to the plight of refugees. As previously

mentioned, many refugees regard UNRWA as having a key role in their representation to the international community and one might speculate that they think if UNRWA withdraws its services and involvement from refugee camps they may be further exposed to marginalisation at the international level. Moreover, some refugees may see the phase out of UNRWA and the transitioning of its services to the PA as a failure to reach a just solution to the Palestinian refugee issue. UNRWA was established originally to provide services to Palestinian refugees until a just settlement was reached (Morris 2010). Transitioning services to the PA, however, does not mark an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the PA's capacity to deliver such services in the West Bank remains limited due to the occupation.

In addition, the PA has limited resources (Dumper 2016) and it may be that some refugees believe that this may prevent it from meeting their social and welfare needs. Refugee camps are crowded and most of the families depend on UNRWA handouts (ICG 2014). In addition, many local refugees are employed by the agency (ICG 2014). Changes to the agency's role may contribute to the failure of the PA and may result in resentment among refugees within the West Bank, Gaza, and in the diaspora. The lack of economic and political sustainability within any forthcoming Palestinian state if UNRWA is phased out may also lead to the exclusion of refugees, which only enhances their determination to return to Palestine proper (Al Husseini 2000, p. 60).

Furthermore, the importance of movement and services delivery is a significant factor in the minds of refugees. The Palestinian Occupied Territory (POT) has imposed on it many sanctions, curfews and restriction of movement, and while UNRWA staff experienced similar conditions, they were permitted to deliver services. Due to the occupying power's ongoing control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it is difficult for the PA to take full responsibility for refugees in both locations (Morries 2010). In fact, UNRWA employees have the ability to move within the POT more than PA officials. Therefore, the disagreement expressed by all age groups of respondents to the proposition that the PA should adopt UNRWA responsibilities arguably provides insights into their concerns that issues related to mobility, employment and general functionality will be adversely impacted. To explain, the phase out of UNRWA in the West Bank would prove problematic for refugees given the highly unregulated nature of the camps. Some camps fall within Israeli jurisdiction (e.g. Area C), whereas other

camps fall within Palestinian jurisdiction (e.g. Area A). A complete phase out (withdrawal) of UNRWA would leave Area C for example without links to services other than those provided by Israel, which currently does not provide any services, thus increasing tensions between political and socio-economic imperatives (ICG 2014). Therefore, phasing out its services without proper planning may expose local authorities and refugees to political complexities (Hilal 2009). The refugee issue will therefore be an internal one and will be the responsibility of the PA (Samara 2000, p. 22).

8.5.2 UNRWA as a monitor of Palestinian refugee hardship

This thesis has also established that UNRWA helps to monitor the problems and daily hardships faced by refugees. In the absence of peace and the exclusion of refugees from the peace process, the international community relies on the agency's reports on the welfare of refugees (Al Husseini 2010). This increases international donors' awareness of the issues and hardship faced by refugees in host countries and occupied territories (Rempel 2009, p. 431). In this way, refugees may regard UNRWA to provide them with a link to the peace process (Bocco 2010).

To gain insights into the views of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank on the implications of the phase out of UNRWA's monitoring role, the flowing included:

The UNRWA is an effective monitor of problems and daily hardships faced by refugees

This researcher-developed survey item emerged from assertions in the literature that of the key role played by UNRWA in presenting to the international community the plight of refugees (Farah 2010). The demographic variables included in the analysis of this survey item are education and gender.

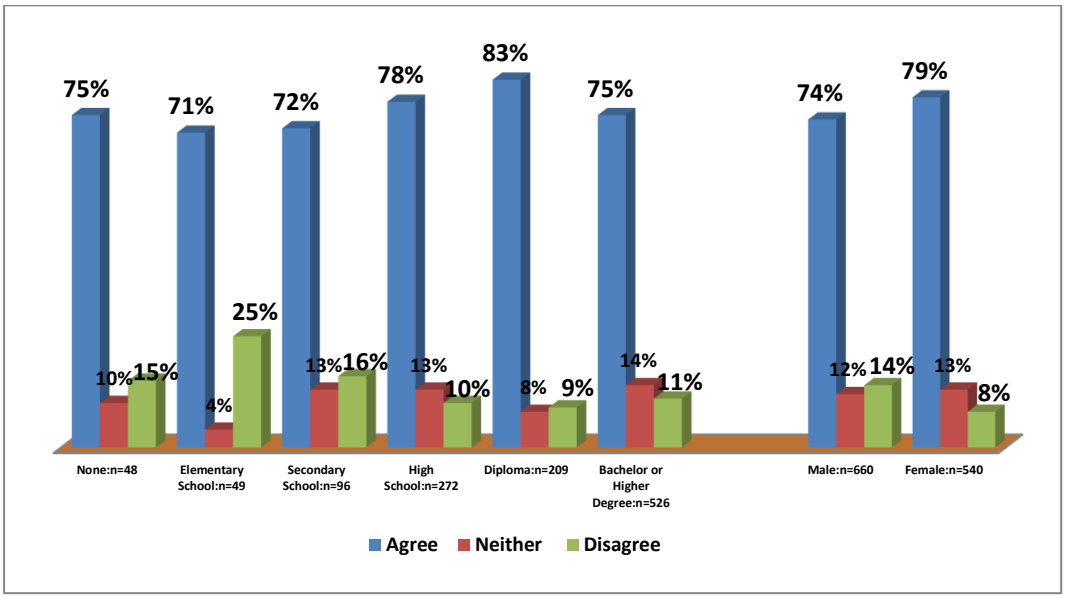
Figure 8.2 presents data to show Palestinian refugees perceive UNRWA as an effective monitor of refugees' problems and daily hardships. The findings indicate 76% of the surveyed refugees view UNRWA as an effective monitor of the problems and daily hardships faced by refugees.

In relation to the respondents' level of education, the results of the analysis shows that the participants' education attainment did not significantly influence their views of the

effectiveness of UNRWA as a monitor of this issues and hardships. That is, Figure 8.2 shows that the percentage outcomes for the spectrum from low education to post-graduate education attainment ranged from 71% (Elementary School education only) to 83% (Diploma level educations). On the basis of these results, it is evident that UNRWA is generally perceived as an effective monitor of refugee issues and hardships by refugees of diverse education attainment levels.

Figure 8.2 also shows 74% of male participants and 79% of female participants agreed with the proposition. This relatively high level of consensus among both genders is most likely an outcome of the role UNRWA that plays in advancing gender equality among Palestinian refugees. A stated objective of the UN Agency is to promote equal human rights for all and to reduce poverty among refugees (UNRWA 2018). Given that the services and advocacy of UNRWA reflect these key elements within the broader framework of providing protection of Palestine refugees, (UNRWA 2018), it is perhaps not surprising that the Agency has the support of most refugees from both genders. In addition, the results may suggest both genders see that reaching a final resolution on the refugee issue hinges on the future of UNRWA and the transition of its operational aspects to the PA (Brooks-Rubin 2014, p. 54).

Figure 8.2: The UNRWA is an effective monitor of problems and daily hardships faced by refugees, by level of education and gender, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1,200

The majority of UNRWA staff members are Palestinian refugees and in most cases these staff have accessed UNRWA education services. Schiff (1995, p. 11) argued the Agency has been used by the UNGA and Secretary General as a source for reporting on Israel's harsh treatment of Palestinians. The findings indicated that attempts by international donors to detach refugees from the Agency by offering limited financial support were not evident. Participants clearly perceived the UNRWA as an effective monitor of their humanitarian and daily hardships.

8.5.3 Dismantling UNRWA

Some refugees have continued to hold their UNRWA registration cards for many years. This card symbolically represents their right of return in their daily narratives, which some considering the card as a passport or a ticket home (Viorst 1989, p. 49). Therefore, the UNRWA card is documentation of return issued by the UN and is symbolic to many refugees of the UN's responsibility for finding a long-lasting solution (Aleinikoff and Poellot 2013). The significant relationship between the narrative of refugees and their registration cards shows how UNRWA remains the only international institution to keep records of the refugees' original homes, and that refugees are not prepared to compromise this relationship. Many Palestinian refugees

may therefore be opposed to the idea of phasing out UNRWA services before reaching a just resolution. This sentiment is reflected to some extent in the assertion from McCann (2008) that phasing out the UNRWA would not resolve the refugee issue and would only result in hardship and distress.

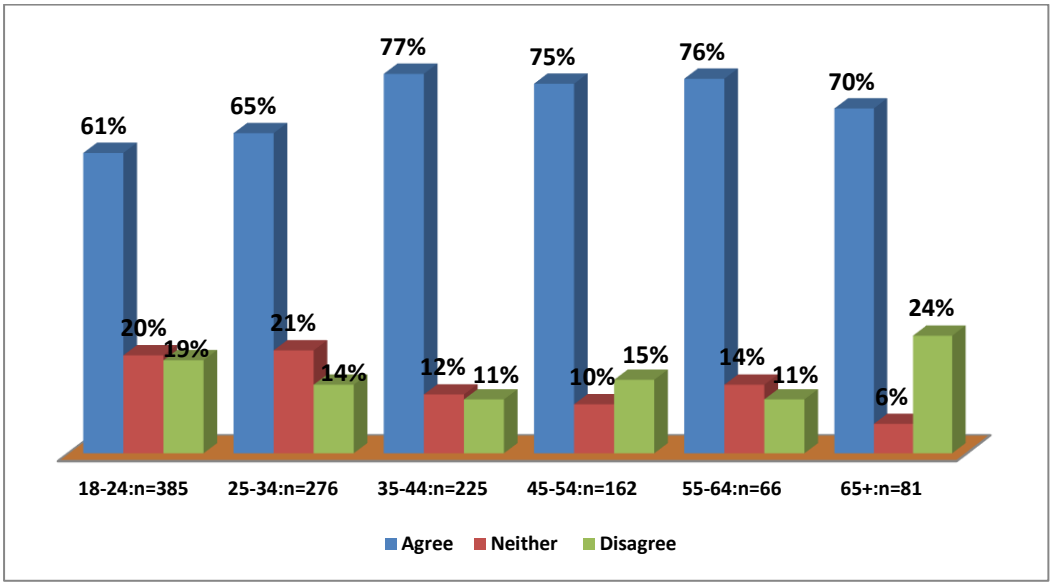
To further our understanding of Palestinian refugees' views of the extent to which they regard UNRWA as important to the Palestinian refugee cause, the following item was included in the survey:

Dismantling the UNRWA will diminish the Palestinian cause in the eyes of the world community

This researcher-developed survey item emerged from claims in the literature of a relationship between "the UNRWA aid regime and the experience of being a Palestinian refugee" (Feldman 2012, p.388). In particular, the support provided by the Agency for their political claims and quest for recognition among the international community (Farah 2010). The demographic variable included in the analysis of this survey item is respondent age.

Figure 8.3 reports the results for this survey item, showing 69% of the surveyed refugees' were of the view that dismantling UNRWA would diminish the Palestinian cause in the eyes of the world community. In terms of age groups, participants aged 35-44 years emerged as the highest percentage (77%) of respondents who agreed with the proposition. Participants aged 55-64 years represented the second highest proportion (78%) to agree with the proposition. Participants aged 45-54 years represented 75% agreement with the proposition followed by participants aged 65+ years at 70% and participants aged 25-34 years at 65% agreement. Younger participants aged 18-24 years represented the lowest proportion (61%) to agree with the proposition.

Figure 8.3: Dismantling the UNRWA will diminish the Palestinian cause in the eyes of the world community; by age, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1192

Given that UNRWA emerged after 1948 to represent the international community's attempt to uphold the political rights of refugees (Bowker 2003, p. 123), its dismantlement may be perceived by refugees as an automatic termination of their rights and diminished recognition of their cause among the world community. The results reported in Figure 8.3 suggest that this view is stronger among older refugees compared to their younger counterparts. To account for this outcome, it is worth considering the increasing role that social media technology can now play in providing younger generations of Palestinian refugees particularly with a platform from which to narrate their own story to the world. For instance, a recent 2015 review by Qawasmi and Othman (2016) of social media use by Palestinians reported there were in excess of 3,000,000 internet users in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (approximately 60% percent of the total population). The most popular sites used by Palestinian in these locations were Facebook and WhatsApp, followed by Instagram and YouTube. Regarding Palestinian youth specifically, surveys show up to 71% are frequent Facebook users, followed by WhatsApp (17%) (UNESCO 2015, p. 10). Moreover, and of particular relevance to this research investigation, the same online survey reports Palestinian youth view social media platforms to "best represent young people and are the best source of information on matters of concern to them" (UNESCO 2015, p. 7).

It may also be inferred from the study results reported above that the phase-out of UNRWA is perceived by many refugees across all age groups to limit their access to the international community and continue their exclusion from society. Certainly, UNRWA contributes to the international community's awareness of the situation for refugees through the information it provides about refugees in Palestine and host countries in its annual reports (e.g. UNRWA 2017). Thus, many of the surveyed refugees may perceive a link between the dismantlement of UNRWA, deterioration in their situation, and increased marginalisation in host countries and in the Palestinian territories. In short, it is possible that most respondents were in favour of UNRWA remaining active because even though it does not have a mandate to provide police or security protection, it is still regarded as having a role in reporting and witnessing Palestinian hardship to the international community.

8.5.4 Withdrawal of UNRWA services within the negotiations for peace

The UN is explicit in declaring that "UNRWA is a stakeholder in the outcomes of any peace process" pertaining to Palestinian refugees (Gunness 2010, para. 5). However, as discussed in Section 8.2.4, there are varied opinions posited by scholars (Brynen 2009; Nachmias 2012) about the relationship of UNRWA to the peace process. Specifically, this section highlighted the contrasting opinions offered by authors on this issue, ranging from assertions that the agency was a barrier to the peace process to its essential role in protecting the rights and dignity of refugees in their quest for a just solution. Given these disparate views, there is value in undertaking further investigation into the refugees' own views of the importance of UNRWA to the negotiations for peace.

To access the refugee participants' views on a possible withdrawal of UNRWA services as part of the peace process, the following proposition was included in the survey:

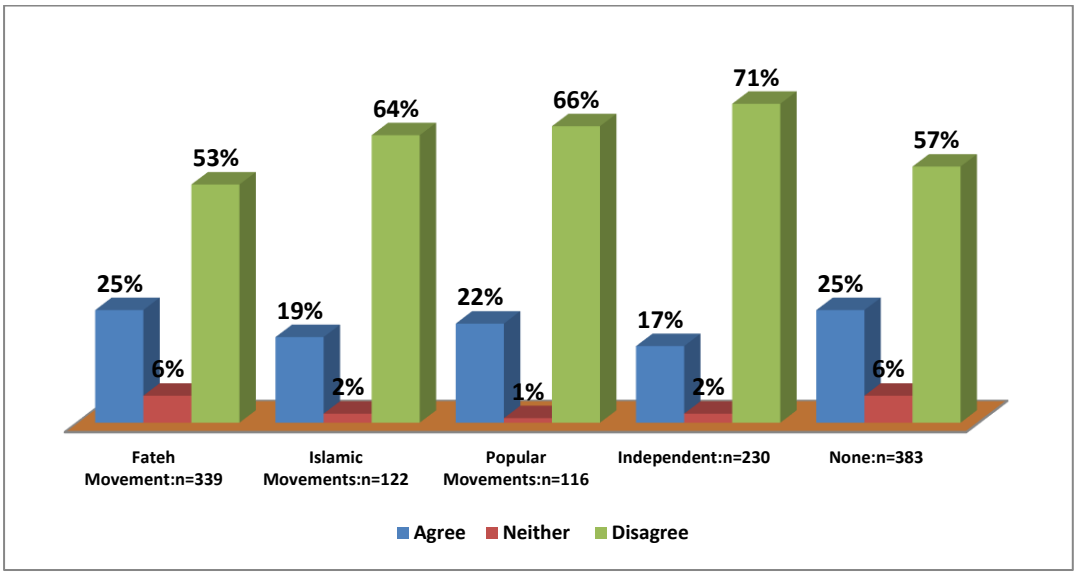
The PA should accept the withdrawal of UNRWA from refugee camps as part of a peace settlement

This researcher-developed item was included in the survey in response to the proposal in 1995 by UNGA to have the PA replace UNRWA as the main service provider to refugees. While the PA is the recognised authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip,

and thus would be assumed to make every effort to provide adequate services to refugees in camps, it is also understood that refugees associate UNRWA with their right of return claim and with international support to exercise their choices "in a voluntary and equitable manner" (Gunness 2010, para. 5). The analysis results for this item are reported overall, as well as according to the surveyed refugees' political affiliations.

Figure 8.4 reports that overall, 61% of the surveyed refugees disagreed with the proposition that the PA should accept the withdrawal of UNRWA from refugee camps.

Figure 8.4: The PA should accept the withdrawal of UNRWA from refugee camps as part of a peace settlement, by political affiliation, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n =1,190

In terms of the participants' political affiliations (including independent positions) and the proposition to transfer control from UNRWA to the PA, the Independent group recorded the highest percentage of participants (71%) to disagree with the proposition. This is clear contrast to the result for respondents indicating affiliation with Fatah (53%). This lower outcome for Fatah affiliates is in line with expectations given Fatah supporters are less clearly opposed than opposition parties. In addition, the result may relate to their dominant position in the PA and thus their leading role in the peace process in general. Conversely, the higher outcome for the Independent group may be due to the following factors. By and large, refugees are hesitant to accept any proposal

made in relation to UNRWA because of the lack of clarity that remains around refugee issues and political settlement. Refugees and Palestinians in general view the termination of the Agency before reaching a solution as only shuffling the right of return issue further into the unknown. In addition, this fear or rejection is linked to refugees' beliefs that, as long as the UNRWA is functional, their cause will stay active, and the PA may accept political solutions that are not in refugees' best interests.

Khouri (2010, p. 14) has argued UNRWA is the only international agency which uses its voice to remind the international community that refugees have legal rights. In addition, the Agency continues to remind the world that Palestinian refugees continue to be mistreated and subjected to ongoing violence by Israel (Khouri 2010, p. 439). Furthermore, refugees continue to perceive UNRWA as a humanitarian welfare agency that caters to the needs of refugees and which operates as a visible symbol of the refugee issue (Al Husseini 2010, p. 14). Thus, Palestinian refugees may perceive the Agency's services to be a right that should be granted to them given the unresolved nature of the refugee issue.

In contrast, since 1996 the refugee camps have been jointly run by UNRWA and local committees appointed by the PLO and PA. Members of the committee are politically active and in most circumstances they represent their political groups (Hanafi 2010, p. 10) which remain committed to resolving the refugee issue. The committee activities that represent the PA and PLO may cause refugees some anxiety and this may be related to the level of trust in the agencies held by refugees in general. The finding of a lower level of opposition amongst Fatah supporters may suggest the Palestinian refugees not involved in these committees are more sceptical about the transfer of UNRWA services to the PA and the withdrawal of the UN from refugee camps as part of the peace settlement.

A distinction has been made by refugees between the ability of the PA and UNRWA to carry out the responsibilities required to best provide them with support. This distinction is based on political and social grounds and goes beyond the financial capacity of the agencies in relation to the question of right of return. Hanafi (2010, p. 11) argued that Popular Committee de-legitimisation was not formed due to lack of representation and efficiency alone, but also due to cooperation with donors and

security groups. In looking to the future, one must not ignore that the movement of Palestinians within, to, and from the territory is subject to Israeli control (McCann 2008). Therefore, as long as the military occupation is controlling the refugees' movements and limiting their growth the Agency continues to be seen as a monitoring body that cannot be dismantled before an end to the occupation is achieved.

8.5.5 UNRWA and the return of Palestinian refugees

The adoption of a rights based approach in the provision of support to Palestinian refugees has ensured that the right of return claim has been embedded in the institutional culture of UNRWA (Joffe 2012). This means that the Agency's support for a negotiated settlement is directed towards explicit recognition of the Palestinian refugee right of return (Joffe 2012). As a Palestinian refugee, I was always aware of the general understanding refugees had of the importance of the association between UNRWA and the right of return claim. However, an important focus of this research investigation is the extent to which refugees continue to associate the ongoing operations of UNRWA with the realisation of their right to return. This study has sought to provide updated data on the current nature of refugees' understanding of UNRWA's functions in this regard.

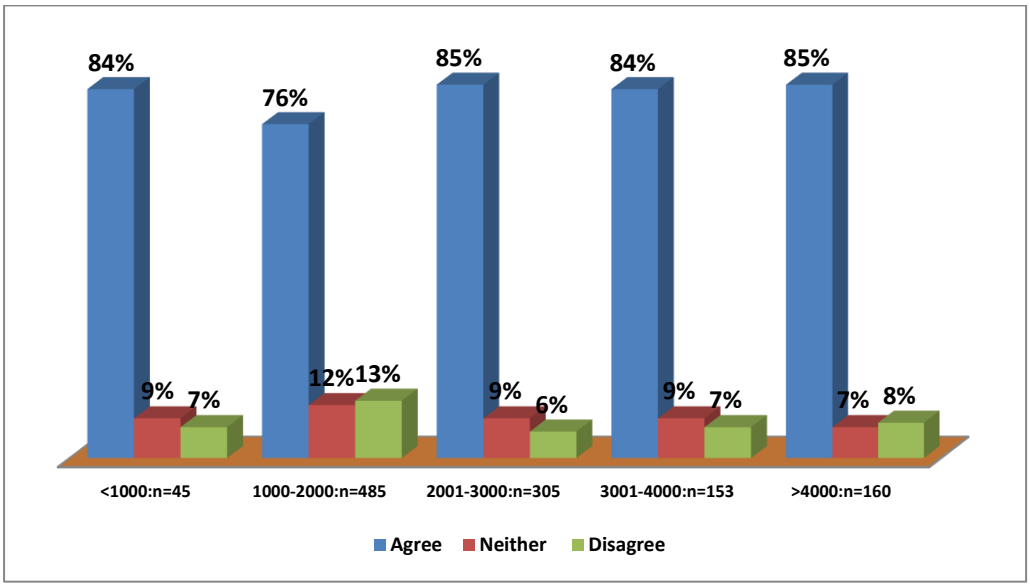
To assess participants' views on this issue, the following proposition was included as an item in the survey:

UNRWA should continue to function until all refugees are returned

This item emerged from assertions made in the literature that UNRWA is in fact counterproductive to the Palestinian right of return claim because it's continued functioning, in essence, perpetuates rather than resolves refugee-hood (Bernstam 2010). The survey item was thus included to ascertain whether, or the extent to which, this is a view held by the refugee participants. The results for this item are reported overall, as well as respondents' level of household income and age. As described in Section 3.6.1, level of income is applied as a criterion for access to UNRWA services and this item thus provides a unique opportunity to gain insights into refugees' perceptions of UNRWA and the right of return irrespective of whether they have access to its services.

Figure 8.5 shows that, overall, the overwhelming majority (81%) of the surveyed refugees disagreed with the proposition that UNRWA should continue to function until all refugees are returned. The outcome for those refugees indicating 'neither' or 'disagree' to the proposition was relatively evenly split among the remaining 19%.

Figure 8.5: UNRWA should continue to function until all refugees are returned, by participants income level (Israeli Shekels), 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,148

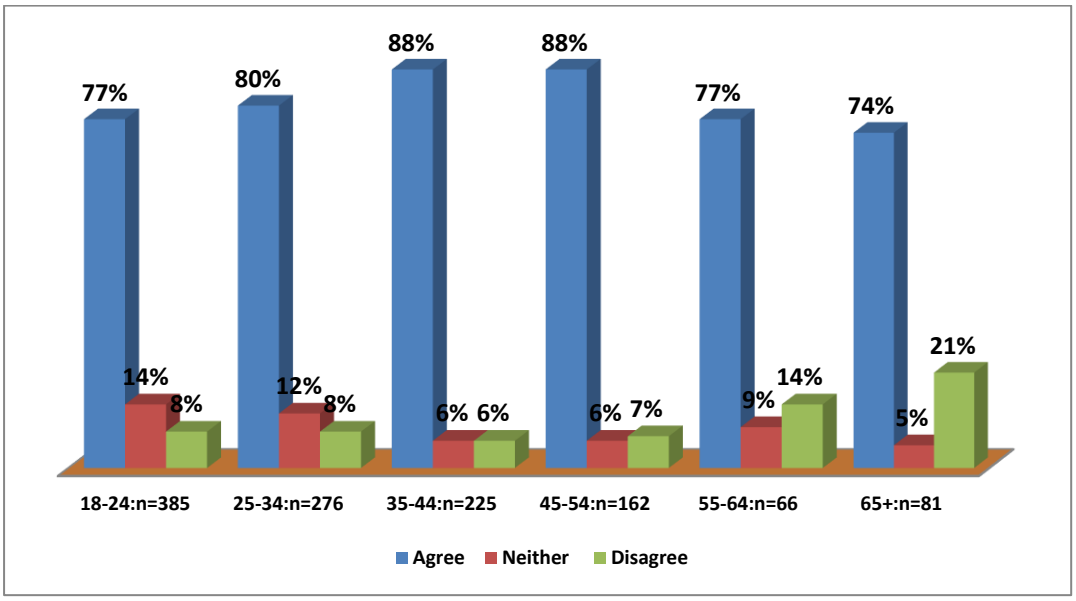
The views indicated by the participants concur with the results from a previous study of Palestinian refugees in the West Bank in relation to UNRWA's role in achieving a final solution (Aweda 1998, pp. 110-111). The study showed most participants believed that UNRWA kept the refugee issue alive. However, they also believed the agency was not able to function as a political instrument and so 74.9% of participants agreed that gradually dismantling the UNRWA should be done in conjunction with further pressure being placed on the right of return issue (Aweda 1998, pp. 110-111). In terms of this study, notwithstanding the fact the UNRWA was originally established to promote welfare, resettlements programs, and facilitate solutions to the crisis through economic reintegration in host countries (Hilal 2009), its appears Palestinian refugees continue to see the need for the agency to remain active despite their economic stability.

Figure 8.5 shows that most participants (84% to 85%) in all income brackets excepting 1000-2000 Shekels per month (76%) perceived the need for the Agency to

remain involved in the management of refugees until all refugees are returned. The consistent percentage outcomes across low-, middle-, and high-income brackets arguably demonstrates that refugees view UNRWA as providing two key outcomes: participation in the labour market (Weighill 1995, p. 260); and a voice on refugee rights in international community regardless of people's socioeconomic status (BADIL 2012). Indeed, it is well documented that Palestinian refugees with financial stability (e.g. 4000+ Shekel per month) do not have access to UNRWA services (BADIL 2012), but still endorse its role as their voice to the world.

In terms of the respondents' views according to age group of whether UNRWA should continue to function until all refugees are returned, the data in Figure 8.6 again indicates overwhelming support for UNRWA across the whole community. For example, from 74% to 88% of respondents across all age groups agreed with the proposition suggesting that Palestinian refugees' continue to perceive an important association between the realisations of the right of return claim on the ongoing presence of UNRWA.

Figure 8.6: UNRWA should continue to function until all refugees are returned, by participant age, 2013, %.



Palestinian Camp Survey 2013; n=1,200

The above findings are similar to the survey findings completed by Badil in 2012 where 88% of Palestinian refugees feel that the UNRWA plays an important role in

sustaining the case of the Palestinian refugees and that the phasing out of UNRWA will harm the right of return claim.

The findings from this and previous studies may suggest that many refugees want UNRWA to continue to function because they view it as a point of reference to their cause and ongoing displacement. Moreover, the generally high support suggests that refugees continue to see the presence of UNRWA as important in protecting the claim to the right of return the right of return.

8.6 Conclusion

UNRWA was established to provide aid and relief to refugees as well as develop projects to create employment opportunities. Moreover, it was introduced by Western states to support refugees to settle within host countries. As such, the Agency is regarded by some refugees and scholars as an important actor on refugee issues and as an important support agent for refugees in occupied territories and host countries in the absence of a Palestinian state. However, the UNRWA has faced many challenges on the ground as refugees continue to be exposed to wars, intifadas and social exclusion.

This chapter also identified and discussed some of the critical attitudes held towards UNRWA by refugees, scholars and politicians. In particular, the Agency was accused by these groups of exercising an imperialist agenda by abolishing the right of return of Palestinian refugees in favour of refugee resettlement within the host countries. This argument was reinforced by claims the UNRWA diminished the refugee narrative by promoting Zionist views and exposing Palestinian children to the Zionist narrative through school textbooks. Indeed, some Israeli officials and scholars bluntly accused the links to terrorism and purported that it was only using the plight of refugees to remain in the region. Proposals were therefore made to end UNRWA operations despite the fact that the refugee question remained unresolved.

In light of the disparate views held towards the UNRWA, this chapter examined Palestinian refugees' attitudes towards the Agency. Specifically, focus was assigned to whether they believed its phase out would significantly impact their right to return, including its role as monitor of refugee hardships and the implications of its dismantlement for the refugee cause; and whether the PA should take over UNRWA's

responsibilities. The findings presented in the chapter offered significant insights into how Palestinian refugees currently view the Agency, suggesting they continue to regard the UNRWA as an important monitor of their daily suffering. Evident in the findings was a belief among surveyed refugees that UNRWA also kept alive their struggle for recognition in the eyes of the international community despite the many attempts to settle them within host countries and diaspora. Indeed, the results revealed many Palestinian refugees regard the agency not only as an international reminder of their story to the international community, but also as a symbol of their rights (Farah 2012). In light of this, refugees have called for the agency to remain in operation until all refugees are returned to their homeland. When demographic characteristics were considered, participants from various political affiliations, particularly independents, overwhelmingly rejected the proposal to transfer UNRWA responsibilities to the PA. What was notable, however, was the relatively higher level of support for the proposal from Fatah supporters. Given that political affiliation to Fatah was the second highest outcome reported by respondents (below no political affiliation), it is worth considering the extent to which this presents as a source of tension among refugees.

Furthermore, the relatively high number of participants representing all levels of income to agree with the notion that UNRWA should continue to function until all refugees are returned supports the conclusion that Palestinian refugees remain reluctant to terminate UNRWA services before the agency can reach a just resolution to the refugee resettlement issue. Indeed, participants indicated their preference for the UNRWA to remain active despite the Agency's limited mandate because they believed the Agency represented their voice to the international community.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

I conclude this thesis by re-examining the study's aims and the extent to which they have been achieved. In addition, I discuss the significance of the study findings, and recommendations are provided for areas of further research. Millions of Palestinians continue to be displaced within their own country and are forced to live under Israeli occupation. Since the Palestinian Exodus in 1948, and also the 1967 Six-Day War, refugees have asserted their right of return; that is, the right to return to the property that they and their forebears left behind. This right is recognised as a political principle, a human right, and a sacred claim (Abu Sitta 1999; Aruri 2001; Richter-Devroe 2013). Indeed, the right of return of Palestinians to their homeland has long held a central position in the Palestinian refugee narrative. However, the displacement of Palestinian refugees has gone beyond its 70 years, and there has been a distinct lack of progress in the negotiations for a just outcome, and the refugee voice continues to be marginalised in the negotiation process. Good work has been presented in various empirical studies to date on the Palestinian refugee problem. However, the general lack of robust representation of the Palestinian refugee voice on the right of return claim in the current international context requires a research response. The marginalised Palestinian refugee voice on this issue limits our understanding of the current perspectives of Palestinian refugees living in camps in the West Bank on the issue of right of return.

In fact, the underlying assumption in this thesis is that the ongoing occupation of Palestine, the continually shifting political landscape, and the protracted peace negotiations may impact refugees' views of the right of return claim and its constituent elements in the peace negotiations (i.e. compensation and resettlement). To determine the extent to which the views of refugees have been impacted by these contingencies, if at all. The aim has been to better understand the legitimacy of Ben-Gurion's claim that "the young will forget" by surveying 1,200 refugees living in five camps in the West Bank were recruited for their current views of the right of return claim. Specifically, this thesis sought to determine whether the Palestinian refugee

views of right to return changed after so many years of displacement (main research question RQ1). Within the broad scope of this aim was the collection of data pertaining to the refugees' view of the effectiveness of their political representation (sub-question one), the right of return claim (sub-question two), proposals for compensation (sub-question three) and resettlement (sub-question four), and the implications of the proposed withdrawal of UNRWA services to refugees (sub-question five). Importantly, the Palestinian right of return has been conceptualised as a multidimensional construct which includes the right of return claim as defined in UN Resolution 194, compensation and resettlement proposals, and the provision of social services by the international community (i.e. UNRWA) until the claim is realised.

Edward Said's theory of Orientalism has been applied in this thesis as a framework to better understand how the Palestinian refugee voice has been marginalised in the peace process and the possible implications of this marginalisation of their views on the right of return. In addition, Abu Sitta's reference to the 'sacredness' of the right of return claim to Palestinian refugees was also considered in this thesis when discussing the results. This was to draw conclusions as to the current depth of the conviction of the surveyed refugees towards the return to their homeland.

9.2 Main Research Findings

The aim of this study was to determine the current views of Palestinian refugees on the right to return claim after so many years of displacement. In turn, quantitative survey data was collected to determine the extent to which Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank regard the right of return as the central claim as well as their current views on significant related aspects such as compensation and resettlement. A study design based on quantitative research paradigms was selected due to significant constraints encountered around data collection including the potential for participants to be subjected to marginalisation, discriminations, and even threats to safety. It is also worth noting that a quantitative study design provided the foundation for the collection of a large sample to ensure access to a wide range of refugees' opinions. Thus, notwithstanding the limitations inherent in a non-random sampling method, the findings of refugee views reported throughout this thesis contribute an objective

examination of Palestinian refugee perspectives on the right of return. In addition, they provide a complement to previous qualitative research studies on this issue.

9.2.1 Support for the right of return

Insights in Palestinian refugees' current views of the right of return were achieved by investigating several and diverse aspects of the right of return claim and its component elements. Overall, this study found that participants overwhelmingly reaffirmed the importance of the right of return, opposition to alternatives and their desire to return to their homes and live in a Palestinian state. Notably, while some variations in the views reported by respondents are identifiable with demographic differences, it is generally the case that overall support for the right of return claim remained consistent across age groups, genders, class, education, and political divides.

Accessing diverse Palestinian refugee perspectives on the right of return was important to this study given that refugees can experience displacement in unique ways. As well-established throughout this thesis, the right of return claim among older refugees in particular may be viewed through the lens of their expulsion and its consequence. For the descendants of these refugees, however – some as young as 18 years of age – it may be that the right of return is understood in relation to different factors more representative of their own life experiences. Moreover, Palestinian women refugees can experience displacement differently to men (Eddin 2015) and refugees' political affiliations, level of education or income, and even their religious practices can have implications for their current views of the right of return.

Notably, Chapter five reported that the majority of respondents (72%) indicated that they were committed to only accepting a peace deal which included a right of return provision. Moreover, the majority of respondents (60%) were commitment to Resolution 194 as the pathway to realise the right of return. The political affiliations of the surveyed Palestinian refugees were also not found to significantly influence their willingness to accept peace at the exclusion of the right of return. This is an important outcome as it suggests that the right of return claim is more to Palestinian

refugees than a political issue to be realised through political processes, and arguably gives weight to representations of the claim as sacred.

9.2.2 Support for compensation

The payment of compensation to Palestinian refugees is included in the peace process as both a mechanism to respond to the hardships and losses of property experienced by refugees in their displacement and as a substitute for the right of return. Given that the compensation provision may potentially influence the refugees' views of right of return, of interest to this thesis is the extent to which Palestinian refugees might accept compensation as an outcome to the exclusion of right of return (research sub-question 2). The participants' views on this issue were canvassed in relation to four potentially influential factors: if they believed that realising the right of return was unlikely; if other refugees agreed to accept compensation; if the PA accepted a compensation agreement on their behalf; or if Israel agreed to pay compensation. The majority of participants in this study indicated that they would reject compensation as an outcome to the peace process even though they believed they would return to their home-towns or even if other refugees had agreed to accept. This finding is significant to our overall understanding of Palestinian refugees' current views of the right of return. This is primarily because it highlights how the 'right' is viewed as something separate to other constituent elements given primary focus on the negotiations for peace such as compensation and resettlement outcomes. Arguably, this finding also reinforces the conclusion that the right of return not only remains sacred to many refugees living in the West Bank, but that it is outside the paradigms for a so called 'just' solution build around compensation and resettlement.

9.2.3 Support for resettlement

Indeed, one of the more complex issues for consideration in relation to whether Palestinian refugees' current views of the right to return have changed after so many years of displacement is the relationship between resettlement and right of return. This is because at the centre of relationship are powerful issues of Palestinian refugee identity and their connections to Pre-1948 Palestine. The push towards resettlement may therefore be perceived by the refugees to be a dismantling of both the right of return and the Palestinian refugee identity. Palestinian refugees connect to and interact with the world through the refugee camps. Nonetheless, it was anticipated that attitudes towards resettlement, either within the refugee camps or in other host

locations, will naturally differ among refugees. Older refugees particularly are more likely to have established direct associations between the camps and their cities and villages in Palestine prior 1948. Alternatively, younger refugees may have an attachment to the camp because this is the 'Palestine' that they 'know'.

Like compensation, proposals to resettle Palestinian refugees in current host locations or alternative countries may potentially influence the refugees' views of the right of return. Indeed, the issue of resettlement forces consideration of resettlement locations, the current conditions of the camps, and refugees' attitudes towards resettlement in general. This study therefore sought to determine the extent to which Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank would accept resettlement as an outcome to the exclusion of the right of return to their original homes (research sub-question 3). Although this study found that only 51% of surveyed refugees favoured returning to their original homes, this can be explained to some degree by the broader result showing only 43% of 18-24-year-olds indicated that this was their preferred resettlement choice. Notwithstanding that this age group strongly supported a return to Palestine in general, their preferred resettlement choice was most likely because they do not know the village of their grandparents and believe life outside the refugee camps may offer them stability provided it is an outcome of the right of return.

Nonetheless, the results suggest that refugee groups may consider resettlement differently in some cases. In turn, a deeper level of insight into refugees' attitudes towards resettlement and its relationship with right of return was sought by accessing the respondents' views on the conditions of the camps. Focus was given to this aspect particularly because camp re-development and the development of new residential projects may be considered as forms of resettlement. Despite just over half of the participants indicating that they believed the camp conditions were inadequate, an overall majority of Palestinian refugees (70%) did not believe that changing the conditions of the camp was a suitable outcome.

9.2.4 Support for UNRWA

As previously established, the international body established by the UN to support Palestinian refugees during their displacement is UNRWA. However, some UN donor

countries have proposed that UNRWA services to refugees be withdrawn, to be delivered instead by the PA. The work of UNRWA is closely related to the right of return because, for many Palestinian refugees, the organisation represents their voice to the international community. As such, this thesis sought insights into the extent to which Palestinian refugees perceived the ongoing presence of UNRWA helped to validate the importance of the right of return and would therefore reject any proposal to phase out UNRWA services before a just resolution can be reached (research sub-question 4).

As reported in Chapter eight, most Palestinian refugees (80%) wanted UNRWA services to remain in place in the refugee camps until the right of return is actioned. The proposed phase out of services was viewed negatively by most refugees (75%). They disagreed with the withdrawal of UNRWA services and the shift in its responsibilities to the PA believing that it would potentially undermine the effectiveness of the UN to monitor their problems and daily hardships (indicated by 77% of the surveyed refugees). In turn, most participants (69%) indicated that a withdrawal of UNRWA services would diminish the Palestinian cause in the eyes of the world community and, as such, they would be unwilling to accept the withdrawal of UNRWA from refugee camps as part of a peace settlement. Thus, this thesis concludes that Palestinian refugees regard UNRWA as important to their ability to overcome their marginalised voice in the international community and as a symbol of their rights.

9.3 Implications of the findings

It is a reasonable assumption that protracted and extremely challenging negotiations for a just outcome for Palestinian refugees will impact refugees' view of the right of return provision and its centrality to the refugee narrative. Resolution 194 adopted by the UNGA in December 1948 stipulates a legal claim in international law for the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes (Rampel 2009). As such, it has long been considered to hold a central position in the Palestinian refugee narrative for the way it talks their right for self-determination and a just outcome in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Bracka 2005). However, given the occupation of Palestine by Israel now in its 70th year, the extreme and inadequate living conditions in the refugee camps, the inability of the negotiating parties to reach a just outcome, and the ongoing

marginalisation of the Palestinian refugee voice, research that provides new insights into the refugees' current view of the right of return is important to give expression to their hopes and expectations of the peace process.

In response to this need, this study sought to determine whether the Palestinian refugees' views of the right to return have changed after so many years of displacement. As stated above, the main findings reported in this study suggest the continued importance Palestinian refugees place on their claim of the right of return to Palestine, while also recognising that issues of compensation, resettlement and social services provided by international bodies are important considerations in the pathway towards peace. The main implication of these findings is that given Palestinian refugees are at the centre of the negotiations their voice needs to be central to the negotiation process. This thesis has sought to give expression to that voice and argues that political representatives of Palestinian refugees, Israeli representatives and the international community more broadly need to give greater provision to the voice of refugees living in refugee camps and their views and expectations of a just solution.

The second implication of the findings reported in this study pertains to the secondary and personal objectives of this research investigation; namely, to reflect on whether the right of return remains a 'sacred' claim among Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank. In addition, to determine whether there is any substance to the prediction that the new generations of Palestinian refugee born into life in the refugee camps will inevitably forget the day of catastrophe Al Nakba as it conveyed to them in Palestinian refugee narrative passed down through the generations. For older aged refugees, the right of return claim is the lasting link to their expulsion and the consequence of Al Nakba. For the descendants of these refugees, however – some as young as 18 years of age – it may be that the day of catastrophe and the right of return claim is understood in relation to different factors more representative of their own life experiences.

Given that the majority of Palestinian refugees who participated in this study remain unwilling to accept any negotiated outcomes that does not include the right of return provision, and that most are also unwilling to accept compensation and/or resettlement as a substitute for the right of return, the reported findings imply the right of return claim maintains a degree of sacredness among Palestinian refugees. In terms

of the younger refugees ‘forgetting’ Al Nakba, the findings reported in this study demonstrate that differences of opinion between the oldest (65+ years) and the youngest (18-25 years) surveyed refugees were most evident in relation to matters of compensation and resettlement, particularly. It may therefore be assumed that younger and older aged Palestinian refugees may have conceptualisation of resettlement and compensation based on their different life experiences. However, the similar extent to which both the younger and older aged Palestinian refugees continue to pursue the right of return claim and hold Jewish forces to blame for the expulsion of Palestinians from Palestine in 1948 implies that younger refugees still assign Al Nakba an important place in their personal refugee narrative.

9.4 Contribution of the study

This thesis contributes to the existing research on the Palestinian refugees’ views of the right of return. Literature on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has pointed to the highly politicised and legalistic nature of the conflict (e.g. Reinhart 2003; Masalha 2001). In addition, past research studies have provided useful insights into the Palestinian refugees’ views of the right of return (Sayigh (1977, 1979), their perceived importance of Resolution 194 as a legal framework for their return (Albarmiel 2005), and what Palestinians may regard as a just solution to the conflict (Khoury and Rouhana 2010). In turn, this study provides new insights into the current views of refugees on the right of return claim by conceptualising Resolution 194 according to three aspects: legal, possible and sacred, and by examining their views of the relationship of the right of return to compensation, resettlement, and the withdrawal of UNRWA services within the refugee camps. The survey of Palestinian refugees living in camps in the West Bank and the reporting of the main findings contribute a current reflection of the Palestinian refugee voice which has been lacking in the research literature.

This study also contributes new insights into the current views of Palestinian refugees on the right of return through the provision of quantitative data. To this researcher’s best knowledge there has been no research study in recent times to attempt a quantitative representation of Palestinian refugees view on this issue. As such, this thesis contributes a data rich and objective perspective to our academic understanding of how Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank currently view the right of return

and its associated aspects (i.e. compensation, resettlement and UNRWA service provision). In addition, the findings in this research also contribute to our general understanding of the extent to which Palestinian refugees consider the right of return to be 'sacred' within the refugee narrative and, correspondingly, the extent to which one might assess the young Palestinian refugees to have forgotten the catastrophe (Al Nakba). This has been achieved by quantifying and explaining the differences in the views of Palestinian refugees towards the right of return according to key variables including age, gender and political affiliation.

9.5 Limitations of this study

Notwithstanding the unique data set generated in this study, and the new and valuable insights into Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return it has provided, an evaluation of the reported research findings should be undertaken with consideration to the following limitations of this study. First, convenience sampling was used in this study to recruit refugee participants living in the West Bank, primarily in response to some of the security concerns surrounding research data collection in refugee camps and to facilitate ease of access to potential participants. It is acknowledged however that this non-probability sampling technique increases the potential for bias in the representation of certain groups within the sample and that the refugees' reasons for participation (or non-participation) are not known. As such, the generalisability of the main findings to the Palestinian refugee population more broadly is limited.

Second, the research study was based on the collection of data from Palestinian refugees living in refugee camps in the West Bank only. Given the unique living conditions of each refugee camp and the variations in population demographics, the findings reported in this study about the current views of Palestinian refugees towards cannot necessarily be generalized to the wider population in Lebanon or elsewhere.

9.6 Future research

During this study of Palestinian refugees' view of the right of return and its associated elements several possible focus areas and methodologies for further research emerged. It is the view of this researcher that our academic understanding of

Palestinian refugees' views of the right of return claim would be improved by further research studies employing a multiple case study design. This would naturally involve the development of data sets around this issue from refugees living in camps outside of the West Bank and even outside of Palestine (e.g. Lebanon). Studies employing this design would allow the robustness of the findings reported in this thesis to be tested and provide add to the body of evidence pinpointing the views of Palestinian refugees of the right of return claim.

In addition, the underlying assumption of this study was that the protracted occupation of Palestine by Israel, the lack of progress in the peace negotiations, and the marginalisation of the Palestinian refugee voice potentially impacted refugees' views of the right of return claim and their views toward compensation and resettlement. In turn, this study reported somewhat unique findings regarding the views of young adult Palestinian refugees particularly (including their lack of clear position on some issues compared to their older counterparts). Therefore, further research studies should be undertaken to examine the views of young adult Palestinian refugees more deeply. Specifically, research studies should aim to compile evidence as to the nature and reasons for the different perspectives held by young adult refugees compared to their older counterparts. This has the potential to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the current factors shaping Palestinian refugee perspectives and may better elucidate the likely future direction their thinking. Lastly, the findings from such research would broaden our academic understanding of the impact of contemporary social and political conditions on refugees' attitudes towards the salient issues and provide a further platform for the Palestinian refugee voice to be heard.

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11 APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: Questionnaire and cover letter (English version)

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Supervised By:
Ben Spies-Butcher at Macquarie University
Noah Basil at Macquarie University &
Shaun Wilson at University of New South Wales

Dear Participant,

I am a PhD candidate in the Sociology Department at Macquarie University in Sydney Australia. I am conducting a study entitled How do the Palestinian Refugees View the Right of Return?

This research project is part of my degree. The objective of this research project is to attempt to understand what Palestinian Refugees want. Through your participation, the data collected will provide useful information regarding my research project and enable me to submit a written document to my university.

The findings of the data will not under any circumstances contain names or identifying characteristics. The information you provide is confidential, and no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.
The data from the questionnaire will be kept in secure storage and accessible to the research team. Also the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period.

Enclosed with this letter is a brief questionnaire that asks a variety of questions about your attitudes toward the refugee issues. I am asking you to look over the questionnaire and, if you choose to do so, complete the questionnaire and send it back to me in the enclosed postage-paid envelope at your local UN Office, or feel free to drop it your self at the UN Office.

If you choose to participate, do not write your name on the questionnaire. I do not need to know who you are and no one will know whether you participated in this study. Your responses will not be identified with you personally, nor will anyone be able to determine which house you belong to.

I hope you will take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Without the help of people like you, research on Refugees could not be conducted. Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate. I understand that you completing this particular survey may bring about feelings of discomfort or fear of the authorities in general. Therefore, I urge you to make contact with the Public Committee of your camp to discuss your concerns or the UN health centres / counselling Services on the following numbers:

Arroub refugee camp: 02- 2522983
Aida refugee camp (DarKhamshta clinic): 02-2742444
Dheisheh refugee camp: 02- 27770997
Fawar refugee camp: 02- 2282375
Al'Azzacamp:(Dar Khamshtaclinic): 02-2742444

Please note that by returning a complete survey you are agreeing to participate in this study. As the survey is anonymous you cannot withdraw your consent at a later time. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors, after completing the questionnaire, could you please send it to the local UN office in your camp or feel free to drop it yourself.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Macquarie University, Department of Sociology by mail at :sociology@mq.edu.au
The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by The Macquarie University.

Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [+61 2] 9850 7854, fax [+61 2] 9850 8799, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). If you wish to discuss this survey or if you have any complaints, please feel free to contact my principal supervisor Ben Spies – Butcher on ben.spies_butcher@mq.edu.au , you may contact him via phone on [+ 612] 9850 4074. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Prepared By: Sobhi Albadawi

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How to fill out this questionnaire
To answer this questionnaire you only need to tick a box. Please tick the box which is closest to your opinion. In completing this survey there is no right or wrong answers. The researcher wants your views only.

This survey is confidential and what you say in the survey will be kept confidential. The findings of the data will not under any circumstances contain names or identify characteristics. The information you provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

The data from the questionnaire will be kept in secure storage and accessible to the research team. The only use of the results on the survey will be university research for the completion of doctoral studies at Macquarie University.
If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Macquarie University, Department of Sociology by mail at: sociology@mq.edu.auor my supervisor on ben.spies_butcher@mq.edu.au , you may contact my supervisor via phone on [+ 612] 9850 4074

Prepared By: Sobhi Albadawi

Supervised By: Ben Spies-Butcher at Macquarie University
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Right of Return

1. Generally speaking, the way things are going in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, people like you and your family have a good chance of improving their future.	
Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☐
Neither	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Disagree	☐

2. Thinking about the peace process between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government, do you feel that the road of peace talks will lead to a just solution of the refugee question?	
Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☐
Neither	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Disagree	☐

3. Based on your experience in the refugee camp, which of the following statements do you see as most important and the second most important for refugees in general?		
	First choice	Second choice
a. The military occupation	☐	☐

b. Low income	☐	☐
c. Cost of living	☐	☐
d. Financial crisis	☐	☐
e. High unemployment	☐	☐
f. Corruption in government	☐	☐
g. Health care and hospitals	☐	☐
h. Not enough progress towards Palestinian refugees right of return	☐	☐
i. Gap between rich and poor	☐	☐
j. Inadequate public transport	☐	☐
k. Public education	☐	☐

4. There are different opinions on the question of who is responsible for the creation of the refugee problem in 1948. In your opinion, who is the responsible side? Please chose one only	
i. Mainly, the refugees left voluntarily	☐
ii. Mainly, the refugees were told to leave by Arab leaders	☐
iii. Mainly, Jewish forces expelled the refugees	☐
iv. Combination of the above	☐
v. Don’t know	☐

5. In your opinion, of the following issues discussed in the framework of the Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations, which are the three most difficult for the two sides to find an agreeable solution to? Please indicate the most difficult issue, the second most difficult and the third.

	1	2	3
The creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel	☐	☐	☐
Resolving the sovereignty of Jerusalem	☐	☐	☐
The implementation of right of return to all Palestinian refugees and compensation to those who do not return	☐	☐	☐
The expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank	☐	☐	☐
Establishing borders with the state of Israel	☐	☐	☐

6. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The Palestinian people should advance their claims through a formal peace process with Israel.

Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☐
Neither	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Disagree	☐

7. Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the peace process, how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following conditions being part of any settlement with Israel?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
i	A solution that improves the quality of life in the camps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii	A solution that enables refugees to relocate from the camps to new housing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

iii	A solution that enables refugees to rebuild housing within the camps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv	A solution that gives refugees the right to stay in the camps if they choose	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v	Compensation that enables refugees to resettle within the Palestinian authority borders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vi	Compensation that enables refugees to resettle within Israel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vii	A solution that allows Palestinians to be relocated within Israeli settlements within the 1967 borders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
i.	I believe that the Palestinian Authority will give up the right of refugees to return to their former homes with the current Israel borders in exchange for a Palestinian state	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii.	I think that the Palestinian Authority may limit refugees return only to the West Bank and Gaza Strip	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii.	I believe that the Palestinian refugees must participate in decision making about the right of return	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv.	I believe that refugees are likely to compromise or give up the right of return as part of any settlement plan compared with other Palestinian negotiators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v.	I think only a limited number of refugees will return to the 1948 boundaries.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vi.	I think the Palestinian refugees will remain in the current camps.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vii.	It is not possible to accept a peace agreement which does not include the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their native homelands	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
viii.	The implementation of the right of return will change the character of Israel.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

ix.	Israel should limit the right of return to family reunification.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
x.	I am committed to the right of return as it is recommended in the UN General Assembly resolution 194	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
xi.	I think the economics and demographic conditions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are not suitable to accommodate all repatriation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
xii.	The Palestinian Authority has the right to negotiate about the Palestinian people's right of return	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
xiii.	The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) has the right to negotiate the right of return as a representative of the Palestinian people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Attitudes of Palestinian refugees with respect to resettlement and camps conditions

9. Here are some statements about attitudes of Palestinian refugees with respect to resettlement and camps conditions. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
i.	The condition of the refugee camps is adequate for accommodating new refugees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii.	The refugee camps should be dismantled.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii.	It is possible to redevelop the refugee camps to be able to continue living in them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv.	The living conditions of the camps in comparison with other areas in the West Bank is adequate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v.	Israel should be responsible for solving the refugees problem	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

vi.	The West Bank is able to accommodate a large number of repatriated refugee	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vii.	The Gaza Strip is able to accommodate a large number of repatriated refugees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
viii.	A new residential project should be developed instead of the current camps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Where the Palestinian refugees should be permanently settled? Please chose one answerer?		
i.	Mainly in their original home inside Israel	☐
ii.	Mainly in places within the Palestinian state	☐
iii.	In the Palestinian state and inside Israel	☐
iv.	In their present places of residence in the Middle East or elsewhere	☐
v.	I do not know	☐
vi.	Other …….	☐

11. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
i.	I think that living in the camp is a national duty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii.	I believe that the refugees in the camp prefer to live together	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii.	I think that there are some differences between the camp residents and local residents outside the camp	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv.	I believe the refugees in the camps are not accepted by other residents outside the camps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

v.	I think that officials and institutions treat the refugees in the camps differently to local resident outside the camps.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Compensation

12. Regardless of whether you personally agree or disagree with compensation, would each of these factors make it more likely or less likely that you accept compensation:

		More Likely	Somewhat likely	Neutral	Somewhat unlikely	Much less likely	Don't Know
i.	Most of the refugees agree to it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii.	The Palestinian Authority accepts it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii.	Most negotiating parties agree to it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv.	Some refugees have already accepted compensation claims	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v.	The value of compensation was adequate to my family's needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vi.	If Israel accepts it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. In your opinion, how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about compensation:

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
i.	The Palestinian Authority should negotiate with other parties to determine the value of compensation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

ii.	The proceeds of compensation should be granted directly to refugees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii.	The proceeds of compensation should be made available to the Palestinian Authority	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv.	Compensation should be shared appropriately between the Palestinian Authority and refugees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v.	Compensation must be adequate to my family's needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vi.	I would accept compensation because it is unlikely e for the refugees to return back to their home towns in 1948	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vii	Should refugees all receive the same amount of compensation regardless of how much property they or their families lost in 1948	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
viii	Should compensation be linked to actual property losses in 1948	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. Which of the following countries or parties should assist in providing the compensation? (Please choose more than one if applicable	
The Arab countries	☐
The European Union	☐
The United States of America	☐
The United Nations	☐
Israel	☐

15. Which one of the following countries or parties should contribute the <u>most</u> to compensation?	
The Arab countries	☐
The European Union	☐
The United States of America	☐

The United Nations	☐
Israel	☐

16. How much confidence do you have in each of these actors if they were part of an international commission to implement a refugee agreement?

		A great deal of confidence	Quite a lot of confidence	Not very much confidence	No confidence at all
i.	The Palestinian Authority	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii.	The United Nations	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii.	The European Union	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv.	The United States Of America	☐	☐	☐	☐
v.	Israel	☐	☐	☐	☐
vi.	The Red Cross	☐	☐	☐	☐
vii.	The Arab League	☐	☐	☐	☐
viii.	Canada	☐	☐	☐	☐
ix.	Norway	☐	☐	☐	☐
x.	Lebanon	☐	☐	☐	☐
xi.	Syria	☐	☐	☐	☐

xii.	Jordan	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Generally speaking, do you feel that the internal community supports or opposes the right of return?	
Strongly support	☐
Support	☐
Neither support nor oppose	☐
Opposes	☐

The role of the UN

18. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The Palestinian Authority should accept the withdrawal of the UN from refugee camps as part of a peace settlement.	
Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☐
Neither	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Disagree	☐

19. Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the withdrawal of the UN from refugee camps, how strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
i.	The UN services make the refugees feel that they are no different from other Palestinians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii.	The UN provides employment opportunities to the refugees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii.	The UN should continue to function until all refugees are returned	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv.	Dismantling the UN camps will increase the financial burden on the Palestinian Authority	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v.	The UN provides essentials to the refugees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vi.	The UN is an effective monitor of problems and daily hardships faced by refugees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vii.	Dismantling the UN services will diminish the Palestinian cause in the eyes of the world community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
viii.	The Palestinian Authority has the capacity to provide employment opportunities to refugees in the camps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Personal background

1.	What is your age	18-24 ☐	25-34 ☐	35-44 ☐
		44-54 ☐	55-64 ☐	65-74 ☐
		75+ ☐		
2.	What is your gender	Male ☐	Female ☐	
3.	What is your marital status	Married ☐	Divorced ☐	
		Single ☐	Widowed ☐	
4.	Which generation of refugee are you	First generation ☐	Third generation ☐	
		Second generation ☐	Fourth generation ☐	
5.	Which area of Palestine where you been expelled from	1948 areas ☐	1967 area ☐	
6.		House ☐	Land ☐	Business ☐

	What property and belongings did you leave behind when you were expelled	Money/gold □	Nothing □	Nothing personally, other family member did □
7.	What is the highest level of education you have completed	None ☐	Elementary school ☐	Secondary school ☐
		High school ☐	Diploma ☐	Bachelor + ☐
8.	What is your main job or daily occupation	House duties ☐	Labourer or worker ☐	
		UNRWA employee ☐	Government employee ☐	
		Student ☐	Self – employed ☐	
		Retired ☐	Unemployed ☐	
		Professional ☐	Community worker ☐	
9.	How often do you practice your religion	Daily ☐	Regularly ☐	
		Sometimes ☐	Casually ☐	
		Never ☐	Not religious ☐	
10.	Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Fatah, Hamas, independent or what	Fatah movement	☐	
		Hamas movement	☐	
		Popular front	☐	
		Islamic Jihad	☐	
		National party	☐	
		Democratic party	☐	
		Independent	☐	
		National coalition for justice and democracy	☐	
		Palestine people's party	☐	
		Palestinian national initiative	☐	
		None	☐	
11.	Would you call yourself a very strong, fairly strong or not very strong supporter of that party	Very strong supporter	☐	
		Fairly strong supporter	☐	
		Not very strong supporter	☐	
12.	Who is the main breadwinner in your household? (Please choose more than one if applicable)	Father	☐	
		Mother	☐	
		Son	☐	
		Daughter	☐	
		Myself	☐	
		Husband	☐	
		Wife	☐	

13.	How many people in paid employment in your family	□□	
14.	Household income	□□□□□ NIS Israeli Shekel	
15.	Do you receive any special benefit from UNRWA	Yes	□
		No	□
		Sometimes	□
16.	If you are receiving any special benefits for what reason is that? (Please choose more than one if applicable)	Disabled family member	□
		Death of the main breadwinner	□
		Low income	□
		Chronic illness of a family member	□
		Large family	□
17.	How many people live in this house	□□	
18.	Is this house provided by UNRWA	Yes	□
		No	□
19.	Has this house been renovated or extended	Yes	□
		No	□
20.	If yes, was it renovated by?	UNRWA	□
		Family	□
		Palestinian Authority	□
21.	To whom does this house belong	UNRWA	□
		Family	□
		Private rental	□
22.	How many bedrooms are in this house?	One room	□
		Two rooms	□
		Three rooms	□
		More than three	□

Thank you for taking time out to participate in this survey. I truly value the information you have provided. Your responses are vital in completing this research project.

11.2 Appendix 2: Questionnaire and cover letter (Arabic version)

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

اللاجئين الفلسطينيين وحق العودة والتعويض

صبحي البدوي
جامعة ماكواري دائرة علم الاجتماع / استراليا

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MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
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Email: sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au

إشراف:
الدكتور: بن سبيسز بوشر من جامعة ماكواري
الدكتور: نوح باسل من جامعة ماكواري
الدكتور: شون ويلسون من جامعة نيوساوث ويلز

عزيزي/ عزيزتي

أنا طالب دكتوراه في دائرة علم الاجتماع في جامعة ماكواري في سيدني باستراليا أقوم باجراء دراسة بعنوان آراء اللاجئين الفلسطينين في حق العودة والتعويض.

يهدف مشروع الدراسة التعرف إلى ما يريده اللاجىء الفلسطيني من خلال مشاركتكم في الدراسة. المعلومات التي سيتم جمعها ستعطي معلومات هامة و جادة وستساعدني في تقديم تقرير كتابي لجامعتي.

نتائج الدراسة لا تحتوي على الاسم أو معلومات شخصية وستبقى المعلومات سرية، ولن تقود لتحديد هويتكم ولن يتم الإشارة إليها في التقرير.

ستحفظ المعلومات في مكان آمن ويحق لفريق البحث في استخدامها فقط. ويجب الإشارة بأن نتائج الدراسة ستبقى محفوظة لمدة خمس سنوات. في ملحق هذه الرسالة استمارة تطرح عدة مجالات حول توجهاتكم في موضوع

اللاجئين ومن هنا أطلب منكم قراءة هذه الاستمارة والتمعن بها وإذا قررت الإجابة أو المشاركة في الدراسة عليك إرسالها على العنوان المبين في المغلف والكائن في مكتب الوكالة الواقع في مخيمكم. أو إحضارها الى مكتب الوكالة الواقع في مخيمكم.

إذا قررت المشاركة في الدراسة لا تكتب اسمك على الإستمارة . أنا لست بصدد التعرف عليك ولا أحد لديه القدرة في التعرف إلى هويتك. إجابتك لن تحدد هويتك وليس لأي شخص القدرة في تحديد مكان بيتك أو عنوانك.

أتمنى أن تأخذ بعض الوقت في إكمال هذه الاستبانة. في حقيقة الأمر بدون مشاركتكم هذه الدراسة لن تتحقق مع العلم بأن مشاركتكم تطوعية بحتة، وليس هناك ضرر إذا قررت ألا تشارك.

إنني اتفهم جيدا بأن المشاركة في مثل هذه الدراسة قد يسبب لك شعور بالألم أو الخوف من السلطات بشكل عام. فلذلك أدعوكم للاتصال باللجنة الشعبية التابعة لمخيمكم للحديث عن مواقفكم أو الاتصال بعيادات الوكالة الواقع بمخيكم للحصول على خدمات الصحة والأرشاد.

إذا كنتم من مخيم العروب اتصل على الرقم: (02552983)، ومخيم عايدة (022742444)، ومخيم الدهيشه (027770997)، ومخيم الفوار (022282375)، ومخيم العزه على هاتف رقم (022742444)

أشكركم جزيلا على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. الرجاء بعد إكمال الإجابات أن تقوم بإرسال الإستبانة إلى مكتب الوكالة في مخيمكم. اذا كان لديكم أي استفسار حول حقك كمبحوث عليك الاتصال في جامعة ماكواري دائرة علم الاجتماع على العنوان الالكتروني التالي:sociology@mq.edu.ay

الجوانب الأخلاقية في هذه الدراسة تم الموافقة عليها من اللجنة الأخلاقية التابعة لجامعة مكواري. إذا كان لديك أي شكوى أو تحفظ حول أي جانب أخلاقي في هذه الاستمارة يحق لك الاتصال باللجنة المذكورة أعلاه على الهاتف التالي (98507845 612+) أو رقم الفاكس (61298508799+) أو البريد الالكتروني Ethics@mq.edu.au على هذا الأساس أي شكوى ستعامل بمنتهى السرية وسيتم التحقيق بها وسيتم الاتصال بكم . إذا كان لديكم أي استفسار حول هذه الاستمارة أو احتجاج على ما تحتويه الرجاء الاتصال على المشرف بن سبيسز بوشر من جامعة ماكواري على البريد الالكتروني ben.spies-butcher @mq.edu.au أو على هاتف رقم (98504074 612+). أي اعتراض سيعامل بغاية من الاهتمام والسرية التامَّة وسيتم التحقيق بأي احتجاج وسيتم إشعاركم بالنتيجة.

إعداد : صبحي البدوي

إشراف:

الدكتور: بن بوشر من جامعة ماكواري - دائرة العلوم الاجتماعية

الدكتور: شون ولسون من جامعة نيو ساوث ويلز- دائرة العلوم الاجتماعية

الدكتور: نوح باسل من جامعة ماكواري- دائرة العلوم السياسية

حق العودة

1. بشكل عام، حسبما تسير عليه الأمور في الضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة، أفراد مثل عائلتك لديهم الفرصة في تحسين مستقبلهم:

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐ غير موافق بشدة ☐

2. آخذاً بعين الاعتبار عملية السلام بين الفلسطينيين والحكومة الإسرائيلية، هل تعتقد بأن فشل المفاوضات يعود لأن المفاوضين لم يناقشوا قضية اللاجئين:

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐ غير موافق بشدة ☐

3. بناءاً على خبرتك الذاتية في المخيم .هنا قائمة بقضايا تواجه الفلسطينيين في الضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة، أي منها يأتي في الدرجة الأولى وأي منها يصنف في الدرجة الثانية من وجهة نظرك:

أ. الاحتلال الإسرائيلي
ب. الدخل المتدني
ت . تكاليف المعيشة
ث. الأزمة المالية
ج. البطالة العالية
ح. الفساد في الحكومة
خ. التأمين الصحي والمستشفيات
د. ليس هناك تقدم في مسألة اللاجئين وحق العودة
ذ. الفجوة بين الغني والفقير
ر. سوء المواصلات العامة
ز. التعليم المجاني

الخيار الأول..... **الخيار الثاني.....**

4. هناك وجهات نظر مختلفة حول المسؤول المباشر في خلق مشكلة اللاجئين في العام 1948. حسب رأيك من المسؤول عن خلق مشكلة اللاجئين الفلسطينين. يرجى اختيار إجابة واحدة فقط.

أ. اللاجئين تركوا طوعا ☐

ب اللاجئين تركوا بناءاً على نداء من القيادات العربية ☐
ت. العصابات اليهودية شردت الفلسطينيين ☐
ث. خليط في الأجوبة السابقة ☐
ج. لا أعرف ☐

5. حسب رأيك بالقضايا الآتية التي تمَّ الحديث فيها خلال محادثات السلام الإسرائيلية الفلسطينية، ما أصعب ثلاثة قضايا للطرفين للتوصل إلى حل نهائي متفق عليه، الرجاء الإشارة الى أول أصعب قضية، فثاني أصعب قضية، ثم ثالث أصعب قضية.

الرقم	الفقرات	1	2	3
1.	دولة فلسطينية بجانب دولة إسرائيل	☐	☐	☐
2.	السلطة على القدس	☐	☐	☐
3.	تطبيق حق العودة للاجئين الفلسطينيين وتعويض من لا يرغبون بالعودة	☐	☐	☐
4.	توسيع المستوطنات في الضفة الغربية	☐	☐	☐
5.	ترسيم الحدود مع دولة إسرائيل	☐	☐	☐

6. **إلى أي مدى تتوافق أو لا تتوافق مع العبارة التالية: الفلسطينيين يجب عليهم طرح حقوقهم من خلال عملية السلام الرسمية مع إسرائيل؟**

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ محايد ☐ غير موافق ☐ غير موافق بشدة ☐

7. **بغض النظر إذا كنت توافق أو لا توافق على عملية السلام ، إلى أي مدى توافق أو لا توافق مع الشروط التالية كوسيلة حل مع إسرائيل؟**

الرقم	الفقرات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.	حل يحسِّن نوعية الحياة في المخيمات	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	حل يساعد اللاجئين في الإنتقال من مخيمات اللاجئين الآن إلى مناطق سكنية أخرى	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	حل يسمح ببناء بيوت في المخيمات	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	حل يسمح للفلسطينين حق الاختيار في البقاء في المخيمات أو الخروج منها	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	تعويض يسمح للاجئين الاستقرار في اسرائيل	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	تعويض يسمح للاجئين الاستقرار في حدود السلطة الفلسطينية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	حل يسمح للاجئين الفلسطينيين الإنتقال إلى المستوطنات الاسرائيلية حسب حدود 1967	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. **إلى أي درجة توافق أو لا توافق مع العبارات التالية؟**

الرقم	الفقرات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.	أعتقد أن السلطة الفلسطينية ستتنازل عن حق العودة مقابل دولة فلسطينية على غرار حدود 1967	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	أعتقد أن السلطة الفلسطينية ستقوم بتحديد عودة اللاجئين الفلسطينيين فقط الى الضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	أعتقد أن اللاجئين الفلسطينين لديهم الحق بالمشاركة في صنع القرار حول حق العودة	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	أعتقد أن اللاجئين أقل من غيرهم لديهم الرغبة في التنازل عن حق العودة كوسيلة للتوصل لأي اتفاق مقارنة مع المفاوض الفلسطيني	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	أعتقد أن عدد محدود من اللاجئين سيعود الى حدود 1948	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	أعتقد أن اللاجئين الفلسطينين سيبقوا في المخيمات الحالية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	إنه من المستحيل القبول باتفاق سلام لا يتضمن عودة اللاجئين إلى وطنهم الأصلي	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	تطبيق حق العودة سيقوم بتغيير هوية إسرائيل الديمغرافية.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	على إسرائيل تحديد حق العودة فقط بهدف لم شمل العائلات الفلسطينية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	أنا ملتزم بحق العودة كما جاء في قرار هيئة الأمم المتحدة 194	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.	أعتقد بأن الوضع الاقتصادي والسكاني في الضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة لا يسمحان بعودة جميع اللاجئين الفلسطينيين	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12.	السلطة الفلسطينية تملك القرار بالتفاوض حول حق العودة	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13.	منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية تملك قرار التفاوض في موضوع اللاجئين الفلسطيني لأنها الممثل الشرعي والوحيد للشعب الفلسطيني.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

توجهات اللاجئين الفلسطينيين حول مشاريع التوطين وظروف المخيمات

9 .هنا بعض الفقرات حول توجهات اللاجئين الفلسطينيين حول مشاريع التوطين وظروف المخيمات الرجاء توضيح درجة موافقتك أو عدم موافقتك لكل من الفقرات التالية:

الرقم	الفقرات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.	ظروف مخيمات اللاجئين الفلسطينيين تسمح بعودة لاجئين جدد	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	مخيمات اللاجئين يجب أن يتم تفكيكها	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	من الممكن إعادة تطوير مخيمات اللاجئين لتمكين استكمال العيش فيها	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	ظروف المعيشة في المخيمات بالمقارنة مع مناطق أخرى بالضفة الغربية تعتبر مقبولة	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	إسرائيل يجب أن تكون المسؤولة عن حل مشكلة اللاجئين الفلسطينيين	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	الضفة الغربية تسمح باستيعاب أعداد كبيرة من اللاجئين القادمين من الخارج	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	وضع قطاع غزة يسمح باستيعاب أعداد كبيرة من اللاجئين القادمين من الخارج	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	يجب إنشاء مشاريع سكنية جديدة بدلا من المخيمات الحالية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. أين يجب توطين اللاجئين بشكل دائم؟ الرجاء اختيار اجابة واحدة.

أ. بدرجة أولى في بيوتهم داخل إسرائيل ☐

ب. في دولة فلسطين المستقبلية ☐

ت. في دولة فلسطين المستقبلية ودولة إسرائيل ☐

ث. في مكان تواجدهم الحالي في الشرق الأوسط و مناطق أخرى ☐

ج. لا أعرف ☐

ح. شيء أخر ☐

11. إلى أي درجة توافق أو لا توافق مع العبارات التالية:

الرقم	الفقرات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.	أعتقد أن السكن في المخيمات واجب وطني	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	أعتقد أن اللاجئين بالمخيمات يفضلوا العيش سويا	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	أعتقد أن هناك فروقات بين سكان المخيم والسكان المحليين خارج المخيم في الضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	أعتقد أن اللاجئين في المخيمات غير مقبولين من سكان خارج المخيمات	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	أعتقد بأن الرسميين والمؤسسات تتعامل مع اللاجئين في المخيمات بشكل مختلف من السكان المحلين من خارج المخيمات	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

التعويض

12. بغض النظر، إذا كنت شخصياً توافق أو لا توا فق على التعويض، هل تقبل التعويض في الحالات التالية:

الرقم	الفقرات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.	إذا وافق عليه معظم اللاجئين	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	إذا وافقت عليه السلطة الفلسطينية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	إذا وافقت عليه بعض الأطراف	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	إذا وافق بعض اللاجئين على التعويض	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	قيمة التعويض مناسبة لاحتياجات عائلتي	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	إذا وافقت عليه إسرائيل	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13.حسب رأيك، إلى أي درجة توافق أو لا توافق مع العبارات التالية مع التعويض:

الرقم	الفقرات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.	السلطة الفلسطينية يجب أن تفاوض مع الأطراف الأخرى لتحديد قيمة التعويض	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.	قيمة التعويض يجب أن تمنح بشكل مباشر للاجئين	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	قيمة التعويض يجب أن تمنح إلى السلطة الفلسطينية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	التعويض يجب أن يناصف بين السلطة الفلسطينية واللاجئين	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	التعويض يجب أن يكون مناسب لحاجة أسرتي	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	سأقبل التعويض لأنه من المستحيل عودة اللاجئين الفلسطينيين إلى ديارهم المتروكة عام 1948	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	على جميع اللاجئين القبول بنفس المبلغ من التعويض بغض النظر عن قيمة خسارة عائلاتهم في العام 1948	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	التعويض يجب أن يكون مقرونا بحجم الخسارة التي منيت بها العائلات في العام 1948 حتى ولو حصل بعض اللاجئين على قيمة من التعويض أكثر من غيرهم	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. أي من الدول / الهيئات التالية يجب أن تساعد في مسألة التعويض (الرجاء أن تختار أكثر من إجابة إذا كان ممكن)؟

1. الدول العربية ☐
2. الاتحاد الأوروبي ☐
3. الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية ☐
4. الامم المتحدة ☐
5. اسرائيل ☐

15 . أي من الدول / الجهات التالية يجب أن تتحمل القيمة الكبرى؟

1. الدول العربية ☐
2. الاتحاد الأوروبي ☐
3. الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية ☐
4. الامم المتحدة ☐
5. اسرائيل ☐

16. كم لديك ثقة في المنظمات أو الدول التالية فقط اذا كانوا جزءاً من هيئة دولية لتطبيق اتفاق يخص اللاجئين الفلسطينيين؟

الرقم	الفقرات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.	السلطة الفلسطينية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	الأمم المتحدة	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	الاتحاد الأوروبي	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	إسرائيل	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	الصليب الأحمر	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	جامعة الدول العربية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	كندا	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	النرويج	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.	لبنان	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.	سوريا	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12.	الأردن	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. بشكل عام، هل تعتقد بأن المجتمع الدولي يدعم أو يعارض حق العودة؟

يدعم بشدة ☐ بين بين ☐ لا يدعم ☐ يعارض ☐

دور وكالة الغوث الدولية

18. إلى أي مدى تتوافق أو لا تتوافق مع العبارة التالية؟

السلطة الفلسطينية يجب أن تتقبل حل وكالة الغوث وتحمل مسؤولية إدارة المخيمات.

موافق بشدة ☐ موافق ☐ غير متأكد ☐ غير موافق ☐ غير موافق بشدة ☐

19. بغض النظر إذا كنت موافق أو غير موافق على مسألة تفكيك مخيمات اللاجئين وحل وكالة الغوث، ما مدى موافقتك أو غير موافقتك على العبارات التالية:

الرقم	الفقرات	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.	خدمات وكالة الغوث تجعل اللاجئين يشعرون بأنهم غير مختلفين عن الفلسطينيين بشكل عام	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	وكالة الغوث توفر للاجئين الفلسطينيين فرص عمل	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	وكالة الغوث يجب أن تكمل وظيفتها حتى أن يعود اللاجئين إلى ديارهم	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	حل وكالة الغوث في مخيمات اللاجئين سيزيد من العبء المادي على السلطة الفلسطينية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	وكالة الغوث توفر الحاجات الأساسية للاجئين الفلسطينيين	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	وكالة الغوث شاهد حي على قضية اللاجئين وصعوبة حياتهم اليومية	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7.	تفكيك وكالة الغوث في مخيمات اللاجئين سيضعف القضية الفلسطينية في عيون المجتمع الدولي	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	السلطة الفلسطينية لديها القدرة لتوفير فرص عمل للاجئين في المخيمات	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

معلومات شخصية

1- العمر؟

☐ 24-18 ☐ 34-25 ☐ 44-35 ☐ 54-45 ☐ 64-55 ☐ 74-65 ☐ +75

2- الجنس؟ ذكر ☐ أنثى ☐

3- الحالة الاجتماعية؟ متزوج/ة ☐ أعزب/اء ☐ مطلق/ة ☐ أرمل/ة ☐

4- من أي فوج من اللاجئين أنت؟ الأول ☐ الثاني ☐ الثالث ☐ الرابع ☐

5- من أي منطقة من فلسطين هجّرت؟ 1948 ☐ 1967 ☐

6- أي ممتلكات أو بيوت تركت عائلتك خلفها عندما هجّرت؟

1. المنزل ☐
2. الأرض ☐
3. العمل ☐
4. أموال / ذهب ☐
5. لا شيء ☐
6. لا شيء شخصي أحد أفراد العائلة ترك ☐

7- المستوى التعليمي الذي حصلت عليه؟

غير متعلم ☐ ابتدائي ☐ إعدادي ☐ ثانوي ☐دبلوم ☐ بكالوريوس ☐ ماجستير ☐

8- ما وظيفتك الرئيسية اليومية؟

أعمال منزلية ☐ موظف وكالة غوث ☐ عامل ☐ موظف حكومي ☐ طالب ☐

متقاعد ☐ أعمال حرة ☐ غير موظف ☐ حرفي ☐ عامل اجتماعي ☐

9- كيف تمارس الشعائر الدينية؟

بشكل يومي ☐ بشكل منتظم ☐ أحياناً ☐ بشكل متقطع ☐ لا أمارس الشعائر الدينية ☐ غير متدين ☐

10- بشكل عام، هل تفكر بنفسك كـ (فتح) أو (حماس) أو (مستقل) أو ماذا؟

حركة فتح ☐ حركة حماس ☐الجبهة الشعبية ☐ الجهاد الإسلامي ☐ فدا ☐
الجبهة الديمقراطية ☐ مستقل ☐ التحالف الوطني للعدالة والديمقراطية ☐
حزب الشعب ☐ المبادرة الوطنية الفلسطينية ☐ لا أحد ☐

11- هل تصنف نفسك (فعال) أو (مناصر) أو (غير مناصر) للحركات السابقة الذكر؟

فعّال ☐ مناصر ☐ غير فعّال ☐

12- من هو المعيل الأساسي في العائلة؟

الرجاء اختيار أكثر من شخص إذا كان هناك أكثر من معيل:

الأب ☐ الأم ☐ الابن ☐ البنت ☐ أنا ☐ الزوج ☐ الزوجة ☐

13- كم شخص يعمل في العائلة؟ .....

14- الدخل الشهري ..... شيكل.

15- هل تتلقى مساعدات من وكالة الغوث؟

نعم ☐ لا ☐ أحياناً ☐

16- إذا كنت تتلقى مساعدات لأي سبب هذه المساعدات؟

إعاقة لأحد أفراد العائلة ☐ وفاة معيل العائلة ☐ دخل متدني ☐
مرض مزمن لدى أحد أفراد العائلة ☐ عائلة كبيرة ☐

17- كم شخص يعيش في هذا المنزل؟ .....

18- هل هذا المنزل يعود لوكالة الغوث الدولية؟

نعم ☐ لا ☐

19- هل هذا المنزل رمم آو تم توسيعه؟

نعم ☐ لا ☐

20- إذا نعم، هل تم ترميمه عن طريق؟

وكالة الغوث ☐ العائلة ☐ السلطة الفلسطينية ☐

21- إلى من تعود ملكية هذا المنزل؟

وكالة الغوث ☐ العائلة ☐ مستأجر ☐

22- كم غرفة في هذا المنزل؟

غرفة وحدة ☐ غرفتان ☐
ثلاث غرف ☐ أكثر من ثلاث غرف ☐

نشكركم على حسن تعاونكم ومشاركتكم في هذه الاستمارة . صدقا أنا أقدر المعلومات التي قدمتموها، اهتمامكم كان عاملاً مهماً في إنتاج هذا المشروع.

11.3 Appendix 3: Study advertisement (English and Arabic versions)

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Arts

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

NSW 2109

Phone: [+61 2] 9850 7854
Fax: [+61 2] 9850 8799
Email: sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au

My name is Sobhi Albadawi; I am a PhD candidate in the Sociology Department at Macquarie University in Sydney Australia. I am conducting a study entitled How do the Palestinian Refugees View the Right of Return?.

The purpose of the study is to attempt to understand what Palestinian Refugees want in relation to the right of return.

I'm Seeking participants to self - complete surveys that contained questions regarding the right of return.

If you are between 18 – 85 years of age, and willing to participate in this study. Please feel free take a questionnaire from this centre, the study would require to complete it in your own time. Please remember this questionnaire may take 50 minutes out of you valuable time.

Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate.

If you need more information about this study, Please feel free to contact me on 0597309161 or via email at sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au or contact my supervisor Ben Spies – Butcher via email at ben.spies_butcher@mq.edu.au , you may contact him via phone on [+ 612] 9850 4074.

Prepared By: Sobhi Albadawi

Supervised By: Ben Spies-Butcher at Macquarie University
Noah Basil at Macquarie University &
Shaun Wilson at University of New South Wales

Thank you for taking time out to participate in this survey

Participants Needed for
Research Study

We need participants for a research study:
"How do Palestinian Refugees view the right of return?"

Description of Project: I am a PhD candidate in the Sociology Department at Macquarie University in Sydney Australia. The purpose of the study is to attempt to understand what Palestinian Refugees want in relation to the right of return. Your participation will take about one hour. I will ask you to take a paper survey from this Centre and self- complete it in your own time.

To participate: You must be at least 18 years old, and be able to return the survey to this Centre using the stamped envelope.

Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate

To learn more, please contact Sobhi Albadawi on 0597309161 or via email at sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au

This research is conducted under the supervision of Dr. **Ben Spies-Butcher**, Sociology Department, and has been reviewed and approved by Macquarie University Ethics Committee.

SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e	SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.e

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

نحتاج لمشاركين في دراسة بحثية بعنوان
" آراء اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في حق العودة؟"

وصف المشروع: أنا طالب دكتوراه في قسم علم الاجتماع في جامعة ماكواري في سيدني، أستراليا. والغرض من هذه الدراسة هو محاولة لفهم ما يريده اللاجئون الفلسطينيون في ما يتعلق بحق العودة. مشاركتكم يستغرق حوالي ساعة واحدة لذا نطالب منكم أن تأخذ استماره من هذا المركز واستكمالها في الوقت الخاص بك.

للمشاركة: يجب أن تكون على الأقل 18 سنة من العمر ولديك القدره على إعادتها في المغلف المرفق مع هذه الاستمارة.

مشاركتكم تطويعه وليس هناك عقوبة إذا لم تكن لديك الرغبه في المشاركة.

لمعرفة المزيد، يرجى الاتصال على صبحي البدوي (الباحث) على الرقم التالي 0597309161 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني في edu.au.sobhi.albadawi@students.mq
هذا البحث بإشراف الدكتور بن بوشر - وبرعاية دائرة العلوم الاجتماعية وموافق عليه من لجنة اخلاقيات الجامعة

SobhiAlbadawi
SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au
SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au
SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au
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SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au
SobhiAlbadawi on 0597309161 or sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au

11.4 Appendix 4: Letter of granting approval from the Popular Committee to access the refugee camps

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Palestinian Iiberation Organization

Refugees Affairs Department

The Public Committee Services

Mobaile No:0599670364

منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية

دائرة شؤون اللاجئين

اللجنة الشعبية لخدمات مخيم العروب

تلفاكس:02:2522325

Date: August 7, 2012

Dear Mr. Albadawi,
635/2 Point Park Street
Rhodes NSW 2138
AUSTRALIA

Subject: The Survey of Palestinian Refugees Right of Return and Compensation

This is in regards to your telephone call dated 25th April 2012. We would like to inform you that the local committee has reviewed your request regarding data gathering.

It is with great honour we accept your request to carry out the survey in Palestinian Refugee Camps in southern West Bank, and therefore, we welcome you to visit our office and use required data for your empirical research.

The committee appreciates your hard work and area of study; in the meantime, we would appreciate if you could send us a copy of the survey in Arabic and English.

I hereby invite you to visit our centre and wish you the very best for your research.

Should you wish to discuss the above, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0599670364.

Yours faithfully

منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
دائرة شؤون اللاجئين
اللجنة الشعبية لخدمات
مخيم العروب

11.5 Appendix 5: Letter of approval from Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee

Dear Dr Spies-Butcher

Re: "Palestinian and Israeli conflict and the right of return. How do the Palestinian Refugees view the right of return" (Ethics Ref: 5201200701)

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Human Research Ethics Committee and you may now commence your research. This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Ben Spies-Butcher
Dr Noah Basil
Dr Shaun Wilson
Mr Sobhi Albadawi

NB. STUDENTS: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP A COPY OF THIS APPROVAL
EMAIL TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR THESIS.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 06 February 2014
Progress Report 2 Due: 06 February 2015
Progress Report 3 Due: 06 February 2016
Progress Report 4 Due: 06 February 2017
Final Report Due: 06 February 2018

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:
http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely
Dr Karolyn White
Director of Research Ethics (Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee)

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

11.6 Appendix 6: Emails to approve study from United Nations Office – Hebron

From: Sobhi Albadawi [mailto:Sobhi.Albadawi@facs.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2011 12:38 AM
To: ABU-KHEIRAN, Issa
Subject: PhD Studies

Dear Abu Ramiz,

I hope this email finds you well.

I'm currently enrolled at Macquarie University, NSW Australia for my PhD studies. I proposed to conduct my research around the Palestinian and Israeli discourse and Right of Return. My question is: How do the Palestinian Refugees View the Right of Return? This research is a sociological inquiry that will try to examine the cause and effects of the Palestine's legal and political limbo as "stateless citizens"

In conducting this research, this study will employ the self – completion questionnaire as a data collection method. The study group will be three Palestinian Refugees Camps (ALDHESHA, ALROUB and ALFOAWAR). The sample will be taken from the UN data system. The sample will be around 600-800 refugees from the above mentioned camps, the age of participants will be between 18 and 75-85 years old depends on the availability of old participants. The sample of participants will be divided equally between female and males.

In order to proceed with the study the University Ethics Committee requires an approval from yourself or the UN Regional Director. I just thought to drop you this email to see what your thoughts are before I get the University involve. Also, I'm more than willing to send you the survey to read and get your feedback.

You feedback is highly appreciated
Kind Regards
Sobhi

Dear Subhi,

I'm more than happy to hear and read about your PHD studies. I'm proud of you and your dedication. The thesis subject is wonderful and useful for the issue of the refugees, and can add something to the attitude towards the right of the retune.

This kind of study didn't need permission from UNRWA. You can take the general info from the website of the agency. However, the questionnaire will be filled by people in four camps directly; all you need from the agency lists of the names of the residents in the four camps.

Generally, I have no doubt; you can do it, I can provide you with anything you want.

Keep me posted!

BR

Issa Abu-Kheiran

Deputy Chief Area Office

West Bank-Hebron

Mobile: 0542168389

From: SOBHI ALBADAWI [mailto:sobhi.albadawi@students.mq.edu.au]
Sent: Wednesday, November 23, 2011 8:50 AM
To: ABU-KHEIRAN, Issa
Cc: shaun.wilson@mq.edu.au; ben.spies-butcher@mq.edu.au; sobhi.albadawi@facs.nsw.gov.au
Subject: Research

Dear Abu Ramiz,

I hope you well.

As I introduced in my previous email that I'm going to conduct my survey in Palestine at the refugee camps in Hebron and Bethlehem areas. I was able to complete the draft of the survey which includes 5 sections. In order to work collaboratively with the UN and be able to obtain optimal responses, we would welcome any comments/ suggestions prior to finalising the survey to be distributed. Therefore, I have attached the draft for you to read and if it possible to provide us with feedback regarding the questions knowing the refugees topic is a sensitive area among Palestinians and other parties. It is worth mentioning the Macquarie Ethics Committee approval and final fieldwork are pending on the UN permission and feedback regarding the attached survey.

I will be visiting Palestine next week and I'm hoping to meet and discuss the questionnaire and the aim of each section. I'm more than willing to provide more information and explanation for each section if required.

Your feedback is highly appreciated I hope to see you soon

Regards,

Sobhi

From: ABU-KHEIRAN, Issa [I.ABU-KHEIRAN@UNRWA.ORG]
Sent: Friday, 16 December 2011 7:34 PM
To: shaun.wilson@mq.edu.au; ben.spies-butcher@mq.edu.au
Cc: Sobhi Albadawi

Subject: RE: The Surrey of Palestinian Refugees Right of Return and / or Compensation Survey

Dear Sirs,

Department of Sociology

Macquarie University

NSW, Australia

Subject:

This is in relation to above matter and in particular to your recent request. Firstly, I would like to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the PhD candidate Mr. Sobhi Albadawi, for his choosing the title of this dissertation, to write about the Palestinian issue. I would like also to express my thanks and appreciation to the members of the committee, for their inspiration, encouragement, wisdom and understanding in getting this thesis off the ground.

Secondly, I would like to tell you that the survey questionnaire has passed the evaluation process. Mr. Albadawi is writing his PhD dissertation in a new and important topic in the Palestinian society. His topic will add a new scientific knowledge and considered an important reference in Social Sciences in general and to those who concerned in the Palestinian question in particular.

Therefore, it's with great honour we accept the researcher request to carry out his survey in the Palestinian Refugee Camps in southern West Bank, and we are prepared for any future cooperation to facilitate Mr. Albadawi mission in his important study, which will have good returns on the Palestinian issue and the scientific research in general.

Finally, we advise the researcher to conduct his sampling survey on the five refugee camps in south West Bank, using the stratified random sample, with a margin error 3% at least, of the study population which consist of (27381) inhabitants as follows:

NO.	CAMP	INHABITANTS
1.	Duheisheh	8736
2.	Aida	2631
3.	Azzeh	1529
4.	Arroub	7941
5.	Fawwar	6544
Total		27381

I thank you, for your consideration, hoping that you would respond favorably.

Respectfully,

Issa Abu-Kheiran
Deputy Chief Area Office
West Bank-Hebron
Mobile: 0542168389

Dear Issa Abu-Kheiran,

Thank you for this email. It is greatly appreciated. I am sure that Sobhi will keep you informed. We will now pass this on to our University to progress the project. Please feel free to contact wither Dr Wilson or myself with any questions you have.

Yours,
Ben

--
Dr Ben Spies-Butcher
Senior Lecturer in Economy and Society
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11.7 Appendix 7: The politics of resettlement

The Palestinian resettlement schemes have a political agenda that aims to deny them their right of return. Abu Sitta (2000) argues that resettlement projects by the Israeli government treat the Palestinian refugees as a group of Arabs without rights and could live anywhere in the world. Furthermore, Klich (1996, p. 18) claims the intent to transfer refugees to a third country has emerged as a key point in Zionist ideology to prevent refugees from returning to their homes. The politicisation of the resettlement issue is clearly highlighted in the following statement from Moshe Dayan in 1973: "As long as the refugees remain in their camps their children will say that they come from Jafa or Haifa; if they move out of the camps, the hope is they will feel an attachment to their new land" (cited in Masrieh-Hazoun 2001 p. 184).

The political agenda underpinning the resettlement schemes, however, was clearly apparent before the 1970s. Bartal (2013) describes the view of the Israel government on the resettlement of Palestinian refugees during the 1950s and 1960s. According to the author, Israel maintained a deliberate position based on population and asset exchange. Furthermore, Israeli officials argued that Arab states were populated with a significant number of Jews, however, due to the 1948 event; Jews were forced to leave (Edwan 2005).

Masrieh-Hazboun (1995) argues that Israel and Western states envisioned a permanent resettlement of the Palestinian refugees in host countries. This is evidenced by the resettlement propositions put forward by Israeli politicians appeared after the June 1967 war (Segev 2007). In fact, these attitudes evolved during the 1960s when Yigal Allon, the then Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Immigration sought to rid Israel of the Palestinian refugee problem. Allon openly accused the Arab states of causing the refugee problem and claimed they were the only party to benefit from the refugee situation (Masrieh-Hazboun 1995). Although he did not negate liability or repudiate the refugee problem, he continued to claim that Israel had no ability to resettle Palestinian refugees in Israel because Israel accepted large numbers of Jewish immigrants from Arab countries. Arguably, Allon's real intent was to deny the *Nakba* and the daily suffering of Palestinian refugees. Thus, his plan was to demand international funding to implement the removal of refugee populations from Israel to Arab countries.

In addition to the official resettlement schemes to emerge from the PA–Israeli government negotiations, different views on how to resolve the refugee issue have been put forward by scholars. Some of the scholars' projects and positions focus on resettlement and compensation. The most widely known of these is the project presented by Donna Arzt in her book, *Refugees into Citizens*. Arzt (1996) proposed that the Palestinian refugees be relocated to Arab and non-Arab countries throughout the world. Integral to Arzt's proposal however is that the least number possible of refugees be relocated to the West Bank in order to preserve the demographic balance of Israel. This proposal included providing Palestinian refugees with a Palestinian passport that indicates their Palestinian nationality and which allows them to visit or to work in the West Bank and Gaza if they choose (Arzt 1996, pp. 86-87). In addition, every Palestinian who seeks to return to Israel is required to meet certain criteria (p. 91). Arzt's proposal was neither endorsed by the majority of political parties nor Palestinian scholars. Indeed, Samara (2000) views Arzt's proposal as an attempt to seek a regional solution to the Palestinian refugee issue and thus remove the refugee claim to right of return. The author also argues that Arzt's proposal to reintegrate refugees into host communities is an attempt to portray the Palestinian refugee problem as a social issue rather than political issue by representing refugees somewhat narrowly as a displaced group only in need of resettlement (Samara 2000, p. 57). Based on this view, Samara (2000, p. 57) asserts that Arzt ignored the reality that the Palestinian refugee problem was a direct result of mass expulsion at the hands of colonialist settlers.

Arguably, Arzt's proposal offers a weak solution to the refugee problem at the expense of Arab states and the world community. The proposal attempts to resolve the refugee problem as a matter of citizenship rather than as a right guaranteed by the UNGA Resolution 194 which continues to be reaffirmed. When Arzt's proposal and those put forward by other scholars and Israeli officials are examined closely, one may conclude that Palestinian refugees were essentially being asked to not only relinquish their right of return, but also to deny their personal and historical attachment to Palestine. Abu Sitta (2000) drew this conclusion and even depicts Arzt's proposal as a form of ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people. He writes:

> *With that she took on a human face, but it is just a continuation of the plan of ethnic cleansing applied by Ben-Gurion, Weizmann and Ariel Sharon. It*

> *provides for the deportation of 1.5 million refugees to different regions of the world and forced exile of many more millions through a variety of threats, coercion and bribery.* (Abu Sitta 2000)

In addition, Hwidi (2008) claims that Arzt's proposal is fully compatible with the Israeli position which demands the resettlement and absorption of a symbolically limited number of Palestinian refugees into Israel. The author also ties Arzt's proposal to Israel's unwillingness to provide funding for the resettlement of refugees by referring to her claim that the west and the Gulf States should provide the resources needed for the re-distribution of Palestinians in the world. In fact, Arzt's proposal suggested integrating approximately 250,000 refugees from their camps into the West Bank, Gaza Strip and neighbouring cities. The committee estimated the cost of this project at the time would be US$2 billion, and to implement the plan it would be necessary for the US and European countries to raise the funds required.

The politicisation of the resettlement issue is further illustrated in statements by Mordechai Ben Prat, who in 1983 served as Chairman of the Israeli Minister Committee for the Rehabilitation of the Palestinian Refugees. In 2007 Ben Prat declared:

> *The Arab countries made no efforts on behalf of the refugees. They did everything possible to keep them in camps. When rehabilitation programs were suggested, they objected to them. They preferred to leave the refugee camps as in and the refugee as is, in order to present their suffering before the entire world.* (The Israeli Initiative 2008)

The illusion of resettlement in the peace process

Refugee numbers continue to increase and the conditions in the camps continue to deteriorate at a concerning rate. In addition, the voice of the refugee continues to be missing from the peace process as they are rarely if ever consulted for their views (Eickelman and Ginat 2001). The right of return to Palestine prior 1948, however, has traditionally been a core aspect of the refugee narrative. However, this narrative is regularly tested by the harsh living conditions and the isolation experienced by refugees. Hence, this study explores the extent to which Palestinian refugees in the West Bank remain committed to accepting only resettlement terms and conditions that do not exclude their right of return.

The dynamics of the right of return issue have unquestionably changed since the commencement of the peace process. The debate is now more focused on the return of the refugee to an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Zureik 2002). As a result, the gap between the official position and the refugee position on the right of return issue has widened to the point that there is now little hope of a return to the pre1948 Palestine. Negotiations now focus on refugee repatriation to a Palestinian state or resettlement in current host countries or other countries (PRRN 2010).

Notably, this resettlement scheme is conditional on the Palestinian state abiding by the rules for resettlement set down by the Israeli government (Zureik 2002). Attempts have also been made to localise the issue of resettlement; that is, positioning it as an internal political issue for the host states to manage. As Masriyeh-Hazboun argues, there are attempts to make the refugee problem a local and an internal issue by disassociating it from the overall issue of the Middle East (Masriyeh-Hazboun 2001).

What this resettlement scheme fails to consider, however, is the political unrest and human crises apparent in most host countries, particularly in Iraq and Syria. Moreover, in Lebanon there is no government support for the permanent resettlement of refugees (Brynen 2008), a position which has been maintained by successive Lebanese governments since the creation of the Palestinian refugee issue (Al-Natour 2007). The fear expressed by the officials is that the resettlement of Palestinian refugee will shift the political and religious balance in the country (Chaudhri 2010). The following section discussed the survey results related to Palestinian refugees' views on the conditions of the refugee camps and their function into the future, as well as potential resettlement locations within the occupied territory.