

NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES



The Palestinian diaspora in Norway: United by history, divided by politics?

By Joakim Hope Soltveit

Master thesis (30 credits) submitted to
The Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Noragric
Ås, Norway
August 2013

The Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, is the international gateway for the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB). Eight departments, associated research institutions and the Norwegian College of Veterinary Medicine in Oslo. Established in 1986, Noragric's contribution to international development lies in the interface between research, education (Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes) and assignments.

The Noragric Master theses are the final theses submitted by students in order to fulfill the requirements under the Noragric Master programmes "International Environmental Studies", "Development Studies" and "International Relations".

The findings in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of Noragric. Extracts from this publication may only be reproduced after prior consultation with the author and on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation contact Noragric.

© Joakim Hope Soltveit, August 2013
joakimsoltveit@hotmail.com

Noragric
Department of International Environment and Development Studies
P.O. Box 5003
N-1432 Ås
Norway
Tel.: +47 64 96 52 00
Fax: +47 64 96 52 01
Internet: <http://www.umb.no/noragric>

Declaration

I, Joakim Hope Soltveit, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

Abbreviations and acronyms

AP – The Norwegian Labour Party

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

EU – European Union

FATAH – Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini – The Movement for the National Liberation of Palestine

FIDA – The Palestinian Democratic Union

HAMAS – Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya – Islamic Resistance Movement

ICBS – Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics

IUG – Islamic University of Gaza

LO – The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions

MFA – The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

PA – Palestinian National Authority

PCBS – Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

PDFLP – Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PFLP – Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PLO – Palestine Liberation Organization

PRIO – The Peace Research Institute Oslo

SSB – Statistics Norway

UN – United Nations

UNRWA – United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

USSD – United States State Department

WTO – World Trade Organization

List of tables

Table 2.1 - Common features of a diaspora – p. 2.3.4

Table 2.2 - Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by sex, country background, time and contents, 2013 – p. 2.3.5

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this thesis, many people and organizations have played an important role in its conceptualization, research, writing and editing, and they are unfortunately more than I can or am permitted to name here.

Firstly I want to extend my gratefulness to supervisor Lars Gule, Oslo and Akershus University College, who has done an excellent job in guiding me through the thesis from start to finish. I am greatly thankful for his wise words, ideas and comments.

I am also thankful to Are Hovdenak, researcher at Landinfo, for his time and assistance. A thank you also goes to all the Palestinians which I talked to: Nidal Hamad, Fuad Timraz, George El Jeries, Nadia Jounes, Line Khateeb and those who did not want their name mentioned. They all provided extremely useful information and insight into complex issues which helped me to acquire important information for the write up of the thesis.

In addition I would like to thank Palestinakomiteén, Fellesutvalget for Palestina, Therese Arnesen from Diaspora Network, Minja Dzamarija from Statistisk Sentralbyrå and others who have helped me.

A thank you also goes out to professors and staff at Noragric, especially Professor Stig Jarle Hansen, study coordinator Ingunn Bohmann and librarian Liv Ellingsen, for assisting during the research and contributing to finding literature.

Finally I am very thankful to my family and parents for encouragement and kind words, my friends for understanding, and a special thank you goes to my girlfriend for positive comments and patience during the process of researching and writing.

Ås, Norway,

15.08.2013,

Joakim Hope Soltveit

Abstract

I wrote this thesis because I could not find any previous research on the Palestinian diaspora in Norway and I wanted to contribute to the field of diaspora studies, as well as to learn more. The objective was to analyse the role which Palestinian politics had on the diaspora, as well as which role Norwegian politics had by using a social constructivist perspective. Methods used were reviewing literature and previous diaspora research as well as ten personal interviews which were conducted with respondents.

I found that the majority of Palestinians in Norway are Fatah supporters or independent politically, there is a belief that the international community should do more for Palestinians, there is a strong belief in civil society, there is a lack of national unity and religion is separating religious and non-religious Palestinians.

The conclusion was that Palestinian politics, especially the relationship between Fatah and Hamas, along with Norwegian politics, religion, personal conflicts and cultural differences within the diaspora acts as a hindrance for national cooperation and prevents national unity. This was largely because of the identity which was assigned to politics and the way that Palestinians perceived each other.

Table of Contents

1.0 – Introduction	1
2.0 – Contextualizing the thesis	4
2.1 – Background	4
2.2 - Purpose of the research, Research Questions and Hypothesis.....	5
2.3 - Conceptual framework and definitions	6
2.3.1 - Terrorism.....	6
2.3.2 - Hamas	9
2.3.3 – Fatah	12
2.3.4 - Diaspora Community	15
2.3.5 - Palestinian in Norway	18
3.0 - The theoretical framework	20
3.0 - Methods.....	27
3.1 - The philosophy of methods.....	27
3.2 - Research strategy: qualitative research vs. quantitative research	29
3.3 - Research design and methods	33
3.4 - Preoccupations and critique of qualitative research.....	35
3.5 - Ethics and moral dilemmas in social research	38
3.6 - The collection of data during the research process	43
4.0 - Findings in the research	46
4.1 - Background for findings	46
4.2 - Finding no. 1 – Palestinians in Norway - A closer look	48
4.3 - Finding no. 2 – The role of the International Community	52
4.4 - Finding no. 3 – A strong belief in the role of civil society	55
4.5 - Finding no. 4 – Difficulties in reaching national unity	59
4.6 - Finding no. 5 – The religious aspect of Palestinian politics	65
5.0 - Analysis.....	71
5.1 - Palestinians in Norway	71
5.2 - Norwegian politics and Norway’s role internationally	74
5.3 - The role of Palestinian politics	77
5.4 - Analysis of hypothesis	82
6.0 – Conclusion.....	86
List of references	91

Appendix 100

1.0 – Introduction

In 2013 we live in a globalized world where political decisions affect people elsewhere than the decisions are being made. Societies are mixed by people of different ethnicities and cultures and religions. Through international organizations, corporations and civil society, people are interacting across cultural, religious and political barriers, by communication systems which have decreased distances and enabled interaction across state borders.

This provided my starting point when I wanted to analyze how the Palestinian diaspora in Norway was affected by Palestinian politics. I have chosen to use the word diaspora, which will be further discussed in chapter two, but which is an overarching term used to describe people who live outside their country of origin. In the initial stages of the research process I searched for any existing scientific research about the topic, but I could not find any and I found it intriguing to research a new field in circumstances which were familiar.

The next step was to read books and articles about politics in Palestine, and I soon found that there were two main political parties which I wanted to focus on; Fatah and Hamas. This was because most of the literature I found was written about them and they are quite different in nature, which I found interesting. I also found a study which was inspiring by Ben David (2012), an affiliate with the Digital Methods Initiative (University of Amsterdam), which had researched Palestinian diaspora networks in over 10 countries (not including Norway). She found that the diaspora networks have shifted into transnational solidarity networks towards those in Palestine, and she pointed out that this might be an indication of a lack of ties between diaspora actors. This could further indicate that there was a polarization of politics which were also affecting the diaspora in Norway, which caused them to mix into Norwegian non-Palestinian civil organizations and not work purely as Palestinian organizations.

Possible explanations for this could be due to the relationships between the organizations or due to personal reasons, cultural differences, social structures or social dimensions. But her research suggested that the intrastate relations in Palestine, has in fact been partly modified into an interstate relationship by the division of Palestinian politics in Palestine. This is manifested in Fatah's attempt to comply with the international community, while Hamas

allies with its partners in the Middle East. This interstate relationship thus shapes the interaction towards external actors and relations and has an effect on members of the diaspora worldwide, which can explain what Ben David found.

What I understand from this is that the polarization of Palestinian politics is acting as a hindrance for Palestinians. Although they have common goals and ambitions, they are segregated into political factions by powerful leaders and ambitious leaderships. In brief Fatah is based on the West Bank, is a secular party, and has power within the umbrella organization PLO and the PA, while Hamas is based in Gaza, is an Islamic party, and was elected into government for the first time in 2006. The manifestation became visible after the intrastate conflict following the elections in 2007, when the political office of Fatah was driven out of the Gaza strip by Hamas, effectively creating an even bigger divide between the two main political actors.

Hamas represented a shift from Fatah politics inside Palestine, but outside Hamas is considered by the US, EU, UN and others as a terrorist organization. However this did not say anything about how members of the diaspora perceived Hamas, and perceived Hamas's role in Palestinian politics. I therefore wanted to research how Palestinian Hamas supporters would perceive themselves and their relationship to Fatah, to see if the political separation in Palestine could be transferred to that of Palestinians in Norway. In order to concentrate my research I decided to narrow my research scope to entail the Palestinian diaspora to the counties of Oslo and Akershus. However, I soon found out after initial research during interviews with Palestinian respondents, that there were very few to be found around Oslo and Akershus, and Norway in general. Several respondents said that this was because most of them do not leave Gaza and they did not want to be open and visible in fear of social stigmas.

I was therefore forced to modify my research scope and widen the research frame to a more general approach towards the Palestinian diaspora in Oslo and Akershus as a whole. The premises were still the same, as well as questions but overall the research changed character and moved from a specialized topic; Hamas supporters or sympathizers, to a general one; Palestinians in Norway and their views on Hamas and Fatah's politics. The aim of the research was to analyze the role of Palestinian politics within the Palestinian diaspora in Norway through the eyes of respondents, and to research how cultural and religious factors could affect the diaspora.

During my initial research I found that the Palestinian diaspora consisted of members from a wide range of places such as Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and others. This made me believe that even though “Palestinian” is a wide overarching term, the people who constitute Palestinians are from different cultures and this could be an important factor for how Palestinians in Norway would interact.

I chose to analyze the aspect of religion because of the different foundations which the political actors were based on, and I thought that religion could be both separating and uniting for the diaspora. But without any former research or analysis from Norway, the effect on the diaspora could at best be guessed, and so it was necessary to include this into the research.

Interviews have been conducted with Palestinians who are living around Oslo and Akershus in Norway. The respondents are a mix of male and female and of generations and professions, as well as how long they have been in Norway. For more thorough facts about who they are, please see the appendix. How data has been collected will be further elaborated in the methods chapter, as well as challenges and evaluations of research methods, while the actual data from respondents can be found in the findings chapter.

Without saying too much, I hope that this thesis will spark the interest of the reader, and provide a baseline for understanding the diaspora and the role of Palestinian politics, as well as the effect of culture and religion. I also hope that the research itself can teach Norwegians and external actors about who the Palestinian diaspora in their own country is, and perhaps create awareness about identity and culture for individuals in the diaspora itself.

2.0 – Contextualizing the thesis

2.1 – Background

There are several reasons for writing the thesis about this specific topic. When the research process started, it was important to find out what type of literature existed and what had been researched before. After extensive search in books, journals and online articles I found that there had been no attempt to write research papers about the Palestinian diaspora in Norway and political influence in Palestine.

This struck me as curious, because the Palestinian diaspora is spread out across many countries in all parts of the world and more than half of all Palestinians live in diaspora communities (Gassner, 2008). She explains that there are diaspora communities in Chile, the US, Canada, France, the UK, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and many more. So one of the reasons for initializing the research was that there was no previous research which I could find, and I wanted to contribute to the field of diaspora studies and analyze how Palestinians were affected by Norwegian politics and politics in its home country.

Another reason was that I wanted to research how a group which is divided into two separate entities on two separate areas of land in their home country, would justify their support for Hamas and Fatah and why. I am aware that there are other political parties such as PFLP, PDFP, FIDA, Third Way, Islamic Jihad and others, but I chose to focus on the two largest parties; Hamas and Fatah.

The final reason for conducting the research was that I wanted to find out what people thought of the label terrorist organization on Hamas by external actors, on their own government. I wanted to find answers to the questions of whether or not they were now seen as legitimate political actors by the diaspora, or if the division in the diaspora were too distant. Hamas was democratically elected into power in Gaza in 2006 and they were relatively inexperienced in government, while Fatah had decades of experience. I was curious to see what the actors represented and understand the reasons why, as well as how was this manifested.

2.2 - Purpose of the research, Research Questions and Hypothesis

The purpose of the thesis is to research the role of Palestinian politics within the Palestinian diaspora in Norway.

This was chosen because of an interest to research the role which politics had within the diaspora, and how the link between identity and politics could possibly manifest itself, as has been seen in the relationship between Israel and Palestine. Israel has refused to negotiate with Hamas and say that they are a terrorist organization (Israeli MFA, 2013), but at the same time they are negotiating with Fatah. One can see their refusal to negotiate as a hindrance for possibilities for peace between the Palestinians themselves and with Israel and Palestine, or as a matter of national security for the state of Israel. But regardless of this, one can see that the division within Palestinian politics and the decisions being made is of importance to both Fatah and Hamas and affect Palestinians. But is this the case within the diaspora in Norway?

In order to answer this question, I developed some research questions which could guide me through the collection of data. They are the following:

- a. What characterizes the Palestinian diaspora in Norway?
- b. Who are the main actors in politics within the Palestinian diaspora in Norway?
- c. Is politics shaping the Palestinian diaspora? If so, how and why/why not?
- d. Do members of the Palestinian diaspora see themselves as influential in Palestinian politics?
- e. What is important for the Palestinian diaspora in Norway?
- f. How do Norwegian politics affect the diaspora in Norway?

By asking these questions, it was possible to analyze the diaspora and find out how they perceive themselves, if they cooperate as Ben David said (in the introduction) with national non-state actors, and what the cause and effect is of engaging in politics. From this analysis I could then arrive at a conclusion of which factors were important.

The hypothesis of the research is that politics has an effect on the whole diaspora community and is difficult to ignore. I believe that politics is affecting the identity of members of the diaspora and how they perceive themselves, and I wanted to analyze the relationship between

religion, culture and identity towards politics. From an outsider perspective, Palestinians in Norway are exactly that, “Palestinians in Norway”, but when analyzing by using a microscope one can find that there is much more to it. The affect which politics have on each individual member is what connects that individual with others who share his or hers political viewpoint, while at the same time creating a distance with those who have other political viewpoints. This is especially prevalent for those who are supporting Hamas and Fatah, due to a lack of cooperation since Hamas was elected into government, and clashes between Fatah and Hamas.

I therefore hypothesize that this affect is transferred to the diaspora in Norway; that most members are separated from those who have a different political standing, but are united with likeminded individuals.

2.3 - Conceptual framework and definitions

When introducing certain aspects and topics, it is important to be aware of their specific meaning in the context. Most aspects can be interpreted ambiguously and may alter the meaning of very important sections if their significance is not clarified. Due to the upgraded status in the UN last year (UN, 2012), I have tried to use the State of Palestine consequently but if other is mentioned, Palestinian territories etc. this is due to direct quotations or indirect mistakes. This section aims to define and explain several concepts in order to provide the reader with a background and understand their meaning and significance in this thesis. The first one is terrorism.

2.3.1 - Terrorism

Even though the thesis does not have its main focus on terrorism, it is important to be aware that some see Hamas as a terrorist organization and this will be important for understanding the wider context, sections about the international community and Norway’s relationship to Hamas. It is a known fact that countries and unions such as the USA, EU and Israel categorize Hamas as a terrorist organization (European Union, 2009, USSD, 2012a, Israeli MFA, 2013).

Another side of the story is what Palestinians told me about Hamas or what I observed when I was visiting Ramallah in January 2013. Most Palestinians that I met with said that Hamas signified a change and even though it was portrayed in the western media that Hamas and

Fatah were in a big disagreement, this was nothing more than a political strife which can happen in any political environment. They did however raise some concern as to Hamas being a full Islamic organization, but never used the words “terrorist organization” to describe the government in Gaza (Study Tour 2013).

But what is terrorism? For many the word comes with certain associations. For Americans it can be the 11th of September 2001, Norwegians 22nd of July 2011 but Israelis and Palestinians might look at this in a different way. The EU, the UN and the USSD all emphasize different aspects when they define terrorism, and Lustick, I. S. (in Crenshaw, 2007: 515), political scientist from the University of Pennsylvania, argue that it is difficult to define terrorism, which is partly because of the taboo associated with the word and also the different contexts in which terrorism can occur. The Norwegian Security Service of the Police (Politiets Sikkerhetstjeneste), agree and say that it is difficult to define terrorism and say that there is not one worldwide adopted definition. This is because one definition excludes what can be considered as terrorism and what can be considered as criminal acts, and it is very important to consider who is doing what against whom, with what means and for what purpose.

The USSD (2012b) defines terrorism as: “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”, while the EU (2002) defines terrorism in a somewhat different way; “[Terrorism] as defined as offences under national law, which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation where committed with the aim of: — seriously intimidating a population, or — unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or — seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation”.

This serves to illustrate the difficulty and differences whereas the USSD emphasizes that terrorists need to be a subnational group or clandestine agents and go against, non-combatant targets, while the EU specifies that acts of terrorism are acts which are done against a state or an organization and which obstructs that actor from performing its functions. It is therefore important to analyze which aspects the definition covers, which also effectively says what it does not. A perhaps more wide definition as whole, but specific as to what is terrorism or not, have been offered by Lars Gule (2013), postdoc and researcher at the Oslo and Akershus

University College, which does not necessarily connect a specific actor and specific methods, but emphasizes the means by which terrorism is conducted; “[Terrorism] Terrorism is the deliberate and argued use of violence or threats of violence against specific or random people in order to instil fear in a group of actors or agents with the aim of achieving certain goals (translated from Norwegian)”. He says that this should be the overarching term but include sub-categories. I agree and there should be room for more specific terms such as politically motivated terrorism, separatism, religious terrorism and more.

So is Hamas a terrorist organization? The most debated and perhaps controversial answer as Paola Caridi, well experienced reporter and researcher from Jerusalem (2012: 20) says, has been backed up by facts and experts; “Hamas is not a terrorist organization, but rather a political movement that has used terrorism, particularly during a certain phase of its history spanning over two decades”. This is interesting, because Caridi offers an explanation that confirms that some elements of terrorism has been conducted, but rejects that Hamas itself is a terrorist organization.

I would tend to agree with her because a terrorist label would include labeling men, women, children, elderly and all those people who are members as terrorists, and those who voted in free democratic elections for Hamas as terrorist sympathizers or supporters. For me this label is problematic because this means taking side against a democratically elected government. By referring to Hamas as such, one takes away their legitimacy as a political entity and thus de-legitimizes the whole process of democracy and democratic elections which is how they came to be in government. That being said, I have no problem understanding how Hamas can be a threat to Israel’s national security, and as Ganor (*s.a.*) explains, the statement “One man’s terrorist, is another man’s freedom fighter”

But terrorism can be relative and experienced different as illustrated by a Hamas supporter who had close relatives who had been victims of terrorism. He said that to him the definition of terrorism was when someone would come to your home, rape your wife and daughter, kill your sons and put you in a corner and say that you cannot move from there (Interview with respondent A, 31.03.13). The result is that different experiences and perspectives define what one would claim to be terrorism, and perhaps even within one group. Fatah supporters can disagree with Hamas’s methods, but does not necessarily label them a terrorist organization, while both Fatah and Hamas can agree that Israel is a terrorist state. In that sense one can find

some sort of a companionship across politics by standing united across political parties against a common enemy but this does not automatically lead to unity.

2.3.2 - Hamas

The background for Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya or Hamas as we know it today was the Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood) and the will to fight Israelis. The Muslim Brotherhood was started by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928 and was driven forward as a protest against colonialism and British discrimination, as well as an attempt to re-examine the old sources which lead to Islamic truths in the Quran, rather than follow the age-old interpretations. According to Hansen, Mesøy and Kardas (2009: 16-30), prominent scholars within Islamic studies, the objective was to encourage people “to become good Muslims as a necessary pre-requisite for the creation of a truly Islamic society and state”. However, the harshness of the occupation forced the members to act under cover, and according to Caridi (2012: 43), “placed the local Ikhwan in a different position, creating the preconditions for a “Gazan way”, a Palestinian nationalist interpretation of political Islam: Hamas”.

The main architect of the creation of Hamas was Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a teacher and a Muslim Brotherhood member living in Gaza. In 1986, Yassin began the process of organizing the structure, objectives and leadership of Hamas, and when the first Intifada of the Stones – *the Intifadat al-Oula*, broke out on the 9th of December 1987 he had an opportunity to realize his goals (Caridi, 2012: 61). Even though there were differences between generations of Muslim Brothers on how to proceed on the Palestinian case, the political office all agreed to accept Yassin’s strategy: to give the Ikhwan “an operational group capable of entering the fray and taking part in the intifada”.

Thus it was now evident that a new generation of Palestinians grew up, one which was more radical, violent and rebellious than the traditional leadership. Imad al-Faluji, a former Hamas leader, stated that the younger generations in the movement were “...sometimes engaged in actions without consulting the traditional leadership, which was not fully convinced of the need for confrontation”. The majority of the young members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and thus Hamas, came from refugee camps in the Gaza strip, while the more traditional leaders were from areas around the West Bank (Caridi, 2012: 67). Hamas represented something new,

an armed resistance and an alternative to Fatah which pursued the struggle against the occupation by using political power.

According to Ziad Abu-Amr (1993: 10), Palestinian author and member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin assigned Sheikh Jamil Hamami, a Brotherhood activist, the task of establishing a Hamas branch in the West Bank in January 1989. He says that Hamami became the liaison between Yassin's division in Gaza, and the Brotherhood command in Jordan. This meant that Hamas had now grown and became an even bigger threat to Israeli security. And in September 1989, Israel declared Hamas to be a terrorist organization due to its many attacks that year against soldiers and non-combatants. The following decade consisted largely of opposition against Fatah, who were negotiating with Arafat through the Oslo negotiations, and more will to fight Israelis. Especially in 1994, the use of suicide bombers and suicide attacks added fuel to the conflict with Israel, as well as the infamous attack of Baruch Goldstein in Hebron, which killed 29 Muslims.

Throughout its history and through the work of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas was able to gain support from Muslims all over the world. And a Palestinian from Gaza (Interview with respondent B, 14.05.13) explains that Hamas was able to provide services which people needed such as medical centers, doctors, education and so on, and they have recruited more people and have thus gained more support. The same goes for Fatah and the respondent says that this has been some of the reasons why they have grown so big, in comparison to leftwing parties. "In addition, those at the right can say that those in the left are communists, they can have sex with anyone, they do not believe in God, and could use these Taboos against the left [to gain support]".

One can say that Hamas started out similarly to Fatah as a guerrilla group focused on defeating Israel and achieving independence for Palestinians, but has now become a political actor after its victory in January 2006. Then they won 74 of a total of 132 seats in the Palestinian Parliament (SNL, 2013) and according to Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi (in Caridi, 2012: 15) socioeconomic development and the philosophy of steadfastness had stagnated, and as a result of this "domestic political corruption and international political hypocrisy came to the fore". He says that Hamas won based on its "Change and Reform" list and "its mission to halt the deterioration of society and change the status quo". Respondent B explained this further: "Hamas came to the election polls on one common, concrete list of candidates in all of

Palestine, while Fatah had many lists. All those people in total who voted for Fatah were more than on the Hamas list but spread out, and the law says that the list who receives the most votes wins” (Interview, 14.05.13).

Dr. Hadi said that this electoral victory happened contrary to many opinions which suggested that the victory was due to disagreements and a separation between Fatah and Hamas. Although this might not have been the case, after the electoral victory in Gaza, there were frequent clashes between paramilitary groups loyal to Hamas and PA security forces supported by Fatah. Hovdenak (2009: 26) says that this ended with a bloody offensive by Hamas forces and in June 2007 they were able to take control of the entire Gaza strip. But in the aftermath there had also been clashes and military control where cases of physical violence and torture had been documented and there had been several reports of Fatah loyal supporters being persecuted by Hamas (Hasselknippe, 2007).

The situation today is that Hamas has a strong position in Gaza and has wide support from the people living there, while they have minor influence in the West Bank with their stronghold in Hebron (Caridi, 2012: 26). Even though the Islamist movement of Hamas represents a more radical way than the Muslim Brotherhood and Fatah, a PRIO report from 2010 (Hovdenak ed.) finds that there has not been any grand redesigns, but a conservative approach in terms of cultural and moral codes, i.e. Islamic dresses and segregation between sexes. But Nidal Hamad, Palestinian activist, writer and journalist, said that they had also introduced bans against showing weapons in public, increased security for civilians and that “when there was a Ramallah government in Gaza, Arafat and Abbas in PLO, there was “Chicago” in Gaza where every man had his own weapon, but now they have none” (Interview, 26.04.13).

Respondent B from Gaza gave several examples where Hamas has used violence to control Gaza; “Around Gaza Square it was impossible to move because there were street salesmen everywhere, but Hamas used force to ban the selling of goods there. Another example is the clash with the Helles family [August 2008] where Hamas used Rocket Propelled Grenades, AK-47s and bombs against the family and “took their nose to the ground”, which means they can no longer use their power or influence against Hamas” (Interview, 14.05.13, Baroud, 2008, Al-Jazeera, 2008). He then said yes the methods are questionable, but the result is favorable in order to suppress opposition.

But even though Hamas has played a more important role in Gaza since 2006, there have still not been any elections which could confirm or reject the current situation of political support amongst Palestinians for Hamas. The PA has talked with Hamas about new elections, but due to a national divide they have not come to any agreements of when and where or how it should happen, nor how to deal with the blockade in Gaza and the road blocks in the West Bank. The practical considerations may be a hindrance but Line Khateeb, former leader of the Committee for Palestine (Palestinakomiteén) (Interview, 17.04.13), says that it is probably first and foremost the political divide which acts as a hindrance towards new elections. And neither Hamas nor Fatah are legitimate representatives anymore, seeing as Mahmoud Abbas's presidential period expired in 2009.

Fuad Timraz, former Palestinian activist and co-founder of the Palestinian Association in Norway (Den Palestinske Forening i Norge), said in an interview that there could be acts of revenge and bloodshed if Fatah would win new elections. But in order to avoid this, Hamas wants assurance that they will not be persecuted or arrested as they have done with Fatah supporters. He also pointed to the important role which Egypt and Morsi has had (until the recent *coup d'état* in Egypt 3rd of July 2013), and said that if Fatah would win the elections, Egypt would support the Palestinians internationally and channel economical support to Hamas (Interview 30.04.13). One cannot be sure how the coup will affect Hamas in Gaza due to Morsi's close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, but it will probably strengthen Fatah's position internationally. In addition, according to Ma'an News Agency, PLO has decided to start peace negotiations with Israel in July 2013; negotiations which Hamas, Islamic Jihad and PFLP have protested strongly against which makes it difficult to hope for any democratic and peaceful elections in the near future

2.3.3 – Fatah

The acronym Fatah translates in English into “victory”, “conquest” or “triumph”, and the main objectives were to free the Palestinian lands from the Israeli occupation. And according to Jonathan Schanzer, director of policy at the Jewish Policy Center in Washington, Fatah was founded in 1958 in Kuwait by Yasir Arafat along with other Palestinian activists¹. Initially they were influenced by Islamic ideology, but later attempted to create a secular state. From its initiation until 1966, Fatah had claimed to conduct more than 40 raids into Israeli

¹ The date is disputed and different sources vary between 1958-1960

territories, including several military operations. In 1968, Arafat was given control over the PLO and positioned the organization under Fatah. And at an Arab Summit in 1974, Arafat was officially recognized as the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people” (Schanzer, 2008: 16-19).

Arafat’s organization was focusing on acts of terrorism and violence to harm the Israelis, but they were also concerned with the uprising of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Palestinian areas. This was because Israel allowed the Brotherhood to operate within Palestine relatively freely, and in 1973, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was allowed to build an Islamic Center. Schanzer (2008) raises the question of whether or not this was shortsighted and allowed Hamas to develop from the Brotherhood. During this period and until the founding of Hamas in 1988, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin established cultural centers, health services, day-care and youth activities in the Palestinian areas, which provided much needed services for inhabitants and also gained him widespread support.

Meanwhile, as Hamas was establishing itself, PLO was losing supporters who were frustrated that they had not been able to rid the lands of the Israelis. And in November 1988, four months after Hamas had published their covenant, Arafat declared independence for the Palestinian territories to maintain support. Soon thereafter, he called for a peace conference with Israel to withdraw from the borders conquered in the Six-Day War, and thus recognized Israel’s 1948 borders. This was a historical event which turned PLO into a quasi-government, away from its position as a guerrilla faction, which in turn was quickly filled by Hamas. This historical recognition also had another consequence; it turned many people away from Fatah to Hamas.

Respondent A, a Hamas supporter exemplified this by saying: “Fatah had Yasir Arafat. I liked him because he was flexible, had a special charisma, but after the peace agreement I personally hated him. Why? Because he wanted to make peace with our biggest enemy” (Interview, 31.03.2013). For Arafat it was imperative to control the vicious spiral of violence, and the Oslo accords led to the creation of the PA. Initially it was thought of as an interim organization, but is today dominated by Fatah and holds the President’s office, Mahmoud Abbas, as well as the Prime minister’s office (Salam Fayyad resigned June 2013). Abbas has never officially been elected, but is still in power and Hamas disregards the PA as the main political body for Palestinians.

Further frustrations as a result of breakdown of negotiations during the 90s lead Yasir Arafat to launch the second intifada, the al-Aqsa intifada in 2000. Waves of destruction, violence, murder, killings and arrests followed from September that year to 2005. Thousands were killed and the relationships towards Israel, who blamed the PA for not controlling Hamas or other Palestinian groups, was deteriorating including the relationship with Hamas itself. Constant clashes between the PA security forces and Hamas on the Gaza strip in 2000-2002 only added fuel to the flames, as well as attacks by Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the equivalent to Hamas's Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades. In addition to this, the PA was unable to finance their employees, important infrastructure was destroyed in retaliation attacks by Israel and the PA had lost much of its power in favor to Hamas. Hamas was still a strong organization and had financial support from many of the Arab states such as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iran and others (Schanzer, 2008: 60-63).

Then on the 26th of January 2006, Hamas was declared the winner of the elections with 76 seats (including two independent), which was a devastating blow for Fatah which "only" won 45 out of a possible 132. And after Israel's decision to withdraw from the Gaza strip in September 2005, the road was now open for Hamas to take control. After the electoral victory, there were constant clashes with Fatah and between the security forces, which lead to numbers of dead on both sides, including civilians. Are Hovdenak, advisor and researcher specializing in the Middle East for The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo) recalls some events from Gaza in 2007: "the PA in Ramallah wanted to demonstrate against Hamas and recommended their workers to stay at home as a protest against the government in Gaza. The consequence was that Hamas replaced many of these, whereas some stayed" (Interview, 11.04.13). The result was that Hamas took over militarily, but within the institutional framework which already existed.

Reports of torture and violence were common, as well as abductions and killings from both sides. "The prisoners document" of May 2006 signed by Marwan Barghouti of Fatah and Abdul Khaleq al-Natshe of Hamas attempted to end the fighting, as well as the Mecca peace agreement in February 2007, provided wishes towards reconciliation but the conflict culminated in a military offensive. From 7th-13th of June 2007 there was a civil war until Hamas ended victorious and controlled all of Gaza.

What happened afterwards is that Hamas has ruled the Gaza strip with a mix of authoritarianism and Islamism while Abbas mobilized his military and stressed a secular nationalist approach (Schanzer, 2008: 150). Since 2008 there have been constant accusations of assassination attempts, arrests of high profile leaders such as senior Fatah leader Ibrahim Abu an-Naja, and Hamas members by PA security officers, violent attacks, condescending rethorics and the relationship has been troublesome. Fatah has found itself supported by the international community due to its choice of acknowledging the state of Israel, while Hamas has turned to Egypt for support from its Muslim Brothers. Several truces have been made, but they have all been broken shortly after, followed by bloodshed and violent conflicts.

But when the war broke out in Gaza in December 2008, Palestinians would unite as one people. Long time Fatah member George El Jeries, recalls the events: “I never supported Hamas, and I will never support Hamas, but when the war started in Gaza I had to stand united with all Hamas members” (Interview, 20.03.13). This was also confirmed by a Hamas supporter, respondent C, who said that “Palestinians gathered in 2008 to show their disgust and protest against the war in Gaza” (Interview, 20.03.2013). This can indicate that a first priority is the political party one belongs to, while the second priority is national unity and liberation. An attempt of uniting the parties happened in January when Hamas let Fatah march and demonstrate in the streets, and hundreds of thousands supporters gathered in Gaza (The Guardian, 2013) but the relationships are moving up and down. In a recent article from The Jerusalem Post (Toameh, 2013) several Fatah officials are quoted where they express joy for the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi, and calls for an uprising against Hamas and a revolution in Gaza. This indicates two *de facto* governments who are in conflict with each other.

2.3.4 - Diaspora Community

In the introduction we briefly touched upon the word diaspora, and defined it as a loose but overarching term, but many consider the term debatable and there have been several discussions on using the word diaspora (Schulz & Hammer, 2003, Van Hear, 1998, Safran 1991, Shiblak, 2005a). Helena Schulz, Associate Professor at the Department of Peace and Development Research, Göteborg University, (2003: 9) says that it is problematic to categorize refugees similar to exile communities in the contemporary frame, and asks if the definition of a diaspora should be put on geographical displacement or a form of social organization. She suggests sub-themes should be created below the term diaspora in order to

separate between refugees, ex-pats, migration workers and so on. This would lead to the diaspora being a sub-group from the majority in the region or area where they move to, and an exile community. E.g. Palestinians in Syria, Palestinians in Norway and they are normally fewer and less organized, perhaps with less resources and less influence into politics, both in the host country and towards their homeland.

Sari Hanafi, doctorate in Sociology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris and specialist on issues pertaining to the Palestinian diaspora, questioned whether or not cultures and identities can be recognized on the same level, and how transnational identities play a part in the shaping of activities beyond the state border. But most importantly, he explains the significance of diaspora and the link between “one particular place and the supposed community abroad”, and says that the diaspora itself is connected between the peripheries and the center (Hanafi, 2003: 159-161).

Table 1.1 Common features of a diaspora.	
1.	Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2.	alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3.	a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;
4.	an idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5.	the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;
6.	a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7.	a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;
8.	a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
9.	the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

Robin Cohen, Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick, illustrates some common features of a diaspora in table 2.1 (1.1 in book) and emphasizes that the diaspora is either dispersed traumatically from their homeland or voluntarily in hope of a brighter future. The word diaspora has been used in many contexts. One has been to describe the diaspora of Jews who were outnumbering those in their homeland. And as I understand from Cohen (1997: 181), the creation of Israel ironically lead to the creation of the Palestinian diaspora, when Israeli Zionists enforced their right from a UN vote to create the state of Israel and violently displaced the people who were living there.

This means that there are different spheres which the diaspora are moving in and out of, depending on how close they are to their homeland and culture and that of the culture in their country where they constitute the diaspora. A global society has contributed to interdependence, economically, ecologically and technologically, but also to create multiethnic states. Cohen (1997: 157) problematizes this and points to the fact that “a deterritorialization of social identity” is challenging the pure identity of nation states, and “multiple forms of identification” has enabled the diaspora communities to emerge. An example can be a Norwegian with Pakistani decent or a Norwegian which is a Palestinian, and thus loses some of the identity, but perhaps gains more in terms of e.g. a higher salary or improved economic terms and access to better jobs and education, when moving away from the homeland.

Cohen (1997: 26) also raises the point that the diaspora community may be in conflict with the host societies which “may indicate a lack of acceptance” or “...the possibility that another calamity may befall the group”. This may be due to the members of the diaspora group who are not integrating into society, but seek companionship with members who share their identity and history. This can be great to integrate an individual into a social group in the short term, but in the long run it halts the integration process and can possibly deny that individual the possibility to become a fully accepted member into the new society.

In the specific case of Palestinians, Lippman Abu-Lughod (1995: 410 in Cohen 1997: 181) ascerts that “Palestinians have an unambiguous case of virtually complete population dispersal”. The Balfour declaration which favored a Jewish state in Palestine by the British (Tristram, *s.a.*, a) paved the way for what Palestinians call Al-Nakba, “The Catastrophe”, when the State of Israel was proclaimed in what was then Palestine (Tristram, *s.a.*, b). Abu-Lughod (1995: 410 in Cohen 1997, 181) asses that “some 780,000 Arabs were expelled from the territory controlled by the Israeli army, while a further 120,000 Palestinians were later classified as refugees”. What happened then was that Palestinians fled to several of the neighboring countries such as Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, while others fled to different parts of the world (Global Exchange, *s.a.*).

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as of 1st of January 2012, there were around 1.9 million Palestinian refugees who were registered in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (UNRWA, 2012). And the Israeli

Central Bureau of Statistics estimate the Arab population in 2011, with an unknown number of Palestinians to be around 620.000 (CBS, 2012), and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics place the total number of Palestinians in the world to around 11 million by the end of 2010 (PCBS, 2011). This means that the majority of Palestinians are living outside the State of Palestine, but does this make a difference, and do political decisions made in Palestine affect the diaspora in Norway?


2.3.5 - Palestinian in Norway

It is very difficult to define who is a Palestinian, because there are Palestinians with a Syrian, Lebanese or Jordanian passport, which are registered as those nationalities when they are registered in Norway, while other Palestinians are simply registered as Stateless along with Kurds and others. But I wanted to include an overview of Palestinians in Norway, in order to contextualize their numbers, backgrounds and current situation.

A Statistics Norway (SSB) associate Minja Tea Dzamarija (Interview, 02.04.13) explained the reasons for not finding the exact number of Palestinians in Norway as the following: “No countries (including Norway) that base their statistics of population on a register of persons, creates statistics by ethnicity. Countries that base their statistics on immigrants in national censuses have other opportunities than us [Norway]. In censuses in the UK for example, there are questions about which of a few ethnical groups each individual think they belong to. Oversea immigrant countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia are also asking about subjective ethnical belonging in their censuses. But in Norway we create immigrant and population statistics on information from the People’s Register (Folkeregisteret) and there is exclusively the information about one’s own, parents and grandparents birth of country which are used to group the people. Nation of birth is a static, unchangeable variable in comparison to the subjective, dynamic, “ethnicity”. Experiences from the USA and Canada show that we often see that a person changes from one ethnical group to the next between censuses”.

She said that their categorizing of country of birth was stable in the sense that changes in a group’s size is because of demographical processes (people move, die and/or are born), not that people change their perception of ethnicity. In addition to this, Norway does not have censuses in other ways than in registries so it is impossible to acquire data on ethnicity. And from ethical and judicial standing points, it is also quite unlikely that this could be possible.

This made it very difficult and complicated to acquire appropriate statistics, and I was only able to acquire statistics on Immigrants and Norwegian-born to Immigrant parents, by sex, country, background, time and contents (this is described in table 2.2 below).



Statistisk sentralbyrå
Statistics Norway

Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by sex, country background, time and contents

	2013
	Persons
Males	
Palestine	2 241
Females	
Palestine	1 475

Footnote(s):
The immigrant population includes persons with two foreign-born parents and grandparents. More precisely: Persons with no parent or grandparents born in Norway. The figures are rounded off.

(SSB, 2013)

Therefore I was unable to show exactly how many Palestinians there are in Norway, but this table says 3716. However, after consulting with respondents, academics and literature they have agreed that there is probably around 6-8000 thousand in Norway. Dalal Abdul Ghani, a Palestinian journalist and researcher, has found identical difficulties when trying to set a fixed number on the amount of Palestinians during her research in Sweden. But she suggests that the number of Palestinians in 2000 was around 10,000 (2005: 45). This illustrates my point of difficulty for getting the right results from the official Norwegian statistics agency and the difficulties they have for gathering the right information, when the real number is much higher than that of the statistics.

This was further explained by Dzamarija (interview, 02.04.2013) when she said that “we have information about the immigrant and the country of birth with a coverage rate of 100%. For Norwegian born immigrant parents we also have their land background after their parents country of birth, so even if a person is born in Norway, we can see if one/both parents are born outside of Norway. So if a Palestinian is born in Israel, he/she will be registered with an Israeli country background in our statistics. Per 1st of January 2013, there are around 3700

people who are registered with a country background from Palestine. Most people in this group, 89% are immigrants, while the rest is born in Norway with two immigrant parents from the Palestinian area”

The reason why there are not more shown in the statistics, is explained by Gassner (2008: 3) where she says that many in the Palestinian diaspora do not have documents which identify them as Palestinians. In 1982 there was an initiative by the UN “to issue identification cards to all 1948 and 1967 Palestinian refugees and their descendants”, but this “failed due to lack of co-operation by host states”. She further explains that many Palestinian asylum seekers in North America and Europe “tend to disappear” because they are often categorized under stateless or are registered by “their place of birth or the host country that issued their travel documents”. Schulz & Hammer (2003: 84) agrees to this and says that there is a high uncertainty in statistics in Sweden because refugees are also registered according to their country of birth and not ethnicity. This means that real numbers of the exact amount of Palestinians in Norway does not exist, but this will be discussed further in chapter four.

3.0 - The theoretical framework

After discussing the different theories and putting them into context, I found that a constructivist viewpoint in the thesis would be the appropriate stance. In International Relations (IR), realism was focused more on the state vs. state relationship and liberalism would be too dependent on institutions. This section will contextualize the theoretical viewpoints of constructivism and explain and discuss why this IR theory was chosen over others. At the same time it will provide a discussion of IR theories and add that some aspects are useful in the analysis

According to Hedley Bull, former professor of International Relations from London School of Economics and the University of Oxford, and co-founder of the English School (1969 in Jackson & Sørensen, 2010: 282), the field of IR analyzes the disciplines of history, political theory and international law. He says that history is the academic way of grasping characteristics of states and their developments over time, as well as their geographical positions, and that this disables us from generalizing state systems but seeing states as distinctive. This idea can be used to empirically explain why some states have been created

and risen in certain geographical areas and to certain times, and why some have failed to develop and why some societies prosper while others struggle.

But problems arise when one does not have a proper state and a recognized government such as the Palestinian refugees. They may move beyond borders and become citizens of that state, but being a member of a state entails completely different privileges and obligations than living in a state. In Norway this entails the obligation to perform military service, to speak Norwegian and includes the possibility to vote, welfare, pension, health, education and much more. But living in a state does not automatically give all of these rights. And so a gap between Palestinians themselves can emerge on the basis that some of them do not have a residence permit, a Norwegian citizenship or speak the language, while some do and thus this can limit participation and organization in civil society and politics and create a dual-identity between a Palestinian and a Norwegian. And so although Palestinians have a common history, this does not signify that they have a common identity. Barnett (in Katzenstein, 1996: 36) argues that this is what has happened in Israel where the Arab minority and their identity as Arabs disables them to participate and identify as Israeli citizens in the benefits and obligations that it implies to be Israeli.

This leads to the theory of constructivism, and Jackson & Sørensen (2010: 162) explains that “constructivists emphasize the social construction of reality” and “human relations, including international relations, consist of thought and ideas and not essentially of material conditions or forces”. This way of theorizing could provide the opportunity to focus more on the philosophical debate about what an idea is and how identity plays a role when defining important aspects for an observer or a group of observers.

Constructivism is a different theory than realism where constructivists choose to describe the world “in order to analyze social action” and is inspired by Weber’s idea of *verstehen*, or interpretive understanding, in contrast to the self-interest rational approach (Ruggie, 1998 in Jackson & Sørensen, 2010: 165). This is because constructivists choose to focus on “the ideas and beliefs concerning those entities which are most important: what those signify in the minds of people”. One of the most known examples is that of money. If people would not give value to money, then it would be useless coins and paper (Searle, 1995, in Guzzini, 200: 160) and it is the intellectual value which assigns meaning to objects. For constructivists, the most important aspects of IR are social and not material and that this reality is not objective or

external to the observer of IR (Jackson & Sørensen, 2010: 306). Baylis & Smith (2006: 261) finds that unlike rationalists which find culture a constraint on action, constructivists argue that culture is what assigns meanings that people give to their actions.

And although constructivism emphasizes the intersubjective ontology and norms, agents and structures, they also accept an epistemology “indebted to positivism, which includes hypothesis testing, causality, and explanation” (Dunne et. al. 2010: 184). Hopf argues that the emphasis on the ontological scientific explanations is an effort to combat the skepticism about constructivism that “constructivists tend to be ambivalent towards mainstream social science” (ibid).

Constructivists propose a social ontology (social nature of being) in exchange for the individualist ontology of rationalism, argued by neorealists such as Waltz (Dunne et al. 2010: 181). They argue that “individuals and states cannot be separated from a context of normative meaning which shapes who they are and the possibilities available to them”. So for a constructivist, the concept of sovereignty cannot really be a concept unless it is recognized as such by individual states who share common understandings of a concept. And where rationalists follow a *logic of consequences*, where they investigate the outcome which maximizes the interests of the subject, constructivists follow a *logic of appropriateness* measured to fit common values and norms rather than that of the individual (Dunne et.al. 2010: 181). An example is states or actors who pursue norms and values which are identified with legitimate values such as human rights, freedom of speech and justice.

An important aspect of constructivism is the aspect of agency, which enables “the individual or state to influence their environment, as well as to be influenced by it” (Jackson & Sørensen, 2010: 181). This is the main focus in the renowned constructivist scholar Alexander Wendt’s article *Anarchy Is What States Make of It* (Wendt, 1992). He argues that between two actors there can be, but does not have to be a constant state of anarchy, but “relationships evolve over time” (Dunne et. al. 2010: 182). Some countries are friends, while others are bitter enemies and history affects modern day time and relations. The example that he puts forward is that of two aliens, *Alter* and *Ego*, who have no previous knowledge about the others, and gestures are the only determinants of whether or not the other one is friendly or hostile. Wendt then explains that agency is what determines how the other will react and they live in a specific relationship where actions by one, will determine reactions by the other.

Could it then be that political dimensions (cooperation, specific political issues etc.) can travel over state boundaries from Fatah or Hamas in Palestine to Fatah and Hamas in Norway and affect focus, organization and cooperation between Palestinians in the diaspora? The Palestinians in Norway have much room for agency, but a possible divide between political affiliations could be what limits actual influence from Palestinian politics to the Norwegian diaspora and vice versa. In addition the total number in Norway, which is quite low, of Palestinians in the diaspora and especially of Hamas members or supporters effectively, could add to the inefficiency politics in Palestine to affect Palestinians in Norway.

According to Wendt (1987, in Dunne et.al. 2010: 182), constructivists “focus on the constitutive role of norms and shared understandings, as well as the relationship between agency and structure” and the specific identities of actors in international politics are shaped by the circumstances and dynamic interactions. The focus on knowledge indebted to scientific knowledge via hypothesis testing and explanations in order to produce new knowledge has challenged the significant difference between the static assumptions of rationalists and eventually lead to the separation of constructivism into conventional and critical. The critical constructivism has rejected the assumptions of positivist science to a larger extent than conventional constructivism. In critical constructivism, the study of dominant identity and narratives of how this has come to be, are the central concerns.

Identity is thus serving as the background for explaining what creates competition, as well as the main factor for separating “us” from “them”. In this case there is a strong emphasis put on historical and religious identity and relationship towards the land where both Israelis and Palestinians claim their state to be. Barnett (in Katzenstein, 1996: 348) exemplifies this by saying that the supporters of a “Greater Israel” enhance their arguments by referring to Israel as “the Holy Land”, Judea or Samaria. This provides the possibility for a descriptive analysis of the reality where nation-states privileges some identities, while marginalizing others (Williams, 2008: 62). Conventional constructivism on the other hand advocates that identity is discovered through analysis and “that analysts can potentially hold a mirror to a world out there”. This leads to the possibility that an analyst can explain the causal relationships between identity and interests.

In IR, constructivists emphasize social dimensions such as norms, rules and language. A certain way of speaking is often identified with certain groups of people, institutions and

professions as well as behavior across state borders and within transnational networks. Dunne et al (2010: 170-187) emphasizes that the role of language has largely been neglected in a debate between rationalists and constructivists. The approach to language as an important aspect of analysis must be consistent with the social ontology of constructivism and “also occupy an epistemological middle ground” where “language is either a mirror of the world or pure interpretation”. This is manifested in the interaction with other humans, where the socialization process teaches humans the meaning of words and how they affect decisions and influence other people. Humans also learn how words and perspectives can be abused, what it means to lie and to discuss, debate and defend viewpoints. Language can also be used as racism, to provoke or threaten in using hate speech or rhetorical acts to de-humanize an enemy. This was especially evident during the World War 2 when Hitler named Jews, Gypsies, Gays and so on as “Untermensch” or a lower valued person.

But perhaps the most important role of language is not of the words which are being said, but the connotations and associations which are related to the word itself. One normally associates the word harmony with peace, and war with weapons. This can continue and one can think of words such as Terrorism, political movement, bombs and thus connotations create and recreate opinions based on different contexts and experiences. So perhaps constructivism does play an important role in understanding how opinions created, shifted and how identities are created, emphasized and enhanced.

Another factor which is of great importance is that of values, since shared values and common perceptions can shape a community, but so are also social structures which can enhance or create an identity as a group or as individuals belonging to a group. Wendt (1992: 73 in Jackson and Sørensen, 2010: 163) explains that there are three elements to social structures: “shared knowledge, material resources, and practices”. The social structure is what enables or disables a further development for relationship between actors. An example is a security dilemma, described by Wendt (in Jackson and Sørensen, 2010: 163) as “a social structure composed of intersubjective understandings in which states are so distrustful that they make worst-case assumptions about each other’s intentions, and as a result define their interests in self-help terms”. Thus as long as mistrust and the idea that the opponent must be fought continues, there cannot be any negotiations, peace-making or a security community where shared knowledge is used “to resolve disputes without war”.

For Palestinians, al-Nakba serves as an example which has created elements that can resemble those of a social structure, where shared knowledge about history and practices results out of a common fate which has shaped the history of Palestinians and the relationship to Israel. In Arabic, the word *Al-Naqba* means “Catastrophe” and is a reminder every year of the creation of the state of Israel. When the UN decided to separate Palestine between Jews and Palestinians, this forced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to flee or be driven into exile from the war which followed, and on the 14th of May 1948 Israel declared its independence. So every year, the Palestinians mourn, while the Jews celebrate on the same day.

The shared ideas and beliefs are also one of the core elements in the constructivist thinking and they argue that ideas must be shared by many to matter, such as policymakers, social groups, organizations, different groups or society (Jackson & Sørensen, 2010: 164). One can see elements of both social structures and widely shared beliefs when applying a constructivist approach to the Palestinian diaspora in Norway. The social structures and framework in which they are living are what enables or disables participation into politics and society.

And a perceived common identity from one Palestinian towards another may not necessarily result in mutual understanding and respect, nor between groups or entities within the Palestinian society or diaspora. This can be because of different political standings, disagreements on which elements should be adopted and integrated from the local culture or misunderstandings and disagreements about the civil society and role of the state. It is then possible to try to understand the Palestinian diaspora, how it perceives itself and its challenges, which parts are pulling them together and pushing them apart, as well as the relationships between power and politics. Perhaps some would identify with those who agree to use violence and weapons to acquire and power and justice and to maintain power balances? Or is the idea of power and justice an abstract phenomenon which would enable a philosophical approach to the debate on the role of the diaspora and how they perceive themselves?

One approach could be possible by analyzing the socially constructed idea of what it would mean to be a member of a people with so many refugees outside its state borders and how identity would relate to state affairs, civil society, to other diaspora communities, towards those who are still in Gaza and the West Bank and towards the perspective of identity and

power. It is difficult to come up with an answer, because the problem is that intersubjective interpretations run a risk of being normative, rather than descriptive of reality. Emotional rather than rational responses and thinking could color the results of the study in such a degree that it would be difficult to separate what could be truth and what could be wishful thinking. But this will be discussed and analyzed in chapter four and five.

3.0 - Methods

In this chapter I would like to discuss research strategies and my research framework. I will also discuss preoccupations and critique against my chosen research methods in order to demonstrate a nuanced perspective, as well as awareness towards research ethics.

3.1 - The philosophy of methods

When conducting research in the social sciences, the type of research objects and research strategy will influence which methods which will be considered. The first of this are deductive or inductive approaches to research. Alan Bryman, Professor of Organizational and Social Research in the School of Management, university of Leicester, say that “deductive theory” is “the most common view of the relationship between theory and social research”. (2008: 9). Deductive research signifies that research will be performed out of a hypothesis which is based on theories in order to verify or falsify the hypothesis. This hypothesis may include elements which are difficult to measure and an important aspect is that the researcher uses appropriate methods for data collection and acquires the necessary skill set. The findings in the data collection will then be used to verify or falsify the hypothesis which can lead to a revision of the initial theory which the hypothesis was built upon. This is perhaps the most common way of doing research since it is very logical and follows a straight line of thinking and it is easier to theorize about something than to collect data and then build a theory, as is the case with inductive research.

Bryman states that induction is in the opposite direction of deductive research, because the data collection and findings are in fact what creates the theory and enables the researcher to make sense of what he or she has actually found as valid data. This can be complicated for several reasons. The initial research may be way to generalized and difficult to narrow down or the research can be way too narrow with an attempt by the researcher to use the data collected to generalize observations. It can also be difficult for an unskilled researcher to actually make sense out of what he or she has collected, since the inductive approach can generate enormous amounts of data.

However it is important to be aware that the two are often interconnected and an approach by one often has elements of the other. Bryman (2008:12-13) explains that the two types of

research are typically associated with different types of methods. A deductive strategy is associated with quantitative research which generates theory and an inductive strategy with qualitative research which researches theories. But what can we regard as acceptable knowledge and by whom does it come from and for whom is it made? There are two main positions in which we can analyze epistemology; positivism and interpretivism. The former position emphasizes that science must be conducted in a way which is value free, i.e. objective, while the latter share the views that subject matter on social science and requires a different logic of research procedure, one which reflects the distinctiveness of humans. Their emphasis is put on either explaining human behavior or understanding human behavior.

Social ontology is described by Bryman (2008: 18) as either objectivism or constructionism. The main point in the former is whether or not social entities or phenomena should be considered external to the social actors, while the latter is concerned whether or not social phenomena are constructed by perceptions and actions by social actors. It is vital to understand these concepts in order to understand how research has been conducted and how different variables play into the equation. Objectivism emphasizes the external factors which exist independently of social actors, e.g. organizations, cultures and social norms. Bryman says that “Cultures and subcultures constrain us because we internalize their beliefs and values”. This can be problematic for people who move across cultures such as students and professionals but especially difficult for refugees and asylum seekers. The difficulty of having this external concept of reality outside of the social actor and little or no possibility to influence their objective environment as an outsider, can problematize the integration processes by enhancing own cultural identity.

An alternative ontological position is as mentioned, constructionism. This position challenges examples that organization and culture are pre-given externally of actors and that the actors are not able to influence these themselves. Strauss *et.al.* (in Bryman 2008: 19-20) argues against the objectivists and uses the example of a psychiatric hospital. In their argument they say that rules are less extensive and less imposed than in a classical organization. This was due to the everyday interaction with actors which led to a constant change in the social dynamics where “numerous agreements are continually being terminated or forgotten, but also as continually being established, renewed, reviewed, revoked, revised”. Thus researchers who are following a constructivist path are forced to see society as a phenomenon created by social actors in that very same society which they live, and not outside of their control. And

numerous social actors are creating a framework in the social world by continuous interactions with each other, limiting, expanding and re-designing their own framework in which they live, thus creating their own social factors and conditions under which they live.

However, a constructionist ontology can also be problematic for several reasons. This is due to the high level of subjectivity which determines how historical events are betrayed. An example is the way history is written in many ways and used as a tool to defend modern territorial borders, geopolitics and supreme national interests, a constructionist ontology can also be used to defend social behavior and individual action, rather than addressing responsibilities, thus the constructionist ontology is not a perfect tool to analyze social phenomena.

However, when it comes to diaspora communities, an interpretivist approach may not be a bad idea. This is because a diaspora community such as Palestinians in Norway is a small group and they are often shaped by their environments and the new culture in the country that they live in. To exemplify this, we can see that the children of diaspora parents who are born in Norway are educated in the Norwegian school system and integrated into the Norwegian culture, but at the same time are taught the values and history of their family and parents. Thus providing the possibility for leaving the children with one foot in the Norwegian society where they grow up and one foot in the culture which their parents grew up in.

3.2 - Research strategy: qualitative research vs. quantitative research

I have chosen to use qualitative methods as the main research strategy. This has been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it would be more time consuming to perform a survey and analyze the data. It was simply too much work to create a survey, do pilot testing, locate sufficient respondents, await their answers, then plot it into a program and analyze the data without assistance. Secondly, the information the researcher is looking for are subjective and difficult to quantify since they are not questions which regards to agree or disagree, but to which extent the respondent believes that Palestinian politics are affecting the Palestinians in Norway and why or why not. It would be possible to use a “Likert scale” with a multiple indicator to measure the extent of which the respondent agrees with a few selected options, but with pre-given answers this would constrain the respondent from answering subjectively. Thirdly, if the quantitative research should have comprised a wider and bigger number of

respondents from several regions and places in Norway, then it would be necessary to travel to the different regions. But this would have been costly and time consuming. And without any link to a network or key actors it would have been challenging to find respondents.

But there are several differences between quantitative and qualitative research. According to Bryman (2008: 22) quantitative research emphasizes quantification by using a deductive approach to test theories, “has incorporated the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular” and finally “embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality”. For qualitative methods there is a higher emphasis on words rather than quantitative measures and qualitative research emphasizes the inductive approach to generate theories out of data, rejects the positivism and natural science approach and emphasizes interpretivism and constructionism (ibid). This possibility of talking to people instead of crushing numbers were important in order to ask follow up questions during the interviews and analyze their body language. It was also important to be able to see the individual and not just the group that the individual belongs to, in order to extract potential rich, deep data which could provide new perspectives and viewpoints, not just those who would have been emphasized during a quantitative survey.

These are some main points in order to separate the two, but there are many more criteria's which Bryman (2008: 393-395) opens up for such as words vs. numbers, generalization vs. contextual understand, macro vs. micro etc. Qualitative research has often been claimed to be too subjective from the researchers point of view where certain aspects have been emphasized and focused upon and that findings also rely too much upon the close relationships that the researcher develop with the respondents (Bryman, 2008: 391). This is a problem especially when building theories on data, since there needs to be good reasons why one aspect of a phenomenon has been emphasized and not others.

However there are also similarities between the two methods. Amongst other things they are both concerned with transparency, reduction of data, variation and must answer research questions, relate data analysis to literature and so on. So after comparing and contrasting the two and making general comments about them, one should be aware that the connections between qualitative and quantitative and associations with ontological and epistemological positions are only tendencies and not mandatory selections.

And as he further elaborates (Bryman 2008: 592) there can be clusters of epistemological and ontological commitments which can be related to self-completion questionnaires more in favor of a natural science approach while the participatory observation methods is more of an interpretivist or constructivist approach. Thus the different approaches move between the research strategies and lay various foundations for which methods should be used and how knowledge can be acquired in different settings. Postdoc researcher Lars Gule at the Oslo and Akershus University College explains that the research process continues while the research is being written and that thinking is constantly shaping the process. This results in the alternation of the holistic image because lines are being drawn between the different factors in the research, as more information is being gathered, analyzed and new information discovered (Gule, 2010: 26).

So far we have discussed differences between epistemology and ontology as well as differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies and how they are influencing social research. We should remember that the research strategies are shifting and adapting a little bit to each other, while at the same time maintaining distance in order to separate methods and theories for researchers. There is also a complicated relationship between behavior and meaning, and words vs. numbers. What one says that one does, can be different from what that person is actually doing, which will result in a different answer in a questionnaire than in actual behavior. And focusing on numbers will enable us to generalize a shared opinion, but focusing on words can single out those individuals who are diverging from the majority. This can create outliers which in quantitative research will be identified by box plots as outliers and disqualified as invalid, while in qualitative research signify individuals which are interesting to talk to.

Bryman (2008: 24) argues that there are other factors which define the outcome of research as well as theory, ontology and epistemology. He points to the factors of values and of practical considerations. He defines values as "...either the personal beliefs or the feelings of a researcher" and argues that the researcher should attempt his or her very best to stay value free and neutral in their research. But what can be defined as neutral and value free? One can be a defender of human rights and democratic thinking, but still support violent regimes or refuse to acknowledge the winner of a democratic election. Or one can demonstrate for peace and human rights abroad, while rushing towards the cheapest clothing store not knowing about the working ethics, salaries and conditions under which the clothes were produced. I

agree with Bryman, but I also find it difficult to be value free because we all have some abstract ideas of what it means to be a good and bad person, and what may be an important value for you, may not be that for me and so on.

This shows that the researcher needs to be very careful during the whole research process. Bryman (2008: 24-25) explains that values can intrude at one or all stages of the research process from choosing topic to collecting data and formulating research questions, creating research design and of course interpreting and analyzing data as well as the conclusion. He points to the potential pitfall of using participatory observation or very intense interviewing. This is because the researcher can adopt certain perspectives and meanings of the subjects who are being researched and in some cases can adopt these to be his or her own perspectives or meanings. This is not to say that the researcher cannot have personal opinions about a matter, but should not use these as a premise when collecting and analyzing data. This is important to remember especially when dealing with matters which might be conflicting ethically with the researcher's own values and principles.

Especially when it comes to ethics, this is very important. The researcher needs to demonstrate skills which enables him or her to foresee potential pitfalls, consequences and future problems if people are being named, classified reports made public, reports will endanger jobs, certain aspects or work methods revealed etc. This will be further discussed in section 3.5 on ethics.

In a research process, Bryman (2008: 25) raises the issue of practical considerations. An example which he uses is the problem of using quantitative methods on a topic which has not been researched before. It can be very difficult to find literature and know where to start, and thus a qualitative research strategy can be better since it is concerned with theory generating instead of theory testing. I agree with this, because it would have been difficult to verify information and sources about my topic by handing out questionnaires. Also, I would not have been able to know if those people were giving me the right answers and I could have ended up with results which had no root in reality. However I am not arguing that a quantitative method should be completely disregarded when conducting research in an unknown field. In fact in some cases they can be used as a complimentary method to qualitative methods and to confront interviewees with previous findings, as illustrated/discussed above.

3.3 - Research design and methods

In this section we will discuss the research design and research methods. Bryman (2008: 31) defines research design as “a framework for the collection and analysis of data. A choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process”. The dimensions he is defining consist of the causal connections between variables, generalizing results to larger groups than those individuals who took part of the investigation, understanding behavior and understanding behavior in the specific social context and a temporal appreciation of social phenomena and their interconnections.

But the research also needs to fulfill certain criteria's in order to be valid. For qualitative methods these criteria's are reliability (external and internal) and validity (external and internal) (Bryman 2008: 377). External reliability signifies whether or not the study can be replicated and is an important and difficult criterion in qualitative research. However researchers can try to minimize the differences by trying to re-create the environment and to transform to the same role and biases as the previous researchers. Internal reliability is when there are more than one person in the research team and whether or not all of them experience the same thing and agree on what they see and hear.

External validity signifies whether or not findings in the research can be transferred to other social settings and generalized across these. This is perhaps the most difficult criteria to fulfill since the researcher(s) need to be aware of cultural, political and religious factors when trying to generalize one study in one field to another field which may be very different. LeCompte and Goetz (in Bryman 2008: 376-377) argues that this is difficult in qualitative research due to small samples and case studies. Internal validity is whether or not the theories which the researcher develops have a correlation to the theory that they develop. This is one of the strength criteria's to qualitative research according to LeCompte and Goetz which especially points to ethnographic research where the researcher becomes one of the participants over a longer time (Bryman 2008: 376).

These are all important criteria's for qualitative research; however there are also some alternatives. These will only be mentioned but not elaborated on or discussed. They are credibility (parallel to internal validity), transferability (parallel to external validity),

dependability (parallel to reliability) and finally confirmability (parallel to objectivity) (Bryman 2008: 377-379).

Bryman (2008: 31) defines research methods as “a technique for collecting data”. There are many examples of this such as questionnaires, interviews (many types including focus group interviews), observations, analysis, testing, statistics etc. In this research, the main source of information have been qualitative interviews conducted with respondents, complemented by literature reviewed in books, journals, newspapers, conference papers, lecture notes, databases and information found on maps, photos and webpages. This is called a triangulation approach to research and Webb et al (1966 in Bryman 2008: 379) defines this as a method to apply more than one method which will result in greater confidence in findings. This is because of the opportunity to do fact-checks and see if respondents are tweaking facts or making up stories, but also to gain a better understanding of concepts, traditions, history, ideas and theories as well as the ability to confront respondents with previous findings in second hand sources which may contradict what they are saying.

On the other hand, the information which is being revealed by talking to first hand sources can be used for inspiration to find more information around a topic, an event, a date, time or other things, and some of the information which they are saying may need to be verified, which may mean that a second interview needs to be conducted where respondents will be confronted with the new findings.

A challenge has been to handle theoretical saturation. This is defined in Bryman (2008: 700) as the “emerging concepts have been fully explored and no new insights are being generated”, i.e. when the same information is being said with different words. I experienced on the majority of occasions during the collection of data that information was being replicated. Unsurprisingly this happened when respondents were asked to recall historical events which had great importance to the Palestinians and which constituted elements which had a high level of significance to them. But this can also suggest that there are ruling opinions and ideas which are shared by many and information which is common for all. There was some saturation, but by analyzing the way that the respondents referred to Israel and Israelis, I was able to come up with a finding that there was a difference in rhetoric amongst respondents and that some viewpoints and perceptions were shared by many individuals.

3.4 - Preoccupations and critique of qualitative research

There are some concerns and preoccupations when it comes to qualitative research, which should be addressed. In the social science, the main objects are people and how they attribute meaning to their environment, and how the researcher attempts to view the world through the eyes of his research subjects. Therefore, an interview by phone or Skype can be useful, but one cannot really achieve the same one-to-one contact as is being done by physically meeting a person. It is therefore evident in the thesis that there must be interaction with respondents face to face in order to read expressions on people's face, look at their body language, analyze their way of talking and of course try to acquire the same mindset as they have in order to fully understand what they are saying. Maybe they will even be exaggerating and/or threatening (not to the researcher) because of their passion for the topic, and this could be misunderstood during an interview where the interviewer and the interviewee are not both physically present. For the researcher it is important to carefully analyze each of these traits to be able to understand the social world of the respondent.

The second factor which must be stressed is that of *description and the emphasis on context*. Within the qualitative research, most studies are emphasizing why a social phenomenon or an aspect in society exists and what the consequences are. A great deal of attention has been given to aspects of politics such as: why is integration not good enough, why are there high unemployment rates, why is this merging process going on etc. Bryman (2008: 387) explains that some researchers might be overly eager about describing the details and circumstances under which the research took place, but that details can be very useful for understanding which findings and results which have emerged from the research. I agree that details are useful in order to provide a better foundation for understanding social behavior and language in a specific context, but only to the extent that it provides a good foundation and does not compete with actual analysis and findings.

The third factor is *emphasis on process*. Research is being conducted over time and space and actions and events are unfolding over time. This enables researchers to study how values, culture, perceptions and identity is developing, changing and shaping (Bryman 2008: 388).

The fourth factor is *flexibility and limited structure*. In this preoccupation, the researchers are concerned that too much exposure to a group or phenomena which is being studied may create

pre-determined opinions among the researcher which can be inaccurate. Thus a preferred approach for qualitative researchers is a “...research orientation that entails as little prior contamination of the social world as possible” (Bryman 2008: 389). None or little exposure to a group or a phenomenon before research is being conducted can create awareness of aspects which are “institutionalized” and thus normalized to the group to the extent that they don’t think why they do what they do, but just do it. But this enables the researcher to confront individuals or groups and ask why they are doing things. An example can be Palestinians who use specific words and language to refer to Israel.

However, to questions “common truths” is a way to test the skills of the researcher. In order to produce a thorough analysis, hard, reliable data and facts, there has to be fact-checking involved, especially in a flexible and limited scope of the research. An unstructured framework and research design leaves more room for flexibility and to diverge to different paths, and thus the researcher will also be challenged in how to restrict him or herself.

After discussing preoccupations we will now look into some of the critique against qualitative research. This is done in order to provide a holistic foundation for understanding the research process in this thesis and to defend the choice of methods against some criticism.

Many respondents had very different answers on the same questions. When I confronted some of them with what others had answered they would in some cases modify their opinion or disregard the other information as inconsistent. This proved that there was a diverse range of opinions and perceptions on things.

One critique is of the possibility to replicate the study. This is due to the circumstances, temporary events, contexts, age and identity of the respondents, researcher and bias etc. I have therefore chosen not to try to replicate any research since it would be very difficult to do so, and I could not find any study which had previously been focusing on my research area, thus it would therefore not be possible to do follow up research.

Another critique is that of generalization which has been mentioned briefly before. If the results of one group, Palestinians in Oslo and Akershus, provide certain results, will those results be transferable to other Palestinians throughout the world or in Norway as a whole or are they simply a unique group? How can research on Palestinians in Norway be transferred

to become a generalized fact about Palestinians in say Sweden? Perhaps it cannot. When conducting research by using interviews, ethnographic studies, observations and so on, the threshold for making a generalization is and should be extremely high exactly due to the circumstances around the research and the contextualization of case studies.

Bryman (2008: 391-392) supports this and states that "...the findings of qualitative research are to generalize to theory rather than to populations". However Williams (2000:215 in Bryman 2008: 392) points out that qualitative researchers can to some extent make generalizations and he argues that they often do. His main point is that when doing research, some particular features are easily recognizable across social or cultural groups and are compared to general findings of other researchers. He names this process *moderatum* generalization which is less moderate than statistical generalizations, but more general than findings in a qualitative case study.

When conducting research, certain aspects can be generalized. An example can be that most Palestinians who live involuntarily outside Palestine, feel that the culture, identity, language, politics, religion and so on in the country where they live, challenge their Palestinian identity and forces them to give up certain aspects of their identity in order to become fully accepted citizens in the society they live in. This is an example of a very general finding which follows logical reasoning that when a person is confronted with other values, that person will either fully deny those other values and thus become an outsider of the society in which they live, or adopt certain aspects of a culture in order to be approved by the members of that society. This is probably a universal generalization, but since it is a generalization, one should be careful about saying that this is the rule, instead of this is the norm which confirms the rule.

A fourth critique is lack of transparency. This is perhaps one of the most grave critiques as it can be difficult to trace the research process when choosing respondents, questions, aspects and most importantly how findings were actually discovered and how they were interpreted. This can often be the case for both qualitative and quantitative research. If a survey tells us that 9 out of 10 Norwegians believe there will be a change in government this fall, how can we know that those people who conducted the surveys asked a representative number and group of the Norwegian population in order to make such a generalized claim? And then we can also ask: Were there incentives involved for the respondents, who ordered the survey, which questions were asked (leading questions), in which setting were the respondents asked

etc. In order to prevent any questions of lack of transparency in my research, I have encouraged my respondents, supervisor, students and so on to ask questions during the research process and I have also transcribed all of my interviews for future referencing. This will be further discussed in the next section.

3.5 - Ethics and moral dilemmas in social research

When discussing ethics and moral in social research, one has to develop a consciousness as to what they are and how they affect research. Ethics is defined as the study of values and morale and morale is a set of perceptions, definitions, opinions, attitudes, deeds, rights and values which are being maintained through practical acts and informal institutions (Pedersen, 2011: 1).

Bryman (2008: 115) specifically states that “What is crucial is to be aware of the ethical principles involved and of the nature of the concerns about ethics in social research”.

Certain principles follow in the discussion about ethics and morale and the researcher should be very conscious about why he or she is doing research on a certain topic, which methods are being used and the consequences of the research. This means that the researcher has great power and great responsibility and he or she is obligated to be aware of current guidelines within ethics and moral in academia and in society in general. He or she should also prepare the research as open and transparent (if not containing classified information) and provide aspects such as who has funded the research, for what purpose is the research being conducted, how are respondents protected against stigmatization or discrimination, what good can come of the research and why the results are presented in the way that they are. Examples of medical research on humans in the Nazi concentration camps led to the Nuremberg Code of 1949, which specifically states “that subjects must *voluntarily consent* to participate in a research study (Wexler, 1990, p. 81 in Berg and Lune 2012: 63).

But the data must also be subjected to ethical and moral consideration. The researcher should make sure that correct quotations are being made, and that the meaning of respondents is retold as they were meant to be. Gule (2010: 43-49) discusses the use of Hermeneutics (the art of interpretation or ability to understand) and argues that people must bear in mind their own “luggage” when they are analyzing material. In order to understand and relate to what the respondent is saying, the researcher must be able to understand the motivation and the

intentions which the respondent had in the moment which is being explained. This must be done without altering its meaning or translate the actions into our own words and ideas, but maintain those of the respondents. This is a challenge especially for inexperienced researchers, to make sense of theory, notes, transcriptions of interviews, literature and documents, and produce new scientific knowledge, and balance this in relations to subjective viewpoints and ideas.

The balance between theory and empirical material is a challenge. As Repstad (2007: 143-146) argues there is no law which says that theory should be in its own chapter, but can be woven into the empirical material where this is presented. But he warns that the theory can be so fragmented that it will not do justice to the theory. In the analysis chapter I have tried to draw lines between theory and research, while remembering that the original meaning of the theory as well as the data found should be equally accurate. Awareness around this has hopefully enabled me to present theories and data which hopefully would do them both justice.

When discussing ethics in social science there are several categories which researchers can be divided in. Bryman (2008: 116) has five different categories. The first one is *universalism*. This is the stance which says that “...ethical precepts should never be broken” and that any “infraction of ethical principles are wrong in a moral sense and are damaging to social research”.

The second one is *situation ethics*, presented by Fletcher (1966: 31 in Bryman 2008: 116) as a principled relativism, by some writers contrasted with universal ethics. The argument can be presented either as *the ends justifies the means*, where one can achieve great benefits by using ethically questionable methods such as covert participation, or as there is *no choice* but to cross into the ethical greyzone to find out what we want to investigate.

The third category is *ethical transgression is pervasive*. The reason for this is that there are elements of almost all research which can be considered ethically questionable and occurs specifically when participants are not given absolutely all details of the research. Gans (1962: 44 in Bryman 2008: 116) states that if the researcher is completely honest with respondents about the intentions and purpose of the research, then the respondents will try to hide

information which they think is not useful, thus he argues that in order to get honest data from respondents, it is better for the researcher to be dishonest.

The fourth category is that of *anything goes (more or less)*. The writers who are in this category proclaim that the ethical boundaries can be pushed further because researchers are individuals, unlike state authorities such as the federal government and police. Douglas (1976 in Bryman 2008: 116) has written a book about how to deceive people and gain their trust in order to extract knowledge and information from them. This is the most controversial ethical standpoint, and can be conflicting with the main issues in social research which will be discussed later.

The final category is *deontological versus consequentialist ethics* where the deontological ethicists consider “certain acts as wrong (or good) in and of themselves”, while consequentialist ethicists judge the consequences of an action to see if it is ethically justifiable or not. In this case I would consider the category of deontological ethicists as a better approach towards research in social science, because a consequentialist perspective can be based on false premises is ethically questionable but the consequences can lead to great improvement or to positive changes. Of course positive changes and great improvement are important, but if they are built on a false premise they cannot be considered to be legitimate.

For inexperienced researchers it might be very difficult to know what to do when faced with ethical dilemmas. Talking to the supervisor could be a good way to start, but fortunately there are committees and councils who are dealing with ethical and moral dilemmas on a daily basis, and they all have very good guidelines and tips for researchers. In Norway they are named The Research Council of Norway (Forskningsrådet), The Ministry of Education and Research (Kunnskapsdepartementet) and specifically for social sciences The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (Forskningsetiske Komiteer). For the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, these can be found at the university’s website². These guidelines can provide extremely useful information for how to avoid conflicts of interests, how to ensure security and safety of respondents, avoid methods which can be ethically questionable and maintain integrity of the researcher and the university.

² Ethical Guidelines for UMB – Localised on the 08 April 2013

Diener and Crandall (1978 in Bryman 2008: 118) have broken down the discussion of ethical issues to: whether there is harm to participants; whether there is a lack of informed consent; where there is an invasion of privacy and whether deception is involved. The discussion of whether there can be harm to participants or not is in relations to what will happen if the respondents are being named and the confidentiality between researcher and respondent is compromised. Gule (2010: 55-59) has researched a case study from Norway, and discusses which way participants should be anonymized. In his research he has either used the first name or given an alias to his participants. I agree that an alias can be good, but I believe that using the first name in this research, in addition to profession and place of birth, could be too revealing, and jeopardize the respondents of being identified. I also argue that if the reader wants to compare answers by groups of respondents, e.g. professors, taxi drivers, politicians etc. or places of birth, Gaza, Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem etc. then the name in itself is not relevant.

Another point on harm to participants is what will happen to the recordings and data which are being gathered and analyzed. Questions such as where will it be stored, virtually or physically, who has access and so on should be considered by the researcher. And it is important to remember that there is not one single correct answer to this, but there can be many, depending on the situation and circumstances. This is a challenge mainly for qualitative researchers since they work with the individual in focus, but for a quantitative researcher, it is easier to ensure anonymity for respondents since their name is not relevant in order to generalize across groups in the society. But there can be strength in numbers, signifying that the more respondents in one group, the more difficult to identify specific individuals. Burman *et.al.* (2001: 455 in Bryman 2008: 120) experienced that they discovered a lot of information which could potentially be harmful to respondents and were thus forced to ask what, how much, how and to whom should the information be disclosed in order to avoid this.

The second important point is the lack of informed consent. This implies that the respondents or those who are participating in research knows what their role is, what responsibilities the researcher has, their possibilities to withdraw from the research, how data will be recorded, stored and what will happen to the data after the research has been carried out. It also implies that they know who will read the data, analysis and conclusion, that their anonymity is ensured if they should choose this and all attributes which can identify them removed, and that there is a confidentiality agreement between the researcher and the respondent. The

informed consent sheet for this research is attached in the appendix and all participants have agreed to take part in the research, either by verbally agreeing or by signing the informed consent sheet.

The third important point is that of invasion of privacy. The researcher should be very precautionous if the respondent reveals private facts about family, personal life, sexual activities and the invasion of privacy is closely linked to anonymity and confidentiality. This is important when conducting interviews one-on-one, but especially important in focus group discussions since intimate and private details may be disclosed. Although the researcher is hosting and preferably moderating the focus group discussions, who should be blamed? This is a complicated and intricate question with not just one correct answer, but by taking precautions and being aware of the potential problem before it happens, this will hopefully not be a problem.

The last important point is deception. This occurs when the researcher is presenting something which is not the case, thus lying/deceiving to the people who are being researched. An example can be that of E. Goode (1996 in Bryman 2008: 125) which placed fake ads in periodicals to conduct a content analysis of the replies or Holdaway (1982 in Bryman 2008: 125) which “deceived his superiors and peers that he was functioning solely as a police officer”.

Further examples which should be avoided are to lie to respondents and use covert methods. This section provides many examples and situations in which ethical and moral dilemmas may arise and proves that they are a big part of social research. There are also other dimensions such as political, religious and cultural aspects which must be taken into consideration, but the points which have been made have hopefully transcend the different spheres. Especially while using qualitative methods it is very important that the researchers, especially young and inexperienced researchers are aware about what constitutes ethical issues and grows a consciousness around it.

By thinking these aspects through, the researcher is able to use the best appropriate methods to do scientific research and come up with an analysis which can be justified scientifically, ethically and morally.

3.6 - The collection of data during the research process

Palestinians who live in Chile or Brazil live in a different culture than those who live in Norway and Sweden, and this can shape their viewpoints differently. And those who live in Norway are possibly influenced by the city they live in, such as Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger, to parts of Oslo such as Grønland, Tøyen, Majorstua and so on. It was therefore important to see Palestinians in Norway as a heterogeneous population which consisted of a number of individuals, rather than a large homogenous group.

I am familiar with the Norwegian culture and know how Palestinians or foreigners are being portrayed in the media. This has enabled me to understand how respondents relate to the Norwegian society and how they are perceived by others. But to understand how they perceive themselves, it could have been useful to conduct field visits to the areas of the people who are being researched, away from a Western perspective and culture. But this would require a modification of the research scope and could potentially pose some security risks for the researcher.

I do not speak Arabic, but I do believe that it would have been a good asset to write, read and speak the language. This could possibly enable a different and more in-depth understanding of cultural factors which could open up a new world of information, since most respondents could explain themselves in their native language. However, I was able to gain much data and to communicate very well with all my respondents either in English or in Norwegian.

With this knowledge it could be possible to lessen the gaps between cultures and identity and bridge bonds between researcher and respondent and build bonds across culture and religion. This could then enable a better understanding and raise awareness for both the researcher and the respondents. This is because the researcher gains knowledge, but can as a potential side effect create awareness amongst respondents because they are asked to explain, elaborate and perhaps defend their viewpoints in the research process. Opinions and meanings can be obvious for the people who are living in the environment where these are prevalent, and it is first when an outsider ask questions that respondents may start the thought process of why they think or act like they do. Another aspect which can create awareness is if the researcher asks the respondent to picture themselves in the eyes of those they oppose. How would they describe themselves then, and would they agree with that description?

The research was conducted over a period of three months in Oslo and Akershus and the researcher interviewed 10 people, who have represented their own individual opinion or as representatives for organizations or groups of people. More information about respondents can be found in the appendix. The respondents represent male and females in the age between late 20s to early 60s from a wide variety of professions. They were very well-articulated and challenged my opinions and views on several occasions. Most of them are referred to with their full name, but some of the respondents said that they want to be anonymous in the research, and so personal attributes and other recognizable traits have been removed. Their names have thus been replaced with respondent and then a capital letter.

The majority of interviews have been conducted face to face, while a few have been conducted via phone or via email. The respondents have been very open, helpful and provided the researcher with valuable information and insights into the topic. In all the cases I have contacted organizations, Palestinakomiteén i Norge, Fellesutvalget for Palestina, Palestinsk Råd and others, where I have been given the contact information of one or two individuals who have put me in contact with others who have been willing to conduct interviews with me, a method called snowball sampling (Bryman 2008: 184).

The interviews were semi-structured and conducted by using an interview guide (see appendix). However it should be noted that due to the shift in research focus from Hamas supporters (as stated in the introduction) and towards a general Palestinian perspective, additional questions were improvised during interviews. And a benefit about using a semi-structured interview guide is exactly this flexibility within the given framework, as well as the ability for respondents to be able to talk freely around a subject. This can also lead the researcher over to new aspects which the researcher has not yet thought of and ask questions regarding these, but at the same time the researcher can guide the respondent back on track if the respondent talks about aspects which the researcher feels are not relevant for the research. This also gives the respondent possibilities to ask questions to the researcher underway, which enables a dialogue between the two and not a monologue based on questions.

But the interview guide is a guide, so there is room for several follow-up and side questions, but one must also stress the importance of not asking leading questions. This is simple to avoid in a structured interview guide where there is little or no room for side questions, but in a semi-structured interview guide this can be a challenge. Bryman (2008: 242) exemplifies

this with the type of question such as: “do you agree with the view that”, because then you are normally handing out facts or a statement to a respondent, which will color the answer which that respondent has. I have therefore asked questions such as: “so if I understand you correctly, you are saying that...” or “according to some sources...would you agree or disagree?” in order to verify or falsify other sources of information.

Since the objective of the research is to get the respondent to reflect around what it means to be a Palestinian in Norway and what it means to be Palestinian in itself, it was very important that I found respondents who could represent different generations and genders of Palestinians, in order to be able to distinguish findings around generational changes or viewpoints, and to generalize my findings within my area and research group. Another important point was to interview a mix of Palestinians who have been in Norway for a long time, 20 years plus, and those who have been here for a shorter time, 10 years minus. I also categorized this by age where younger generation were under 35 and the older generation above 35, given that the average age of respondents were around 40-45.

In total I was very pleased with my informants and those who participated in the research and did not have any problems during the research process. I believe that this was due to good planning and ability to adapt through the process, during the interviews and by using creative and analytical skills to arrive at interesting data findings. I have learnt a lot about collecting data and my most valuable lesson is that things take much more time than planned. When I started out I was very optimistic and believed that data could be collected during one month, but weeks turned to several months and much time went to finding informants who were willing to speak openly. So I went from a narrow research scope, to a wide one, where I would need more time and additional research in some areas and aspects to find out more. In addition, reviewing more literature and more interviews with individuals could be beneficial. However this is a valuable lesson learnt for other types of research and data collection.

4.0 - Findings in the research

4.1 - Background for findings

The respondents who are not mentioned by name but simply as “Interview with respondent, date” have specifically asked to be held anonymous, while those who have their full name given have said that they do not wish to be anonymous. However, any errors or misunderstandings of what they have said are mine and I take full responsibility for this. I am aware that I could have had a larger number of respondents from more places in Norway to add more depth to the thesis, and I would therefore like to remind the reader that one should see the findings in light of this.

The Palestinian diaspora community in Norway is very heterogenic and the respondents provided a variety of perspectives on identity and culture, and political affiliation appeared to be of crucial importance. The majority of respondents answered differently on several of the questions which were asked, which may signify that there is a wide variety of opinions within the Palestinian diaspora, and that there is not one opinion which is predominant. This in itself is a finding, which also relates to the perception of how the diaspora are influenced by political decisions made in Palestine.

One of my hypotheses was that the diaspora would be influenced by political decisions in Palestine, but the majority of respondents denied that this was the case, due to differences in social and cultural contexts. Included in this was that I hypothesized that Palestinians in the diaspora communities were able to influence political decisions in Palestine. This was also denied by the majority of respondents, but some emphasized that Palestinians were working within political parties in Norway and thus were able to affect politics on a small scale. This was interesting because the findings in the research could lead to an understanding of how the Palestinian diaspora conducts political work and what the effects are.

Throughout the research I found that there were three important variables which could be identified as significant in affecting the answers which the respondents provided. These were discovered after the data collection had been conducted, when multiple answers were compared and contrasted, and a pattern began to emerge. Turton and Gonzalez (1999: 17)

point to the same characteristics and argue based on their research that immigrant communities are not homogenous but consist of a large amount of unique individuals, which share variables such as “age, experience, gender, education and socio-economic positions”. In my research I found that this was important in order to demonstrate that the Palestinian diaspora is a heterogeneous group and this should be kept in mind when reading the findings and analysis.

Firstly, *age*. There was a division of opinions among generations. Older generations, i.e. those above 35 years of age had less hope in finding a solution which would be acceptable to both Israelis and Palestinians, while those below 35 emphasized that educating and empowering youth, children and women would be a key factor for uniting the Palestinian people. In addition to this, five out of six in the older generation emphasized fighting as the way to go in order to achieve their objectives, which included bloodshed and armed resistance, while three out of three of the younger generations emphasized peace and dialogue as a way to go about issues in Palestinian politics.

This is related to the second point, *duration of stay in Norway*. The majority of respondents said that they experienced a divided identity between being Norwegian and Palestinian, i.e. Norwegian-Palestinian, Palestinian-Norwegian, while some said that they are more Norwegian than Palestinian and vice versa. This affected their way of thinking and use of rhetoric. Those who had a Norwegian citizenship or had been in Norway for several years also emphasized peace and dialogue. While those who felt more Palestinian than Norwegian, emphasized blood, battle and conflict as a way to go about issues in Palestinian politics. Some respondents said that this had to do with not being accepted into the Norwegian society but seen as an outcast.

This was also related to the third variable, *identity*. The majority of respondents said that their background and identity had shaped their opinions, but that when they arrived in Norway they were able to see themselves from the outside and that this perhaps changed some of their perspectives. The majority of respondents agreed that once they had lived in Norway for some time and experienced peace and co-existence, freedom and liberty, they were less prone to advocate the use of violent methods and radical means to achieve objectives which could improve the situation in Palestine. This was especially relevant for the younger generations

and an interesting finding which suggest that they were going through an anti-violence process by becoming members of the Norwegian society.

This could also indicate that the respondents were able to see the situation from a third party view by experiencing the mentality towards Palestinians in Norway and discuss with Norwegians, and this could lead to some of them acquiring the perspectives and approaches to the conflict which would otherwise not be apparent when living inside Palestine. However, some of the respondents said that they had experienced social and cultural pressure to be active in the Palestinian cause and found this complicated. This was because they were not able to enjoy their freedom and quality of life in Norway but was exposed to critical voices which encouraged them to be involved in Palestinian activities, in order to not lose their Palestinian heritage. Some said that this further complicated the integration process into Norwegian society and disabled them from becoming fully integrated, while others emphasized that they were Palestinian and proud and not Norwegians.

There are five findings which I will point out throughout my data collection. I have chosen to summarize these below each finding and leave the discussion for the next chapter. This is because of the possibility to first present some findings separately and thoroughly and then connect several of them, in order to arrive at a detailed discussion in the next chapter by using empirical data and theory combined. The significance of the findings will be discussed under each number, and those with higher significance will be given more space in order to provide the reader an insight into its relevance. In light of these three variables which came to be important when researching the target group, the findings and some short comments will be presented in this chapter, before they will be analyzed and discussed in relations to the main problem statement in the next chapter.

4.2 - Finding no. 1 – Palestinians in Norway - A closer look

According to six out of ten respondents, approximately 90% of Palestinians in Norway are Fatah supporters or members, some are independent and a few are Hamas supporters or members. This is interesting because Hamas and Fatah are the *de facto* ruling parties in Gaza and in the West Bank respectively, but the proportion of supporters or members of each party is very different in Norway. Most Palestinians in Norway are Fatah members or supporters,

and there is a distinction between how they perceive Fatah and Hamas in Palestine. The respondents explained that this was because of the following;

- a. Hamas is a regionally based organization and its members are mostly situated around the center of its operations in Gaza and in the countries surrounding Palestine, but they have a wide range of supporters and sympathizers throughout the world, mainly the Muslim world. One respondent said that in Palestinian politics you are considered a coward if you flee from Gaza, and people who support Hamas or its members are also martyred if they die within Gaza, but not if they move out of Gaza.
- b. Many Palestinians outside Palestine are not willing to demonstrate openly that they are Hamas members. This is due to fear of stigmatization and negative connotations which Hamas have within the Palestinian diaspora and also within the Norwegian society. Four respondents, independently of each other, explained when asked that Hamas is seen as a terrorist organization by some, but they pointed out that this was due to misunderstandings, and that there were groups and fractions which are emerging from Hamas which gave the organization a disputed reputation.
- c. Fatah has existed more than three decades longer than Hamas in Palestinian politics, and one respondent said that it is then natural that there are many more members and supporters in Norway because many of them came before Hamas started to exist.
- d. According to two respondents, The Norwegian Government and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) have cooperated largely with PLO and Fatah officials, not with Hamas. This has led to a higher interaction and integration of PLO and Fatah in their respective regions and lowered the threshold for mobility and migration between them.

This finding shows that the respondents believe that the majority of Palestinians in Norway are representing the viewpoint which is reflected in the political affiliation of the majority of respondents, the one which Fatah have. A long history of Fatah combined with cooperation with Norway, has disabled other actors such as Hamas from achieving a foothold and spread their politics within the Palestinian diaspora in Norway. However, there were different answers by the respondents which were interviewed. Some said, including Respondent A, that cooperation could be possible and even desirable within the diaspora to unite Palestinians: “we need to stand united, we shouldn’t be fighting ourselves! ... We need more unity to fight against Israel!” (Interview, 31.03.2013).

But others said that God had nothing to do in politics, and thus cooperation with Hamas was unthinkable. One Fatah member said that “Some are fighting for land and some are fighting for God... Hamas members are not more religious than Fatah members, but the difference is what you wish to fight for. God and then Palestine or Palestine first and foremost?” (Interview with George, 20.03.13). This is interesting because it illustrates that there is a weak link between political decisions and cooperation in Palestine and the influence and effects on Palestinians in Norway. This was also confirmed by respondent B who answered no when asked if Palestinians in Norway would cooperate across political parties if Hamas and Fatah would do the same in Palestine. “This is because of context. Some believe in Fatah, and some believe in Hamas and most don’t believe in anything. So it does not really matter for our everyday life if Hamas agrees or disagrees” (Interview, 14.05.13). This diversity of opinions also demonstrates that there is not necessarily one predominant opinion on how to deal with politics within the diaspora. It seems that political affiliation is reflected by the circumstances and environments in Palestine, but Palestinians in Norway are affected differently when living in a diaspora country.

The consequences are that those who are in smaller parties may be marginalized politically. By this I mean that the major political actor has so much power that if it wanted, it can ignore the others and choose to follow its own agenda. The result is that politics are affecting individuals of different political parties, and effectively disables them from acting politically. Thus personal contact, history and identity become an important factor in shaping a sense of belonging and promote interaction within the diaspora, rather than politics. By following this view, it is possible to say that political affiliation is shaped by major political actors, but also by historical, social and cultural factors such as past events either in favor or against political standpoint, voting behavior of friends, family, clan based traditions and cultural factors such as tradition and values.

Some viewpoints on Fatah and Hamas have already been mentioned, but there were several more to be described by respondents. Respondent B compared the two organizations by an example of how they are organizing their universities in Gaza: Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) (Hamas) and al-Azhar University (Fatah) which is separated only by a wall. He said that at the IUG there were international conferences on water, electricity, computer science etc. but he said that the al-Azhar University could be compared to the chaotic Saturday market at Grønland in Oslo. He further said that in the university management at the IUG, things

were well organized with skilled academics and professors, while at Fatah's University there was complete chaos, and explained that this would attract completely different students and create a different reputation. This can provide an example of the two parties' abilities to educate new generations, and to build up public service institutions but perhaps with different outcomes. Such a division could further enhance a divide between the Palestinian people, which could echo through to the diasporas around the world. This has manifested itself in different perspectives and created grief and grievance between those who formerly had power and those who have power now.

George expressed frustration and anger after Hamas had taken over Gaza. He compared them to the occupational forces in that they took Gaza by brute force, but he remarked that support from God or the USA or anyone could not help, because Palestinians do not like injustice. "We will throw them out. Our mothers and wives and sisters with slippers, we will knock them down". He then proceeded to say that Fatah was the backbone of the Palestinian people, and that it can be sick, handicapped and tired, but that it will never die because it is the liberation organization for Palestinians (Interview, 20.03.13).

Respondent A saw it differently when he said that Hamas represents the will to fight because Fatah has asked for help and recognized Israel's right to exist. He also supported the Hamas Charter where Hassan al-Banna, a prominent Muslim Scholar who died in the 1940s, is quoted saying that the Zionists should be driven from the land and the state of Israel should cease to exist. In addition to this he believed that there could not be peace between Israel and Palestine, because Israel would still be in conflict with the neighboring countries which have large numbers of Palestinians in their population (Interview, 31.03.13).

I also found that none of the Palestinians interviewed used the words "terrorist organization" to describe Hamas, and this demonstrates that there is a difference in description and rethorics compared to those of the USA, EU and Israel. However there were also very few who described Hamas as the legitimate government in Gaza, which can indicate that the defeat in 2006, after decades of Fatah rule, was a very bitter defeat.

4.3 - Finding no. 2 – The role of the International Community

Palestinians in Norway is a very diverse group in opinions across generations, gender and background, but common for them all was that they were concerned with the Palestinian question: how to get their own state, and solve the conflict with Israel and opinions were divided with regards to the future. And they all agreed that the international community have an important role and responsibility in relations to Palestine but that there is not enough being done. This manifested itself in the following findings:

- a. The study found that there was divided opinions across genders and generations as to which solution would be the best, and a mix of opinions between a one-state solution, a two-state solution or other solutions.
- b. Most of the respondents agree that they are not against the civilians who live in Israel and that they pity the Jews who were killed during World War 2, but they are against the Israeli state's occupation of Palestinian territory, expansion by settlers and Israeli politics against Palestine.
- c. Most of the respondents say that the USA are affecting international decisions and as long as they are closely connected to Israel then there will not be a change in the situation inside Palestine. They expressed frustration that the international community, specifically Norway, was following the US line towards Palestine, especially in international or regional organizations such as the UN and EU.
- d. Some respondents said that they were not optimistic and did not want to talk about any solution which both the Israelis and the Palestinians could be content with, since there had been talks and negotiations going on for over 60 years.
- e. There was a difference in methods amongst supporters of the different parties. Where Hamas supporters would argue that weapons should be used and Israelis should be fought, Fatah and left-wing supporters emphasize a non-violent resistance which included negotiations through dialogue, diplomacy and international support.

According to these findings, there is not that much hope of prosperity for Palestinians, since negotiations have not lead to any substantial solutions. This manifests itself in hostility against the State of Israel and the leading role of the USA. Several respondents commented on the power that the USA has and said that if they did not agree with a decision, nothing would be done. "...as long as USA has the world hegemony, nothing will happen" (Interview with

Nadia Jounes, 03.05.13). “Who is working against development [in Palestine]? ... Israel. And who is their supporter? USA. As long as the USA does not go into the process, nothing will happen” (Interview with Fuad Timraz, 30.04.13). This was also commented by a third respondent who said that “Israel has a great supporter in the USA” (Interview with Line Khateeb, 17.04.13). A fourth respondent also agreed and said that USA also had support from France, Great Britain and Germany, and that the borders are closed in Gaza from the Israeli side, the West Bank is under occupation and that Israel knows very well what they are doing (Interview with Nidal Hamad, 26.04.13). The majority of respondents agreed that the USA had great influence in a peace process between Palestinians and Israelis, as well as the power to bless or stall any process which it did not find appropriate. A few respondents disagreed on the USA’s role, and thought that the Arab world could do very well on its own, seeing as Hamas had driven Israelis out of Gaza and Hezbollah had done the same in the south of Lebanon.

However all of the respondents agreed that Palestine should be liberated but they differed in how this should be done and which methods should be used. Respondent C said that the only way to communicate with Israelis is to fight them. “Fatah has asked for help, but Hamas wants to fight. Fighting is the only language that Israel understands! When Hamas had weapons which could reach Tel Aviv, Israel wanted to negotiate” (Interview, 20.03.13). The respondent emphasized that Hamas wanted to make Israel understand that they were capable of harming or destroying them. Whether this is actually true or a subjective opinion can be discussed, but it leaves some food for thought for the readers and for me.

Most Fatah and left-wing supporters perceived dialogue and communication as important factors for shaping the peace and argued that their way forward was the correct one, as it seemed that armed resistance and the terrorist label which Hamas has, prevents other actors from cooperating with them. One respondent also confirmed this by saying that “They [Fatah] want to cooperate with Israel, but they do not want to cooperate with Hamas” (Interview with Nadia Jounes, 03.05.13). However, George (Interview, 20.03.13) did not rule out Hamas’s fight for Palestine and said: “What does the West expect from us? More blood? I know that we are not cheap when it comes to blood and we are ready to give as much as we can to liberate Palestine, and we know that Palestine is very expensive and very beautiful, so we know that every step demands a lot of blood”. This statement was in contrast to the rest and

also demonstrates how some opinions differ within a political party and in relations to other parties in the diaspora.

After the blockade of Gaza from Israel, conditions have deteriorated and the international community has not been able to put pressure on the Israelis. One respondent mentioned that Ship to Gaza was one way which international activists and civil society actors could influence political decisions (Interview with Line Khateeb, 17.04.13). However another respondent said that important political decisions which involve sanctions against Israel are often blocked by the USA. One respondent who sympathized with Hamas asked: “Why are we called terrorists? The real terrorists are Israel and USA” (Interview with respondent A, 31.03.13). He also pointed out that the international community was not independent and they followed the actions and words of the USA. Respondent B, (Interview, 30.04.13) said that “civilians are civilians and politics is politics. Israeli civilians are human beings to me, but those who are shooting or killing or are settlers are not good people”. But Nadia Jounes (Interview, 03.05.13) nuanced this when she emphasized that “...it is important to separate Judaism and zionism. When you are against the state of Israel, you are not automatically against Jews. Many adults and many Palestinians misunderstand this and hate Jews, and that is wrong”.

When asked if there could be any dialogue or communication between the Palestinian diaspora and Israelis in Norway, even if this was not possible on a state level, the answer was clearly no: “When you are organized you must follow the rules and even today there are no orders of meeting Israelis and talking to them or the opposite way. There has been before and after the Oslo Accords, but that is now over. But in the “old days” there were several groups from Palestine to Norway who met with Israelis. Norway was very active in conveying contact. [But today] all Palestinians who do this are hated. They are very much hated” (Interview with George, 20.03.31). This can illustrate two things: The organized political parties in Norway are under orders from the political parties in Palestine, and any unauthorized action will be seen as disloyal. And Norway has had an important role in the peace process before and should continue to do so, especially within the international community, since they were one of the few countries who have actually made some progress in the conflict.

This role of foreign actors and the international community was also pointed out by Respondent B (Interview, 14.05.13) who said that the international community admitted that they had done something wrong when they treated Jews badly, but that they didn't "care if other people have to pay the price" by having their land occupied, and he stated that "if someone should pay the price, it is not us". This responsibility should be directed to those who are part of the international community, which also applies to Norway, and several respondents agreed that Norway should become more active internationally in politics towards Palestine with other states to put international pressure on Israel and the USA.

On questioned how this could be possible, Nidal Hamad said that "the UN, USA and NATIO can open up for a Palestinian state if they choose to do so and solve the problem. Use strong politics against Israel and use force, although not by bombing...this is the only way, because if not, then we do not know what will happen in the future. We do not know. Palestinians always hope that we will come back and have our own state and we never lose hope. We are a people who are striving and struggling, although we are not very big or very strong, but we do have courage" (Interview, 26.04.13).

Other respondents further elaborated what this signified when they said that they had a responsibility themselves of working inside Norwegian political parties and shaping Norwegian politics towards Israel and Palestine. Thus an emphasis on international political support via state and non-state actors is needed in order to understand how people think, work and react, and which factors are engaging and important. However, it is important to remember what Khateeb said in her interview: "As long as there is not a UN resolution [against Israel], Norway does not want sanctions" (Interview, 17.04.13).

4.4 - Finding no. 3 – A strong belief in the role of civil society

The majority of the respondents believe that better conditions in Palestine can be achieved by a stronger emphasis on the role of civil society. This was an interesting finding because most respondents said that this was the way for Palestinians to achieve more freedom and autonomy, regardless of their political affiliation, both Hamas, Fatah and left-wing Palestinians emphasized this. This could indicate that people would rather emphasize the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations rather than the governing parties.

- a. The majority of respondents emphasized the role of the new generations of both Palestinians growing up in Norway and Norwegians. The role of activists, lobby groups, political actors and those who are not seen as state actors were important of shaping agendas and ways of thinking amongst the young generations.
- b. However several respondents said that this was not being practiced and expressed concern that the government intervened in day-to-day activities by civil state actors since they saw many of these assignments as their job, not the job of sub-state actors.
- c. Most respondents agreed that the international diaspora of Palestinians should unite in a common struggle for a free Palestine, and that this should be done across political affiliations inside the diaspora. But they disagreed whether or not this was actually possible due to the relationship between Fatah and Hamas and if it should be done independently of the state opinion in the country where they were living.
- d. Most Palestinians who were interviewed said that they registered political decisions made in Palestine, but that they were not directly but indirectly affected by them via friends and family who lived in Palestine. But they also said that they were unable to influence political decisions in Palestine due to their small numbers and small resources in Norway. However some said that if committed in a civil society organization, they would most likely be more affected and possibly have more influence.

Even before Hamas was started, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and his supporters had provided social welfare and public services such as, education, health care, Islamic cultural centers and so on in Palestine via their Islamic networks and organizations. Sara Roy, a senior research scholar at the center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, found that civil society organizations has been “absolutely critical for Hamas specifically and Islam in general”, to establish Hamas as the alternative to militancy and political violence. She argues that during the Oslo process, Hamas did in no way seek to overthrow or confront dominant (secular) institutions, but simply accommodate and coexist with them. She continues her argument by saying that Hamas is a pragmatic and flexible organization which has a wide support amongst Palestinians, not so much because they are a Muslim organization, but because they provide social care which ensures the survival of its constituencies (2011: 161-166).

I understand her point, but I disagree that people are supporting them because they are given social care. There must be a political reason to support them, and I believe that the people of

Gaza are supporting them because of their will to fight Israel, and argue that if someone else would come and offer the same social support, but from a different political party, the majority of votes would stay with Hamas. My research also backs up this argument, when only three of the ten respondents interviewed, focused on the social role which Hamas had played and could play, while seven out of ten focused on its wars, use of violence and conflicts.

In addition, at the same time there were six out of ten who believed in a strengthened civil society which could lobby for political rights. But as the example of Hamas shows, what will happen if that civil society actor becomes elected into politics and people do not agree with those politics? And so the questions arise in this context; should civil society organizations be independent politically, does this limit their chances of affect political decisions and is this possible? Several members of the diaspora thought of civil society organizations as a means to affect political decisions made in Norway which in turn would affect political decisions in Palestine and that this was an additional way of contributing and working for their objective. But they were unsure whether or not these should be politically active or not.

From the research I therefore discovered that there was a desire to work with both state and non-state actors and that there was also a lot of Norwegians who were not of Palestinian descent who were contributing to this work (Interview with Nidal Hamad 26.04.13). In addition, opinions and perceptions of Palestine and Palestinians had changed, not just through the generations of the diaspora, but also amongst Norwegians. Fuad Timraz said that Palestinians had more sympathy from Norwegians, now than in the 70s and also that some UN forces which had gone to Lebanon had seen with their own eyes how Palestinians had been treated (Interview, 30.04.13).

George El Jeries recalls his first experience with Norwegian culture; “It was very difficult, I was not a normal person, I had experienced war and met death every day...it was a new and foreign country and I did not like it here because I felt that much of me was still down there. But the chances of going back were almost zero because of airplane hijackings, closed airports, violent fights in the streets...there was a civil war so I stayed here” (Interview, 20.03.13). Perhaps this account could also underline the situation and the conditions as to where some of the refugees came from, but regardless of who brought the stories to Norway, the ultimate change in sympathy was triggered by the Norwegian people themselves.

Even today there are strong ties, and respondent D said: “There are many Palestinians who are [working] together with Norwegians and there are several organizations in Norway and in Palestine” (Interview, 30.04.13). Thus the Palestinian diaspora have managed to engage young generations into joining their cause for a free Palestine. This has been done through information campaigns, identity building, cultural awareness and political demonstrations, and a lot of this has happened through civil society organizations in Norway, but also engaged organizations in Palestine. Respondent C also suggested that Palestinians can achieve better conditions with “the influence of more civil society than government. Maybe they are able to help politics in Gaza and to help with development” (Interview, 20.03.13). However, Line Khateeb said that when she visited Gaza, she noticed that civil society organizations were popular amongst young people. “There are many political parties which one can support, but now one can see that many young people are being engaged in NGOs rather than politics. There are hundreds of NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza” (Interview, 17.04.13).

The hope then is that NGOs in Norway and in Palestine can work together and exchange experience and knowledge. But she also said that there were several challenges. One example was a NGO that she spoke with, which provided education for children and after school activities. This organization was shut down because “the authorities said that this was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and that they did not need an organization to do this work”. And she also questioned the level of intervention when she said that “it is understandable that they want control to a certain degree, but they cannot dictate how people should organize themselves and go against the Palestinian constitution [which includes] freedom of speech and freedom of organizing”.

This says something about the difference in conditions which civil society organizations work under, however if Palestinians in Norway continue to engage in civil society work, they could be able to connect with other non-state actors in Palestine and ultimately have the possibility of influencing political decisions. But this could also be the opposite way, and the agenda which Palestinians have in Norway and how they are working, can be shaped by events on the ground in Palestine and political decisions. However there are some disputes about this from the diaspora community itself. George (Interview, 20.03.13) said that the new generation wanted to become part of the Palestinian people, and that “the political problems which concern Hamas or Fatah, does not have any significance in Norway”. This will be discussed further under finding five, but the data can eventually lead to a theoretical framework which

can be the basis for a more thorough evaluation and contribution into how diasporas engage in decisions in their home country.

4.5 - Finding no. 4 – Difficulties in reaching national unity

As seen in finding no.1, Palestinians in Norway are divided between different organizations. This is because there are a lot of different opinions on how they should organize, who should organize them and there is currently not a lot of resources available to create national, pragmatic and functioning organizations. Many of the respondents were frustrated by the fact that they were not able to work together towards common goals and ambitions, but there was an agreement amongst all respondents that Palestinians should stay united despite different political affiliation, but that this was difficult to achieve practically. This manifested itself in the following findings:

- a. There are many organizations in Norway who are working for the Palestinian cause, but they are not cooperating. Four of ten respondents said that this is due to internal and personal conflicts within the diaspora, but several respondents suggested that a functioning national organization, preferably headed by a Palestinian, could bring together the diaspora in Norway towards a common goal.
- b. The lack of unity was due to a separation of people due to politics in Palestine and that this effect was also present in the Palestinian diaspora in Norway. This was due to people bringing along their political assurance to Norway and personal conflicts which delayed unification despite possibilities for very good results. Several respondents said that within one family, there can be people who are completely separate in their political affiliation, which delays a unification process.
- c. Several respondents said that they were cooperating with solidarity movements and Palestinians in other diaspora communities throughout Europe and that this lead to some support and organization of their activities.
- d. Many respondents said that they participate in cultural and social activities and in demonstrations to raise awareness of the Palestinian cause and create awareness about the situation, but would like to do more.

In the previous findings we have learned more about whom the members of the Palestinian diaspora are, which political parties they belong to and we have touched upon the role of civil society. In this finding we have also seen that there is a lack of unity and cooperation which

are caused by history, social differences, distinguished religion and cultural traditions. Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) said that the problem with Palestinian politics was that Hamas is doing today, what Fatah was doing decades earlier; controlling the political situation, but favoring their own. Nepotism, economic benefits and other advantages, contributed to the perception on Fatah as greedy and corrupt, while Hamas today are earning money on taxes and smuggling via the tunnels to Egypt.

The historical power experiences by individuals and desire for influence in decisions manifested itself in that many similar organizations were created in Norway and that these were not cooperating very well. She said that “There has been some disagreements and separations in Oslo”, where she specifically mentioned “den Palestinske Kulturforening” and “den Palestinske Forening”, while in other parts of Norway the organizations had been able to work quite well. She thought that this depended on the people who were running it and the participants, and that some people would bring their differences and political viewpoints from refugee camps to Norway; “Some might want to be the leader, or maybe decide and decide that someone else should not decide, and the result is that not many things are being done”. Fuad Timraz (Interview, 30.04.13) said that this had something to do with background and cultural differences. “Palestinians from Lebanon, think different than [those from] Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan etc. and that is one of the reasons why they cannot agree on how to front the Palestinian case and who to support”. He added that the key to elimination of ethnical conflicts is language, and language is built on interactions and understandings where language is a part of culture.

When George (Interview, 20.03.13) was asked about disagreements between Fatah and Hamas in Palestine, he said that “even Norwegian Palestinians disagree with each other”. So if Palestinians are not able to communicate or interact with each other, those born in Norway and those abroad will most probably experience difficulties in understanding and thus cooperating with each other. The Norwegian and Palestinian culture is quite distinctive, and as respondent B exemplified: “In Norway you need to schedule an appointment two to three weeks in advance while in Palestine you can ask someone to go for a coffee and then you go. It is a different context” (Interview, 14.05.13). Nadia Jounes (Interview, 03.05.13) highlighted this when she said that her adolescence had shaped her identity as Palestinian, but also as a Norwegian. “When I was younger I said that I was Norwegian, but then people would ask me: where are you really from? So then I would say that I am a Palestinian in order to avoid

questions. Today I see that some people are more Palestinian than Norwegian, but I am a bit of both”. Respondent A shared his perspectives and said that he felt that he was being categorized as Norwegian-Palestinian, and argued that this made him drift away from the rest of the society because he did not belong 100% (Interview, 31.03.13).

Fuad Timraz (Interview, 30.04.13) suggests that an identification as Norwegian can jeopardize Palestinian identity because one can lose a sense of belonging or identity. He says that this is because there are a lot of new Norwegians of Palestinian descent who are not that engaged in the Palestinian case. He says that this is partly due to lack of language skills and lack of unity between organizations who work on issues in Palestine, as well as hopes for a prosperous future; “...they are thinking that my future is in Norway and I become Norwegian, and I want to be here in Norway and enjoy my life in peace and quiet”.

Although people would like to contribute more, language and differences makes this difficult. One needs to unite individuals with different histories, from different cultures and political convictions, but how do one solve this? Nadia Jounes proposed that a higher frequency of events and more information within the Palestinian diaspora and to the Norwegian people were seen as two ways which could encourage more participation and cooperation (Interview, 03.05.13).

It is interesting to research how members of the diaspora think and why they are not working together when they have common goals and ambitions. Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) said that this was quite frustrating, but proposed that a national council could be created, which could represent Palestinians, headed by a Palestinian. Fellesutvalget for Palestina is an umbrella organization for all organizations in Norway who support the Palestinians case, according to their own website (FUP, 2013) but they are not working as a national council as Khateeb suggested.

Several other respondents also supported her suggestion, and as far as I can understand from their opinion, it seems that the younger generation is questioning why the older generations have not been able to come together despite their common identity, faith and history, and are willing to cooperate in order to promote common goals. A national council could unite the diaspora, and force individuals to set aside subjective feuds in return of the common good, recommend political decisions to state and non-state actors and give the Palestinians a strong

united organ which could promote their interests. However, Line Khateeb underlined that PLO was supposed to have this role within Palestine to gather Fatah, Hamas, leftist parties and be a national organization for all, but have thus far failed, but perhaps this could be developed on a smaller scale within the Norwegian diaspora? Notably, she, Nidal Hamad and Fuad Timraz agreed that this required resources and qualified people and was difficult due to geographical distances, political diversity and financial restraints.

But at the same time, it is important to understand that diversity and differences might not be a bad thing. There is room for many people and organizations, where opinions and ideas can be discussed, and some things can be agreed upon. And by working within different social contexts, knowledge can be exchanged, information transferred and cooperation can grow.

However, can there be cooperation? In March 2013, the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said that he and Hamas leaders had “reaffirmed that the Palestinian people have the right to non-violent resistance” and that there was an agreement that they should now return to the negotiation table (RT, 2013). In interviews, when asked if this could encourage a process amongst Palestinians in Norway to reunite, the answer from most respondents was that this is difficult. Most respondents agreed that the diversity, conflict and lack of a national organ disfavored cooperation and that the social context was different in Norway than in Palestine. This had to do with the amount of resources, as well as freedom and possibilities in Norway compared to Palestine.

In addition one has to consider the starting point. I found that Palestinians who grow up in Norway have a better starting point than those who come as refugees, in relations to education, possibilities, work, social welfare and health care, and they should use this to their advantage in order to reach understandings and agreements amongst themselves. As a result, these may be able to create the base for a unification, which can create an optimistic and prosperous future. Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) also said that those who have come during the past 10-15 years have been victims of torture and are broken down mentally. She said that when their children grow up, there might be a stronger Palestinian diaspora in Norway, because today these organizations are dominated by the older generation, and that they are the ones who are most concerned about political affiliation within the diaspora. Respondent D agreed to this and said that he wanted to guide the new generation who are growing up. “[The new generation] is growing like a tree. A tree which one can pull in one

direction or the other or you can support it. One can shape the tree while it grows” (Interview with respondent 30.04.13).

What is interesting in this finding was that I understood that a sense of national unity was overshadowed by history and a current divide in politics. Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) said that it was a surprise for many when Hamas won the elections in 2006, but she reminded that many saw Fatah as an old man’s regime, where there are many people who have been there a long time holding on to their positions of power, and there is not any changes but a lot of nepotism. She said that this frustration could enable people to give their support to Hamas instead, however unwittingly that they might have supported Hamas to come into a stronger political position which has increased the gap between the West Bank and Gaza.

The division of Hamas or Fatah member or supporters was increased after Hamas came into power in Gaza. Respondent A recalls the events and says that many Fatah supporters were harassed and that “...there was clearly a tone that Fatah members were not welcome in Gaza...and today that is the same in the West Bank, Hamas members are not welcome and if you are a Fatah member I do not want to be seen with you or interact with you”. This was confirmed by Nadia Jounes who said that in Nablus, which has a larger share of Fatah than Hamas supporters, people can frame you as a terrorist, people are acting condescending and say things such as: “that guy is Hamas”, and they tend to paint Fatah on walls to show their political affiliation. And following the assassination of Ahmed Jabari, a former military leader of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, and the violence which followed in November in 2012, that Fatah supporters in Nablus went out to the streets and celebrated, she was shocked and said: “What? You are Palestinians, what is this? It was crazy!”.

She also said that she could identify certain aspects of that divide here in Norway; “I have heard comments such as anti-Hamas...and some people are only thinking Fatah, Fatah, Fatah, and nothing with Hamas or others”, but she nuanced it to some extent and added: “there is some division but I cannot say that it goes for everyone, but there are some” (Interview, 03.05.13). But Respondent B criticized Fatah and explained that they had now turned into some fat old men in nice suits and good cars and said that “Fatah has a lot of internal struggles inside itself”, which could explain why there was not a stronger unity amongst its members in Norway (Interview, 14.05.13). This was also explained by George El Jeries who said that Fatah have a group of around 300 members [in Norway], but there are over 1000 members in

Norway which does not wish to be organized. When asked why, he explained that there is a disagreement of how things should be organized, and this has led to a difference in thinking of how Fatah is thinking in Palestine and in Norway (Interview, 20.03.13).

Based on what these respondents say, there seems to be not so much a political conflict between Hamas and Fatah in Norway, but mostly inside Fatah. However there are some points where they differ greatly. Firstly, as Nadia Jounes said (Interview, 03.05.13) Fatah wants to go back to the 1967 borders and have acknowledged Israel's right to exist through the Oslo Accords, while Hamas does not want anything to do with Israel at all. Secondly, respondent A said when asked what the difference was between the two political parties: "Fatah follows the path of politics, while Hamas follows the path of fighting. Simple as that" (Interview, 31.03.13).

Nidal Hamad (Interview, 26.04.13) offered to nuance this and said that the Palestinian fight for freedom consisted of more than firing rockets, but that rockets were part of the fight as an answer to Israeli air attacks and occupation. He added that Hamas' and other Palestinian rockets were not very effective, which was confirmed by respondent B. This respondent said: "In Sderot, Palestinian resistance groups have sent 10.000 missiles. And after 10.000 missiles you probably imagine that Israel is destroyed right? But zero Israelis have been hurt and the missiles are very inaccurate. It has happened many times that missiles have been fired, and then they have returned, so we should be careful to use missiles so that Israel does not bomb Gaza with a 1 ton missile" (Interview, 14.05.13). They both added that Israel had more military power, but were also good at using media and information channels, as well as homemade rockets as propaganda against Palestinians and argue for their national security.

But this split could also provide an opportunity for pragmatic and united thinking, as Fuad Timraz (Interview, 30.04.13) said: "I am thinking Palestine, not Fatah or Hamas. I defend Hamas when I have to. Things are unfair, but they are a part of the Palestinian society, they are patriots, they are as good or bad as me". Respondent B also agreed and explained that he wanted all Palestinians; Fatah, Hamas and the political left to be welcome in a resistance fight against Israel by using diplomatic, peaceful and military force (Interview, 14.05.13). Nidal Hamad also agreed to this and said that all Palestinians should fight against the occupation to liberate Palestine, regardless if they are Hamas, Fatah or others (Interview, 26.04.13).

Thus it was the idea of a united Palestinian people that drove them toward their common goals and ambitions, but which has previously been shown to be difficult, and will be demonstrated in the next finding. But this idea of national unity can indicate a will by some to defend their fellow Palestinians even though their politics are contradicting and differ in their methods. And a will to cooperate, an approach which perhaps should be adopted by more individuals in order to enhance participation and possibilities for cooperation both within the diaspora and their host country, and within politics in Palestine. But the questions are many, such as when is the right time to cooperate, what do we have to give up to get national unity and is this possible?

4.6 - Finding no. 5 – The religious aspect of Palestinian politics

The role of religion was an important factor in understanding why there was a split amongst Palestinians, but there was a disagreement in how important it was. And the majority of respondent said that if Hamas and Fatah would cooperate in Palestinian politics, this did not mean that Palestinians in Norway would do the same due to religious differences. The study found that:

- a. It was emphasized by several respondents that there could be no cooperation between Fatah and Hamas members in Norway due to their origin. Hamas is based on Islam while Fatah is a secular movement. Fatah supporters said that this was not possible due to religion, while Hamas supporters said that Fatah should be more willing to stand up and fight, however they did not exclude the possibility for cooperation within Palestine. The majority of respondents agreed that they would like more cooperation and that the relationship as it is today is harming the Palestinian cause and helping Israel to divide and rule them.
- b. There is a difference in thinking on how Hamas has influenced Palestinian politics. Some respondents say that Hamas has persecuted others who have a different political affiliation, while some say that Hamas has taken control and solved many of the previous problems in Gaza, e.g. weapons are not allowed, protection of other religions etc.
- c. Most respondents, except Hamas supporters, agree that religion and politics should be separated. They say that this is because an imam or a religious leader is not a political person, and that religion can separate people and complicate the process of the

Palestinian question by adding the religious dimension and mixing religion with politics. Several respondents also said that religion is open for interpretation and can be interpreted the way one needs it to be fit, and thus the religious dimension of Hamas was a hindrance for prosperous progress.

In the earlier findings we have not specifically discussed the role of religion and politics, but this finding goes into this aspect. The mixture of religion and politics is an old phenomenon. During the Pharaoh's rule in Egypt, he was seen as a God and ruler and during the Viking age's people had the opportunity to convert to Christianity or be killed, and in Iran today the chief of state is the religious leader Ali Hoseini – Khamenei (CIA, 2013).

In the Palestinian context, an emphasis on identity in politics has been found to be quite an obstacle in order to cooperate and organize activities across political parties. But by adding the religious dimension, this relationship can become even more complicated. The power of religion increased hostilities and enhanced the difficulties for cooperation both in the diaspora and in Palestine. And in a secular country such as Norway, it can be even more important to maintain religious beliefs since it is not incorporated into daily life routines and into society in the same extent as in Palestine. This in return can enhance difficulties of participation within the diaspora itself, as religion can include some and exclude others. But as religion becomes more prevalent into the society in Palestine, this has also an effect on the diaspora.

Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) explains that in many countries in the Middle East, people have become more concerned with religion. "My aunts in the 80s used to wear knee short skirts and short armed dresses, but today everyone is wearing long sleeves and long skirts and a hijab. So there has been a more religious society especially when it comes to clothing and also to some degree an Islamisation of politics". George El Jeries (Interview, 20.0313) said that 80% of Palestinians are Muslims, and emphasized that Islam was a part of their culture and tradition. However, he also said that Hamas was modern religious and can cooperate with other organizations in Palestine, and unlike Al-Qaida, Hamas is much more open.

Although, this is interesting, the perhaps most interesting finding is that even though there could be cooperation between the parties in Palestinian politics, this would not necessarily lead to cooperation in the diaspora. This is related to finding number one where respondents said that differences in political standing and that of religion are what prevent cooperation,

even though the ultimate goal is the same. George El Jeries (Interview, 20.03.2013) said that Hamas are working undercover of the Islamic Council, the Islamic Library and others, which he said was problematic. “Despite the fact that we in Fatah have more members who are just as faithful believers as them [Hamas], the problem with Hamas is that they think God has given faith to only themselves and not to others”. The respondent further explained that since Hamas originally developed from the Muslim Brotherhood, the organization was also supported by Moroccans, Lebanese, Syrians and Egyptians. These countries have a larger percentage of inhabitants who are Muslim than in Norway, and respondent C (Interview, 20.03.13) said that “if Norway wants to talk to Palestinian organizations, they go through Fatah. This is because Hamas is not very strong in Europe”. When asked why, he replied “they are a Muslim organization, and most people in Europe are not Muslim”. This meant that those in the diaspora who were pro-Hamas would seek others who were likeminded in terms of religion, whom were not necessarily Palestinian, but still wanted to influence political decisions.

However, the inclusion of others should not be excluded since Norwegians and non-religious parties participate in the organizations who work for Palestine. Thus several parties are included, but a secular and an Islamic initiative in Norway, both to aid people in Palestine, may be welcomed differently because their different background, but the intention and purpose is still the same. Another factor is experience and knowledge. Before Hamas came into power they provided many civil services which were of crucial importance, inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, and thus they have a wider connection not necessarily with secular Palestinian parties such as Fatah, but with other Muslim organizations. Thus politics has been altered into religious politics or politicians who are religious, which has complicated a cooperation process across politics. This will also reflect the role of the diaspora and to some extent its limitations and possibilities, although this is dynamic, which again will provide the basis for how a diaspora organizes itself and which ways it works.

This lead to an interesting finding which can be traced back to the 2006 elections; Respondent A (interview 20.03.13) said that “Muslims all over the world are united and the main idea of Hamas is to defend Muslims and fight against Israel”. But George El Jeries (Interview, 20.03.13) disagreed and said that those who are fighting in Palestine are “fighting to liberate Palestine, not for Islam, and said that there are only Jews all over the world who are united in Judaism, which is what makes them stronger than Arabs even though they are very few. Our

religion divides us and their religion unites them”. He further argued that this was complicated because many of those who supported Hamas in the elections 2006 did so in order to punish Fatah or other left wing parties, but also “to support the armed resistance against Israel”.

Despite the frustration which Palestinians in Palestine may experience, an armed resistance might send the wrong signal towards the international community and discourage support and sympathy. This in return can further undermine the vital efforts and role which the diaspora can have in the countries where they live, since they are unable to create any major effects on political parties in government. The study thus finds that the internal conditions in Palestine and the external conditions have a major effect on how members of the Palestinian diaspora are able to influence political decisions in the country where they reside.

The majority of respondents agreed that religion can be a hindrance for cooperation, but this is only the case if they choose to. If religion becomes a decisive factor for who can work together and who can receive support then it is sure to cause more harm than it is intended to relieve. Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) explains that religion is a natural part of a Palestinians everyday life, “regardless of whether one is Christian or Muslim...but there has always been a tradition that politics and religion are two different things. And even though you always say in God’s name before you hold a speech, that is a different way of separating religion and politics, I would say”. As I understand it, she wants to say that even though the person who is holding the speech is a religious person and wants to pay respects to God, this does not mean that he or she is mixing religion into the speech.

If the path of secularity and politics which Fatah claims could offer an alternative which could improve the situation and include all religions, could it include all political parties? Perhaps if Hamas was not rooted in Islam, the political relationship between them and Fatah could have been different, but what should Palestinians choose? A secular country where divine power from God cannot be used to justify political violence or holy fights based on religion or religious writings, or a state which could come closer to that of Saudi Arabia which practices Sharia law?

Fuad Timraz (Interview, 30.04.13) questions whether or not religion is really that important in politics. He says that Norway has had a Christian prime minister, but it has not changed that

way that politics are done or the way of thinking of the Norwegian people. “ Hamas has not forced people to go to the Mosque”, he says and continues: “in a democratic country and [democratic] elections, Hamas won. And everybody witnessed it. But if we go to a country which does not have elections such as Saudi Arabia, then we can see that people are forced to go to the Mosque and women are treated the way they are. It is a “democratic”, autocratic regime”. In a country such as Norway, where religion is not as important as in Palestine, a religious politician does not necessarily win the election because of religion but because of good politics. But I would still argue that religion is dividing people because it categorizes people into something which they are and into something which they cannot be.

George El Jeries was very clear on the role which religion has; “...religion does not gather people. There are Christians who are divided in Great Britain, Catholics and Protestants, and in Islam there are Sunni and Shia [Muslims] who are separated. They do not have one collective religion in the Middle East” (Interview, 20.03.2013). But how can then different states such as Iran with a majority of Shia Muslims and Palestine with a majority of Sunni Muslims work together? Probably because of a cause which both can benefit from, a common enemy or for pragmatic reasons because an important point is that religion is what people make of it. One example was the Norwegian people, but also what Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) argues. She says that “Whether you are a Christian or a Muslim means that you behave decent towards others and that you have respect for others. And it has meant the same to be a Muslim for my father’s mother as it has to be a Christian for my mother’s mother”.

But George El Jeries wanted to emphasize the differences which religion made, and said “If I as a Christian sit in Norway with 100 Muslim friends around me, I feel very marked in terms of language and everything”. In the interview he stated that he found it difficult to be a foreigner in his own country since he did not share the majority of Palestinians religious beliefs. “We in Fatah are not believers in their [Hamas] eyes, we are their enemies and do not have Islam as our law...we believe, and my belief is between me and my God, but it is my country which they have occupied, it is not my God they have occupied” (Interview, 20.03.13). When asked what the difference was between him and Hamas, he clearly said that they wanted to turn the whole world into an Islamic world, but that he was interested in Palestine and that was it.

This difference in thinking across genders and generations provide an interesting image of how the situation is today. Some have very strong opinions and personal experiences which can hinder future cooperation, while some are more pragmatic and able to put their differences aside. That being said, it should however be noted that religion is a crucial part of the everyday life of Palestinians in Norway and should not be underestimated, but at the same time not overrated. People are able to cooperate and move forward towards common goals despite differences in religion and this difference should be understood and respected, based on mutual understandings.

5.0 - Analysis

The previous chapter showed by using empirical data that Palestinians in Norway are divided in politics between Fatah, Hamas, left parties and some who are independent politically (there might be other important political actors, but this has not been discovered by this study). It also showed that there was a link between political parties in Palestine and in the Palestinian diaspora in Norway, but that there was a weak link between the politics itself and its effects on the diaspora. This is consistent with the other finding that there is a strong belief in the role of civil society because politics are dividing Palestinians, and that national unity was desirable but difficult to achieve. But what do these findings actually signify and how are they relevant for the Palestinians who live in Norway?

5.1 - Palestinians in Norway

The study has indicated that the Palestinian diaspora in Norway consists of around 6-8000 individuals. This number has been suggested by a number of respondents and partly confirmed by a researcher at SSB. However, it is important to underline that this number is only a guesstimate and that no one knows for sure how many there are (this has been discussed in chapter two). It would be interesting to know how many there are in Norway in order to theorize further around the effect that diaspora communities have on politics in terms of size and strength, but also to compare them in relations to other diasporas, both in Norway and in Europe.

Through interviews and empirical material, my research has shown that the diaspora is a diverse group, with a number of various ages and generations, opinions, identities and backgrounds, e.g. from Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon. In addition to this, the diaspora consist of a mix of those who are born in Norway and raised in Norwegian society, and those who have come to Norway as refugees, former prisoners and those who have applied for asylum or family reunification. The diversity is also manifested in a large variety between generations and across geographical areas, where the diaspora is spread out from Alta in the North to Kristiansand in the South.

The study shows that a majority of the respondents in Norway are Fatah supporters or members, while there are small groups of Hamas and left wing parties and some who do not

have any particular political affiliation. One reason to this which was pointed out in the analysis was that Fatah had existed much longer than Hamas and had been a major political actor in Palestinian politics. Thus it was natural that most of the respondents and Palestinians in Norway had in one way or another a relationship to Fatah. But Palestinians who were not supporters or members of Hamas perceived Hamas to follow a radical way of fighting, which was also confirmed by Hamas supporters, while their way was that of politics. This is not surprising, when looking back into historical events, but what was surprising was that respondents disagreed on whether or not there could be a possible cooperation towards a common goal and objectives, despite political differences. The role of religion was especially problematic and perhaps the biggest hindrance for an effective cooperation, besides personal conflicts and prestige.

Through the eyes of a constructivist, the social ontology as discussed in chapter two and the *logic of appropriateness* has clearly not been taken into consideration. Since constructivists argue that a concept requires that it must be shared by many to be called a concept there can be errors in some elements. Individuals may agree that there is a state which should be called Palestine, but e.g. the concept of state-building has not been recognized by the political groups which individuals belong to, because they cannot agree on how to do it, but instead fight for power.

As argued by Wendt in his article about Alter and Ego (Wendt, 1992), *agency* plays an important part as to how relationships involve over time. In his article he argues that among state actors there does not have to be anarchy, but relationships are dynamic and state influences individuals and vice versa. Seeing as Hamas and Fatah are in fact governments of two separate parts of a state, they have gone to war against each other and signed and broke a number of peace agreements, they are considered as unequal partners by the international community and are supported by different international actors.

This split has resulted in an interstate relationship in Palestine which has been transferred to some diaspora actors, which effectively prevents cooperation. And the result is that most respondents believe in a strengthened civil society, and that the role of civil society both in Norway and in Palestine could create changes which would benefit both the Palestinian diaspora and those who live inside Palestine. In addition to the belief in a strengthened civil society, one respondent also suggested that a national council for Palestine in Norway could

work on developing social agendas and strategies, and that more awareness should be raised among the public in Norway about the Palestinian question for land. However, Nidal Hamad (Interview, 26.04.13) said that there is already a national organization named The Palestinian Association in Norway (Den Palestinske Forening i Norge), but not very active since it is run on a voluntary basis.

I find this idea quite interesting but it depends on how one will deal with challenges such as ways of financing and inclusion of all. This means across genders, ages, backgrounds, political affiliation and to work united for the Palestinian question of land rights, and not for self-promotion in politics. I believe that such a council should be apolitical, since there are different interests and as the research has shown, politics is a hindrance for such cooperation. Therefore, such a council should not work to shape political agendas, as a lobby organization, but rather as a consulting and coordinating organ for Palestinians in Norway, with the aim of strengthening public information and the role of civil society between Norway and Palestine. I am aware that there are many organizations who are working on this today as well, but visibility and information to the public should be a top priority, especially if they wish to gather more support for their causes. Nadia Jounes (Interview, 03.05.13) suggested that the possibility to travel to Palestine for those who are not familiar with the Palestinian case could be a good way to start. This way, one can attract more attention from those who are not already interested in Palestine.

Another benefit is that a national council can be established in other diaspora countries, and as such, the diasporas all over the world can unite on common goals and ambitions. Unity and cooperation amongst the diaspora can also be beneficial for the political parties within Palestine and leadership in exile, as it can lead to exchange of experiences and leadership training. And in this there is the possibility to exchange knowledge between young leaders and learn from other diaspora organizations which can effectively lead to a closer cooperation.

But the majority of Palestinians who have been interviewed have been very active and had the desire to play a role, to use their knowledge, their experiences and to contribute for a prosperous future. But even though commitment was high, this does not lead automatically to a hope and optimism. Many of the respondents, 35 years old and above, said that they had experienced many things, many sparks of optimism before, which had ended in failure, and so

their hope for the future was fading. But on the other hand, several respondents said that they would continue to be committed, in order to give hope and perhaps responsibility to the new generations, and let them continue the fight for their land.

5.2 - Norwegian politics and Norway's role internationally

A continuous commitment and its outcome could depend upon the involvement of Norwegian politicians and politics, as well as the ability to provide possibilities for the diaspora to engage in organizations and movements. In a document on Peace and Reconciliation processes in the Middle East, by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), they say that they are in solidarity with the demands which the international community, the quartet (Russia, USA, EU and UN), have for a direct cooperation with the Hamas-lead Palestinian government. These are the recognition of Israel's right to exist, distance themselves from violence and acceptance of former agreements (MFA, 2011). This seems to be problematic and would undermine the foundation of Hamas itself and Haniyeh said in a speech dated 11th of February 2012 that "Hamas will never recognize Israel's right to exist" (Aftenposten, 2012). Thus as long as Hamas maintains this position, they will never achieve any support from Norway. But the ministry also said that if these demands are fulfilled, they are willing to go in front of creating direct aid cooperation with the Palestinian government (MFA, 2011).

Nidal Hamad comments that those who have created Israel can also create Palestine: "UN, USA, NATO etc. can open up for a Palestinian state if they want to and solve the problem" (Interview, 26.04.13). And respondent B also confirmed this by saying "I don't think that there is one country which can play a big part alone. [But] Norway is a part of the international community who can contribute together" (Interview, 14.05.13). These voices from the Palestinian diaspora underline the concern that Norway should be independent and raise their critical voice on the international scene when it comes to the Palestinian case. By influencing political decisions in all levels of society, positive results can be achieved both on bilateral but also multilateral politics.

Are Hovdenak explains that there were others who were discontent with the election results and said that some felt that there should be new elections and that the "wrong candidate" had been elected. However, when asked about the possibilities of undermining democracy by failing to recognize Hamas (which had won the majority of votes in the Parliament, and had

been elected through legitimate and democratic elections), he answered: “I would say that it is a disruption of institutions and yes, also of the democracy. It will undermine the democratic process in the Middle East if the results are not acknowledged”. He continued to explain that the West and the USA especially, have been proactive in exporting democracy to the Middle East, but that it is a paradox that these are not being recognized as legitimate. Hovdenak explains that Al-Qaida can use this against Palestinians and say “you have now tried democracy and conducted democratic processes, but they are not being recognized by the West. There you see, we were right” (Interview, 11.04.13). Could it then be that as long as Norway fails to conduct official diplomacy and recognize Hamas as a legitimate political actor, not only as a part of a coalition government, Norway can also fail the democratic processes which it advocates so strongly internationally?

A new book published in June 2013 by Director for Fridtjof Nansen Institute (Polhøgda) Leiv Lunde and NUPI researcher Henrik Thune (Thune & Lunde, 2013), both former Diplomats, criticizes Norway’s dependency on the USA and explains how Norway has secretly been negotiating throughout several conflicts in the world. In an article in *Aftenposten*, 10th of June 2013, Lunde and Thune explain that Norway has been talking and negotiating with parties which the USA have not been able to talk to. This is because they are on the USA’s and EU’s list of terror organizations and, and they point out that early contact with Hamas enabled Norway amongst other to provide information to the USA (*Aftenposten*, 2013). Norway is not bound by the EUs directives and rules, it has chosen to stand outside the union, and although it must adopt certain rules and regulations, it is not bound by the EUs list of terrorist organizations and can become a negotiator or a mediator between Hamas and the international community, in addition to its official talks with the government in the West Bank. And although it is understandable that a small state such as Norway is dependent on following great powers officially, it can do very well in conducting negotiations secretly and Norway can play a unique role.

Seen from a realist perspective in international relations theory, this strategy is understandable, exemplified by Thucydides in the Melian Dialogue: “the strong do what they want, and the weak suffer what they must” (SHSU, *s.a.*). Although Norway is not a weak state compared to states such as Sweden and Denmark, it cannot compare itself to the military and economic power of the USA, and it is understandable that small states want to seek alliances with big states for security reasons. But the power of a small state is by Ingebrigtsen et al. in

Small states in International Relations (2006: 283) considered to be its possibilities to act as a norm entrepreneur in international politics, and provides the examples of sustainable development practices, peaceful resolution of conflict and the norm of transferring resources from rich to poor, all advocated by Scandinavian countries. However, this also includes the support of big states and the influence of small states alone is limited due to a dependence on other states.

Without the support from states such as USA and Russia Norway may lose its influence in international political decisions and be forced to adapt policies made by big states, and without this support, small states risk much by acting alone. This is exactly what Keohane and Nye argues when they say that the increased interdependence of institutional markets, institutions and economics can “become increasingly costly for states to turn away from” (Keohane & Nye, 1998: 84). Although these are the perspectives of two of the most prominent neoliberal scholars, constructivists would not disregard this perspective, but consider it an addition into the thinking of the world as constructed by social dimensions.

If Norway had been the USA and the EU, they could have used carrots and sticks to have other states follow them in recognizing Palestine and provide direct aid to the Palestinian people. But this will not happen if the USA and the EU’s politics stay the same towards Hamas as it was in 2006 when it recognized the democratic process of the elections but not the outcome. And the result was that USA and EU soon condemned Hamas and continued their negotiations and talks with PLO, effectively run by Fatah and Abbas, while Hamas was left with its allies in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iran amongst countries.

So I therefore believe that large states such as the USA and unions such as the EU need independent political actors to negotiate with parties when official politics prevents them from doing so, and smaller states such as Norway need the security and protection which larger states can provide. Therefore it is understandable that non-official negotiations are being conducted by Norway, even though an official recognition of Hamas as the legitimate political actor in Gaza could improve conditions on the ground and channelize direct aid to the Palestinian people. If not, then civil society is being harmed, international humanitarian laws violated and the conditions are deteriorating in Palestine as time goes, contrary to the desire of providing aid and assistance through Norwegian foreign policies. Respondent B

(Interview, 14.05.13) made it clear in an interview what he thought about the role of Norway when he said that “what you don’t accept yourself, you should not accept to others”.

5.3 - The role of Palestinian politics

The majority of respondents understood the political parties within the diaspora in Norway as a hindrance for cooperation. They argued that former conflicts and disagreements between individuals and political parties were maintained when Palestinians moved to Norway. These disabled younger generations of Palestinians which had grown up in Norway to cooperate and unite in common goals and ambitions, and several of the respondents who mentioned political affiliation as an important factor for cooperating or not were around 40 years and older. A common factor for them was that they had experienced a history of violence, with the different intifadas and experienced death of close friends and family members, as well as loss of land and resources. Palestinians support democratic elections, but winning an election is only the first step for change and reform. Processes of democratization take time and help is often needed, by both internal and external actors, in the process of creating long-term sustainable solutions which can help processes towards unity, peace and reconciliation.

But the new generations who grow up in Norway live under different conditions than the hardships in the refugee camps and thus develop differently. Fuad Timraz (Interview, 30.04.13) said that “the younger generations are easily integrated into the Norwegian society, and does not have much time in the Palestinian society”. He complemented this by saying that older people have more experience and knowledge about Palestine, but there is also a difference between a child at the age of two and a youth at 16. Thus, the new generation must learn from the experiences of the older, both good and bad, and combine this knowledge with modern methods and appropriate tools. Nidal Hamad (Interview, 26.04.13) said that the generation who are born in Norway or who have been in Norway; “are more concerned about the Palestinian case...and the political problems which concerns Hamas and Fatah, have less importance here in Norway”. Respondent D (Interview 30.04.13) confirmed this when he said “the new generation wants peace...and they are talking about peace and solutions”. Again, this demonstrates a difference in thinking between the generations, but also between those who are born in Norway and those who come as refugees.

This has also been discussed by Abbas Shiblak, Associate Fellow, RSC, University of Oxford, in his article on reflections about the Palestinian diaspora in Norway. He explains that Palestinian families who move to Scandinavia are met with a culture shock and that the majority of Palestinians see the new culture as a threat to their values and identity (2005b: 15). He says that this causes a gap between generations and argues that the result is that there is a “deeper bonding to the Mosque and an entrenchment in religious groups” and “...the second generation of Palestinians finds it more difficult to reconcile the root and adopted cultures to one another” which effectively leads to an identity crisis. I would therefore argue that the diaspora who are growing up in Norway should try to understand the situation from the refugees point of view or those who move to Norway, and that those who are refugees or move to Norway should put aside political differences and use their knowledge to assist the new generations in shaping a common future. And even though there are differences, there should be dialogue amongst those who disagree. This can be more helpful than silence, because then one knows what the other part thinks and one can approach a topic or a decision from different angles. Disagreements and discussions can provide insight and knowledge into perhaps new aspects and discover new ways of thinking and doing things. Being different is an advantage, not an obstacle, if all actors have a common goal.

As far as I have been able to analyze, a split in the diaspora is caused by different politics advocated by the political parties in Palestine, their history and the support from diaspora members. The study found that politics was separating the diaspora, because religion influenced politics, which affected identity and the perceptions of self and others. And this was illustrated by George (Interview, 20.03.13) who said: “Me personally, I have nothing in common with Hamas, partly as a Fatah member and partly as a Christian”. This perception and viewpoint of “the others” were also said to be difficult by respondent C: “I want to integrate and adapt across culture and identity. But when people look at me, people think of me as a terrorist because I go to the mosque, I have a beard and I wear traditional clothing” (Interview, 20.03.13).

Since Hamas reflects the view of many of Palestine/Gaza’s inhabitants, it is important to understand the role Hamas has and how it is able to influence Palestinians. Nadia Jounes (Interview, 03.05.13) said that she knew people who would want Hamas as it was historically, but not as it is currently. When she was asked to elaborate on this, she said that the old Hamas was more democratic and open, but has started to go over to extremism because of the small

groups and fractions which Hamas has created. And this was the closest I came to find anyone saying that Hamas was a terrorist organization, even though many respondents criticized Hamas's methods and disagreed with their choices. This is illustrated by respondent B from Gaza (Interview, 14.05.13) who said that before the elections in 2006, "Hamas said that it was "haram" (forbidden) to not vote for Hamas", and that God said that people should vote. The same respondent said that Hamas has also introduced hijab for girls, and that they have strict controls with women and men being together. He also said that they would physically punish those who had a certain hairstyle and nice jeans, because they would dress disrespectfully.

Respondent D (Interview 30.04.13) said that many people in Gaza have not had any education or travelled much outside Gaza, and thus one might influence them easily. From an external point of view, I understand that religion matters in Gaza, but I also argue that mixing religion into politics is a hindrance for cooperation between political actors. This is because problems arise when religion is being used as an argument in politics, and a politician becomes a messenger from God. Fuad Timraz (Interview, 30.04.13) also supported this when he said "it is important that one does not focus on religion. Religion is separating in all ways. Religion is implicit and the same as certain laws".

From an external point of view, I therefore believe that religion does not necessarily mix with politics and is not related to the thought of democracy and freedom of rights, since it is subjective and can be tweaked to fit any position, e.g Sharia laws. This signifies that if we should accept religion into politics, we must also be prepared to recognize those who do not have the same religious viewpoint as we have.

Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) further explained how Hamas controls everyday life, when she said that boys and girls are encouraged not to mix in Gaza and that they were controlling large parts of the inhabitant's life. She also said that Hamas today was "more concerned about religious control and apparently, less concerned with national liberation". This can be exemplified by the last law which gained international attention, that of gender segregation in public and private schools from the fourth grade (Al-Jazeera, 2013). Are Hovdenak, explained that this could be due to internal and external forces which pull and push in different directions (Interview, 11.04.13), namely the leadership outside of Palestine who perhaps have different ideas than the leadership inside Palestine, which creates conflicts. Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) also said that "they [Hamas] are contributing to escalate

the level of conflict when they are speaking about our religious right on the country, instead of international framework... and when they use religion to legitimize murder of civilians or to demonize the enemy”.

The result of this should be that despite differences between political parties, an agreement should be made if religion should be included into politics at all, because if not, then religion can continue the divide and distance amongst Palestinians. Nidal Hamad (Interview, 26.04.13) also desired this and said that “we want to become a united government similar to all organizations, despite differences” and that a separation does not help the Palestinians, only the Israelis. Perhaps those who voted for Hamas in the 2006 elections are re-considering their choice, but then again, as long as there is not a new election, Hamas is still in government. And if religion should be advocated to front politics from Palestinians, so should the Israelis be able to claim a religious right to their “holy land” and thus justify their politics. This is another example which illustrates why a religious dimension can further complicate political processes.

When asked about the link between politics in the diaspora and politics in Palestine, Line Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) said that many of the older Palestinians in the diaspora are concerned with political affiliation and separation, but that she was hoping for a change of mentality and she was optimistic about the new generation. She also said that if the young generation chooses to become politically active, they have a better foundation for having their policies count and lead to results without being colored by these conflicts. This was also confirmed by Nidal Hamad (Interview, 26.04.13) who said that “it is important to include the youths because they will control the country”.

But the real effect that the politics have in relations to Palestine is that Hamas have fought Israel. Nidal also says that “If anyone else than Hamas had done the same as Hamas did against Israel; they could also have won the elections”. He said that this was because negotiations had been attempted before, but that the Palestinian people had now lost much due to PLOs negotiation approach. This had led to many people who had to flee Palestine because of wars, because of further expansion of settlements, which was a result of failed politics, and a reason why many Palestinians had to move to diaspora communities. Respondent B, (Interview 14.05.13) said that there is now a tendency that people are trying to move away

from Gaza, because those who have graduated from university have nothing to do and no possibilities for a job.

There are many individuals who are involved in activities which are closely linked to solidarity movements throughout Europe. Khateeb (Interview, 17.04.13) says that she knows about several who are travelling to conferences and meet other Palestinians in exile and that “there are several Palestinian international forums where one meets”. But there is an emphasis on the role which individuals have and she said that “the amount of things one can do, depends on those one knows either in Palestine or in the countries around in the refugee communities”. Nidal Hamad (Interview, 26.04.13) also says that there are Palestinians who are working with European solidarity organizations, in order to tell people about the situation in Palestine, but that more could be done. Fuad Timraz (Interview, 30.04.13) also said that if members of the diaspora have been in contact with the Palestinian society and the situation becomes stable, then there might be possibilities for future processes.

Another factor which is related to the link between politics in Palestine and within the diaspora is that neither Hamas nor Fatah have any strong allies except Egypt who can speak their case to the international community, and can therefore risk standing alone. With strong allies where the diaspora are located, the interests of Palestinians could become more visible, which eventually could lead to international pressure on demands. But this requires in return that the diaspora is liberal and willing to compromise on certain aspects with other political actors in the diaspora and adapt to politics in the country where they live.

A third factor is that there are different environments in Palestine and in Gaza, and that the political situation in Gaza, where Hamas has its stronghold, is relatively unstable compared to that of Norway. Respondent B (Interview, 14.05.13) illustrated this when he said that “Gaza is a special place. Gaza is a place where social changes can happen overnight...The social structure changes so rapidly”. But in Norway there is a different context, and people respond differently.

This is where I argue that social structures are very important, those of practices, shared knowledge and material resources. If there should be a possibility for cooperation and if a Palestinian identity should be enhanced and underlined, it is important to unite on common terms. But this is difficult since the living conditions for diaspora members in e.g. Europe are

quite different from the hardships which the Palestinians in Gaza live under. But for Palestinians it should be important to unite across the values which constitute the Palestinian identity, symbols of nationality and cultural heritage. This is one of the main ideas of a constructivist thinking and combined with the other social dimensions such as language and rules, one can see that a strong national identity would help the diaspora to promote common interests.

5.4 - Analysis of hypothesis

I found that political affiliation and a connection to the political parties plays an important role for from members in the Palestinian diaspora. This sense of belonging and identity manifested itself in the diversity of the diaspora, the role of individuals, religion, and the politics itself which the political actors conducted in Palestine. The research indicated that the identity and assumptions which one assigns to another person by saying that they are from Fatah or Hamas, had a strong significant effect on how people were perceived within the diaspora.

In addition, the Palestinian diaspora in Norway is very heterogeneous with different backgrounds, opinions, personalities and ages, as well as thoughts about the future. This was demonstrated on many occasions when respondents disagreed on which way the political parties in Palestine should move forward, what was the role of the diaspora and many agreed that disagreements and personal conflicts were disrupting possible collaboration within the diaspora. However, very few actually came up with ideas and suggestions to how these conflicts and problems should be solved, and many said that when the older generation steps down, the new generation steps up. A quote by Nadia Jounes (Interview, 03.05.13) illustrates this: “things move slowly, very slowly. And we need to get rid of the old people who are into politics, and replace them with new, young people. Both Israelis and Palestinians, educated people can fix this, and they are not that narrow-minded”. This gives room for some optimism, but also requires much patience and how much longer do Palestinians want to wait?

I also found that Norwegian politics could be a hindrance for effective diplomatic processes, negotiations and interstate relations towards Palestinian actors. And despite Norway’s unique position internationally, it has chosen to be informed about Hamas’s role in Palestine and position on various issues but not recognize it as the legitimately elected government. So

when linking these findings I believed that Palestinians in Norway cannot agree on which politics they want, and are therefore not able to promote common politics for all Palestinians which leaves them inefficient and unequal and the result is that they are not able to organize themselves. But this might also be because of Norwegian politics towards Palestine and Hamas. Norway wants to negotiate via the PLO which effectively is run by Fatah, which leaves Fatah supporters in Norway with the upper hand in a power relationship with Hamas and its supporters which must seek support elsewhere.

I would be very interested to see if a change in Norwegian politics and diplomacy towards all Palestinian actors, could improve situations on the ground in Palestine. I believe that there can be even more difficulties for future generations of Norwegians of Palestinian descent if Norwegian politics are not altered. Those generations of Palestinians who grow up in Norway will most likely acquire the mindset of Norwegians, and as more and more generations are being born, how will they be able to maintain their Palestinian heritage? One might ask, will the new generation who will be born in Norway in 20 or 30 years be as connected to Palestine, as their family who fled from the distant country more than 70 years ago? Will Norwegians of Palestinian descent remain as steady on reclaiming their land as the current generations are, and how will refugees who come with their own background and perspectives influence the diaspora?

Øivind Fuglerud, Professor of Social Anthropology at the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History, says that there is a blend between the host society and the society of origin which effectively mixes into “here” and “there” which creates a dual or perhaps multiple identity for Palestinians. Helena Schulz (2005: 25) uses examples from Sweden to prove this point when she says that Palestinians recreate their homes in exile and socialize with other Palestinians, but also participate in the Swedish labor market, school system and take part in the celebration of “Midsummer”.

Fuad Timraz (Interview, 30.04.13) assured that the Palestinian identity was strong and that there was no need for concern: “As long as Palestinians feel alienated from the world society, there will be new generations who will be engaged in the question about Palestine. They will not die out, even though they are born here in Norway. There are people in Norway who are engaged towards other people in the world, and there are many Palestinians in Norway who are engaged to the question about Palestine. Think about how many people who have been

engaged in Sub-Saharan Africa, some in Syria, Chile etc.”. This is interesting because throughout my data I discovered that individuals were affected differently both inside and outside a political party. This signifies that even though an individual was strongly against the opposite party, this also signified that inside the political party which that person belonged to, there were conflicts and disagreements. And even though many respondents did not want this, they realized that this inter and intra-polarization was difficult to prevent.

This means that the hypothesis I put forward in chapter two was incorrect; that most members of political parties are separated from those who have a different political standing, but are united with likeminded individuals. Even though I was wrong I discovered that there are more nuances than differences between Hamas or Fatah amongst the Palestinian diaspora (in addition to those who support other parties or are independent), but also several levels of disagreement. I found this interesting because I did not know very much before I started the research, but this enabled me to see the individual rather than the whole group of diaspora members. In addition this was also important because the results are consistent with the results which Ben-David (2012) put forward that Palestinians work with non-Palestinians, also in Norway. This demonstrates that the deductive research approach of testing empirically previous research led to confirmation of that research, and can perhaps act as a valuable contribution to diaspora studies

I can therefore argue that Palestinian politics play an important role and have a significant effect on perceptions of identity and possibilities for cooperation within the diaspora of Palestinians in Norway. This is because some individuals are more concerned about political affiliations, and what the political actors are doing in Palestine, more so than being a Palestinian, working in the diaspora, for other Palestinians. A lack of unity harms their common goals and ambitions of their own state, prevents the formation of a functioning and active national council or organization, and acts as a hindrance for future cooperation both internally in the diaspora and externally towards other actors. But there is optimism and there are possibilities.

It is probably not new information for many that politics is dividing people (not only Palestinians), but for non-Palestinians who are working with them and who are committed to their cause this might be interesting and important information. By analyzing who the actors are, what the factors are, which agreements/disagreements there are and how one can try to

solve them or which attempts have been tried before, new understandings and knowledge can be reached on how a diaspora community in Norway relates to both internal and external actors.

But this community is only a part of the larger diaspora. Even though there are “only” thousands of Palestinians who live in Norway and in much better conditions than the millions in refugee camps in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, they still have similar experiences and ambitions, and can use this to their advantage and learn from each other and cooperate. A PRIO report of the participation of diasporas in peace building and development processes recommends that the participation of the diaspora should be recognized and that fragmentation and politicization amongst the involved actors should be understood and dealt with in appropriate ways (PRIO, 2010). The diaspora community should therefore be included in all phases and regarded as an important actor, and perhaps the diaspora can come to terms stimulated by external initiatives and also understand how external actors perceive them and collaborate with them in order to reach agreements which will not only benefit one actor, but all. This can lead to cooperation, sustainable solutions and prosperity which in return can involve the diaspora in important decision making processes and eventually create a success story which others can learn from.

6.0 – Conclusion

As I wrote in the introduction, the purpose of the thesis is to research the role of Palestinian politics within the Palestinian diaspora in Norway. I also stated that I initially wanted to focus on Palestinian Hamas supporters in Norway but that I could not find sufficient respondents to conduct research. This shifted my focus towards a more general approach as to how Palestinians regardless of political affiliation, experienced the relationship between politics, identity, culture and religion (and I therefore started out with different research questions than I have actually answered (see interview guide)).

g. What characterizes the Palestinian diaspora in Norway?

The diaspora is heterogeneous and Palestinians show a great variety in backgrounds. They come from different places, have different histories and some support Hamas, some support Fatah and others are loyal to PFLP, Islamic Jihad, other parties or are non-political. They have had problems cooperating amongst themselves and have not been able to work united in a national organization in Norway where there are only Palestinians. This has led many of them to work for NGO's where they cooperate with non-Palestinians, and this has in turn not improved the relationship between individuals in the diaspora. This is not necessarily between political parties, because the finding's chapter also shows that there are disagreements inside political parties within the diaspora, on which things should be emphasized, how things should be done and how they should work. Another characteristic is that they did not see Hamas as a terrorist organization, as indicated earlier by the USA, EU and Israel, and this was an important answer to this part of the research question.

h. Who are the main actors in politics within the Palestinian diaspora in Norway?

During the research process I found that Fatah was the party which had the most supporters and that Hamas was considered as the main opposition in the diaspora. Historical ties with Norway and Norwegians in the form of close cooperation on a state-to-state level have enabled the majority of Palestinians in Norway today to have either a direct or indirect relation to Fatah. And according to the majority of respondents, there were not many Hamas members who moved away from Gaza or demonstrated their public affiliation with the party due to fear of social stigma. One thing which was interesting is that several respondents said that Hamas had support from Muslims who were not from Palestine. This can indicate that

Hamas has wide support amongst Muslims in Norway, but that the supporters are a minority within the Palestinian diaspora.

i. Is politics shaping the Palestinian diaspora? If so, how and why/why not?

Throughout my findings and analysis I demonstrated that yes, politics is shaping the Palestinian diaspora. This was related to how one assigned identity, culture and religion to either of the political parties. Where Hamas would draw inspiration from Islam and be associated with acts of terrorism, Fatah would remain its main secular counterpart, devoted on following the path of politics. But I also found that personal differences and differences in culture in addition to politics would disable cooperation between diaspora actors. Thus politics were important, but not the main decisive factor for shaping the diaspora, e.g. be united or polarized.

j. Do members of the Palestinian diaspora see themselves as influential in Palestinian politics?

The majority of respondents said no and this was because the political headquarters in Palestinian politics were in Palestine and the countries around, e.g. Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. But there were several respondents who said they had contact with solidarity networks in other diasporas in Europe and cooperated with them in order to spread information and focus on the International Humanitarian rights for Palestinians. But due to the low number of diaspora members it was difficult to affect any political decisions and most respondents recognized this.

k. What is important for the Palestinian diaspora in Norway?

The most important point was to achieve international recognition for the state of Palestine and to unite the West Bank and Gaza, but there were three additional points which were also important. Firstly, achieve national unity despite differences and aim for common goals and aspirations. The challenges were to empower the young generations of Palestinians who are growing up in Norway and to maintain the Palestinian identity, and to integrate refugees and asylum seekers into the Norwegian society. Secondly, to continue the commitment and engagement of new generations of Israelis, Palestinians and non-Palestinians in processes which are aimed at achieving permanent sustainable solutions which could be beneficial for all parties, in Palestine, Israel and in diaspora countries. And thirdly, to cooperate with relevant Norwegian actors both in government and on lower levels and to maintain support

from individuals and solidarity organizations. This was not necessarily done via Fatah, Hamas or other political parties, but via Norwegian organizations which is focusing on Palestinian rights.

l. How do Norwegian politics affect the diaspora in Norway?

Norwegian politics seemed to increase the separation between the political actors and thus Palestinians and those who are independent politically. This was due to the impossibilities of cooperating with a government which was not recognized as legitimately elected by the USA, EU and Israel, which left Norwegian politics on the continuous track of having official diplomatic relations with Fatah. This has disabled Hamas from having an open dialogue and receiving direct aid from Norway and they have had to seek support elsewhere. This unequal balance of dialogue, power and negotiations towards the Palestinian governments in Gaza and Palestine has been driven by a Norwegian desire to keep up good relations with great powers such as the USA and the EU in hope of security and protection internationally. But perhaps this is a wise decision, because if Norway would go to the step of recognizing Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank as the *de facto* governments, they could indirectly recognize that Palestine was governed by two sovereign bodies, which in return would implicate that Palestine was divided into two states.

In my thesis I was able to use a constructivist perspective to identify key factors which mattered for a national unity or not (not counting politics), such as religion, culture, language and social dimensions. The study from Oslo and Akershus has found that identity linked to politics and religion can unite or separate, stigmatize or build bonds, and problematize a national unity amongst Palestinians. I have argued that the reasons for this in the diaspora are because of different backgrounds from different countries and experiences as well as the politics and the relationships between the political actors. This also confirmed previous research by Ben-David (2012) that Palestinians are mixing into separate organizations and does not work as purely Palestinian organizations. The result is that lack of unity is destructive for the Palestinians, and as long as divisions continues to exist there are few hopes and only moderate reasons for optimism for a Palestinian state.

In the analysis I pointed out that differences in culture can highlight difficulties in cooperation but I suggested that dialogue and communication could help to avoid these. In addition, a continuous belief and hope in civil society was emphasized when asked how one could

achieve common goals and ambitions, and create national unity and common interests. By following a path which includes strong and united civil society organizations, both in Palestine and diaspora countries, who decide their own agendas and policies together and cooperate with diplomatic and influential leaders, Palestinians themselves can change their common future. Outcomes of their actions can be judged by external actors, condemned by international organization and neglected in interstate affairs, but strong efforts should be made to create arenas to cooperate, negotiate and debate between equal members of the civil society and state leaders in order to achieve the best results possible. The people who are affected by top level decisions are ultimately those who should decide their own fate by using their knowledge, skills and wisdom to cooperate and create a way forward.

This is especially true for those people who are affected by historic events in everyday life and pay the price with blood and tears, both Jews and Palestinians. This does not mean that there has to be a solution which can promote peace and pave the way for prosperity immediately, but for all the future generations this should be the end goal. And I believe that in order to achieve this, Palestinians should take a step back and view them from an external actor's point of view. If a division in politics is dividing a people and is harmful for the ambitions of creating a state, then why continue to work in parallel organizations or across fields of interest?

Line Khateeb had the idea of creating a national council for Palestinians in Norway, an umbrella organization under which they could join and communicate, agree and come to terms on what was important for them and how they wanted to achieve this. I am not aware of how this process has been conducted in other countries or if it has at all, but I believe that the idea can create unity. I also believe that this can have far more power in reaching out to other national councils, umbrella- or diaspora organizations, and to involve more people in both this council and lower level organizations.

But even though this may be a good idea with the very best of intentions, it can also create results which can worsen current conditions. One possible scenario is that this council does not involve all relevant and important actors and is given mandate to perform tasks which concern all Palestinians, thus effectively making decisions on behalf of others. And so inequality and injustice can manifest itself and some critics might ask would not *status quo* be better?

One should simply not be positive or negative to such a suggestion, but there should be a thorough analysis which contains advantages and disadvantages which can give a nuanced image of benefits, pitfalls and possible outcomes of such a council. The point would be to not be exclusive and lock oneself to one opinion, one mindset or one way of doing things, without being able to differentiate between context and situations. One might see things from a very positive view and act accordingly in one situation, while another situation might be completely different.

The main challenge as I have come to understand throughout this research is to unite the Palestinian diaspora in Norway and work towards common goals. This must be in addition to an interest for new thinking and new ideas, while combining the best methods and experiences which have worked previously. The inclusion of the new generations of Palestinian diaspora who are growing up in Norway is vital in this process in order to create prosperity and hope. And a constant communication and exchange of ideas and knowledge across different backgrounds, cultures, politics and identity are important elements for empowering the diaspora, which can create hope and a prosperous future for Palestinians in diaspora countries and in Palestine.

I suggest that the research and findings provided in this thesis can be used to further investigate the diaspora, push and pull factors for cooperation, relations to other diasporas in a regional area, e.g. Scandinavia, and compare and contrast the diaspora to others in Norway. Perhaps they are able to learn from each other despite their differences, and even though the tools can be different, the results can be similar. And perhaps those who read this are curious and interested in learning more about the topic, and consider this a baseline for further research, both narrow and wide. But it is important that diaspora communities are included in processes of reconciliation and peace building, together with state and non-state actors, in diaspora countries. And as long as injustice is being made, there are those who are willing to stand up and fight for their right by different methods.

I would like to end the thesis by quoting some words which made an impression on me. I saw them written on a wall in January 2013 when I visited Ramallah: "I hope that one day I can live with peace in my heart, love around me and know that my people are safe".

List of references

Aftenposten. (2012). *Hamas-leder: - Vi vil aldri anerkjenne Israel*. Localised on 15 June 2013 on the World Wide Web: http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/Hamas-leder---Vi-vil-aldri-ankjenne-Israel-6760072.html#.UbuJFpzs_44

Aftenposten. (2013). *Hemmelig fredsmegling i over 20 konfliktområder*. Localised on 15 June 2013 on the World Wide Web: http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/Hemmelig-fredsmegling-i-over-20-konfliktomrader-7225305.html#.Ubugu5zs_45

Al-Jazeera. (2008). *Aftermath of Hamas' Helles Family Gaza Raid*. Localised on 30 July 2013 on the World Wide Web: http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=1d7_1217879965

Al-Jazeera. (2013). *Hamas orders gender segregation at schools*. Localised on 14 June 2013 on the World Wide Web:
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/04/201342101959704457.html>

Amr, Z. A. (1993). *Hamas: A Historical and political background*. *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXII, no. 4 (Summer 1993), pp. 5-19. Localised on 11 February 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.palestine-studies.org/files/pdf/jq/11537.pdf>

Baroud, R. (2008). *Family politics and the new Gaza crisis*. *Arab News*. Localised on 30 July 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.arabnews.com/node/315063>

Baylis, J. & Smith, S. (2006). *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to international relations*. Oxford, University Press. 811 p.

Ben-David, A. (2012). *The Palestinian Diaspora on The Web: Between De-Territorialization and Re-Territorialization*. *e-Diasporas Atlas*. Localised on 26 February 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.e-diasporas.fr/working-papers/Ben-David-Palestinians-EN.pdf>

Berg, B. L. & Lune, H. (2011). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 8th ed. Pearson Education. 432 p.

- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford, University Press. 748 p.
- Caridi, P. (2012). *Hamas from resistance to government*. New York, Seven Stories Press. 414 p.
- CIA Factbook. (2013). *The World Fact Book about Iran*. Localised on 01 August 2013 on the World Wide Web: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html>
- Cohen, R. (1997). *Global Diasporas: an introduction*. London, UCL Press Limited. 228 p.
- Crenshaw, M. (ed.). (2007). *Terrorism in context*. University Park, Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania State University Press. 633 p.
- Dunne, T., Kurki, M. and Smith, S. (2010). *International Relations Theories – Discipline and Diversity*. 2nd ed. Oxford: New York. Oxford University Press. 365 p.
- Ethical Guidelines for UMB. Localised on 08 April 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.umb.no/statisk/personal/etikk/UMB%20Ethical%20Guidelines.pdf>
- European Union. (2002). *Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism*. Official Journal of the European Communities, L164/3. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:164:0003:0007:EN:PDF>
- European Union. (2009). *Council Decision 2009/1004/CFSP*. Official Journal of the European Union, L 346/58. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:346:0058:0060:EN:PDF>
- Fellesutvalget for Palestina. (2013). Localized on 04 August 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.palestina.no/om-fup>
- Fuglerud, Ø. (1999). *Life on the Outside: The Tamil Diaspora and Long Distance Nationalism*. London, Pluto.

Gani, D. A. (2005). Caught Between Two Worlds: The Case of the Palestinian Community in Sweden. In Shiblak, A. (ed.). *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe – Between Identity and Transnationalism*, p. 44-51. Refugee and Diaspora Studies, No.2

Ganor, B. (s.a.). *Is One Man's Terrorist Another Man's Freedom Fighter?* International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT). Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.ict.org.il/ResearchPublications/tabid/64/Articlsid/432/currentpage/1/Default.aspx>

Gassner, I. J. (2008). *Palestinians living in the diaspora*. This Week in Palestine, no. 119. Localised on 05 April 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://thisweekinpalestine.com/i119/pdfs/March%20-%20119%20-%202008.pdf>

Global Exchange. (s.a.). *The Palestinian Diaspora: A History of Dispossession*. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.globalexchange.org/country/palestine/diaspora>

Gule, L. (2010). *Den Fjerde Opphengingen. Beretningen om et varslet justismord og en profesjonsstudie av aktøransvar*. Lars Gule og Ariadne forlag. 614 p.

Gule, L. (2013). "Venstreekstremisme og terrorisme". In Sørensen, Ø., Hagtvat, B. & Brandal, Nik. (eds.). *Venstreekstremisme. Ideer og bevegelser*. Oslo: Dreyer forlag. 218 p.

Guzzini, Stefano. (2000). *A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations*, European Journal of International Relations (6): 147-182

Hanafi, S. (2003). Rethinking the Palestinians Abroad as a Diaspora: The Relationships between the Diaspora and the Palestinian Territories. *HAGAR, International Science Review*. Volume 4, (1-2): 157-182.

Hansen, S. J., Mesøy, A. & Kardas, T. (eds.) (2009). *The Borders of Islam. Exploring Huntington's Faultlines, from Al-Andalus to the Virtual Ummah*. London, Hurst & Company. 388 p.

Hasselknippe, G. (2007). *Forfølgelse av Fatah-lojale personer i Gaza etter Hamas maktovertakelse*. Report to Landinfo. Sent by Hasselknippe 05 April 2013.

Hear, N. V. (1998). *New diasporas: the mass exodus, dispersal and regrouping of migrant communities*. London, UCL Press Limited. 298 p.

Hovdenak, A. (2009). *Al-Qaida – a challenge for Hamas?* Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), report 2009/00092. Sent by Hovdenak 09 April 2013. Available on 05 August 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/09-00092.pdf>

Hovdenak, A. (2010). *The Public Services under Hamas in Gaza: Islamic Revolution or Crisis Management?* Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) report, no. 03. Sent by Hovdenak 09 April 2013. Available on 05 August 2013 on the World Wide Web: http://file.prio.no/Publication_files/Prio/The_Public_Services_under_Hamas_in_Gaza.pdf

Ingebritsen, C., Neumann, I, Gstöhl, S. & Beyer, J. (eds.). (2006). *Small States in International Relations*. Seattle, Reykjavik. University of Washington Press, University of Iceland Press. 334 p.

Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS). (2012). *Families, by type of family, size of family, district and population group 2011*. Statistical Abstract of Israel 2012. Localised on 03 July 2013 on the World Wide Web: http://www1.cbs.gov.il/shnaton63/st05_09.pdf

Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2013). *Palestinian terror and incitement*. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/default.aspx>

Jackson, R. and Sørensen, G. (2010). *Introduction to International Relations – Theories & Approaches*. 4th ed. New York, Oxford University Press. 337 p.

Katzenstein, P. (1996). *The culture of national security: norms and identity in world politics*. New York, Columbia University Press. 560 p.

Keohane, R.O. & Nye, J. (1998). Power and Interdependence in the Information Age. *Foreign Affairs*, Sept/Oct 1998; 77, 5; pp. 81-94.

Ma'an News Agency. (2013). *Islamist, leftist factions rally against negotiations*. Localised on 30 July 2013 on the World Wide Web:

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=615551>

Mail correspondance with Minja Tea Dzamarija, 02 April 2013

SSB. (2013). *Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by sex, country background, time and contents for Palestine*. Localised on 26 March 2013 on the World Wide Web:

<https://www.ssb.no/statistikkbanken/selectout/ShowTable.asp?FileformatId=2&Queryfile=20138611242731583244InnvBefolkn2&PLanguage=1&MainTable=InnvBefolkn2&potsize=2>

MFA - Utenriksdepartementet, 28.10.2011. (2011). *Fred og forsoning i Midtøsten*. Localised on 15 June 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/selected-topics/peace-and-reconciliation-efforts/fred-og-forsoning-i-midtoستن.html?id=408562>

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2011). *Special Statistical Bulletin On the 63rd anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, May 2011*. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Nakba_E63.pdf

Pedersen, A. (ed.). (2011). *Exphil 2, tekster i etikk*. Unipub forlag. 178 p.

Personal interview with respondent A, 31 March 2013.

Personal interview with Are Hovdenak, 11 April 2013.

Personal interview with respondent B, 14 May 2013.

Personal interview with respondent C, 20 March 2013

Personal interview with respondent D, 14 May 2013

Personal interview with George El Jeries, 20 March 2013

Personal interview with Line Khateeb, 17 April 2013.

Personal interview with Nidal Hamad, 26 April 2013.

PRIO. (2010). *Participation of Diasporas in Peacebuilding and Development. A Handbook for Practitioners and Policymakers*. Localised on 18 June 2013 on the World Wide Web:
<http://unpos.unmissions.org/Portals/UNPOS/Repository%20UNPOS/PRIO%20Report%202010%20with%20links.pdf>

Repstad, P. (2007). *Mellom nærhet og distanse. Kvalitative metoder i samfunnsfag*. Fjerde utgave, Universitetsforlaget. 168 p.

RT. (2013). *No need for intifada, Palestine can achieve goals peacefully – Abbas to RT*. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web:
<http://rt.com/news/abbas-palestine-israel-interview-336/>

Roy, S. (2011). *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza. Engaging the Islamist Social Sector*. Princeton and Oxford. Princeton University Press. 319 p.

Safran, W. (1991). Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*. Volume 1, (1): 83-99.

Sam Houston State University (SHSU). (s.a.). *The Melian Dialogue*. Excerpted from *Thucydides*, Benjamin Jowett, tr. A. P. Peabody, ed. (Boston: D. Lothrop & Co., 1883), bk. 5. Localised on 02 August 2013 on the World Wide Web:
http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/Melian.html

Schanzer, S. (2008). *Hamas vs. Fatah: the struggle for Palestine*. New York, Palgrave Macmillian. 239 p.

Schulz, H. & Hammer, J. (2003). *The Palestinian Diaspora: formation of identities and politics of homeland*. London, Routledge. 276 p.

Schulz, H. (2005). The Palestinian Diaspora Between Nationalism and Transnationalism. In Shiblak, A. (ed.). *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe – Between Identity and Transnationalism*, p. 19-31. Refugee and Diaspora Studies, No.2

Shiblak, A. (2005a). *Iraqi Jews: A history of Mass Exodus*. London, Saqi Books. 180 p.

Shiblak, A. (2005b). Reflections on the Palestinian Diaspora in Europe. In Shiblak, A. (ed.). *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe – Between Identity and Transnationalism*, p. 7-18. Refugee and Diaspora Studies, No.2

Store Norske Leksikon (SNL). (2013). *Hamas*. Localised on 28 February 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://snl.no/Hamas>

Study tour to Ramallah. (2013). With Thanks to Scandinavia, an institute of the American Jewish Committee.

Telephone interview with Timraz Fuad Hansen, 30 April 2013.

The Guardian. (2013). *Mass rally in Gaza to support Palestinian president's Fatah faction*. The Guardian world news, agencies in Gaza. Localised on 23 July 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/04/rally-gaza-fatah-palestine-abbas>

The Ministry of Education and Research (Utdanningsdepartementet). Localised on 08 April 2013 on the World Wide Web:

<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/tema/forskning/forskningsetikk-2.html?id=563207>

The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH). Localised on 08 April 2013 on the World Wide Web:

<http://www.etikkom.no/en/In-English/Committee-for-Research-Ethics-in-the-Social-Sciences-and-the-Humanities/>

The Norwegian Security Service of the Police. (2013). Localised on 07 April 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.pst.no/trusler/terrorisme/>

The Research Council of Norway (Forskningsrådet). Localised on 08 April 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.forskningsradet.no/no/Forsiden/1173185591033>

Thune, H. & Lunde, L. (2013). *Hva Norge kan være i verden*. Cappelen Damm. 187 p.

Toameh, K. A. (2013). *Fatah calls on Palestinians to overthrow Hamas in wake of Morsi's fall*. The Jerusalem Post. Localised on 21 July 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Fatah-calls-on-Palestinians-to-overthrow-Hamas-in-wake-of-Morsis-fall-318792>

Tristram, P. (s.a., a). *What Is the Balfour Declaration?* About.com, Middle East Issues. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://middleeast.about.com/od/israelandpalestine/f/me080508.htm>

Tristram, P. (s.a., b). *What Is al-Naqba, or al-Nakba – The Catastrophe?* About.com, Middle East Issues. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://middleeast.about.com/od/israelandpalestine/f/me080511.htm>

Turton, D. & González, J. (1999). *Cultural Identities and Ethnic Minorities in Europe*. Humanitarian Net. Localised on 04 July 2013 on the World Wide Web: http://www.humanitariannet.deusto.es/publica/PUBLICACIONES_PDF/01%20Ethnic%20Minorities.pdf

TV2.no. (2011). *Støre har hatt hemmelige samtaler med Hamas*. Localised on 14 June 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.tv2.no/nyheter/utenriks/midtosten/stoere-har-hatt-hemmelige-samtaler-med-hamas-3400055.html>

UN. (2012). Department of Public Information, News And Media Division. *General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State' Status in United Nations*. New York, United Nations, 33p. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/ga11317.doc.htm>

UNRWA. (2012). UNRWA Headquarters. *UNRWA in figures as of 1 January 2012*. Communication Office, Gaza. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20120317152850.pdf>

US Department of State. (2012a). *Foreign terrorist organizations*. Localised on 27 March 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>

US Department of State. (2012b). *Section 2656f(a) of Title 22 of the United States Code*. Localised on 03 July 2013 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2011/195554.htm>

Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics. *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring, 1992). Pp. 391-425.

Williams, P. D. (2008). *Security Studies: An Introduction*. London, Routledge. 552 p.

Appendix

Interview guide for Master Thesis for Joakim Hope Soltveit (Semi-structured interview)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. It is important that you know that everything which will be said in this interview is confidential between me and you and if you choose to, then your name will be made anonymous and unidentifiable.

(Show informed consent sheet)

It is also important that you know that once I have defended the thesis, all paper and notes, all recordings and all materials which can be used to identify respondents will be stored in a safe and secure location which only the researcher will have access to. This is in case there will be question to the thesis, about the research and about the researcher.

Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

1. Can you tell me about your background?

- Where were you born?
- Has your family been politically active?
- Are you politically active?
- How long have you been in Norway?

2. What can you tell me about the Palestinian diaspora in Norway?

- Numbers
- Geographical locations
- Organizations, communities
- Political affiliations

3. Do you have any reflections around the Palestinian diaspora in Norway?

- Roles
- Responsibilities
- Importance
- Influence in Politics in Norway
- Influence in Politics in Palestine

4. Do you think there is a difference in the political thinking in the diaspora in Norway, and in Palestine about Hamas? Please explain why/why not

5. Which groups or organizations do you know about in Palestine? Are there similarities/differences?

6. **Do you think that there is a difference/similarity between supporters of Hamas, Fatah, PFLP, Islamic Jihad + others, supporters in Norway?**
 - What differences?
 - How are these manifested?

7. **Do you think that there is a difference/similarity between supporters of Hamas, Fatah, PFLP, Islamic Jihad in Palestine?**
 - What differences?
 - How are these manifested?

8. **Why do you think that there is a difference/similarity in people living in Palestine and the people living in Norway?**
 - Political system, government, physical distance?
 - Freedom, perspectives on future?

9. **What can you tell me about Hamas? (How would you describe Hamas + elaborate on description)**

10. **In what ways are Hamas able to use power and legitimize their use of power?**

11. **Is there an alternative to Hamas as a political power?**
 - If yes, please explain
 - If no, please explain

12. **Do you have any reflections around living in a secular country, but supporting an Islamic organization in a country far away?**

13. **What do you think about the relationship between politics and religion?**
 - E.g. a Palestinian Christian living in Gaza under Islamic rule or opposite

14. **Can you tell me about which way forward you would like Hamas to go and what you would like Hamas to do?**

15. **What is in your opinion the best solution to create peace between Palestinians and Israelis?**

16. **Is there anything that you would like to add which haven't been mentioned or touched upon?**

Thank you very much for taking the time to conduct this interview. This has been very helpful for my research and I am very grateful for your cooperation. Can I contact you on a later occasion in case there is something which I missed or misunderstood and want clarify? Do you have any questions after the interview is finished?

Informed consent sheet for master thesis for Joakim Hope Soltveit

You are being asked to take part in a research study concerning the Palestinian diaspora's perspective, more specifically Hamas supporters or Hamas sympathizers, on influencing political decisions in Palestine, more specifically in Gaza.

The researcher is a MSc in International Relations student at the Institute of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric), at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB). This is also where the research will be published. The principle investigator is Joakim Hope Soltveit. Any questions about the research can be asked to this person at any time during the research process and is highly encouraged.

Before the interview

The researcher will inform the respondent what the research is about and inform the respondent that whatever information which is given during the interview, through correspondence by email or text messages is confidential and will only be seen by the researcher. Then the researcher and the respondent will set up an appropriate time and location for an interview which the respondent and researcher agree upon.

During the interview

You will be asked to answer questions about your perspectives on the Palestinian diaspora in Norway, the political situation in Palestine and asked to elaborate on general questions about these topics. The interviews will be recorded by the respondent and certain aspects may be used in the thesis.

After the interview

If the respondent chooses all attributes, titles, names or other recognizable traits will be unidentifiable, thus anonymising the respondent and using pseudonyms. If the respondent desires anonymity in the scientific paper, the respondent has to make the researcher aware of this at the latest on July 15th, one month before the hand in date, 15th of August.

Once the researcher has defended the thesis, all paper and notes, all recordings and all materials which can be used to identify respondents will be stored in a safe and secure location which only the researcher will have access to. This is in case there will be question to the thesis, about the research and about the researcher.

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood what is being asked of you, and that you consent to participate.

Date:

Researcher (sign.)

Respondent (sign.)

List of Respondents

Palestinians

Nidal Hamad

Born in Galilee and grew up in the largest refugee camp in Lebanon: Ein El Hillweh, is now in his early 50s and have been living in Norway for more than 20 years. He is a Palestinian writer and journalist and supports the political left. He has his own website www.safsaf.org, the first Arabic website in Norway, where he publishes information about the Palestinian case and solidarity activities with Palestinians in Norway and Europe. Interview conducted 26th of April 2013.

George El Jeries

Born and raised in a Lebanese refugee camp in East Beirut, has now lived in Norway for more than 20 years, now in his late 40s. He is a long time Fatah member and Christian, and has been active in the Palestinian diaspora in Norway. His father, Moussa El Jeries (Abu George) has been active in politics within labor unions and the Palestinian LO. Interview conducted 20th of March 2013.

Nadia Jounes

Born and raised in Norway, with her father from Israel and her mother from the West Bank. She has travelled to Palestine every year since her youth and has also lived there for several months on many of these occasions. She is now in her 30s and is a master student of International Relations at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Interview conducted 3rd of May 2013.

Line Khateeb

Born and raised in in Norway to a Norwegian mother and Palestinian father. She is now in her late 20s and has travelled every year to Galilee since her youth has lived there for one year. In addition she has also travelled a lot throughout the West Bank and Gaza. She was the leader of the Committee for Palestine (Palestinakomiteén) from 2008-2012 and has worked extensively for Palestinians rights. She now works for the Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers. Interview conducted 17th of April 2013.

Fuad Timraz

He grew up on the Gaza strip and came to Norway as a student in the 1970s. He is a co-founder of the Palestinian Association in Norway (Den Palestinske Forening i Norge), 6th of October 2000, and he was the spokesperson between 2000-02 and 2003-04. He is now in his early 60s and one of the oldest members of the diaspora. He is a former Fatah member, but he is now respected by both Fatah and Hamas members/sympathizers, and can communicate and cooperate with both of them if necessary. Telephone interview conducted 30th of April 2013.

Respondent A - A young male Hamas supporter from Libya, in his late 20s. He is now an asylum seeker and said he had moved around to different places before he came to Norway. He supported Hamas because he identified with their way of doing things, their politics, their organization and their fight for a free Palestine. Interview 31st of March 2013.

Respondent B – A male respondent from Gaza, in his late 30s, politically independent and pursuing a career in Norway. He has lived in Norway for 10 years and has been in Gaza several times before and after Hamas won the elections in 2006. Interview 14th of May 2013.

Respondent C – A male Hamas supporter from Gaza in his late 20s who has applied for Asylum in Norway. He said he supported Hamas because for him they represented something new which symbolized a change with the old ideas. Interview 20th of March 2013.

Respondent D – A male respondent from the West Bank in his early 30s, who have been in Norway for five years. He said he was politically independent and supported those who support International Human Rights, none in particular but those who do good things and the new generations of Palestinians. Interview 30th of April 2013.

Experts

Minja Tea Dzamarinja

She works as a Statistics Norway senior researcher on statistics at the section for population statistics. Mail correspondence 2nd of April 2013.

Are Hovdenak

He works as an advisor and researcher specializing in the Middle East for The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo). Has experience from Middle East research from the Peace and Research Institute of Oslo, journalism and humanitarian work and has lived in periods in Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza. Interview conducted 11th of April 2013.