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The Right of Return: International Representation of Palestinian Refugee Rights

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SIT Graduate Institute - Study Abroad

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The Right of Return: International Representation of Palestinian Refugee Rights

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Abstract

This study focuses on Palestinian identity in refugee camps and their international representation of rights by the PLO. The goal of this research is to understand how the meaning of the Right of Return has developed through generations of Palestinian refugees residing in camps, in contrast with the international community discourse presented by the PLO on this topic.

After almost two decades since the PLO’s leadership renewal, a gap is visible between Palestinian political representation and the sentiments of Palestinians on the ground. There are growing perceptions dissatisfaction with the current leadership, especially from the perspective of refugees. More often than not, refugees describe themselves as marginalized by both the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian leadership itself. Since the international community embodied by the United Nations has been the stage for most of the advocacy for Palestinian rights, it is key to understand how the PLO has presented the Palestinian struggle in fact representative of Palestinian sentiments towards their perceived rights. This study shows how the PLO’s strategy has shifted towards the two-state solution, sidelining the possibility of the implementation of the right of return, while Palestinian refugees still nurture the hope of return and the liberation of historic Palestine.

Keywords: Political Science, Regional Studies: Middle East, Ethnicity
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Introduction

It was Ramadan of the year 2015 when a Palestinian man and his family asked me to drive them to a village once called Zakariya. This family, who grew up in Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem, had been forced to leave their homes in 1948 during the Nakba and had since then endured for three generations in refugee camps now located in the West Bank, under the Palestinian Authority (PA). As most Palestinian citizens of the West Bank, both the man and his son had no access to their former land – the crossing of the checkpoints that now divided them from their homes, now under Israeli rule, was not allowed. Luckily, during the holy month of Ramadan, some families, including this father and his son, were granted permits to cross the border (by foot) and reach Jerusalem.

I waited for them both at the exit of Checkpoint 300 between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Though it had been decades since his last visit, the father could still remember the way to his parents’ village, only forty-five minutes away from the refugee camp. As we drove on the highway, he told his eldest son, sitting in the backseat of the car, about all of the invisible villages that once stood proudly along the road. His son nodded in silence, documenting everything on his camera.

Zakariya, which had once been the longest lasting Arab community in the southern Jerusalem Corridor, and home to 1,180 Palestinians before the Nakba, was nothing but sparse remains. Still, this man could remember every detail of his original homeland – the mosque, the school, the houses of his relatives – as if it remained standing today. From the top of a hill nearby, he would point to the horizon, showing his
son his rightful inheritance, almost as if his land hadn’t been confiscated for nearly seven decades.¹

The hope of return, as unlikely as it is today, is not unusual for Palestinian refugee families, especially those who still live in refugee camps. Though the international discourse on the topic has completely shifted to the two-state solution, thus eliminating the possibility of returning to historic Palestine, the promise of return remains vibrant in the hearts of even the youngest generation of Palestinian refugees.

Since the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) accepted the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of 1948 as the ground for the Palestinian right of return, it has established “crucial limitations on a putative absolute right of return.”² On the other hand, recent opinion polls in West Bank and Gaza show that Palestinians do not approve of the PLO or its Executive Committee to make critical decisions that dictate the future of the Palestinian people.³ This growing gap between the people and its leadership is even more noticeable in Palestinians refugee camps, residents often describe themselves as marginalized by both the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian leadership itself.

The goal of this study is to investigate how the discourse of Palestinian refugee rights in the international community, specifically the right of return, is in fact

¹ See Figure 1 in Appendix
representative of Palestinian sentiments on the ground. The research focuses on interviews with Palestinian refugees still residing in camps in the West Bank and Jordan, which were then compared with recent statements of the PLO addressing the United Nations. I hypothesize that though the dream of returning to their homeland is still alive in the camps, the belief in the possibility of returning has diminished due to the increasing frustration of Palestinians with the PLO and the Palestinian Authority (PA). In addition, I believe that this phenomenon happens to a lesser extent outside of Palestine, such as Jordan, whose population has not been directly effected by the decisions of the PLO and PA.

**Literature Review**

My experience with the family from Dheisheh is not unique to researchers in Palestinian refugee camps. Ghada Karmi, when visiting Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, writes about her astonishment realizing how vivid the hope of “going back” was among children. Karmi points out the contradiction of these sentiments, especially since “the international community had no intention of implementing the refugees’ right to return”. It does not seem logical that a concern that is so central to the identity of Palestinians world-wide could have faded from the mouths of Palestinian leaders at the negotiation table while remaining so vital to their constituents. Instead, Palestinian leadership, as it will be discussed further, has focused most of its efforts in showing its commitment to the two-state solution. As much as it has been discussed as the platform for negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, the two-state solutions simply eliminates

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the possibility of returning to former Palestinian villages inside the State of Israel. As Karmi concludes, no settlement with Israel that does not address the right of return, a core issue for Palestinian refugees, can be considered “just, legal or an end to the conflict.” The two-state solution would therefore not solve the problem as much as it would accept the legitimacy of occupation and denial of Palestinian rights.

Other sources have drawn attention to the challenges posed by Palestinian leadership before the United Nations towards the rights of Palestinian refugees. As the PLO opted for a bid as a “non-member observer state status” at the UN – which was granted under United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19 on November 2012 – the 2011-2012 survey by the “BADIL Resource Center” reveals this approach is not necessarily beneficial to all sectors of Palestinian society. While Palestine’s recognition in the United Nations focuses on the Palestinian right of self-determination and defined borders, it does not emphasize the terms of Palestinian refugee rights such as the right of return. In fact, the BADIL survey explains how official diplomatic efforts adopted by Security Council and General Assembly are inherently politically driven and will tend to emphasize their own national interests, the balance of power and the compromise between the two sides of the bargaining table. As a result, fundamental rights and freedoms of Palestinian refugees have been sidelined, including the right of return. A familiar question remains – why would an organization like the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization agree to negotiate such terms?

5Karmi, 228
Rashid Khalidi explains this transition. Until 1968, the concept of return was under the idea of total liberation of Palestine, namely the dissolution of Israel and a recreation of an Arab Palestine. Initially, it was a rather simple concept – once Palestine was liberated from the Israeli occupation, Palestinians would return to their land. Diplomacy and compromise were not the main concern of Palestinian leadership at the time, which explains the lack of specificity on the terms of the right of return when drafting the Palestinian National Charter in 1964. It was only in 1968, when the PLO’s leadership had been taken over by commando groups, that the right of return gained a central part in the revision of the National Charter. Namely, Article 9 defined the goal of the struggle for the liberation of Palestine as “the return to it,’ and self-determination and sovereignty in Palestine.”

But this position did not stay that way for long – as Khalidi points out, this view suffered a drastic shift by 1974. This change took place once the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the legislative body of the PLO, introduced the “Provisional Political Program” which included the idea of establishing “an independent fighting national authority of people on any piece of Palestinian land which is liberated.”

For the first time in the history of the PLO, the idea of fighting for a Palestinian state that does include the entirety of historic Palestine was being advocated for. Once this idea was introduced, the PLO and the PNC progressively gave up on the use of militant language and started adopting internationally recognized principles instead.

Finally in 1988, both official documents and statements from PLO leaders used specific language connected to UN resolutions when addressing the issue of the right of return. Namely, the PLO began using specific language from the

7Khalidi, 34
8Ibid.
UNGeneralAssemblyResolution 194 (III) of 1948, previously rejected by Palestinian leadership, which states that:

“refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date; and compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property…”

By accepting Resolution 194, the PLO gave those who choose not to return the opportunity of being compensated for the property. This means it also accepts the creation of the state of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian’s rights. From this point onwards, the discussion over the destination of those that would fall under the right of return disappeared from PLO official statements. While leaving space for ambiguity and negotiation, this shift started a new trend of thinking in the leadership of the PLO, which some PLO spokesmen came to interpret this to mean that “Palestinians may return to live in the Palestinian state to be established, rather than Israel proper”

Meanwhile, Palestinian public opinion has far from followed the same political reasoning. In a poll conducted earlier this year, David Pollock revealed that “only 14 percent of West Bankers, and 24 percent of Gazans, select ‘working to establish a Palestinian state’ as their top priority”. The PLO may have focused their diplomatic efforts on international recognition as a viable state, but the truth remains that building a Palestinian state is not a priority for most Palestinians today. As disliked by the international community and undiplomatic as the poll results reveal, most Palestinians

9Khalidi, 33
10Ibid.
(58 percent of West Bankers and 65 percent of Gazans) still advocate for “continuing the struggle...until all of historic Palestine is liberated" and for armed "resistance" as a means toward that end.”\textsuperscript{12} It is no accident that a recent poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) shows that a majority of Palestinians are unfavorable towards the PLO and its Executive Committee, and does not trust it to make crucial decision on behalf of the Palestinian people. In terms of the PA, the majority sees it as a burden on Palestinians and demands its dissolution.\textsuperscript{13} This is not to say that Palestinians would not accept any form of compromise – according to Pollock’s findings, half of more West Bankers, and a substantial numbers of Gazans, would “probably” compromise if doing so might “help to end the occupation” and lead to Palestinian independence.\textsuperscript{14} The two major issues they would be willing to compromise on are first, “the principle of two states for two peoples, the Palestinian people and the Jewish people,’ and, second, limiting the right of return to the West Bank and Gaza, ‘not to Israel.’”\textsuperscript{15}

Still, it is important to note that these numbers, especially on the latter issue, may vary in Palestinian refugee camps and are not necessarily representative of those whose rights would be severely affected by the terms of the right o return. As Pollock clarifies, any survey on Palestinian public opinion must take into account the difference between the Palestinian “street” and the “elite”: “the political leadership, the intelligentsia, the moguls of Palestinian media (and social media), and the most prominent Islamic activists.”\textsuperscript{16} This is particularly important when considering how Palestinian refugees in

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{13} Shikaki and Ladadweh. \textit{Palestinian Public Opinion}, 2 
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid
the camps are regarded within Palestinian society itself. Ghada Karmi, during her visit to Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, mentions how it should come as no surprise that refugee camps became the birthplace of the fighters of the PLO and later Gaza’s Hamas activists. Palestinian refugees, especially those still residing in the camps, are the ones that have suffered the most since the start of the Israeli occupation. Their rights have been marginalized by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities, and have been sidelined for the sake of diplomatic negotiations. Meanwhile, the camps still provide Palestinian leadership with armed forces when diplomatic efforts seem to give little hope for a solution to the conflict. The paradox is that once armed struggle gives place to diplomacy, it is the rights of those who fought that are being sidelined at the forefront of the United Nations.

So how relevant is the PLO in terms of representing the Palestinian people internationally? Ghait Al-Omari, former Palestinian negotiator, sheds light on the number of key Palestinian constituents that are not represented in the PLO. First, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) are not members, but this falls beyond the internal problems of representation within the PLO. As Al-Omari explains, the current PLO leadership is highly outdated – the quota system includes substantial representation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and other Marxist and Arab nationalist groups that have simply become irrelevant since the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, it has been almost twenty years since the last regular session of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) in 1996. The PLO’s leadership has not been renewed in two decades, excluding “a whole generation and failing to capture current Palestinian political

17Karmi, 227
International Palestinian leadership, represented by the PLO, does not only fail to represent Palestinian refugees, but in fact has progressively receded to irrelevance in terms of embodying the political positions of Palestinian today.

While Palestinian refugees have not been able to count on the PLO to advocate for the implementation of their right of return – as revealed by previous literature – many still have found alternative ways to cope with the trauma of dispossession and hardship while living in the camps. On a study made with Gaza residents, Ilana Feldman illustrates the nostalgia that became an inherent part of reflections on home before 1948. After decades of occupation and dispossession, she mentions how recollections of “ayyam al-balad” (the days of the land) are remembered as the inverse of the present, a time and a place where life is idealized, namely “a time of safety.”

Feldman mentions one particular example, when a refugee from Khan Yunis, originally from al-Jura, described life before the Nakba as a “sweet life” and wished he could return to live in his land even if for one day, so he could die there. He referred to his village as “paradise; it was the flower of the cities.” As an effect of the dispossession of Palestinian land and denial of their rights, many Palestinian refugees have cultivated a vivid and idealized image of their original villages, even though the discussion on the possibility of return has been frozen since 1988.

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20. Ibid.
In terms of the PLO and Palestinian refugees in Jordan, it is important to note the consequences of Black September, the clash between the PLO and the Jordanian armed forces during 1970-1971, which ultimately resulted in the PLO’s expulsion from Jordan. Nabil Marshhood, while interviewing Palestinian refugees in Zarqa camp, revealed how Palestinian patriotism suffered vastly after Black September. Even inside Palestinian refugee camps, refugees noticed a shift in the camp school’s curriculum, which drifted from the Palestinian cause to the ideas of peace and human rights. As Khalidi explains, Black September also shifted the “massive public support the PLO enjoyed in Jordan.” The incident affected both the way supporters and the Jordanian government perceived Palestinian patriotism, which has since then decreased in public spaces in Jordan.

Methodology

I. Shaping the Research

Initially, the goal of this research was to understand whether the general discourse on the right of return was still relevant and representative of Palestinian identity in refugee camps across generations. There were two main questions guiding this study: first, how the hope in the right of return had developed after three generations since 1948 and second, if Palestinian identity varied depending on the location of the refugee camp (i.e. if the camp is located inside or outside of historical Palestine). The idea was to interview

and survey residents from two refugee camps, one inside of the West Bank and one in Jordan. Two members from each generation since the Nakba would be interviewed, one female and one male, in addition to a written survey that would be handed out to thirty residents from each camp (ten members from each generation).

What was missing from this approach was understanding what “the general discourse on the right of return” means in practice. The main document used to understand this topic was “The Question of Palestine and the United Nations”\textsuperscript{23}, which outlines how the issue of Palestinian statehood and rights has developed since 1947 in the international community. It came to my attention that, according to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988 (III), which states that “the designation ‘Palestine’ should be used in place of the designation ‘Palestine Liberation Organization’” at the UN, the PLO essentially became the exclusive representative of Palestinian rights before all nations.

This opened a new door for investigating the issue. Through reading United Nations statements from the past three years made by President Mahmoud Abbas and Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian Ambassador to the UN, it was surprising to see how the subject of the right of return has little mentioned at all. This observation was what shaped the current goal if this study, which aims at understanding how and if the PLO represents the rights of Palestinian refugees, and if what is said before the international community is in fact an accurate depiction of Palestinian refugees’ sentiments on the ground.

There were two possible paths of investigation came to mind – one, was interviewing NGOs for Palestinian Refugee rights such as BADIL and UNRWA, as well as PLO representatives, and comparing the two. The second path would be focusing on the comparison of official UN statements and interviews with current residents of refugee camps. There are limitations to both – the first approach is not the direct voice of Palestinian refugees, and not all PLO representatives necessarily participate in the discussions that take place before the UN. The second approach is not flawless either – the opinion of a small number of refugees from two specific camps does not necessarily define what the right of return means for all Palestinian refugees today. Still, I chose the latter methodology, under the belief that focusing on the grassroots of refugee camps might reveal more of an in-depth understanding of their perceptions of the right of return.

II. Selecting Refugee Camps

Considering the above, the next step was to find families that had living members from all three generations, which proved to be more challenging than expected. Due to my previous contact with Dheisheh refugee camp in Palestine, finding families to interview there was easier than in Jordan. Ideally, I wanted to find a camp with a similar background of Dheisheh, especially one that was mostly Palestinian, established around 1948 and with a similar population size. This was not possible, particularly in terms of establishment date – Jordan’s oldest Palestinian refugee camps, such as Zarqa, Jabel el-Hussein and Wihdat – have developed into cities and neighborhoods that are not solely for Palestinian refugees anymore. In order to insure the reliability of the results, it was key to find a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan that would allow a consistent comparison with the data from Dheisheh.
Finally, a contact with Hittin camp, also known as Marka refugee camp, was found. I was able to get in touch with members from the same family of 1948 Palestinian refugees residing in Hittin, who had lived in Karameh and Baqa’a before settling in Marka. Though Hittin camp has a population over three times size of Dheisheh (48,492 residents as opposed to 14,395 in Dheisheh, according to BADIL)\(^\text{24}\) and was founded after the 1967 Israeli occupation, in terms of the camp’s character and identity, Hittin had many features that reminded me of Dheisheh. As Dheisheh, Hittin is also located by the side of the road with markets and shops surrounding it, and only a narrow entry allowing the entrance of the residents. They are both slightly isolated, but close enough to a main avenue that would allow interaction with the rest of the district. Additionally, both camps are similarly close to its country’s capital (Jerusalem for Dheisheh and Amman for Hittin) – though considering Dheisheh residents cannot reach it due to movement restrictions under the Israeli occupation. These resemblances enabled the research to continue and made the collection of relevant data possible. Still, readers of this research must keep in mind that the results may not represent sentiments of Palestinian refugees residing in camps that have suffered a higher influx of refugees from Syria and Iraq, or that have grown to the point that they are not considered “camps” anymore.

III. Conducting the Interviews

Initially, I intended on doing both interviews and surveys in order to obtain more material to analyze. However, after conducting a test for the survey I realized that trying to quantify complex issues as identity were not as helpful as having face-to-face conversations on the topic. In addition, since the first generation of the Nakba includes

\(^{24}\text{BADIL, Survey 2011-2011, 11.}\)
senior refugees, some past the age of ninety, the survey was simply not a helpful platform to record how they related to their homeland.

In Palestine, a former resident of the camp, who was especially trained for this research, conducted interviews in Arabic. The results were recorded in Modern Standard Arabic, which I translated upon receiving the written notes. There were six interviews with members of one extended family, one female and one male from each generation. Though the interviewees were not from the same family as the interviewer, the familiarity with the camp and the language made it easier for the subjects to give candid answers on the topic. In addition, since the interviewer was from the camp himself, finding a family that would fit the requirements for the research was not as difficult.

The interviews in Jordan were more challenging than the above. The contact I had with Hittin was through an acquaintance, as opposed to a former member of the camp, which made finding families much more difficult. In total, six members from one family of 1948 refugees were interviewed. However, for the first and third generations, it was not possible to find male subjects to discuss the topic. This is due to two factors – the gender of the researcher and the challenge of finding living members of the first generation of 1948 refugees. This may reflect in the results of this study, since more women were interviewed in Jordan than men. I performed all the interviews in Arabic, initially with the help of a male translator for certain key words. Some of the challenges involved in this method are explained in the next sub-section of the research.

The interview questions, attached to the appendix of this study, focused on three themes: a) development of Palestinian refugee identity; b) connection to the homeland,
and c) definition of the right of return. They purposefully did not use any specific language or references, in order to allow the interviewees to speak from their own perspectives and not be guided by the formulation of the questions. This proved to be a successful format, as long as it included follow up questions and informal conversation, which allowed the interviewees to tell personal stories and comments that revealed the basis of their identity. With the intent of not to lead the interviews to particular answers, no questions specifically about Palestinian leaderships were asked, though it still came up in a number of conversations naturally.

All of the refugees interviewed signed a written consent form that allowed me to use the information for this research while preserving their identities. With this in mind, no real names will be use in the results section, as well as any information that might reveal their identity. There was one case of an illiterate interviewee, in which the subject’s son read the consent out loud signed on her behalf.

IV. Further challenges

There were a number of challenges that were not anticipated. First, in the case of Dheisheh, the interviewees were often suspicious about the purpose of the research. Espionage by the American and Israeli government seemed to be in the collective memory of the camp, even if the interviewee himself was a Palestinian refugee from the Dheisheh as well. Participants were still reluctant in giving personal information about themselves due to mistrust. In Jordan, this problem was not encountered. While Palestinian refugees from Dheisheh were used to the presence of foreigners doing research on a number of issues, refugees from Hittin did not have as much knowledge
about what the concept of right of return. There, it was perceived more as a shared sentiment than a political term.

As mentioned before, there were also gender issues involved while conducting the interviews. In Palestine, female subjects of the third generation showed signs of discomfort while talking to a male interviewer, which affected the depth of their answers. However, in Hittin, there was the opposite problem - as a woman, it was easier to find female interviewees to talk to about the matter, which explains the higher number of women interviewed in Jordan. Though I performed all the interviews in Arabic, the presence of a translator was key in order to understand specific words and concepts. When talking to the women, however, it was not acceptable for the translator to accompany me, which led me to conduct the interviews in Arabic myself. Though it was possible to conduct the interviews with my level of language, it may have interfered in the depth of the discussions.

**Findings**

1. First Generation

1.1 Dheisheh Camp, Palestine

When asked about their place of origin, there was no hesitation in their answers – Ahmad and Khadija referred immediately to memories of their village Zakariya, which they were forced to leave in 1948. Ahmad, now ninety-three years old, lived until the age of twenty-five in his village before he was forced to leave with his family in 1948. Still, after sixty-eight years living in Dheisheh, he considers Zakariya his true home:
“Everything reminds of Zakariya, especially old men around me. I see Zakariya in my dreams - my house and my family sitting eating lunch together; there, everything is perfect. All the memories I love are from my village, that’s where I want to die”

Even his wife, Khadija, considers Zakariya her place of origin. Her daughter Fatima corrected her – “Mother, you are not from Zakariya, you are from BeitNatif.” Khadija explained she was originally from BeitNatif but that she never came back after 1947, when she married Ahmad and moved to his village. “Sure, I haven’t lived for long in Zakariya but I count myself as originally from there,” she said, “my house was my husband’s house. I don’t want to go back to BeitNatif. Everything in my life reminds of Zakariya.”

Ahmad and Khadija’s house is located on “Zakrawyastreet”. Before the new wave of refugees in 1967, Dheisheh was divided into the villages the refugees were from, and this form of organization in the camp has only partially remained today. Most of the families living around Ahmad and Khadija are also from Zakariya. Khadija mentioned how this aspect united the families during the first years of the camp. “All the women in this street were from my village and we used to clean and cook together, and help each other,” she recalled. She continued, “Now, it’s not like that anymore.” Her husband clarified how, after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, many fled from the camp. According to Ahmad, out of 18,000 residents, only 7,000 refugees stayed in Dheisheh. Once the camp was empty, Ahmad explained that many Palestinians from neighboring areas started moving to the camp to take advantage of the aid it received from UNRWA. Most of Ahmad and Khadija’s family stayed, and the camp welcomed the new residents from other villages.
Though their recollection of Zakariyais still vivid in memories, Ahmad and Khadija seemed confused when asked about the meaning of the right of return. For Khadija, this is a very simple idea, it means “To go back to Zakariya, even if only for one day, to die there”. It was clear she would go back if she could, but when asked if she truly believed she would have the chance, she humbly answered: “Everything that comes from God is good”, without showing hope she would see the day of her return. Her husband’s answers were similar – for him, the right of return meant returning to his village: “Even if they only let me reach the desert in the outskirts of Zakariya, I will go there to dig my grave. I would leave my house today and go there.” Yet, Ahmad still believed that the only way to go back was through fighting. “Returning will not come from the sky, only God knows,” he said, “nobody will give us back the land, we need to fight for it.”

In the eyes of Ahmad and Khadija, Zakariyais a magical place, where every aspect of life is exceptional. The memory of their village was full of life; it was happier, greener, the opposite of the gray, cold streets of the camp. For them, the right of return is being able to simply reach this place, and finally rest their bones in the land that gave birth to their souls. Everything in their lives is divided along one line – the light before the *Nakba* and the darkness that it followed.

1.2 Hittin Camp, Jordan

Insherah was born in ‘Ajjur, though her family left in 1948 when she was only two years old. Still, her accent was an obvious marker of her roots, which remained identical to that of Palestinian refugees from 1948 villages. Though she declared she had nothing in her possession that reminded her of her village – everything was left behind
when they left in the Nakba – she still identified ‘Ajjur as her place of origin. She could mention some general information about her village – especially about the agriculture of ‘Ajjur; the grapes, figs and olives that her family used to grow. Insherah felt displaced in Hittin – as she pointed to the room around us, she exclaimed: “This is not my home, I feel like I am just renting this house here, it’s not my place”. She also explained how she had lived in Karameh and in Baqa’a before settling in Hittin camp after 1967, but that she still had more contact with people who came from her village.

Similar to the first generation of Dheisheh, Insherah did not seem to give much thought to what the right of return meant. For her, it was also simple: “Returning to the land that belongs to us, this is not our land.” It was not clear, however, if she meant all of Palestine or ‘Ajjur specifically. The lack of specific memories from her land made it seem like she saw all of Palestine as her home, and longed either her return or her children’s. When asked if she believed she would be able to fulfill this dream, her answer was almost identical to that of Khadija, from Dheisheh: “It’s up to God, not to people.”

During all interviews conducted in Hittin, Insherah would follow me and guide her children’s answers. Though she herself was not sure if she would see the day she would return, it was important for her to instill that feeling in her family. If a member of her family showed any doubts, she would assure me: “We will return, inshallah we will return.” Her children would nod and correct their answers, looking down and whispering “Inshallah,” as she firmly stood next to them.

2. Second Generation

2.1 Dheisheh Camp, Palestine
Fatima grew up in Dheisheh after 1967, when the camp changed its demography following the occupation of the West Bank. Though she also lives on “Zakrawyastreet”, named after Zakariya where her family is from, she was not always surrounded by those from the same village as her parents. When introducing herself, she referred first to her camp, then to her village. She clarified, “I present myself saying my full name and the name of my camp. But from my last name, people know I am from Zakaryia.” Her cousin Salah, who was also interviewed, had a similar response: “I tell people I am from the camp, but originally from Zakaryia.” Though Salah did not have anything specific that reminded him of the camp or Zakaryia, Fatima was very descriptive: “My life is the camp. It has a certain special smell, it reminds of my childhood here.” She explained what connects her to her camp:

“The camp is not made of stones, it’s made of its people. We are not connected by physical, we are connected to the individuals. I remember a story – when I was working in the house during the First Intifada – I had bought a new washing bowl (اناء) for my clothes. It was new and sharp, and I cut my hands while I was holding its sides. When I started cleaning the blood from my hands, my neighbor came to my house and saw me. I remember how she washed all my clothes and helped me clean my whole house. The camp was like one big family.

A shared feeling between Fatima and Salah was that the camp represented their family, not their parents’ village. Both claimed they feel more connected to Dheisheh than to Zakariya. On the other hand, it was remarkable to see how militant their perspectives were when speaking about the meaning of the right of return. For Fatima, returning means going back by fighting (بالنضال), not by negotiations. “Whatever the world is doing right now, I don’t care about,” she said, “I care about what us as Palestinians are doing.” When asked about the diplomatic efforts of the UN, she frowned and said she believed they were “useless”. Salah also made use of militant language,
though he added a religious meaning to the concept of returning. In his words, returning means “to free Al Aqsa from the hands of the *kufar* (الكفار), the infidels.” In addition, both Salah and Fatima agreed they believed they would go back one day: “Even if I was the richest person I would go back to my village,” Fatima added. “I miss Zakariya,” she said, even she had never been to Zakariya herself.

In general, the second generation of Dheisheh has developed a connection to the camp that goes beyond their original link to their parents’ villages. Dheisheh camp, affected deeply by the First and Second Intifada, has established a new identity that is strongly associated with the values of community and militancy. Still, returning to Zakariya remains in the back of their minds, which they see as their own responsibility to achieve.

2.2 *Hittin Camp, Jordan*

“I am from Palestine, with Jordanian citizenship,” said Yasser, Insherah’s son. He does not usually mention his parents’ village ‘Ajjur, only if he is talking to people from the same camp as him. He did not seem to know much from ‘Ajjur, other than pictures and information that he had researched online. What reminds him the most of the village, as he described, are members from the first generation. “Old people remind me of ‘Ajjur. They talk about the land, it is my family who reminds us where we are from,” he explained. He also mentioned how the first generation connects more to people from their own village than his generation. Still, Yasser considers Hittin his second home, while he does not return to his homeland.
When asked about the meaning of the right of return, Yasser expounded on the idea that Israel did not own the land it has currently. “For me, it is the right of return to our land,” he said, “Israel never conquered it, the British simply handed them our land.” Somehow in contradiction to his remark, he also commented on the reason why his family was forced out of the village: “They were told the Jews were killing everyone in the villages around them to scare them away, they did not have another option.” Yasser, when speaking of the right of return, had a collective perception of what it meant to go back. He expressed hope, but added, “If we ourselves don’t return, our children will. We will continue fighting until we have our right.”

Yasser also talked about the differences between Palestinian refugees inside and outside of historic Palestine. “We are longing to go back to Palestine more than refugees who are still inside. We miss it more, they at least get to see the land.” Here, Yasser expressed a desire to go back to Palestine as the whole land, as opposed to his specific village. Growing up in Jordan, Yasser talked about the challenges as Palestinian as opposed to a refugee from the camp. There was no mention of a separate “Hittin identity”.

Yasser’s sisters were interviewed in a separate room and did not seem to have given as much thought to the issue as their brother. Nisreen and Farah, though they introduced themselves as originally from ‘Ajjur, had little connection to the village itself or to others that shared the same origin as their mother. For instance, they spoke with a softer accent, without using the strong sounds that their mother used. However, they both shared a utopic perception of Palestine, which according to Farah, was based on what their friends and family who had been to the land told them. “Everything is prettier in
Palestine”, said Nisreen. Though both did not put stock on the prospect of return, they were still assured that Palestine was their “natural place”.

In general terms, the second generation of Hittin did not show a strong connection to their village, especially the women. Though Yasser seemed to have more information about the political situation and the culture of his village, there was still a collective sentiment that returning to Palestine is the main goal – not necessarily to ‘Ajjur. In addition, since the family has moved from different camps since 1948 – as it is the case for most refugees from this period in Jordan – the camp itself is not a relevant part of their Palestinian identity.

3. Third Generation

3.1 Dheisheh Camp, Palestine

After listening to his grandparents’ interviews, Ibrahim imitated their response and told the interviewer he was originally from Zakariya. He hastily corrected himself: “No, I am from the camp. When I introduce myself, I usually say I am from Dheisheh.” Ibrahim has never traveled outside of the camp, he explained, and therefore Dheisheh is home to all of his memories throughout his life. He did not show any special ties with other people from the Zakariya families, besides his own cousins. Still, when asked about the right of return, Ibrahim’s automatic response was: “The right of return means going back to our land. If I could, of course I would go back.” Ibrahim did not seem very confident of returning one day to his village, nor did it seem like this was a central theme in his life. For him, the camp was the main part of his identity and the symbol of home.
His cousin Rima had even less of a connection to the concept of returning. Rima, when presenting herself, only mentioned her full name and the name of her camp. Her family, friends and house are the main components of her identity, which are connected more to Dheisheh than Zakariya – as her cousin, the only friendships she has that are from her original village are with her cousins. Rima’s perception of the right of return was influenced by her father’s answer, Salah: “The most important return is a return to religion, prayer and fasting,” she explained. The right of return in terms of Palestine was not a main concern for Rima, Islam was the most important part of her identity as a member of the camp. She seemed uncomfortable speaking to a male interviewer and kept her responses straight and religiously oriented.

Ibrahim and Rima showed little connection to the concept of returning to their village or the militant language of the past generation. For them, the camp was their home and the main component of their identity as refugees.

3.2 Hittin Camp, Jordan

At first, Razan and Dalal seemed very confused with the idea of return. Razan did not talk much, and mostly agreed with whatever Dalal had to say about the matter. Dalal explained she did not have any personal connection to her village, though she still identifies herself as a Palestinian-Jordanian. Her friends and connections are not originally from one village, or even from the same camp.

First, when asked about the right of return, they did not know what it meant. Dalal’s sister in law, Nisreen, explained to her that it was the right of return to Palestine. Dalal simply answered: “It’s returning to the place where we are originally from.” There
was no mention of ‘Ajjur, her family’s village. Even so, Dalal did not believe she would have the chance to return one day, or any will to fight for retuning either to Palestine or to ‘Ajjur itself. Razan expressed she would return if she could, but did not believe that was possible at this point.

4. Dheisheh and Hittin: Cross-Generation Analysis

4.1 Similarities Encountered

In both camps, the belief in the right of return has increasingly faded throughout generations. The first generation of refugees, both in Hittin and Dheisheh, is fighting to instill hope in their grandchildren, but when interviewed individually, the third generation showed disbelief in fulfilling their right of return. This sentiment was more often found in women from the third generation, who did not seem as politically aware of the current discussions on the matter. Additionally, contact with their original villages now inside the Israeli state, has decreased substantially due to movement restrictions. Still, the second generation still revealed a longing for return, though it expressed itself in different ways in Palestine and in Jordan.

There were a number of overlapping themes in each generation. The identity of the first generation is still deeply connected to the villages they were expelled from in 1948. Their hope of return was associated with religious faith, perceived by the mention of “God” in all statements. The second generation, on the other hand, perceived the Palestinian people as the agents responsible for fulfilling the right of return. Both men and women of this generation expressed fighting and armed struggle as the means to that end, as well as resentment with the intervention of the international community on the
conflict. In addition, the second generation also shared a utopic perspective of either Palestine or their parents’ village, even though the members interviewed had never seen to their land themselves. In terms of the third generation, answers were similar in both camps – the right of return and connection to their land were not main concerns to the members interviewed.

4.2 Disparities

While the first generation of Dheisheh refugees expressed a personal wish to return and be buried in their village, in Hittin, this hope was articulated as a collective wish to go back one day, whatever generation of the family it may be. In addition, Dheisheh stories showed traces of a construction of a community based on their village of origin, that the displacement of Palestinian refugees to different camps in Jordan did not allow. This sentiment continued upon the second generation in Dheisheh, whose members still live in the street named after their parents’ village, and connect the right of return to this their families’ land. In Hittin, on the other hand, the wish to return was associated to going back to Palestine as a whole, and not a specific location.

Finally, the major difference between Palestinian refugees in Dheisheh and Hittin is the presence of a “camp identity” that Palestinian-Jordanian interviewees lacked of. Residents of Dheisheh, in most generations, have included the camp as a main part of their identity and the stage of their memories growing up. In the case of the second generation, this was influenced by the impact of the First and Second Intifada in the camp, which has brought the camp together working as a community. The displacement of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan to multiple camps, as well as the absence of a
continues and direct intervention from the occupation, prevented a feeling of community present in Dheisheh narratives.

5. The PLO, the United Nations and the Right of Return

Meanwhile, at the United Nations, the PLO has also brought up the issue of the right of return of Palestinian refugees, but in rather particular way. This section will focus on three key instances: the April 2013 address to the Security Council delivered by Dr. Ryad Mansour, the Ambassador of Palestine at the United Nations; President Mahmoud Abbas’ address at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly on September 2013; the April 2014 address by Ambassador Riyad Mansour before the Security Council; and finally the address at the September 2015 General Assembly on raising the Palestinian flag at the UN, presented by Ambassador Mansour.

5.1 Security Council Address by Ambassador Riyad Mansour, April 2013

During the open debate on the situation in the Middle East on April 2013, Ambassador Riyad Mansour addressed the United Nations Security Council on the Palestine Question. His speech focuses mainly on how Israeli policies have continuously caused challenges to the viability of the two-state solution, while the PLO has constantly abided to the agreement, “based on the longstanding parameters that are well-known to everyone in this Chamber.”

Ambassador Mansour, when advocating for Palestine before the Security Council, referred mainly to Palestinian diplomatic efforts towards

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peace such as follow-up meetings with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and meetings with the Arab Ministerial Follow-up Committee. In his words, “the Arab commitment to peace, reaffirmed for over a decade in the context of the Arab Peace Initiative, is unquestionable.”  

By choosing this strategy, Ambassador Mansour’s main basis for Palestinian legitimacy is the acceptance and commitment to the two-state solution on the basis of 1967 borders.

In terms of the right of return, the issue was mentioned briefly under the following context:

“On our part, once again, in this Chamber, I reaffirm the commitment of the Palestinian leadership to a peaceful settlement in accordance with the two-State solution. However, I must stress that at the core of this commitment is our obligation to preserve the dignity of the Palestinian people and ensure justice for them. Essential to this is fulfillment of their national aspirations and rights, including the right of our refugees to return and the right to self-determination in our independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

Here, the right of return remains one of the main appeals of the PLO before the United Nations, along with the right of self-determination and East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. On the other hand, there was no focus on the terms of the right of return or any emphasis on the importance of this point. While the call for the feasibility of Palestine as a state was promoted through a specific strategy – the two-state solution on the basis of 4 June 1967 borders – the right of return for Palestinian refugees was intertwined with less practical language such as “the dignity of the Palestinian people”.

Still, Palestinian self-determination and defined borders, agreed before the international community, are the PLO’s main point of concern.

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
Additionally, Ambassador Mansour did acknowledge problems the PLO and PA have faced in terms of political unity: “On the internal Palestinian front, we continue to strive for an end to the political division”. He also added that: “We are hopeful that elections can soon be undertaken in continuation of the democratic path we have chosen,” focusing his strategy on democratic values that would resonate with members of the Security Council.

5.2 General Assembly Address by President Mahmoud Abbas, September 2013

In September 2013, President Mahmoud Abbas addressed the sixty-eighth session of United Nations General Assembly for the first time in the name of the “State of Palestine”, one year following the UN’s recognition of Palestine as a “non-member observer state”. President Abbas opened his remarks by thanking the international community and reminding the Assembly that the State of Palestine “abides by the United Nations Charter, by international humanitarian law and by the resolutions of international legitimacy.” He spoke extensively on the path that the PLO has followed towards negotiations, stressing three main goals on the behalf of the Palestinian people: the establishment of an independent and sovereign state on all land occupied in 1967; the recognition of East Jerusalem as its capital; and a solution to the refugee issue “in a just agreed upon solution, according to United Nations resolution 194.”

28 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
When mentioning the United Nations resolution 194, President Abbas referred to the General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of 1948, which as mentioned before states 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.” By using resolution 194 to define the right of return for Palestinian refugees, President Abbas makes use of the ambiguity of the language of this document, which gives leeway for negotiations on the matter. While “all land occupied in 1967” and “recognition of East Jerusalem as its capital” are very clear requests by the PLO, the appeal for the right of return has important limitations on how this right would be implemented, which does not delineate the location of return and gives alternative options (i.e. compensation) as a resolution.

As it was the case with Ambassador Mansour’s address earlier that year, President Abbas focused on the PLO’s commitment to the two-state solution which the Palestinian National Council in 1988 “had the necessary courage to accept (...) on the borders of 4 June 1967, establishing a Palestinian State on 22% of the land of historic Palestine.” Surprisingly, President Abbas even commented on how this solution would be advantageous for State of Israel, envisioning “a future in which Israel will gain the recognition of 57 Arab and Muslim countries,” implying that once the State of Palestine is viable, even if it is established on 22% of its land, it would guarantee the respect of the Arab world.

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
President Abbas also made use of Palestinian national culture, such as the poet Mahmoud Darwish. He stated: “We – as Mahmoud Darwish wrote – ‘cultivate hope’, and we ‘shall one day be what we want’: a free sovereign people on the land of the State of Palestine.” By interpreting Darwish’s words, President Abbas’ main message is that the Palestinian people’s current and ultimate aspiration is to become an independent state, though still framing his speech under the two-state solution agreement.

Yet, President Abbas referred extensively to the Nakba and the lives of refugees in the camps, sharing personal experience and connection to this narrative:

“I am personally one of the victims of Al-Nakba, among the hundreds of thousands of my people uprooted in 1948 from our beautiful world and thrown into exile. Like hundreds of thousands of Palestine refugees, I have known as a youth the pain of exile and the tragedy of the loss of loved ones in massacres and wars, and the difficulties of building a new life from zero. And we tasted in refugee camps in exile the bitter taste of poverty, hunger, illness and humiliation, as well as rising to the challenge of affirming one’s identity.”

President Abbas also uses refugee rhetoric as part of his personal identity before the United Nations, which he somehow conflictingly uses as a point of legitimacy for his commitment to the two-state solution as well. His strategy focuses on how much the Palestinian people has suffered since the Nakba, which he frames as the reason behind the alleged motivation towards peace and statehood. Further in his address, President Abbas does recognize that the people of Palestine has at times “walked the path of armed revolution,” but adds that they have “affirmed at all times our active quest for peacemaking.” President Abbas claims that even at times of despair and injustice, the Palestinian people, represented by the PLO, have always offered an olive branch for the end of conflict. Finally, President

33 Ibid.
Abbas concluded his speech focusing on three points: “freedom for the Palestinian people,” “independence of Palestine” and “peace.”

5.3 Security Council Address by Ambassador Riyad Mansour, April 2014

Ambassador Riyad Mansour addressed the United Nations Security Council on the Palestine Question, during the open debate on the situation in the Middle East in April 2014. The Ambassador’s address used similar language to that of his April 2013 address on the matter, using internationally recognized agreements such as United Nations resolutions, Madrid Principles, Arab Peace Initiative and Quartet Roadmap in order to, in his words, stress “the criticalness of the hour to salvage the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 border.” Ambassador Mansour also held the international community accountable for resuming peace negotiations, asking specifically for the following: maintaining pre-1967 borders; halting Israeli settlement activities, (specially in East Jerusalem); and once again called for “respect for the rights of the Palestine refugees in accordance with resolution 194 (III).” As observed, the right of return remains the least specific request, due to the ambiguity in the document chosen by the PLO as the framework for negotiating the return of Palestinian refugees before the international community.


35 Ibid.
On the other hand, Ambassador Mansour, when mentioning the Nakba, did not use the same rhetoric used by President Abbas the previous year. The Ambassador stated that, “despite the burdens of occupation and sixty-six years of Al-Nakba,” Palestinians have done their part “to uphold international law and to act in good faith in the context of all initiatives and negotiations aimed at resolving this tragic conflict.” The use of the word “despite” is key, because unlike President Abbas’ address, it suggests that the motivation for peace does not come from the roots of continues despair.

Another important remark during Ambassador Mansour’s address was the use of the international consensus on UN resolutions on the question of Palestine to reaffirm his request for, in his words, “completely ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967.” By using 1967 as the initial date for the Israeli occupation, as opposed to 1948, Ambassador Mansour is framing his requests on the premise that demands related to the Nakba are secondary to those post-1967. This becomes contradictory, once he mentions resolution 194 in the end of the same paragraph.

5.4 General Assembly Address by Ambassador Riyad Mansour, September 2015

On September 10th 2015, Ambassador Riyad Mansour addressed the United Nations General Assembly on the vote of the Draft Resolution (A/69/L.87/Rev.1) on the raising of flags of non-member observer states. Generally, the Ambassador thanked the international community for supporting the “realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence.” However,

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38*Statement by H.E. Dr. Riyad Mansour, Ambassador, before the UNGA, Agenda Item 38: Question of Palestine, Agenda Item 37: Situation in the Middle East, 23 November 2015, New
Ambassador Mansour swiftly linked national aspirations of the Palestinian people to the refugee problem, referencing “5 million Palestine refugees in camps throughout the region continue to endure repeated tragedies, all awaiting the realization of their rights.”

Most of the Ambassador’s speech then focused on the self-determination and independence of the State of Palestine, with no mention of the right of return whatsoever. Once again, his speech showed a pattern of how the PLO has presented the question of Palestine before the United Nations, which constantly links the Palestinian refugee issue with national aspirations based on the two-state solution, notwithstanding the contradictions that this parallel reveals.

Conclusion

In statements made over the past three years as a “non-member state” at the United Nations, the PLO has fundamentally based their rhetoric on its commitment to the two-state solution, and to the obstacles and challenges the Israeli government have posed along the path to achieving this goal. The discussion on Palestinian refugee rights developed from the efforts of ensuring human rights to the victims of the Nakba, to advocating for a political solution, namely assigning territories to two people. In terms of the right of return, the PLO has followed the same tactic it adopted in 1988, using UN resolution 194 (III) as the basis for discussing the return of Palestinian refugees from 1948. This has limited the viability and the implementation of the right of return to


39 Ibid.
historic Palestine in its original sense. Surely, one can understand the reasoning behind the shift in the PLO’s approach – it is clear that calling for the dissolution of Israel and the return of all 1948 refugees is a politically impossible demand. Nevertheless, it is still key to understand that while the PLO has shifted its strategy, the political aspirations of Palestinian refugees today have not followed the same pattern. The recent PLO statements at the UN simply cannot be interpreted as the political thermometer of Palestinian society, especially in the case of refugees currently living in the camps. As revealed by Pollock’s polls mentioned earlier, less than a quarter of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza today consider the establishment of a state as a political priority, and the majority still supports armed resistance towards the liberation of all of historic Palestine.

Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees interviewed in the camps in both Palestine and Jordan revealed similar sentiments. The results of this study reveal that refugees do not connect as much to the idea of a state, but rather to the ability of reclaiming their rights denied by the Nakba. The ability of reaching their rightful lands and passing them on to the next generations is far more significant than the prospects of a peace resolution to the conflict through the two-state solution, illustrated by the militant language used by interviewees in both the first and second generations. This appeared in a greater extent in Palestine, where the camps have been more directly affected by the impact of the First and Second Intifada. Furthermore, the hypothesis that the dream of returning is still alive in the camps is correct – the nostalgia encountered by Ilana Feldman’s study in Gaza is also a key component of the first and second generation of refugees in Palestine and Jordan. In fact, identical statements such as “everything is prettier in Palestine” and
wishes to return “even if only for one day, to die there” were often emphasized by the participants. The claim that Palestinians have lost hope in the possibility of return, on the other hand, mainly pertains to the third generation in both Palestine and Jordan. It is not clear, however, if this is linked to increasing frustration with the PLO, since this generation did show signs of a high political awareness of the current situation. Instead, this resentment was more present in the second generation, in both locations. Finally, it is not necessarily true that Palestinian refugees in Jordan are more likely to still believe in the right of return than those residing in Palestine. What can be concluded instead is that due to Palestinian-Jordanian refugees’ connection to the idea of Palestine as a whole, as opposed to a local identity with a specific village, Palestinian refugees in Jordan may be more open to the PLO’s rhetoric on Palestinian statehood.

What can be identified as the main gap between the refugees’ sentiments on the ground and the way the PLO has advocated for their rights is rooted in the narrative around Palestinian struggle and the *Nakba*. While Palestinians refugees have used narratives of struggle and dispossession towards the motivation for the liberation of historic Palestine, the PLO twisted the same narrative into motivations for peace and statehood. The PLO has capitalized on the stereotype of the “good Palestinians”, similar the “good Muslim/bad Muslim” binaries that have emerged in the West, reconstructing selective positive image of Palestinian history that would resonate with the international community. As Andrew Shryock explains, the phenomenon of the “good Muslim” has been constructed around common features such as being peaceful, politically moderate and an “advocate of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom, an opponent of
armed conflict against the U.S. and Israel.” This has led the PLO to opt for an adapted version of Palestinian nationalism, which portrays the Palestinian refugee identity as an ideal partner for peace, a people that has turned sixty-seven years of displacement and occupation into, in Abbas’ words, an “active quest for peacemaking.” As this study shows, this reading is a misinterpretation of the conviction of Palestinian refugees in the camps, who to this day still cultivate the hope of one day returning to historic Palestine and reclaiming their right of return.

Study Limitations

While using this study as a reference, the reader should take into account that this study represents the opinions of twelve refugees residing in two camps with their own specific contexts. Hattin and Dheisheh may not be representative of the sentiments of other camps that have had different experiences related to them of this study. In addition, more women than men were interviewed in Hittin, which may also influence in the results of the section on Jordanian refugees’ opinions.

Another important factor that has limited this research is that the interviewees were not specifically asked about their sentiments towards the two-state solution, and how this relates to their perspectives on their right of return. A worthwhile way to further this study would be to ask Palestinian refugees if they would still want to return to their villages if that meant living under Israeli rule as law-abiding citizens. This would give a

deeper understanding of the relevance of the PLO’s narrative around Palestinian national aspirations.

Bibliography

Primary Sources


Written Resources


Father brings his son for the first time to see their family’s original village, Zakariya, under Israeli control since the Nakba. Pictured is the view from the top hill in Britannia Park, planted by the National Jewish Fund in 1950s after the newly established State of Israel took control of the land.
1. Interview Questions (English)

a. Theme 1: The Development of Palestinian refugee identity
   i. Q1: How do you describe the place where you are from?
   ii. Q2: What is the thing that reminds you the most about your homeland?

b. Theme 2: Geographic Distance and Right of Return
   i. Q1: Do you feel connected to your land here where you live? Why?
   ii. Q2: In the camp, to what extent do you feel more connected to the people that come from the same homeland (i.e. village) as you?

c. Theme 3: Definition of the Right of Return
   i. Q1: What does the right of return mean to you?
   ii. Q2: Do you believe you will have the chance to return to live in your homeland? If you had this chance today, would you return to live there?

2. Interview Questions (Arabic)

أ. القسم الأول: التطور لهوية اللاجئين الفلسطينيين.
   a. كيف تصف المكان الذي أتيت منه؟
   b. ما أكثر شيء يذكرك بموطنك؟

ب. القسم الثاني: البعد الجغرافي و حق العودة.
   a. هل تشعر بالارتباط في المكان الذي تعيش فيه الآن؟ كيف؟
   b. في المخيم، إلى أي مدى تشعر بالأرتباط بالأشخاص الذين جاءوا من نفس القرية أو المدينة التي جنت منها؟
3. Consent Form (English)

1. Brief description of the purpose of this study

The goal of this study is to analyze how the right of return of Palestinian refugees has been represented in the international community and the difference between what is discussed in the United Nations and the sentiments of Palestinian refugees in the camps.

2. Rights Notice

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

a. Privacy - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.

b. Anonymity - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.

c. Confidentiality - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.
4. Consent Form (Arabic)

ا. علاج الموافقة

وصف الهدف من هذه الدراسة تحليل كيف يتم تقديم حق العودة على النطاق العالمي والاختلاف بين ما يتم نقاشه في الأمم المتحدة وما يشعره اللاجئ الفلسطيني في مخيمات اللاجئين.

أ. أشعار الحقوق

قد تم استعراض وموافقة على هذه الدراسة من منظمة التعليم العالمية SIT قبل التأسيس. إذا شعرت في أي وقت بالخطر أو تعرضت للضرر غير المنطقي، يمكنك الاتصال بالجهة المقابلية. الرجاء أن تكون على قناعة أثناء الجلسة أن المعلومات المقدمة للدراسة متجهة للإحالة. إذا كنت ترغب في تسجيل المعلومات صوتية، الرجاء إعلام الشخص الذي يقوم بالمقابلة بذلك.

ب. عدم الكشف عن الهوية

ب. علاج الموافقة

ج. الخصوصية

جميع المعلومات التي يتم جمعها محصنة بالخصوصية في هذه الدراسة. إذا كنت تريد تسجيل المعلومات الصوتية، الرجاء إعلام الشخص الذي يقوم بالمقابلة بذلك.

د. حجز الرفض

إذا كان الشخص يشعر بعدم الراحة في الدراسة في أي وقت، فقد يقرر الرفض الكامل للدراسة. في هذه الحالة، سيتم عرض الرفض على الطرفين و ستتم إعلام جميع الأطراف بleccion.

ه. التعويض

لا يوجد تعويض للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة. هذا البحث يساعد على فهم مشاكل ضمن الجميع.

ملاحظة:-mortgage
توقيع الباحث والتاريخ
اسم الباحث
Access, Use, and Publication of ISP/FSP

Student Name: Ariella Hohl
Email Address: agh2144@columbia.edu
Title of ISP/FSP: The Right of Return: International Representation of Palestinian Refugee Rights Program and Term/Year: Jordan: Modernization and Social Change, Fall 2015

Student research (Independent Study Project, Field Study Project) is a product of field work and as such students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. Ethical field work, as stipulated in the SIT Policy on Ethics, results in products that are shared with local and academic communities; therefore copies of ISP/FSPs are returned to the sponsoring institutions and the host communities, at the discretion of the institution(s) and/or community involved.

By signing this form, I certify my understanding that:

1. I retain ALL ownership rights of my ISP/FSP project and that I retain the right to use all, or part, of my project in future works.

2. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may publish the ISP/FSP in the SIT Digital Collections, housed on World Learning’s public website.

3. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may archive, copy, or convert the ISP/FSP for non-commercial use, for preservation purposes, and to ensure future accessibility.
   • World Learning/SIT Study Abroad archives my ISP/FSP in the permanent collection at the SIT Study Abroad local country program office and/or at any World Learning office.
   • In some cases, partner institutions, organizations, or libraries in the host country house a copy of the ISP/FSP in their own national, regional, or local collections for enrichment and use of host country nationals.

4. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad has a non-exclusive, perpetual right to store and make available, including electronic online open access, to the ISP/FSP.

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7. I have sought copyright permission for previously copyrighted content that is included in this ISP/FSP allowing distribution as specified above.

ARIELLA HOHL

December 11, 2015

Student Signature

Date
Withdrawal of Access, Use, and Publication of ISP/FSP

Given your agreement to abide by the SIT Policy on Ethics, withdrawing permission for publication may constitute an infringement; the Academic Director will review to ensure ethical compliance.

☐ I hereby withdraw permission for World Learning/SIT Study Abroad to include my ISP/FSP in the Program’s office permanent collection.  
Reason:

☐ I hereby withdraw permission for World Learning/SIT Study Abroad to release my ISP/FSP in any format to individuals, organizations, or libraries in the host country for educational purposes as determined by World Learning/SIT Study Abroad.  
Reason:

☐ I hereby withdraw permission for World Learning/SIT Study Abroad to publish my ISP/FSP on its websites and in any of its digital/electronic collections, or to reproduce and transmit my ISP/FSP electronically.  
Reason:

ARIELLA HOHL  
December 11, 2015

Student Signature  
Date

Academic Director has reviewed student reason(s) for withdrawing permission to use and agrees it does not violate the SIT Study Abroad Policy on Ethics.

Academic Director Signature  
Date Dec. 12  
2015

Note: This form is to be included with the electronic version of the paper and in the file of any World Learning/SIT Study Abroad archive.
ISP Ethics Review

(Note: Each AD must complete, sign, and submit this form for every student’s ISP.)

The ISP paper by Ariella Hohl does conform to the Human Subjects Review approval from the Local Review Board, the ethical standards of the local community, and the ethical and academic standards outlined in the SIT student and faculty handbooks.

Completed by: Ashraf F. Alqudah, Ph. D.

Academic Director: __Ashraf F. Alqudah, Ph. D.

Signature:

Program: JOR Fall 2015

Date: Dec 23 2015
**LRB/IRB ACTION FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Student: Ariella Hohl</th>
<th>Institution: World Learning Inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISP Title: The Right of Return: International Representation of Palestinian Refugee Rights</td>
<td>IRB organization number: IORG0004408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Submitted: Nov. 17, 2015</td>
<td>IRB registration number: IRB00005219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program: JOR</td>
<td>Expires: 9 December 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of review:</td>
<td>LRB members (print names):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exempt</td>
<td>Ashraf F. Alqudah, Ph. D. Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expedited</td>
<td>Ismael Abu Aamoud, Ph. D. Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Badr Al Madi, Ph. D. Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LRB REVIEW BOARD ACTION:**

- **X** Approved as submitted
- _____ Approved pending changes
- _____ Requires full IRB review in Vermont
- _____ Disapproved

LRB Chair Signature: [Signature]

Date: Nov. 22 2015

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Form below for IRB Vermont use only:

Research requiring full IRB review. **ACTION TAKEN:**

- ___ approved as submitted
- ___ approved pending submission or revisions
- ___ disapproved

__________________________________________________________  ____________________________
IRB Chairperson’s Signature  Date