

Palestinian Youth: Studies on Identity, Space and Community Participation



2017

**Reference Concept Paper for Studies
on Palestinian Youth Identities:
Changing Identity Hierarchies in Segregated
Communities**

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Synopsis

This project aims to provide a reading of the effects of the colonial partition, fragmentation, and the crisis of the current national project on the identity representations of Palestinian youth. It examines the generational and socioeconomic overlaps on the tribal, religious and national representations of groups of Palestinian youth from different places of residence.¹ It also examines the state of fragmentation, split, checkpoints, and lack of territorial contiguity, with the spread of factionalism and a crisis in the national project. Furthermore, it focuses on the marginalization of some Palestinian communities and their interiorizing of the settler colonialist culture. The paper examines the impact of this fragmentation on the identity representations of Palestinian youth in different areas of residence. The paper presents a comparison between the youth identity representations before and after the Oslo Accords and attempts to avoid the trap of nostalgically glorifying the First Intifada. It is rather an attempt to understand the impact of socioeconomic, political and legal changes on youth identities and their community participation in the current Palestinian context.

Methodologically, the project, which will be led by a number of researchers from different fields of expertise, will examine the different youth representations (although the survey is not exclusive to youth) inside Palestine and in the diaspora. It will scrutinize the identity hierarchy as presented by the youth regarding themselves and their places of residence, as well as their perceptions of youth in other areas. It will use sociological variables to study their representations of their sub-identities and the correlation these sub-identities have with the collective identity. Moreover, the paper will investigate the clan/territorial representations

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1 Translation note: for the purposes of this research, place of residency refers to region and not small town. It is either (West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon or the Palestinian areas occupied in 1948)

in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, Palestine of 1948 and the diaspora, as well as some subdivisions of these places of residence (namely, the north and middle of the West Bank). It will study the colonial legal hierarchal differentiations (Israeli ID card, Jerusalem ID card, PA ID card, etc.) as well as the cultural/social differentiations (city, village, camp, returnee, resident) and the forms of recalling sub-traditional institutions (tribe and family). It also examines partisan/factional representations. The project focuses on the components of the identity itself, being Palestinian, Arab, religious, cosmopolite and universal, and its hierarchy for the youth in accordance with the sociological characteristics of the communities under investigation.

The study includes a component on community service – because the research team will partner with community youth organizations in different places of residence – therefore, the project will attempt to propose some identity policies that might consolidate the society’s texture and social identity and its relation to the representations of the national and cultural identity, mainly among the youth. The project will also examine the relationship of this social identity with the collective national project – which united the Palestinians around the Palestine of the Palestinian National Charter before it was amended. The project applies a legitimate perception based on preserving variances in plurality in homogeneity rather than in similarity. It considers the youth Palestinian identity like any other Palestinian identity and other identities. The project also proposes that such identity must be understood through the dynamic dimension of the identity as it has internal and external, changing and alternating limitations.

Introduction

Identity, any identity whatsoever, is a source of intellectual debate in all societies. How do we define identity? Is identity definable to start with? Why do we define identity? What for, and what will we do if we succeed in giving it a definition? These questions are not a state of luxury but rather real concerns for any researcher in social and humanitarian sciences. So, how do we define identity, and whose identity, and what actors, and how do we interpret any representations thereof?

The research stems from a legitimate premise proposed by researchers on a society subjected to colonization, and asks the question about whether it needs

to examine the differences and fragmented parts or rather focus on a collective research vision. A collective vision means ignoring the identity hierarchies because they are universal and expressed in all societies. Other research questions include: What to do with the findings? Who will benefit from these results? These legitimate questions, which open to problems of knowledge, methodology and community, cross the minds of Palestinian researchers who wonder about the use of the diagnosis of our community and its different phenomena. Methodologically speaking, will we use ethnographic studies to support the existing colonial project that is dismembering the Palestinians to foster its own project? Will this approach produce research that can be classified as works of 'local anthropological collaborators', who serve the colonial hegemony of knowledge? All of these legitimate questions on the knowledge, power and authority of the produced discourse arise. Opposite such legitimate premises, appear other foundations that account for what we mentioned before. However, these other premises view that the study of any societal phenomenon requires understanding the phenomenon on the ground and suggesting comparisons therewith. This means developing an understanding of the mechanisms that shaped the phenomenon under question and its forms of expression. By doing so, the research approach seeks a rigorous epistemological commitment or community abidance. In other words, it provides policy visions about the phenomenon and/or initiates a community dialogue. Researchers must choose between a divisional approach and a study of sub-components that presents each part as a homogenous entity. Identity is like any other sociological determinant and is by definition a social construction. In other words, it is neither a normal nor a natural form of expression. We need to reiterate here that identity and its changing societal vision are not a natural outcome. This means we must be aware of the artificial trend of identity.

Thus, the research project will avoid the puritans' and idealists' approaches that think in dichotomies. The challenge here is 'how to create the homogenous out of the heterogeneous' and create the 'uniform diversity'. The matter does not relate to an absolute doubt about the identity and its constituting elements, but rather evolves around the necessity to subject it (this identity) to the common with the possibility of forming new elements. In other words, creating an identity that is open to evolving elements and that keeps up with the challenge of the different components of the collective Palestinian identity, which should take into account the particular Palestinian context without claiming it is exceptional.

The final premise is about what community/society we are researching. Are we researching the West Bank and Gaza Strip and thus shrinking the Palestinians from 12 million people to a mere 4.7 million as per the official Palestinian vision of reduced Palestine according to the two-state solution? Shall we call the Palestinian residents of the first colony of 1967 the 'Palestinian society', while we call the other Palestinian places of residence different Palestinian communities? The project certainly does not see this division and deals with the Palestinian components as part of a single cultural, ethnic, and linguistic component that is plural and homogenous, taking into account the particularities of every Palestinian group. Therefore, the project studies the youth in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, areas occupied in 1948 and parts of the diaspora – see the work methodology, actors and sample selection procedures. Researchers realize that sociologically, every social group needs an *Asabiyyah* (social solidarity) in the Ibn Khaldun sense of the term. In other words, it needs solidarity in a social body. The research presumes that the Palestinian identity is a social identity that focuses on homogeneity that is partly based on similarities, and whereby identity representations may contradict with each other. Therefore, it is necessary to find mechanisms that allow for uniting the Palestinians around a holistic national project, capable of bypassing their fragmentation and dispersal.

Theoretical Approach²

In Arabic, the term '*hawiyah* – identity' is defined as, "what the thing or the person is and what distinguishes the thing or the person from others".³ In addition to this definition, there are new nation state uses of the term that are linked to modern civil registry systems. The registry grants an ID '*a hawiyah*' under a different meaning; it is an 'ID card'. When Palestinians of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Jerusalem use the term, they usually refer to this latter meaning 'the card'. In other words, it refers to the classification of the Palestinians as holders of Palestinian ID cards, on the basis of which the Palestinian identity – in its administrative component – is reduced to ID card numbers established by the

2 Parts of this approach were published in a paper by Saqqa, Abaher, The Palestinian Social Identity: its Fragmented Representations and Plural Overlapping, workpaper published in Conference Proceedings 2, Second Annual Conference, 2013, on 'Palestinian Communities and their Representations, and the Future of the Palestinian Question', Masarat, p. 35-64

3 Almu'jam Alwaseet, Arab Language Academy, Cairo, ed. 3, 1998

Israeli colonization authorities during the direct occupation of what it called the Civil Administration of West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. The PA preserved this classification, which is written on the Palestinian passport/travel document granted to the residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip alone.

In the Anglo-Saxon references, the Oxford dictionary defines identity as “a state of close similarity or affinity that is close to absolute matching or similarity”. The French Robert dictionary defines identity as “the fixed characteristics of one’s self”. The social identity is then an alternative to belonging to a particular social group. Therefore, the symmetry of the identity is the individual’s social coping within the group. However, there is also a process of ‘differentiation’, by which an individual differentiates him/herself from the others and acquires his/her own characteristics. Social identity is also the process through which an individual seeks to influence his/her social surrounds with his/her own projects.

The social identity thus does not appear as a simple reflection or synthesis of an individual’s consciousness and belonging in his/her social roles. It is rather a dynamic whole where all elements interact in a complementary or conflicting manner, as they are the product of ‘belonging strategies’. Individuals try, through these strategies, to defend their social presence and vision to integrate such presence in the united (common identity). At the same time, they appraise themselves and seek their own logical cohesion. The identity of the group is then a constructed social symbol and embodiment. It is more relevant to the imagined rather than the objective reality. It is the embodiment and a presentation through which a given group perceives its unity, as differentiated from the others, and forms a self-fulfilled symmetric category with its classifications and differentiations. All this takes place with its existence itself.⁴

The sense of identity is not a primary factor in the individual’s consciousness, which shapes his/her relations with the other. It is rather the outcome of a continuous overlapping social mechanism, which is a social construction process *par excellence*. Every identity is built and identified as per its relation with other identities. This relation comprises absorption and acquiring moves (through which the individual or individual/society becomes similar to the other) and

4 Edmond Marc Lipiansky, *Identité et Communication*, Broche, Paris, 2005. Translation by Shahrstan, Marie, *Tahawulat Review*, Issue 6, 2005

differentiated moves (through which the individual asserts his/her specificities *vis-à-vis* the others).⁵ These social groups are not isolated because they establish relations with other groups. Lévi-Strauss⁶ believes that identity is a presumed premise that does not have an objective *per se*, but that we believe in it (the identity) and need to express it as actors who learn to live and interact with others. Therefore, the identity assertion process is not only a highlighting and reflection of the social homogeneity of a certain group, but rather a means through which the group attempts to build its unit and construct social boundaries that separate it from other groups. The term 'boundary' here means that every human group demarcates its own boundaries (or that such boundaries are established for it), but not necessarily as geographic borders. Indeed, they are basically symbolic boundaries. When we say symbolic, this means they are boundaries in history and in relation to memory, language, work and mutual perceptions.⁷ These boundaries are not constant, but rather expand, shrink, change and mutate with context.

Every group forms 'positive' or 'negative' social images of itself, either of the contradiction or opposition that is associated or linked to the formation of the group, which is expressed through the attribution of negative characteristics to the 'other' identity. In fact, identity is not defined only by a set of positive characteristics (which is proposed by the whole, as an example, but also through negative features, through which an individual learns beforehand what he/she should avoid or do). Thus, identity appears as a dual dynamic system.⁸ In our analysis, we imagine identity as a dynamic rather than clashing interactive form. We take after Claude Dubar⁹ and use the expression of "professional identities", which assumes the existence of multiple, changing and rapidly vanishing identities.¹⁰

Youth identities

The expression 'youth identities' is problematic because its meaning and specifications vary, starting with the state appellation that classifies youth under

5 *ibid*

6 Lévi-Strauss.1977. *Claude, Identité: séminaire de collège de France*. PUF: Qaudriage.

7 There must be positive discrimination toward black people in Arab communities, 2009, dialogue between Mohammad AlJuweili and Adel Alhaj Salem, *Alwan Journal*

8 *ibid*

9 Dubar, Claude. 2000. *la crise des identités l'interprétation d'une mutation; le lien social*. Paris: press universitaires de France.

10 Weber, Max. 1971. *Economie et Société*. Paris: Plon social. Paris: Press universitaires de France.

a different social category, based on its statistical and other social information. The state use of the term determines whether the given state is young or old, and consequently affects its socioeconomic policies to address they youth from age perspective and other pertinent confusion and ambiguity. This disposition may lead to the exclusion of large segments of youth who do not conform to state classifications that change with context and over time. This debate is central in modern sociology. Sociologists question what youth is. We will refer here to the famous Bourdieu's perception, "youth is only a word", (Bourdieu, *La Jeunesse n'est qu'un mot*, 1993:143-154). Therefore, from a knowledge perspective, questions are raised about whether youth means a social age group that is associated with the limitations of the generation, or whether it is an economic classification that is associated with recent employment, or if it is a classification of a cluster according to professional characteristics. It should be noted here that youth age classifications vary. Thus, researchers in this project must define what they mean by the use of the term "youth" and why they chose this age group. They need to present the socioeconomic features that differentiate this group from other cohorts. They should explain the justifications and classification mechanisms of the study, taking into account that it is not a homogenous mass nor a social class. It is rather an age group influenced by variant changes; it is a group that influences, and is influenced by other socioeconomic effects.

The youth group is a stratum the emerges from larger groups. Its known distinctive feature is that sociologically it is linked to the generation variable, which is a classification social variable.

Therefore, the research project attempts to answer the following questions:

- What perception/image do youth have of themselves?
- What are the changes that affected the social usages¹¹ - which of these usages do the youth use to present themselves in society?
- What are the different and similar pictures of youth compared to their counterparts in other communities?

11 For instance, in the present public revolt, people classify the martyrs as children. This is different from what happened in the 1990s and the last uprising. Youth in the First and Second Intifadas were classified as youth. Their description as children resembles past expressions in other contexts such as the RBG children, stones children in Lebanon and during the First Intifada.)

- What is the effect of the Palestinian place of residence and its context on the formation of the Palestinian collective identity?
- What are the Palestinian youth perceptions of themselves, their social identity, different identity hierarchies, and their local, national, Arab, religious and humanitarian references?
- Is there a special social identity for Palestinian youth in different areas?
- Is there any identity stereotyping of the self and other compared to other Palestinian place of residence?
- Will the afore-stated questions help us understand the elements composing Palestinian youth's social, religious, local, political and cultural identity?

The Palestinian Identity

The Palestinian identity¹² remained a controversial issue as regards its formation mechanisms and forms of expressions. It appeared between the lines of historical formation associated with the birth of ethnicities in the Arab Levant, and later under colonization and emancipation with the formation of the modern state; between the struggle against the Zionist project that accelerated the development of a sense of 'Palestinization'. In other words, we oppose the opinion that associates the birth of the Palestinian identity with the Zionist project – and between the merging and hierarchy of the identity according to Gellner (Gellener, Nations and Nationalism, 1983), and the overlapping of local, national, (Arab) national, religious (Islamic and Christian) and universal identities. This identity preoccupation was reflected upon different Palestinian communities and their feeling as groups holding special identities that are differentiated from their larger communities.

This identity differentiation results from several factors, including the socio-geographic space and its impact on the formation of the Palestinian national identity, and the fragile national identity (like any other national identity), as well as the absence of any social project that abolishes family/clan/tribal opposition with the unprecedented crisis in the Palestinian National Project. Definition of identity results also from the stereotypes the other social groups hold about each other

12 A large part of these thoughts are published in Al-Saqqa, Abaher, The Palestinian Social Identity: Its Fragmented Representations and Plural Overlapping, workpaper published in Conference Proceedings 2, Second Annual Conference, 2013, on 'Palestinian Communities and their Representations, and the Future of the Palestinian Question', Masarat, p. 35-64

and the colonial legal differentiations (procedures used to divide the population in a manner that creates a different social engineering of the colonized Palestinians).

In the Palestinian case, identity has always been a debatable issue in terms of its formation mechanisms, types and forms of expression, for the following reasons:

- a. The historical formation lines associated with the birth of ethnicities in the Arab Levant, and the later colonization and emancipation phases;
- b. Influence from the mechanisms of transformation of the nation-state and the formation of modern states, as generalized around the globe, mainly since 1945 when this model was generalized as a state model of political entities worldwide
- c. Palestinian nationalism is the product of a historical process that is linked to the Palestinian context and rise of post-Ottoman nationalisms, passing by the British colonization (Mandate) and the rise of Arab nationalism that had copied the model of Turkish nationalism, which was also an assimilation of the Young Italy (*Giovini Italia*) and Germany and other European movements.¹³
- d. Struggle against the Zionist colonial project, which accelerated the growth of a sense of Palestinization. It should be noted that we oppose the argument that the birth of the Palestinian identity is linked to the Zionist project, but is rather a sum of all of the above mentioned factors.

It is believed that identity has two approaches: The first is based on the collective memory as the creator of the identity with other determining factors, i.e. common denominators (language, habits and tradition, common destiny in the 'national cause', etc.). The second approach sees identity as a whole based on differences between social groups on the basis of self-proclamation of individuals composing this identity and their belonging. Reference may be made here to Weber,¹⁴ who sees "identity as a declared sense and feeling of belonging to a social group, compared to other social groups that are different or differentiated within the same social body, and which require its members to declare other social identities".

13 Hobsbawm, Eric. 1990. Nations and Nationalism since 1870. Myth. Reality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

14 Weber, Max, 1971. Economie et Société. Paris : Plon Social. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France

Overlapping of the Palestinian Identity

Representationally, identity and its hierarchies were merged in the sense seen by Gellner.¹⁵ Identities overlapped through a historical process that merged the local with the national,¹⁶ and the (Arab) nationalism with the religious (Islamic and Christian) and global (universal). Thus, identity means a group of hierarchies that change with context. However, this does not mean symmetry. Moreover, the 'specific' of the social identities does not annul the 'common'. Weber defines identity as a sense institutionalized on a self-perception of the social whole, which makes social existence itself based on clear differentiation. This accompanies the perception a group has of another according to the stereotypical mechanisms of individuals themselves into 'positive' images and 'negative' images. To Weber, identity is "a sense of common denominator" "like a social structure" and not a "natural state". This feeling of belonging is associated with special representations linked to (value systems, habits and ways of action) of what Bourdieu¹⁷ calls "The Habitus" "generated rules". This means that a social actor does not feel or represent the identity unless he/she realizes his/her belonging to a specific social category that recalls specific interiorized elements and/or excludes others. These common denominators (habits and traditions) do not suffice alone to define the identity because identity is changing and mutating. Moreover, as with any other nationalism, it will be focused on as a comprehensive container in which unity is placed via diversity rather than symmetry. Morin,¹⁸ for instance, believes that the birth of nationalism precedes the birth of the state. The forms of the pre-state social identity cohabit with those of the post-state identity and do not contradict except for in the state representations, which consider that the national identity is based on similarity and symmetry. Thus, the local (belonging to the neighborhood, village, area or entity) overlapped with the national 'mandatory/historical' (Palestine) and (Arab) nationalism, which cohabitated with each other and with family/clan/sectarian belonging, more specifically as regards the management of the social sphere and impact on identity policies and individuals' representations and identities. However, it may affect the sense of citizenship,

15 Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell.

16 Khalidi, Rashid. 1997. *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, New York, Columbia University Press.

17 Bourdieu, Pierre. 1981. *La Représentation Politique: Eléments pour une Théorie du Champ Politique*, Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales, n° 36-37, Février-Mars

18 MORIN, Edgar. 1984. *Sociologie*, Paris, Fayard

which supersedes special affiliations in favor of public belonging. However, local identities re-emerge and assert themselves during the crisis of a state or a social project or a social system that discriminates in favor of specific social segments and excludes that other strata.

‘Patriotization’ of the Palestinian Identity

Palestinian loyalties changed with context. It is historically known that since the outset, identity declarations speculated across different considerations (Palestine as part of Greater Syria, southern Palestine...) passing through the 1930s (1936 revolution), which played a key role in rooting the nascent nationalism as social groups melted in the revolution, although not all segments were involved. However, it laid the foundation for a new nationalistic discourse based on the idea of resistance against a hostile Zionist colonial project. The nationalistic discourse started to adopt a national identity that merged Arabism with Islam, and a shy ‘Palestinization’ trend. As with other nationalistic discourses, they are artificial in nature.¹⁹ It is known that under colonial conditions, as described by Fanon,²⁰ the adoption of a national identity introduces radical changes at the emotional, cognitive, psychological and personal levels. This feeling of identity is linked to changing social hierarchies. This hierarchical diversification provides individuals with the flexibility to exhibit loyalties to other trends. This shows that identity is not a static structure imposed on others through ideological or state attitudes but rather metaphors and assimilations that overlap to create these identity forms.

Noriel²¹ says identity is fragmented when a certain discourse presents it as being under threat. In the Palestinian context, this is proven with the existence of another ‘nationalist’ identity, Zionism, with which the emerging Palestinian national identity competed. These new Palestinian identity policies fluctuate during the

19 Eric J. Hobsbawm, Terence O. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Traditions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983; GELLNER Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1983; HOBBSAWM Eric, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870. Program, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 14; Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986; NORA Pierre (dir.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 7 vol., Paris, Gallimard, 1984-1992. ANDERSON Benedict, *L’imaginaire national. Réflexions sur l’origine et l’essor du nationalisme*, Paris: La Découverte, 1996 (1ère édit., *Imagined Communities*, Londres, Verso, 1983).

20 Fanon, Frantz. 1968. *Les damnés de la terre*, Paris, Gallimard.

21 Noiriél, Gérard. 2001. *Etat nation et immigration, vers une histoire du pouvoir*, Paris, Belin.

Nakba, which was the founding event in the birth of Palestinian nationalism and in the identity and 'Palestinian national conscience'. This Palestinian nationalism did not fade away. It was enhanced by a second event, namely the defeat in June 1967. The next expression of this nationalism was the rise of the 'Palestinization' stream, which transformed the 'patriotization' of the Palestinian identity since the national imaginary requires usually 'patriotization of the social space'. This entails the processes of (national ideologization and institutionalization, the dichotomies of revival of legacy and traditions and references of the international law in a late stage). It also needs identity changes and activation of the collective memory about the places of memory, as represented by Nora,²² where land became a core actor in the Palestinian collective memory, being a geographic, cultural, and a historical reference as well as a unit of socioeconomic measurement that represented the foundation of the Palestinian society, whose structure was destroyed with the Nakba.

The 'Palestinization' streams presented different imaginings of the self and of history. They were mainly associated with the contemporary national discourse led by the Fatah Movement, mainly the Arafat stream, with the making of a new identity, similar to other identities²³ in the world. This happened via a process of repossession of ancient history such as the history of the Canaanites and others, to assert historical continuity and ('extension of civilizations'). This was the case of modern state discourse in Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon (as regards the narratives on the Phoenicians and the Pharos, etc.). Palestinian nationalism adopted a similar approach albeit with less powerful presence compared to Arab counterparts because of the absence of any state structure and the nature of the conflict with the 'Israeli' colonization, where resistance must be led at the pan-Arab level. This act was rooted in the idea of 'Arabism' itself, which has always been a central 'source of identity' despite official Arab and Palestinian attempts to marginalize it.

22 Nora, Pierre. 1992. *Les lieux de mémoire*, Paris, Gallimard

23 Similar to other identities, imagined in some sense of common perception produced by central European culture, there are nations with deeply rooted identities and others not, especially in the post-independence era. There was an identity production that was inspired by the making of identities produced by the generalization of the state-nation model. Modern studies consider that nations made identities that own history and old identities. See, Noriel, Andersen and others on the French and German cases

Religious identity

The sectarian identity is not officially represented in Palestinian society. The sectarian or religious identities do not appear fragmented and isolated, although some minor changes took place, as stated by Alkhatibi.²⁴ Indeed, certain social signs may legitimize the perception of growth of religious identities among different actors, with an impact on the individuals' perception of their social identities. Following the failure of the Arab Unity Project and manipulation of the national discourse by religious streams in Arab countries, with influence in Palestine, religious identities appeared strongly in the hierarchy of collective identities. Furthermore, it is not possible to think of a unifying Palestinian identity without introducing religion as part thereof. Actually, the identity discourse borrows religious expressions to promote its legitimacy. Recent events in the Arab world actually gave rise to the Salfi Taharani²⁵ religious discourse, in response to the crisis of the Arab national liberation social project. The fragile state structures were destabilized and some succumbed to alliances with religious groups either by granting them specific quotas or by applying positive discrimination. Consequently, the current sectarian conflicts in the region may affect the Palestinian youth perception of their identity and change the rank of religion in their identity hierarchies.

Family/Clan/Tribe

Regionalism and tribalism in the Palestinian society have historically been centered (in the sense of *taasub* (blind loyalty) with a certain region and identity identification with this region in the first place, as a primary source of identity). Life in Palestine has historically developed around core historical cities because of a number of socioeconomic conditions that allowed for relative socioeconomic stability and historical administrative structures (province, district, governorate, etc.). This led to the emergence of urban zones surrounded by numerous socioeconomic activities of large social groups from surrounding villages and towns within the periphery of this urban center. The activities were supported by

24 Alkhatibi, Abdelkaber, *The Wounded Arab Name* (in Arabic), translation of Mohammed Banis, introduction by Roulan Bart, Beirut, Dar Alawda, 1980

25 Note of translator: Salfi or Salafi is a movement that calls for the return to the traditions of the prophet and his companions (salaf saleh – the good ancestors)

a social system that allowed families to enter into kin relations and joint ventures. This centralization produced similarities in the sociocultural stereotypes that interiorized in the inhabitants' social identities and 'differentiated' them from the others. There is thus a self-constructed identity stereotyping with stereotyping of the identity of the other, compared to other Palestinian zones. All inhabitants of a certain social space imagine they have their own identity in a way that the place produces an imagined collective identity shared by the individuals who compose this society. At the same time, the internal split between the two largest factions boosted family sensitivities because of the practices of the two factional authorities (Fatah and Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip). Divisional discourses rose with perceptions of 'victimization' and 'monopoly of suffering, heroism and resistance'. Moreover, a culture of 'quotaization' led by PLO-affiliated factions appeared. One of the elements of the social identity that Palestinian nationalism has lived with was the regional biasness and tribal pride alongside a network of family and regional relations that operate according to an imagined system of social considerations. This system acts, in the absence of identity policies, to merge everybody regardless of region. The isolation of different Palestinian communities into West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and Palestine of 1948 together with three major diasporas partially dismantled any centralized identity. This was particularly the case with the deepening split between the two territories of what remains of Palestine, with increased local stereotyping. In other words, this led to the development of identity localism. This scene is not only Palestinian, but can be witnessed globally.

'Colonizational' identities

With the advent of the 'Israeli' colonial rule, regions were segregated from each other, particularly the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The colonizer established a colonial discriminatory system to create new social components (different identities with different privileges and practices and different car licensing numbers, with specific entry and exit zones for the inhabitants of each area). The Israelis designated Rafah Crossing Point to the inhabitants of Gaza and the Allenby Bridge to those of the West Bank and Jerusalem, assigning them special corridors within these crossing points. This applies to the checkpoints, which aim to divide different areas into special colonialist privileges. With these divisions, the colonized, unconsciously, reproduced the colonial discourse around them.

There is a feeling among West Bankers that they differ in privileges from those in the Gaza Strip. These illusory imagined differentiations, in the manner that we will explain later, produced representations of sociocultural stereotypes that the inhabitants interiorized as social identities that 'differentiate' them from the others. Accordingly, some groups developed self-imagined identity stereotyping that different from the way they viewed the 'other'.

- Inhabitants of every social space imagine they have their own identity as the place produces an imagined collective identity shared by the members of this particular society. We find that inhabitants of the first colony (area occupied in 1948) consider their status different from that of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, while inhabitants of Jerusalem²⁶ perceive their status as better compared to those of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. With this colonialist logic, social hierarchies were formed and consequently produced imagined identities with privileges for certain socioeconomic classes, conforming to the colonialist stereotyping. A number of perceptions are generated in the public imaginaries of different social components. They are, for instance, shared among the inhabitants of different areas (especially for young generations). With Israeli measures of separation, checkpoints and mobility restrictions, an entire generation of four communities in historical Palestine (the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Jerusalem and the area occupied in 1948), have been deprived of communicating with each other. These differences are asserted on daily basis at the checkpoints and in the colonial classifications of areas into A, B and C. we find it too in the permits system and the type of permits granted to certain groups or age groups. These divisions and isolationisms alongside the colonial Bantustan system created stereotypes and imagined fears that may affect the common social identity of the Palestinians, mainly for the new generations this study focuses on.

26 See article on Colonial Mindset, by Aghazorian, on the Palestinians of Jerusalem, Elize Aghazorian, the Jerusalemites and the fragmentation of identity, inspired by Franz Fanon, Beirut, Institute for Palestine Studies, issue 82, 2010, p. 87-80

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