

One People United: A Deterritorialized Palestinian Identity

**BADIL Survey of Palestinian Youth on
Identity and Social Ties - 2012**

بدیل

المركز الفلسطيني

للمصادر لحقوق المواطنين والمواطنات



BADIL

Resource Center
for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights

One People United: A Deterritorialized Palestinian Identity

BADIL *Survey of* Palestinian Youth on Identity and Social Ties - 2012

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A young man with his face painted in the colours of the Palestinian flag participates in a rally in Gaza City on May 15, 2012 to mark Nakba day (Photo: <http://razadotani.com/>)

Credits & Notations

Many thanks to all who have supported BADIL throughout this research project and in particular to all field researchers and volunteers who have carried out the surveys in the different areas. Without their contribution this publication would not have been possible. We would also like to thank Dr. Norma Hazboun for her contribution.

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1 Chapter Introduction

1.1: Introduction

The violent birth of Israel in 1948 constituted a catastrophe - *Nakba* - for Palestinian aspirations of statehood. The implications of the Nakba on Palestinian society exceed violating their right to self-determination. The Palestinian social fabric has been torn as a result of the mass forced displacement of the majority of Palestinian people from their homeland. Indeed, the implications of the Nakba on Palestinian society have yet to be fully studied and understood. No single research effort can cover the wide spectrum of issues that emanate from the Nakba. One of the most visible outcomes of the Nakba is the geographical dispersal of Palestinians, mainly across the Middle East, but also in the rest of the world. A small number of the Palestinian people remained in the part of their homeland that is now Israel, only to become second class citizens. Today, nearly six and a half decades after the Nakba, it is possible to identify four main Palestinian groups: Palestinian citizens of Israel; Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip under Israeli military occupation since 1967; Palestinian refugees living in the neighbouring Arab countries; and Palestinians in the rest of the world. These four categories crudely, denote, both to different political and social environments in which these groups live.

The following brief description illustrates the different cultural and political circumstances in which Palestinians live. Palestinian citizens of Israel, for example, constitute approximately 20 percent of Israel's population. They live as a minority in a Jewish society with Western cultural orientations. Palestinians in Israel are educated according to the Israeli curriculum. The design, objectives, and impact of that curriculum on Palestinians have been studied by many.¹ Without discussing this issue in great detail, Israeli education of Palestinians aims

to achieve the opposite goal of education, or what has been labelled in Arabic as '*siyasat al-tajhil*' (in free translation, a policy of making Palestinians ignorant of their history, identity, culture and collective rights). For example, the Israeli curriculum glorifies Western and Jewish histories, while limiting the study of Arab and Islamic histories. Ultimately, Palestinian students in Israel are encouraged to forget and disengage themselves of any connection or pride with their history, their belonging to Palestine, and the history of the Middle East generally.

Politically speaking, Palestinians in Israel are forced to operate within a structure that serves the Zionist character of Israel as 'the state of the Jews'. In other words, they have been subjected to attempts to erase their national identity. Undoubtedly that the effects of such an attitude, which amounts to a policy, impinged on the identity of subsequent generations of Palestinians much more than the first generation of the Nakba whose identity was unquestionable.

In comparison, until 1967 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip lived under Jordanian and Egyptian rule respectively, and since the Israeli occupation they have been living under a cruel regime which combines features of military occupation, colonization and apartheid – thus depriving them of their basic human rights.² Moreover, Palestinians in the territory occupied in 1967 live in a different cultural environment to Palestinians inside Israel. Palestinian refugees living in the neighbouring Arab countries, evidently, live in different political and social settings, respective to every country, be it Jordan (the biggest host country of Palestinian refugees), Lebanon or Syria.

The contrast between Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians living under the Israeli regime in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is used here to exemplify the diverse contexts in which Palestinians have lived for the past six or so decades. Hence, although it is impossible to provide a detailed description on each Palestinian case in this introduction, the above brief outline leads to the research subject of this study: Palestinian national identity 65 years after the Nakba. The question that arises is: if different Palestinian groups have existed for so many decades in different political, socio-economic and cultural environments, in isolation from each other, what can we say about Palestinian national identity, and movement, today?

In order to address this question, BADIL has conducted a survey which focuses on identity and social ties among Palestinian youth residing in Mandate Palestine (the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Israel), Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. This is an initial effort to begin to understand how youth (third or fourth generation of

displaced Palestinians) of Palestinian heritage identify themselves with those that share their ancestry. These issues are rendered increasingly relevant given the uncertainty of the continuation of the Oslo framework that has characterized the Palestine question for the past two decades.

It is important to note that the findings of this research are not, and cannot be, conclusive. Mapping Palestinian identity across multiple geographically-divided groups is a huge task and one which demands comprehensive quantitative and qualitative research. This paper, then, should not be viewed as definitive, but instead as a piece of preliminary research which can pave the ground for further, deeper and more comprehensive analyses. Accordingly, alongside each set of findings BADIL has hypothesized explanations for trends and variations encountered so as to assist any such future studies, but again, these 'explanations' must be investigated fully, and it is BADIL's opinion that this area constitutes a rich potential for future research.

Although by no means definitive, the findings found within this paper are significant, as they provide a general overview of contemporary Palestinian orientations and identity. In addition, given the wide range of socio-political contexts in which Palestinians have existed for the past 65 years, some of the findings, especially when viewed as a whole, are surprising. We hope to elaborate upon some of these findings in the following pages.

1.2: Methodology

The volume of academic literature on ‘identity’ is immense. Scholars from various disciplines and approaches have been trying, for too long, to explain the notion of ‘identity’, or more specifically to the subject of this paper: ‘national identity’. It is common to cite ethnicity, culture, language, religion and shared history as important components of a national identity. This non-exhaustive variety of components makes ‘identity’ an elusive and contextual social construct.

No different from other national identities, Palestinian identity has been the subject of numerous research enterprises and debates. Scholars, intellectuals and political activists wrote about the history of Palestinian identity, trying to pinpoint its core characteristics and particular development. According to Palestinian historian, Rashid Khalidi, Palestinian identity began to form around the end of the 19th century.³ The foundations of this identity rested on attachments to a place and to local religious sites. Others, like Farsoun and Aruri, indicated how shared experiences also helped shape Palestinian identity, especially in light of the experiences of European Zionist immigration to Palestine,⁴ stemming from the collectivist and orientalist views that led the immigrants to treat the indigenous population with disdain. BADIL has also sought to further our understanding of Palestinian identity. Most recently (2012), BADIL published a working paper prepared by Abulfattah al-Qalqili and Ahmad Abu-Ghosh. The paper, titled “*Palestinian National Identity: Formation Particularity and Defining Framework*”,⁵ emphasized the centrality of resistance, in its many forms, to the evolution of Palestinian identity since its early stages. Earlier, in 2009, Palestinian sociologist Rosemary Sayigh published, with BADIL, a working paper on Palestinian identity in refugee camps.

However, in this paper we will refrain from delving into the aforementioned academic debate on identity. This is because we do not intend to analyze particular characteristics of Palestinian identity. In this paper we approach identity as a matter of fact. Identity simply ‘works’ in the real world: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been raging for more than one century, with two national identities lying at its core. Palestinian national identity shaped, and was shaped by, the conflict with the Zionist movement in a reciprocal, two-way, relationship. In other words, Palestinian identity has evolved for many decades within evolving social, political and economic contexts. Hence, studying Palestinian identity, and the way it evolved over the years, through the lens of a single definition of ‘identity’ risks losing sight of newer dimensions or components.

The matter-of-factness of identity, as well as its evolutionary nature, constitute

our methodological point of departure. It is important to note that despite the use of ‘evolution’, this paper does not follow the theoretical lead of social Darwinism. From the viewpoint expressed here, evolution of Palestinian identity does not aspire to arrive at a ‘higher’ or ‘advanced’ stage of development. Our use of ‘evolution’ refers solely to the free, undesigned form in which Palestinian identity transformed. We have not used the term ‘development’ because it implies progression towards a ‘better’ state. The term ‘transformation’ is also unsuitable because it downplays the interconnectedness of the transformations in Palestinian identity. Evolution is a term that contains the transformations in identity in a historical, chronological form, preserving the different compiling layers of identity.

During the period from October 2011 to March 2012, BADIL and its local partners conducted up to 4,000 surveys in seven target areas: Israel, the West Bank (not including Jerusalem), Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan (about 600 in each area). The size of survey takers was relative to the size of the population in question. Moreover, the surveys took into account the different realities, histories, and experiences respondents in each area have.

A sample survey was conducted in the Aida refugee camp, Bethlehem. Based on the findings and experiences collected at that stage the final survey was optimized. The survey consists of 33 questions. Alongside general questions such as age and gender, are inquiries regarding the legal status of those surveyed. As illustrated above, most importantly, the questionnaire contains questions about identity and the importance of social ties. The target group are Palestinians between 15-19 years old and living in one of the above mentioned seven areas. The study's focus Palestinian youth is born of the notion that it is this section of Palestinian society which will dictate the nation's future identity. This is intended as a forward-looking study, and focusing on older age groups would carry the risk of its results being skewed by antiquated paradigms.

Data collection did not go without some challenges: firstly, because of the political unrest in Syria during the period of our survey, data from Palestinians living in Syria was confiscated during transport into Jordan. BADIL was thus forced to repeat the data collection in this area. Secondly, BADIL found great difficulty in completing the surveys in Israel because of the lack of trust surveyors faced concerning such a sensitive research topic (of being questioned by the Israeli authorities).

One final methodological note relates to terminology. Due to the existing multiplicity of naming related to Palestinian citizens of Israel (Israeli Arabs; 1948 Palestinians; the Inside [the Green Line] Palestinians and so forth), each title carries political and ideological components. Throughout this paper we will refer

to the indigenous community in Israel as 'Palestinian citizens of Israel'. This term is accepted academically to be 'neutral'. Our analytical use of the term is irrespective to self-identifications of respondents to our survey.

Chapter 2 Findings

In this chapter we will introduce the main findings emanating from the youth-filed questionnaires received from across the Middle East. As will become evident by the conclusion, the findings reflect similar tendencies and patterns of thought among Palestinians living in divergent social, political and economic environments in the Middle East. These similarities are evident in the graphs provided below: 13 (46 percent) of the 28 diagrams relating to the question “How important is it to foster social ties with....?” have a descending ‘half a bell’ shape, with results emphasizing ‘important’ and ‘extremely important’ attitudes towards the question. In addition to providing clear indications as to the importance of forging social ties with Palestinians from different geographical areas, the pattern of answers in the graphs reflects pragmatic assessment of current political reality. We can only speculate as to the explanations for this pragmatism, leaving the questions open for future investigation. What characteristics in the current political reality lead to such a mode of thinking? Did these attitudes exist in the past, and were they consistent among all Palestinian groups in the Middle East? This limited research cannot answer such questions at this stage, but it paves the way for further studies on current Palestinian attitudes to the conflict, and consequently, identity.

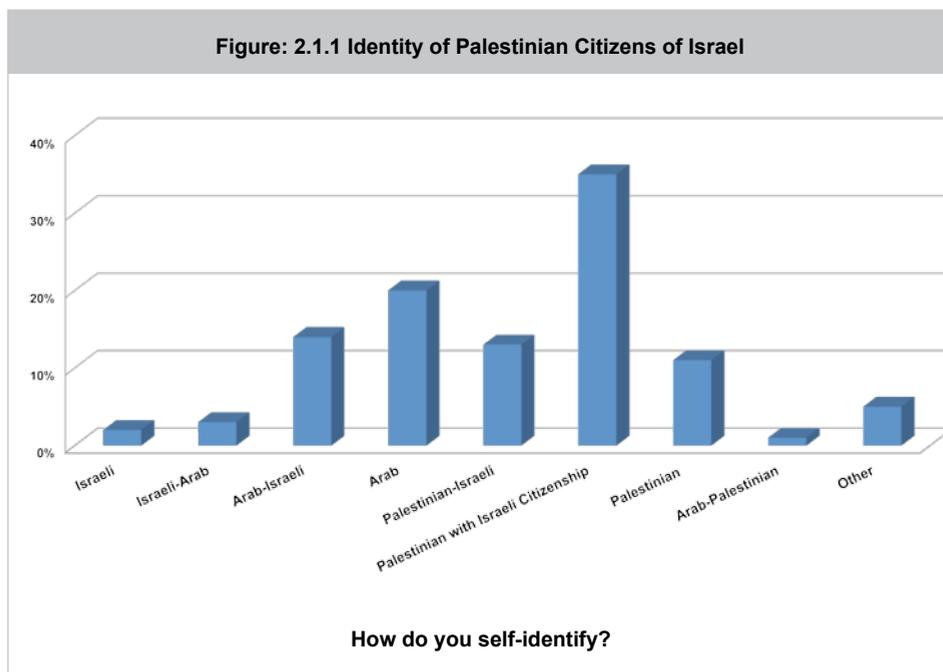
2.1 Palestinian Citizens of Israel

We begin our survey on Palestinian citizens of Israel. This is for two reasons. The first reason could be called ‘geographical-historical’ – Palestinian citizens of Israel live in the largest area of Mandate Palestine, where the main events of the 1948 Nakba took place. The second, and related, reason related to contemporary Palestinian, Israeli and international discourse, which excludes this community from the Palestinian issue, and prospective solutions. Current political discourse limits the Palestinian issue to the 1967 occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. In opposition to this view, we believe, like many others, that the Nakba marks the beginning of the Palestinian predicament, highlighted by the mass exodus of the majority of Palestinians from their homes and homeland. This historical view emphasizes the disastrous collective implications of the establishment of Israel on Palestinian society, among which are those Palestinians who remained in their homeland and became citizens of the new state.

Because of the exclusion of Palestinian citizens of Israel from the public debate on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we will provide a brief historical background that helps explain the findings from our survey. Whilst Palestinians in Israel have undergone a particular process of "modernization", Palestinian identity elsewhere has evolved in different directions. From a political point of view, Palestinians across the border preserved their national struggle for liberation and independence, a discourse which was wiped out among Palestinians in Israel due to unnoticed and subtle de-nationalizing modernization within the Zionist framework. According to Palestinian political scientist, Nadim Rouhana, up until the first Palestinian Intifada in 1987, Palestinians in Israel subscribed to a tripartite consensus: “(1) unequivocal support for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the leadership of the PLO; (2) a demand for full equality as citizens of Israel; and (3) agreement that all forms of political activity be conducted within the limits allowed by Israeli law”⁶

The first Intifada transferred the centre of gravity of the Palestinian conflict to the occupied territory, emphasizing the 1967 Naksa (setback), at the expense of awareness of the 1948 Nakba. The Oslo peace process also planted the seed of this belief among Palestinians, Israelis and the international community. The exclusion of Palestinian citizens of Israel from the historic reconciliation has had serious implications for the identity of Palestinians in Israel. The Intifada and the Oslo Accords proposed a solution that “no longer seemed remote to the Palestinians, and one that was on the international agenda as the key to settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict”.⁷ Peretz refers to a two-state solution, according to which a Palestinian state could be established alongside Israel in the territory occupied in

1967. This proposed solution excluded the Palestinian citizens of Israel, requiring them to define their status and identity as ‘Palestinians residing in Israel’.⁸

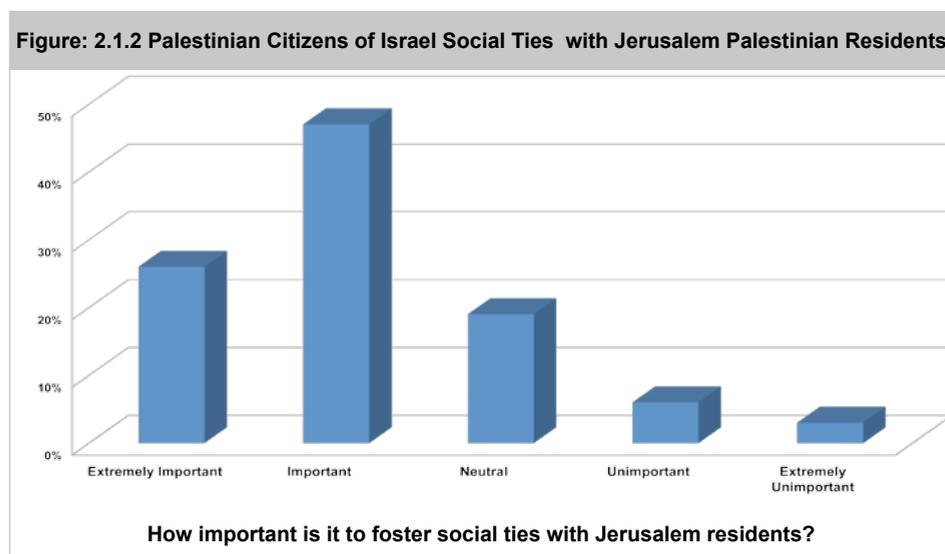


The history of Palestinian identity evolution in Israel since 1948, as outlined above, explains the range of identifications that Palestinians in Israel declare. The highest identification respondents (34 percent) declare themselves as, ‘Palestinian with Israeli Citizenship’, and as such reflects a comprehensive understanding among Palestinian youth living in Israel of their national identity and place in the conflict. Identifying oneself in this way has two components: the primary identity for these youth is their ‘Palestinian-ness’. The Israeli identification is clearly marked and framed in legal terms: citizenship. In other words, Palestinian youth choosing this answer from our survey lack any symbolic identification with Israel or what the state stands for. Moreover, the primacy of Palestinian identity among these respondents is evident in the formulation of their identity “Palestinian *with* Israeli citizenship”: such a formulation sees Palestinian identity to be the primary identity, with Israeli citizenship merely attached to it, and not having any meaningful effect.

The second and third highest responses, ‘Arab’ and ‘Arab-Israeli’ respectively, reflect another form of identification of Palestinians in Israel. Although it is impossible to generalize regarding all respondents, it is possible to say that using

these terms (Arab, Arab-Israeli) derive from within Israeli terminology, and they should not be mistaken, or automatically attributed, to Pan-Arab attitudes among Palestinian citizens of Israel (at least not all of them). Thus, the choice ‘Arab’ in particular should not be automatically associated with responses coming from other examined areas/countries in this survey. Israel, ironically or not, is the only country in the world that attributes ‘Arab’ as a nationality. This, of course, is intentional and aims to erase Palestinian identity, and hence Palestinian claims on Palestine. The fact that more than one third (combined) of Palestinian citizens of Israel utilize Israeli terms to identify themselves reflects the scale of Israeli attempts at erasing Palestinian identity. However, it also shows the failure of such an enterprise, as the majority of Palestinian youth do not use them. It is possible to say, that “Arab” for Palestinian citizens of Israel implicitly means Palestinian, evident in the parity between “Palestinian-Israeli” and “Arab-Israeli” responses. This however, requires an in-depth qualitative investigation which is beyond the scope of this study.

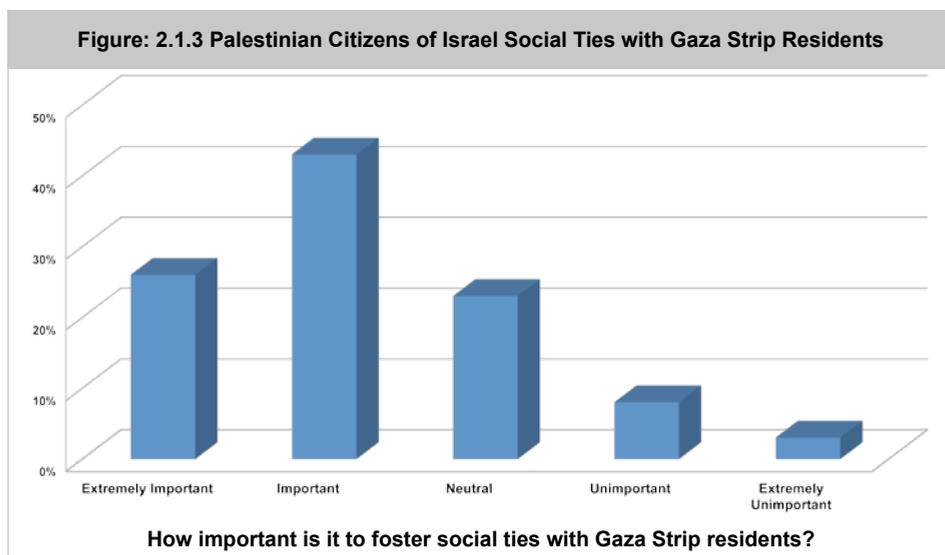
The results of our survey among Palestinians in Israel reflect the diversity, or even perplexity, of Palestinian identity in Israel. These results reveal more insights into Palestinian identity in Israel if they are analyzed from a historical perspective. A study conducted by Palestinian political scientist As’ad Ghanem (2002) shows transformations in Palestinian identification in Israel. By comparing two surveys - conducted in 1995 and 2001 - which related to Palestinian political orientations in Israel, Ghanem concludes that: “there has been a decline in the number of Arabs who see themselves as Israeli without a Palestinian component as well as



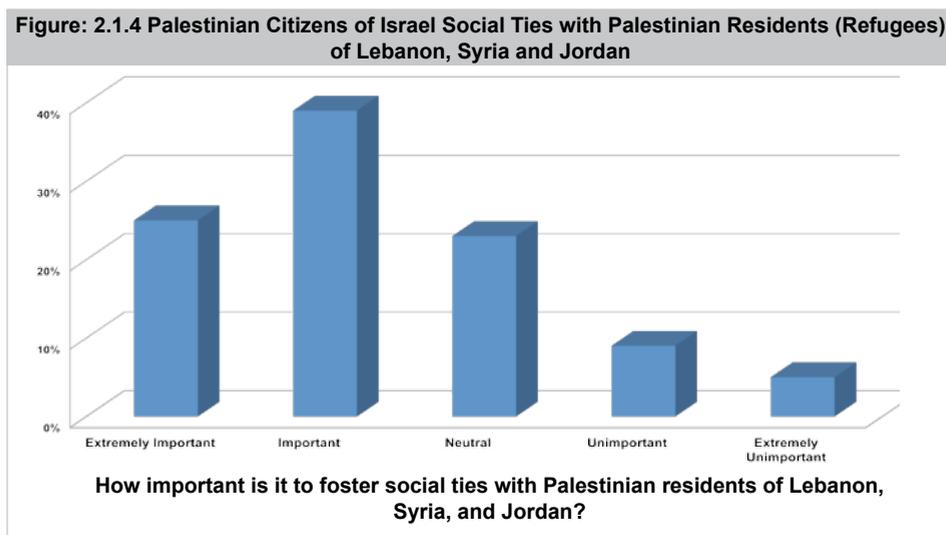
an increase in the percentage of those who emphasize the Palestinian component of their personal identity".⁹ Evidently, our survey reflects similar patterns to those described by Ghanem.

Figure 2.1.2, on the topic of social ties in our survey, represents the aforementioned “descending ‘half a bell’ shape”. Read from left to right, a diagram will have a shorter “Extremely Important” bar, relative to the “Important” bar on its right. Results afterwards tend to descend gradually. In the following diagram, we see that 45 percent of youth Palestinian citizens of Israel see the fostering of social ties with Jerusalemite Palestinians as important, and almost 25 percent see it as extremely important, adding up to nearly 70 percent. This result may be surprising for some, especially because of the “geographical continuity” between Palestinians in Israel and Palestinians in Jerusalem. However, the results show that even with no physical barrier hindering contact between the two Palestinian communities, such social ties do not usually take place.

However, the freedom of movement afforded to Palestinian citizens of Israel regarding access to Jerusalem, as well as its Palestinian neighbourhoods and villages, also results in their exposure to the severe conditions in which Jerusalemite Palestinians live, hence inducing sympathy and solidarity with them. The Israeli campaign to Judaize Jerusalem - effectively aiming to expel the Palestinians from its municipality¹⁰ - is the recipient of increasing media and public attention in recent years, a fact that can explain this growing solidarity with Jerusalemite Palestinians.



The diagrams (figure 2.1.3 (above) and figure 2.1.4 (below)) regarding the fostering of social ties with Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan convey similar attitudes to those reflected in the above diagram (figure 2.1.2) which refers to Palestinians from Jerusalem. In the case of the Gaza Strip, these results are most likely attributable to the current Israeli blockade applied to the territory in 2006 and which has been subsequently followed by constant military operations resulting in thousands of civilian casualties. The suffering generated by this siege has led to an increased expression of international solidarity towards the residents of Gaza, and this is also likely to have influenced the survey's findings.

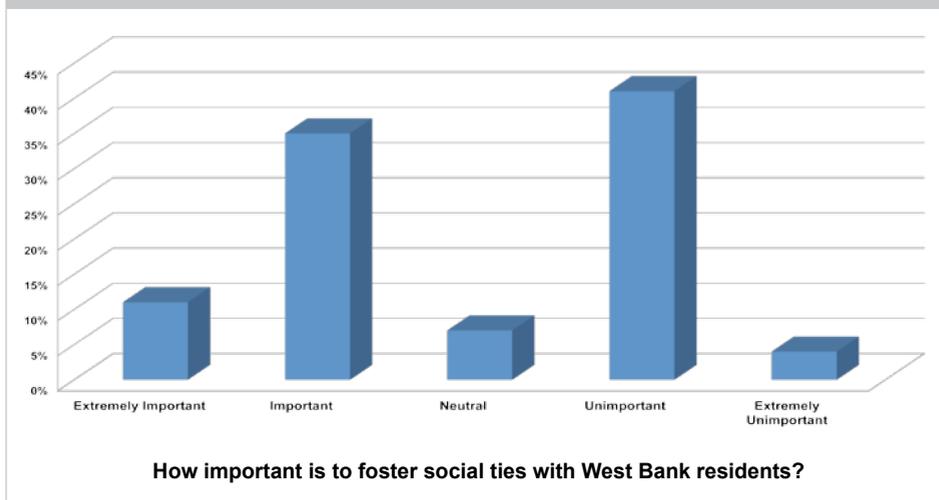


Palestinian isolation from the Arab world since 1948 has always generated strong emotions of longing for family members and friends who were lost during the Nakba. Moreover, the cultural continuity of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria was severed in 1948, creating strong emotions of nostalgia and longing among Palestinian citizens of Israel. It is not surprising, then, that most Palestinians in Israel find it important/extremely important to renew the ties with Palestinians residing in these countries.

The diagram (figure 2.1.5) regarding the fostering of social ties with Palestinians in the West Bank does not follow the common pattern described above. It also does not 'fit' with the attitudes expressed in the diagram above (figure 2.1.1) on how Palestinians identify themselves. How can we explain the fact that Palestinian citizens of Israel see themselves mostly as Palestinians, while seeing it as unimportant to foster ties with Palestinians living under occupation in the West Bank? How can we explain the divergent results relating to Jerusalem and those to

the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the rest of the region? One would assume that 40 percent of Palestinian youth in Israel see it as unimportant to foster social ties with Palestinians in the West Bank on the basis of relative ease of access, in contrast to their inability to access the Gaza Strip and the majority of Arab countries.

Figure: 2.1.5 Palestinian Citizens of Israel Social Ties with West Bank Palestinian Residents

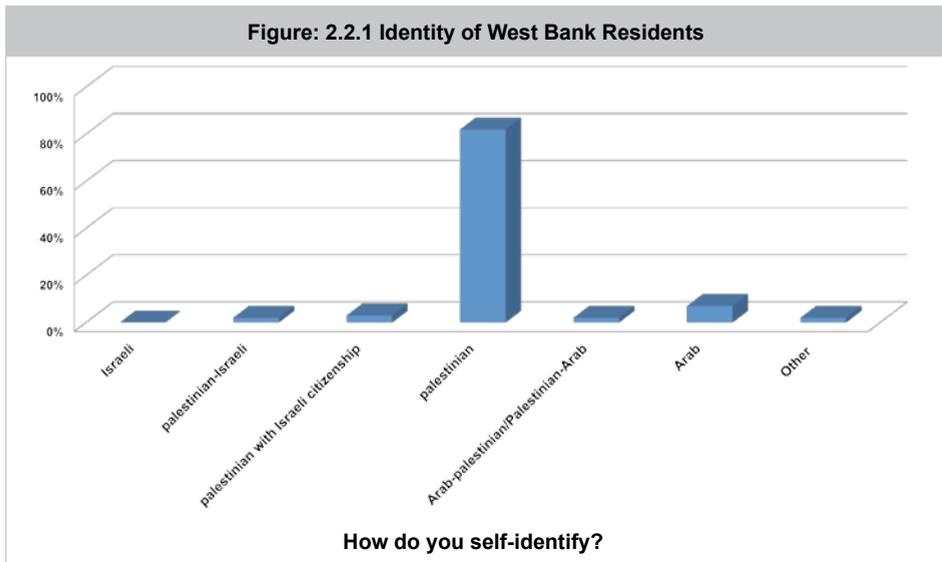


However, we have mentioned above that uninhibited Palestinian access to Jerusalem induces sympathy and solidarity with Palestinians in that city, so how is the West Bank different? One would speculate that this could be attributed to levels of proximity. Here, proximity does not mean physical or geographical, but in terms of legal status. Jerusalemite Palestinians are closest to Palestinian citizens of Israel - only one step lower in terms of Palestinian legal status under Israeli rule. Therefore, their predicament seems similar and easier to associate with. After all, house demolishing in Jerusalem is carried out in legal pretence, giving the impression of a state legal system. In addition, issues of poverty and unemployment are shared among Palestinians both in Jerusalem and inside Israel. Moreover, as a result of Israel’s policies in Jerusalem, there are few facilities left that allow Palestinians the opportunity to meet. In contrast, Palestinian youth with Israeli citizenship spend comparatively more time in the West Bank, presumably fostering social ties there, and this would go a long way to explaining that high “unimportant” percentage in responses. It could be argued that this difference is based on the presumption that West Bank residents are favored by the West and Israel in comparison to Gaza Strip residents, for example, through reduced restrictions imposed on the West Bank than on Gaza. This assumption in return might influence Palestinian youth living in Israel to show more solidarity with their Gazan counterparts than with their West Bank ones.

2.2 The West Bank

The 1993 Oslo Accords established the division of the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) into three administrative zones; A, B and C. Area A, consisting of the populous Palestinian cities and towns, is under the administrative and security control of the Palestinian Authority (PA). However the area falls far short of sovereign territory and is subject to repeated Israeli military raids. Area B, consisting of populated rural areas, is under PA administrative control but military functions remain in the hands of Israeli forces. Areas A and B are divided into 227 non contiguous areas separated by Israeli military checkpoints and barriers. Area C, which is under full Israeli military and administrative control, and which accounts for the majority of West Bank land (more than 60 percent of West Bank), consists of Israeli settlements, settlement roads, military zones, strategic areas, water reservoirs and almost all of the Jordan Valley.

Israel imposed military rule on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip immediately after their occupation in June 1967. The institutional and legal infrastructure for this military rule was established in Israel, two decades earlier. For the first 18 years of Israel's existence, it applied military rule to its Palestinian citizens. This system was lifted in 1966, only a few months before the 1967 War.¹¹

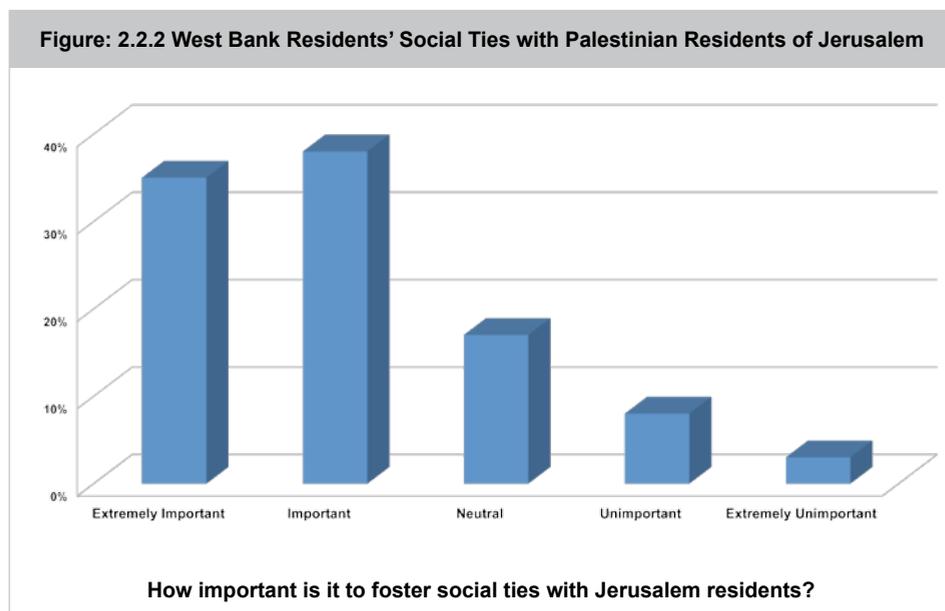


The international community, Palestinian leadership (as early as 1977) and Israel have framed the 'Palestinian conflict' to Palestinian struggle for emancipation

from Israeli military occupation beginning in 1967. As a result, it is not surprising that 82 percent of youth living in the West Bank self-identify as Palestinians.

However, this should not suggest that Palestinian identity has been imposed externally on Palestinians in the West Bank. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank, and the existing international framing of the conflict to the West Bank (and the Gaza Strip), allow little option for ‘hyphenated’ identity there. The by-default Palestinian identity could only be emphasized in a boiling-hot political and military crucible.

On the topic of social ties, the majority of youth in the West Bank believe that forging social ties with Palestinians living throughout the Middle East is “important” or “extremely important”.



It is undeniable that Israel succeeded in imposing political divisions and categories on the Palestinians. The fact that Palestinians from the West Bank see the fostering of social ties with Palestinian Jerusalmmites to be important is worth noting, especially as Jerusalem is geographically part of the West Bank, at a walking distance from Ramallah to the north, and Bethlehem to the south. However, the results show that Palestinian youth see it as important to overcome the political, legal and physical barriers in the form of military checkpoints imposed by Israel.

Figure: 2.2.3 West Bank Residents' Social Ties with Palestinian Citizens of Israel

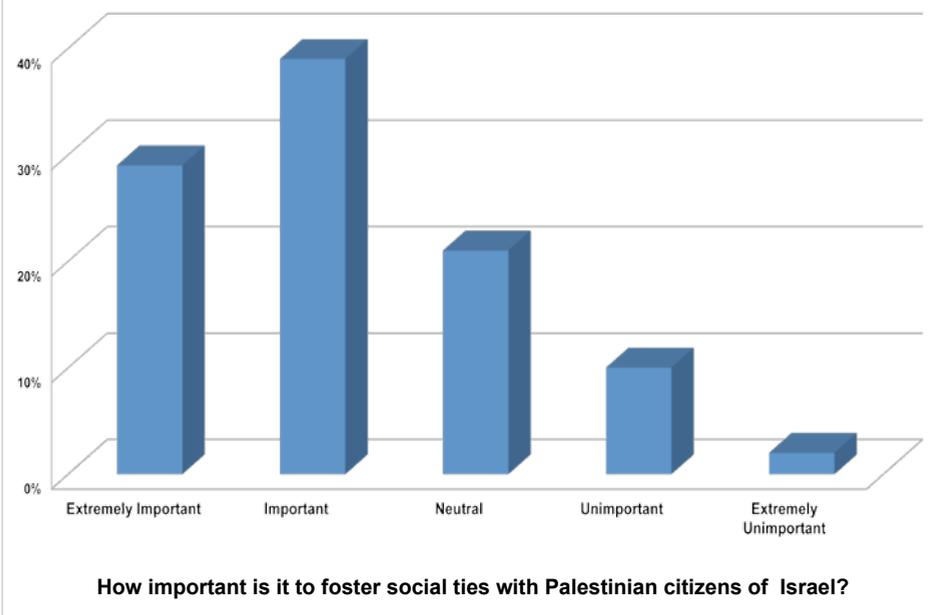


Figure 2.2.4 West Bank Residents' Social Ties with Palestinian Residents of Gaza Strip

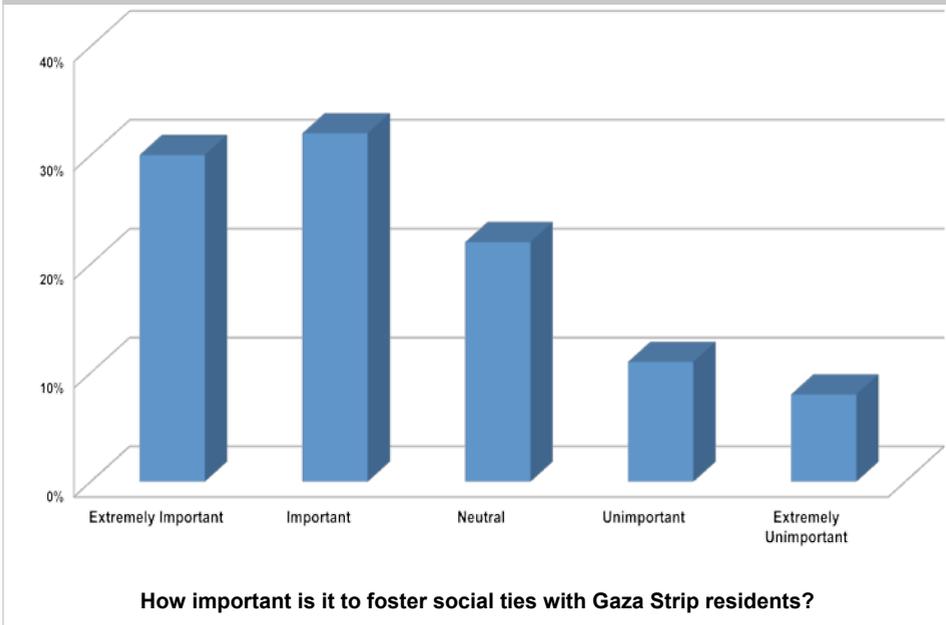
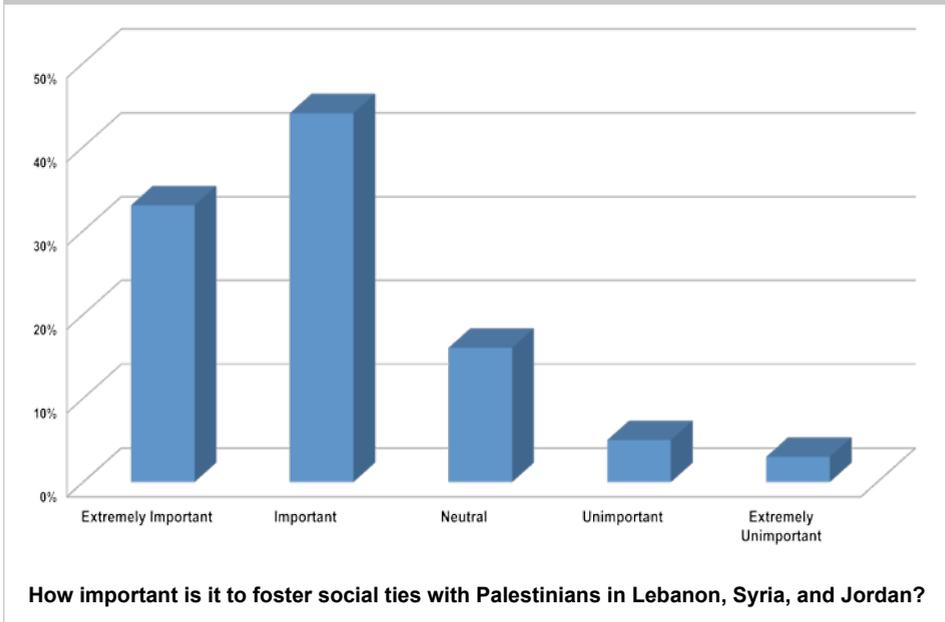


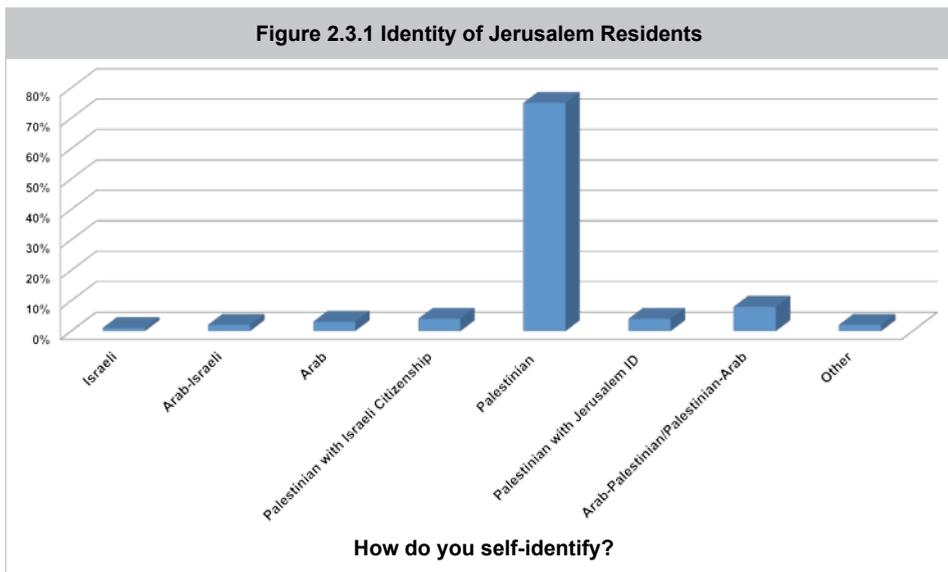
Figure 2.2.5 West Bank Residents' Social Ties with Palestinian Residents of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan



In addition to the comments above, these diagrams (figure 2.2.4 and figure 2.2.5) reflect consistent attitudes of respondents from the West Bank. However, when comparing these results with answers provided by respondents from other areas, it seems that, relatively speaking, youth in the West Bank place less importance on social ties with Palestinians from other areas. This slight variation may be attributed to the fact that Palestinians in the West Bank associate the solution to the conflict within the Oslo framework, envisioning a Palestinian state consisting of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; instead of an inclusive state for all Palestinians. Another possible explanation could be attributed to the impact of internal fragmentation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip authorities and their accompanied contradictory campaigns. Additional evidence for this speculation is to be found in the relatively low numbers of individuals surveyed who attached importance to fostering social relations with those in the Gaza Strip, compared to Palestinian citizens of Israel (a near 10 percent difference). The rivalry between Fatah and Hamas in the two areas may be the reason for this. This political rivalry leads, it seems, to a reluctance to foster relations with opponents (although it is interesting to note that such a tendency does not exist in the results from the Gaza Strip).

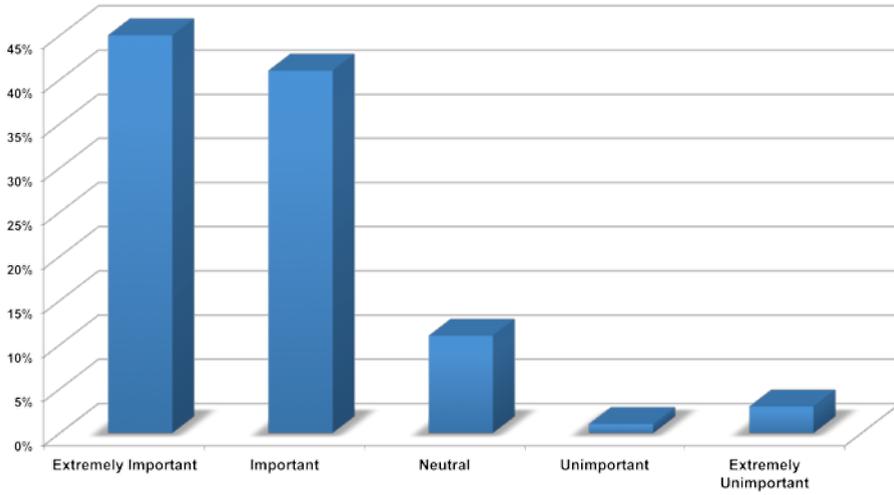
2.3 Palestinians in Jerusalem

We chose to conduct a sample survey specifically for Palestinians living in Jerusalem given the city's physical and "legal-administrative" separation from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. Following the 1967 war, Israel illegally annexed Jerusalem, and its residents received identification cards (making them inhabitants, rather than citizens) different to those received by the rest of the West Bank population, also different to those given to Palestinian citizens of Israel (who are deemed citizens). This annexation of Jerusalem disconnected Jerusalem residents from Palestinians in the West Bank by extending different rights to each population. The difficulties faced by Jerusalem Palestinians in light of this only grew with the construction of the Annexation Wall. It is because of these difficulties, as well as the unique situation that Palestinians in Jerusalem face, that we felt it particularly important to understand the effect on youth identity and social ties.



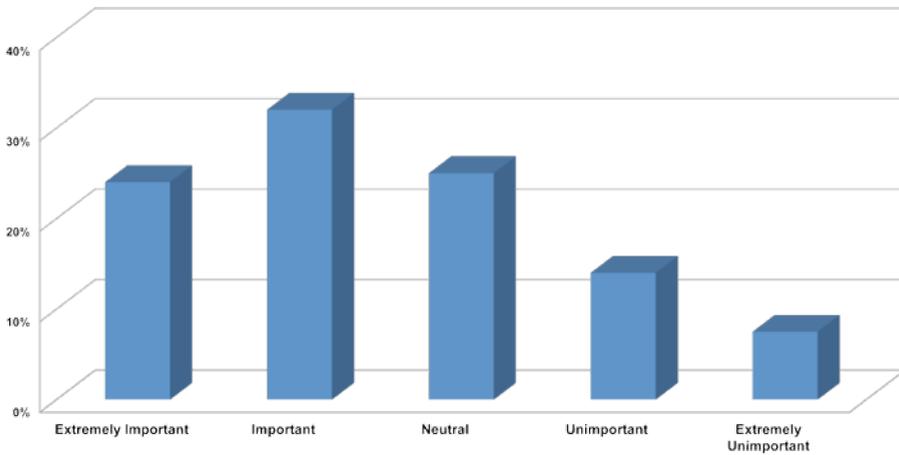
On the question of identity, the vast majority of respondents (75 percent) self-identify as "Palestinian". This result is hardly surprising given the reality in which Palestinians in Jerusalem live. Israel's implementation of its declared intentions to Judaize Jerusalem becomes glaringly apparent on the ground. The declaration of Jerusalem as the 'eternal capital of Israel' has been coupled with illegal forcible population transfer by virtue of house demolitions, impediment of movement, underdevelopment of infrastructure and so on. As a result "78 percent of Palestinians and 84 percent of Palestinian children are living below the poverty line".¹² Such a reality can only serve to reinforce Palestinian identity in the city.

Figure 2.3.2 Jerusalem Residents' Social Ties with West Bank Residents



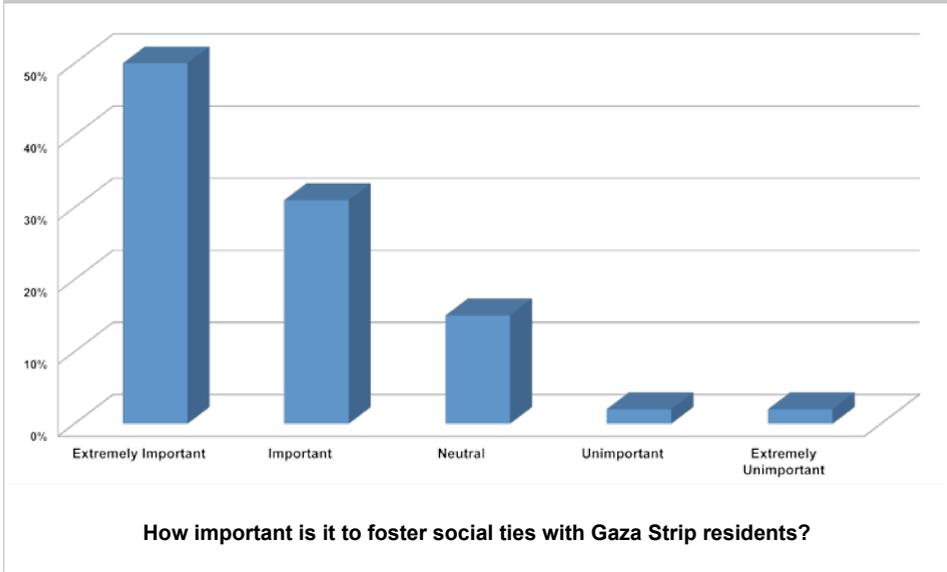
How important is it to foster social ties with West Bank residents?

Figure 2.3.3 Jerusalem Residents' Social Ties with Palestinian Citizens of Israel



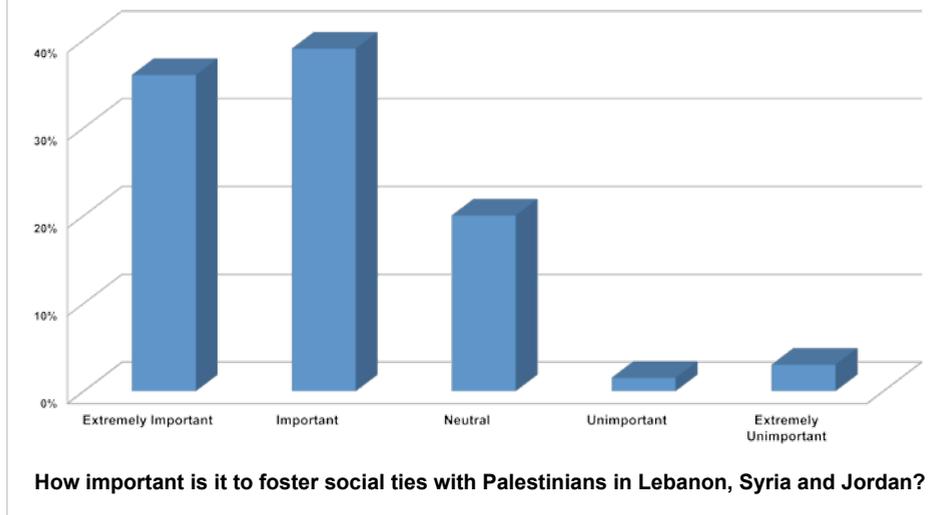
How important is it to foster social ties with Palestinians of Israel?

Figure 2.3.4 Jerusalem Residents' Social Ties with Gaza Strip Residents



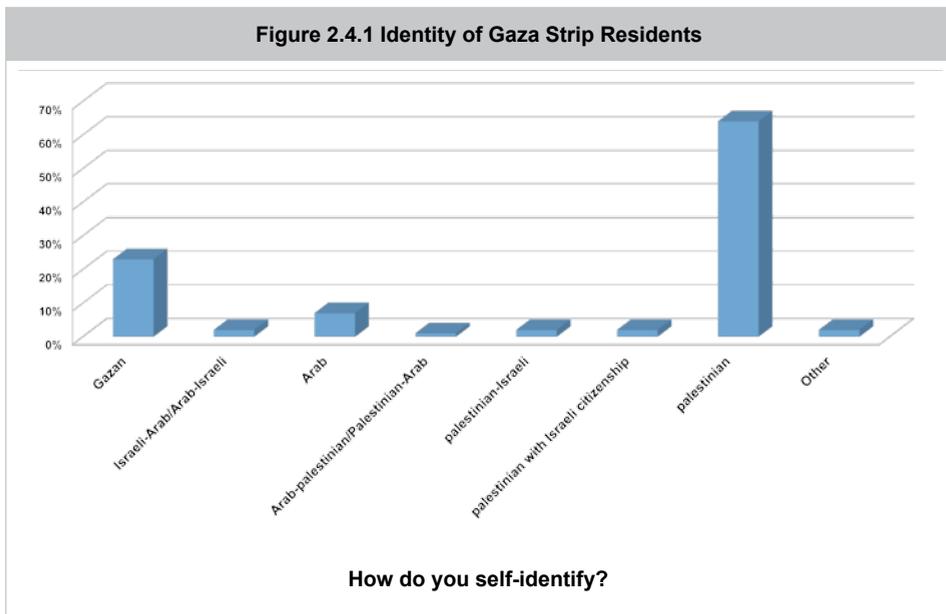
On the topic of social ties, the majority of Palestinian youth in Jerusalem find the forging of social ties important or extremely important, following the general trend of Palestinians surveyed elsewhere with this question, and indicating their desire to remain connected with the greater Palestinian community despite the physical and legal-administrative barriers separating them.

Figure 2.3.5 Jerusalem Residents' Social Ties with Palestinian Residents of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan



2.4 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip

The Israel's desire of to take control of the maximum amount of land whilst minimizing the number of indigenous Palestinians residing within that land led to the refusal to allow the return of the 250,000 refugees who fled their homes to Gaza - a small territory of around 140 square miles¹³- during the Nakba. Differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip stem from both their size, and how those who have controlled these territories have related to its inhabitants. Notably, the Egyptian government, which became responsible for the Gaza Strip after 1948, did not make any attempt to incorporate or annex the territory, and instead administered the territory through the All-Palestine Government,¹⁴ a government in name only. The Egyptians viewed Gaza as distinctly Palestinian "and did little to foster an alternative national identity" explains Sara Roy.¹⁵ Compare this to the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan, which not only allowed for the development of political institutions, but also the ability to maintain connections and relations with the Palestinians in the diaspora. In addition, after 1967, Israel used different tactics to maintain its occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As Roy explains, Israel more readily used brute force and more authoritarian methods of control in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank, a distinction that continues to exist to this day. Such factors have surely impacted the ways in which youth in the Gaza Strip responded to the questionnaire.



It is interesting that while the majority (67 percent) of youth residing in the Gaza Strip identify as “Palestinian”, 23 percent identify as “Gazan”.¹⁶ It is possible to attribute these results to the isolation imposed on Gaza since 2006, by Israel, Egypt and the international community. The combined effects of the physical blockade on the Gaza Strip, the political isolation of Hamas, as well as the trauma of the Israeli 2008-2009 military attack on the Gaza Strip (the survey was conducted before the 2012 Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip), may be the reasons for emphasizing Gazan identity next to a Palestinian one. The split in the Palestinian political map within the occupied territory between Fatah and Hamas possibly contributed to such orientations among Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

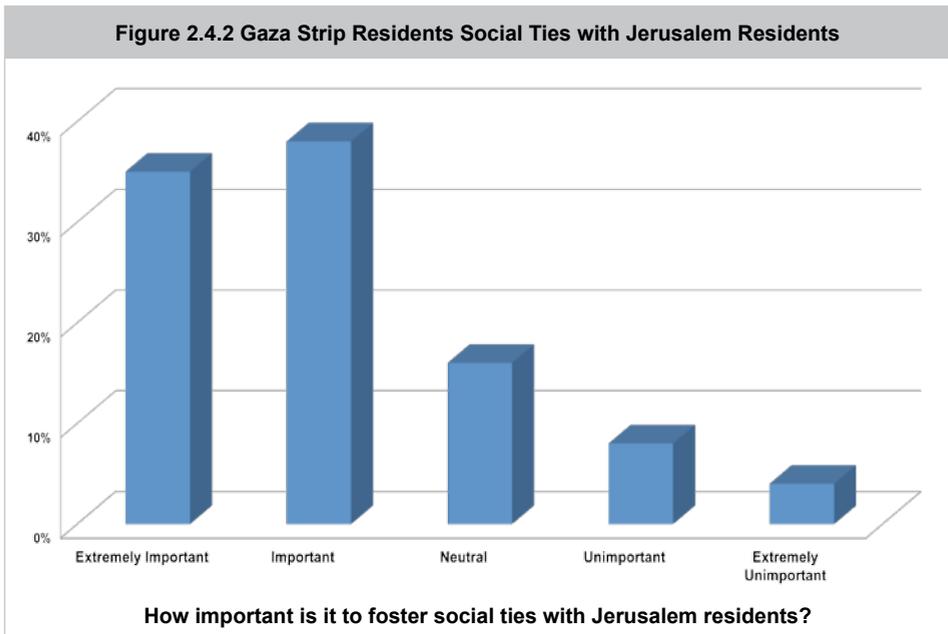


Figure 2.4.3 Gaza Strip Residents Social Ties with Palestinian Citizens of Israel

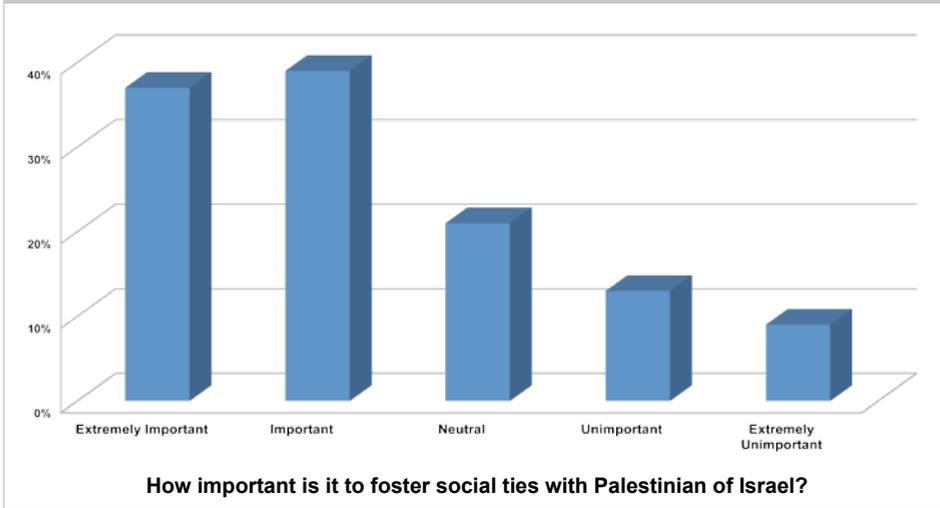


Figure 2.4.4 Gaza Strip Residents Social Ties with West Bank Residents

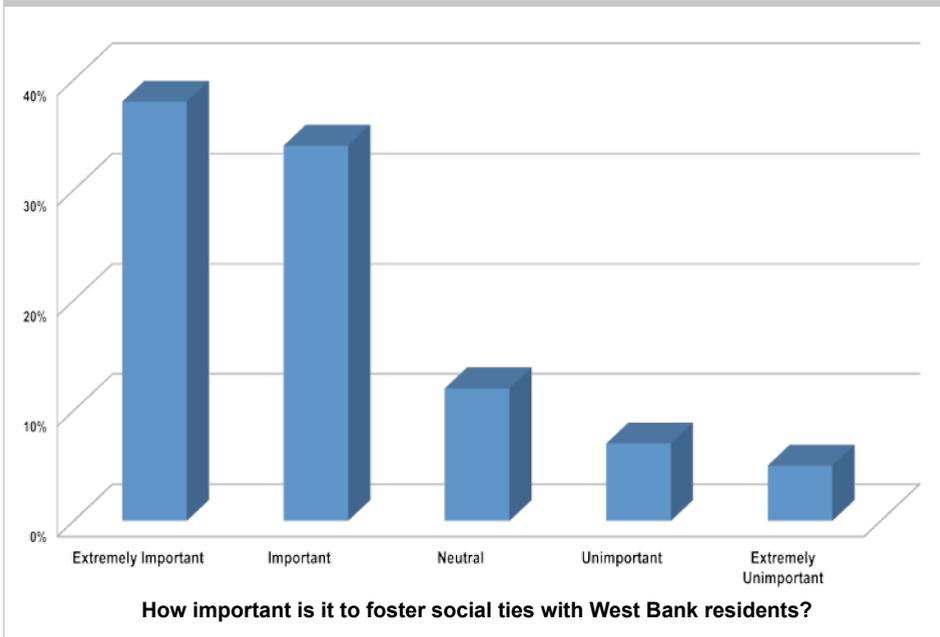
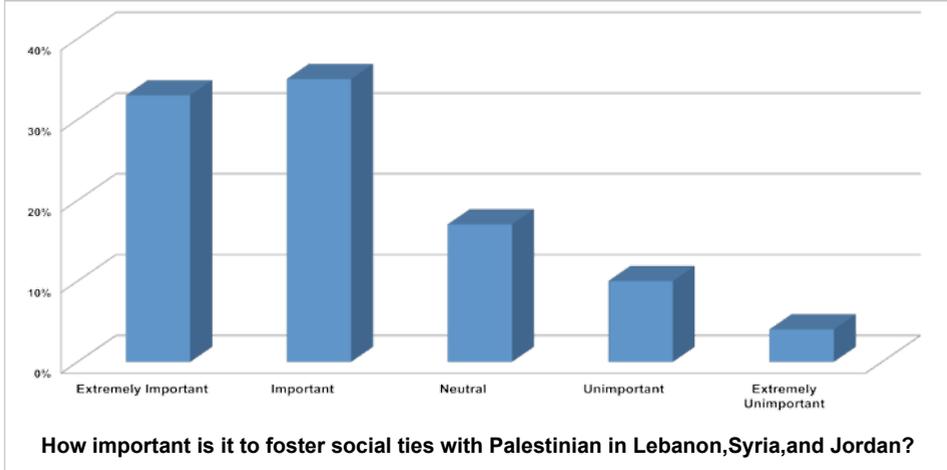


Figure 2.4.5 Gaza Strip Residents Social Ties with Palestinian Residents of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan

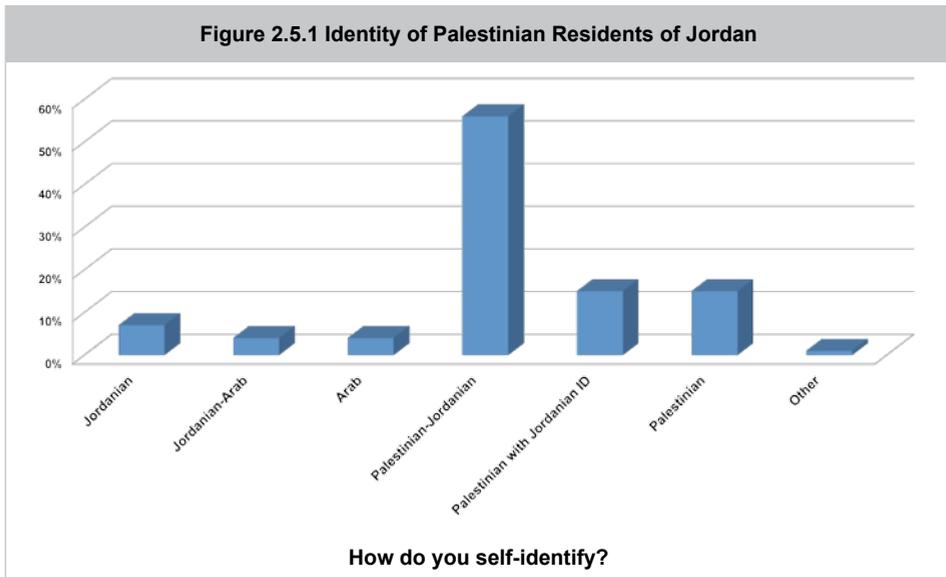


On the question of social ties between Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Palestinians living in other areas, the majority deems such ties “important” or “extremely important”. The results here are consistent with the patterns expressed by Palestinians from most of the other areas, as explained earlier. However, two points are noteworthy from the Gaza Strip results; the first is the relatively high levels of neutrality and unimportance attributed to social relations with Palestinian citizens of Israel. This deserves further research, especially given the strong political support Palestinian citizens of Israel show to Palestinians outside of Israel, and Gaza in particular. One example of such solidarity is the support shown by Palestinian leaders within Israel - ranging from secular-nationalist to Islamic - to the flotilla which sought to break the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip. Both the arrest of Sheikh Raed Salah, leader of the Islamic movement in Israel, and the vocal advocacy of Israeli Member of Parliament (Knesset) Hanin Zoabi in support of Palestinian human rights in the Gaza Strip have received special attention from local and international media.

The second notable result relates to the contrast between the attitude of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip towards Palestinians from the West Bank, and vice versa. Though the latter has been discussed above, respondents from the Gaza Strip attributed relatively high levels of importance to the fostering of social ties with Palestinians from the West Bank. Again, one may attribute both results mentioned above to what may be called “Oslo culture”. As the surveyed sample was born at the beginning of the Oslo process and has grown within its framework and effects, the ignorance of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship on one hand, and emphasis on OPT residents as the concerned segment of the PA on the other hand may explain the low levels of the importance of relations with Palestinian citizens of Israel and high levels of importance or relations with West Bank residents.

2.5 Palestinians in Jordan

The situation of Palestinian refugees in Jordan is commonly described as favourable and are comparatively well-integrated into social and economic life. All Palestinian refugees in Jordan have full Jordanian citizenship with the exception of about 120,000 refugees originally from the Gaza Strip, which was administered by Egypt until 1967.¹⁷



Our survey of Palestinian youth residing in Jordan reveals that the majority (56 percent) choose to identify themselves as “Palestinian-Jordanian”, while 14 percent chose the moniker “Palestinian with Jordanian identification”, and 14 percent refer to themselves solely as “Palestinian”.

These findings stem from the complexities of the Palestinian experience in relation to the Jordanian government since 1948.¹⁸ During the Nakba, 70,000 Palestinians found refuge on the east bank of the Jordan River.¹⁹ Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, and provided Transjordanian citizenship to its inhabitants. As Laurie Brand explains, “The annexation...necessitated a policy of integrating the two banks. This involved remodelling the bases of identification [...] The state’s goal was less to impose a Transjordanian identity than to create a hybrid Jordanian identity for both communities”.²⁰ While conflict existed in the past, and continues to exist in the present day, the government’s strategy succeeded in forging a youth population that largely identifies as Palestinian-Jordanian.

Figure 2.5.2 Palestinian Residents of Jordan Social Ties with Jerusalem Residents

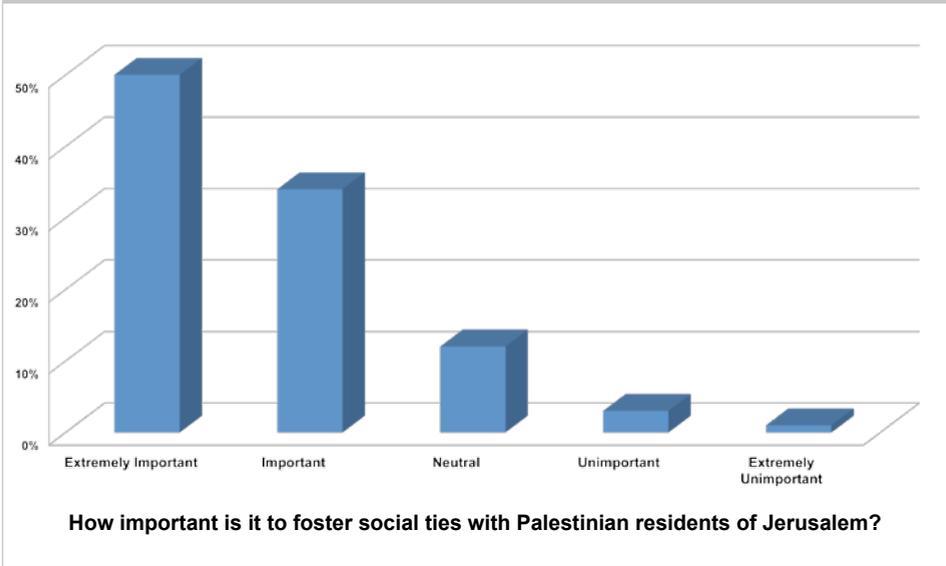


Figure 2.5.3 Palestinian Residents of Jordan Social Ties with Palestinian Citizens of Israel

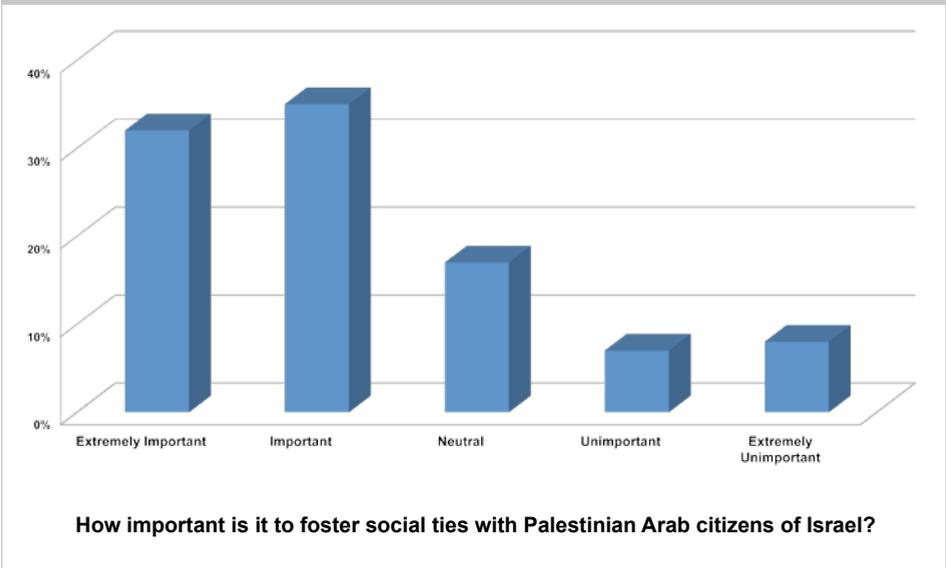
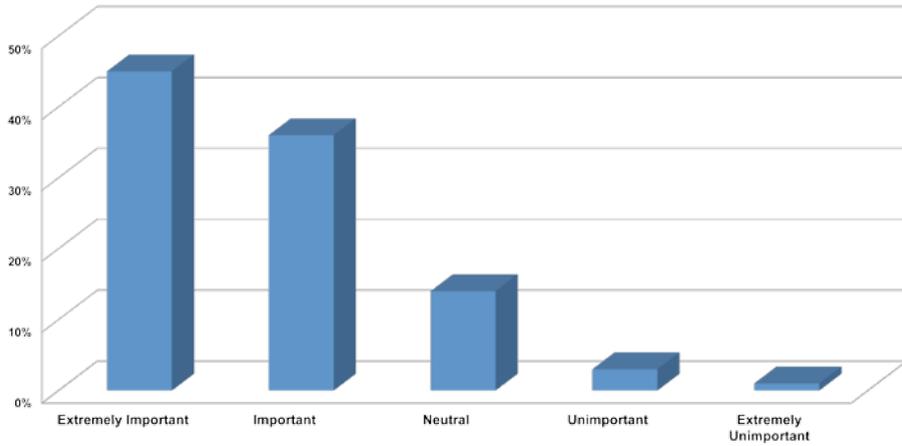
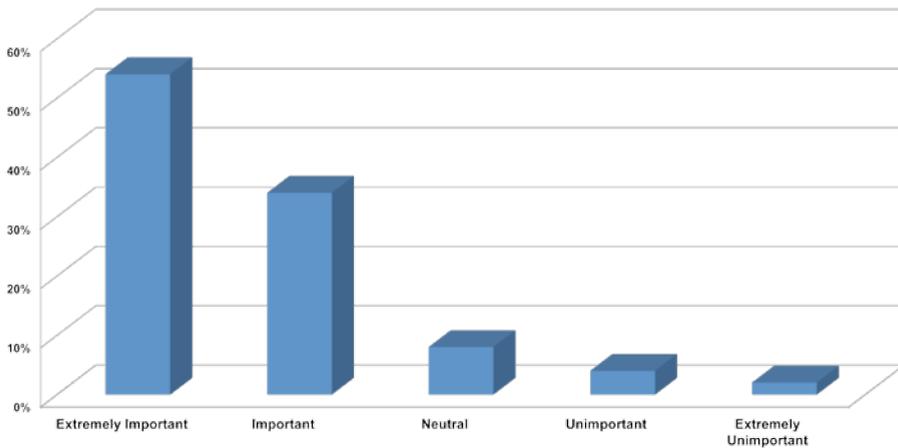


Figure 2.5.4 Palestinian Residents of Jordan Social Ties with Gaza Strip Residents



How important is it to foster social ties with residents of the Gaza Strip?

Figure 2.5.5 Palestinian Residents of Jordan Social Ties with West Bank Residents

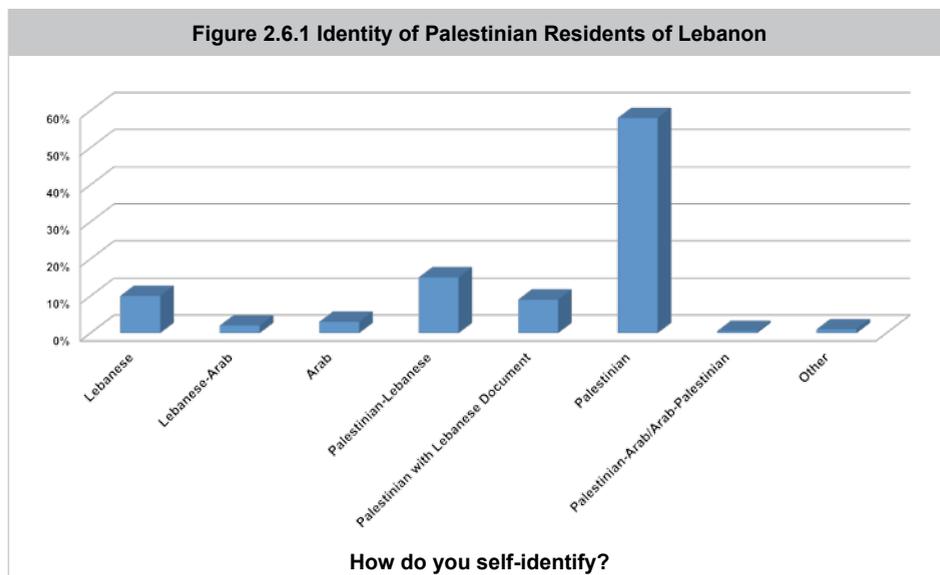


How important is it to foster social ties with residents of the West Bank?

Palestinian refugees residing in Jordan, nonetheless, reflect attitudes towards the fostering of social ties with Palestinians elsewhere that are consistent with the result patterns which we have seen so far, i.e. the majority finds it extremely important or important. It is, however, possible to identify slightly lower attributing of 'importance' to the forging of ties with Palestinian citizens of Israel, and slightly higher numbers expressing 'unimportance' (while preserving the same half-bell shape). As indicated earlier, this could be attributed to the commonly held notion of excluding this section of Palestinians from general discourse on the conflict.

2.6 Palestinians in Lebanon

The number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is highly disputed. Nevertheless, 422,188 refugees are registered refugees in Lebanon. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have no civil rights and only few social rights. The Lebanese government has adopted severe restrictions on employment, with refugees prohibited from taking up many skilled and semi-skilled professions. This leaves them with only unskilled and low-paid employment options, even if they have an academic degree or higher qualifications.²¹ Additionally, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are not allowed to own houses or other property,²² which, in combination with their difficult economic situation, greatly limits their ability to move out from the camps. In August 2010, the Lebanese Parliament acknowledged the right of labour for Palestinians, but many Palestinians and Lebanese observers report that the new law has not yet been put into practice.²³



The large influx of Palestinian refugees to Lebanon in 1947-48 upset the precarious confessional political system of the country. In light of this, the Lebanese state conferred citizenship upon only a few thousand, leaving the vast majority of refugees restricted in most aspects of life. This is still very much the case today.²⁴ As a comparison, Palestinians in Syria have open access to the general population, yet in Lebanon, the majority of Palestinians live in refugee camps with severely limited access to the population at-large.

It is because of this treatment that we see a majority of those surveyed (almost 60 percent) self-identifying as Palestinian. However, it is interesting that a sizeable

percentage chose a moniker that included Lebanese (25 percent). Such responses make further research necessary so as to better understand the relations between Palestinians in Lebanon and the Lebanese state.

Figure 2.6.2 Palestinian Residents of Lebanon Social Ties with Jerusalem Residents

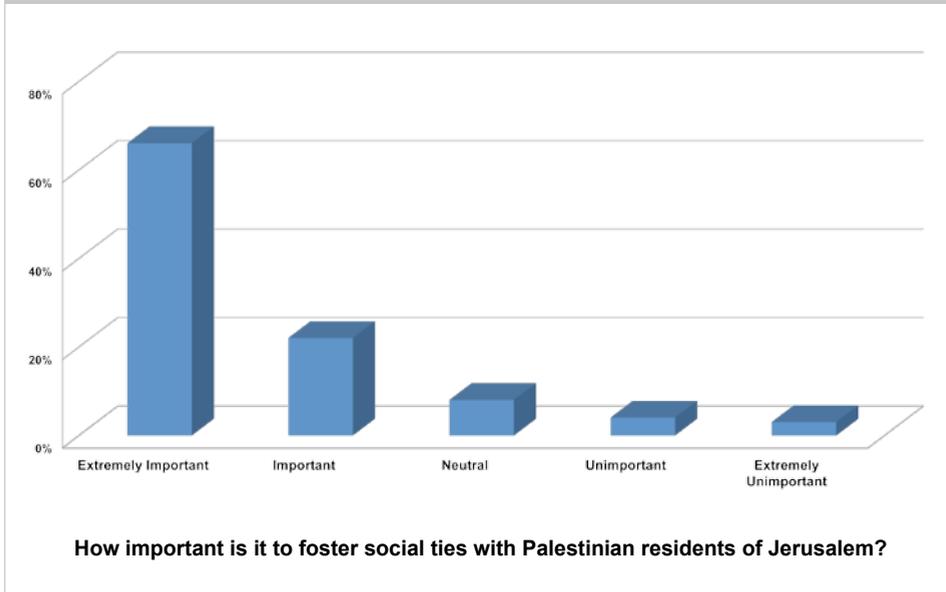


Figure 2.6.3 Palestinian Residents of Lebanon Social Ties with Palestinian Citizens of Israel

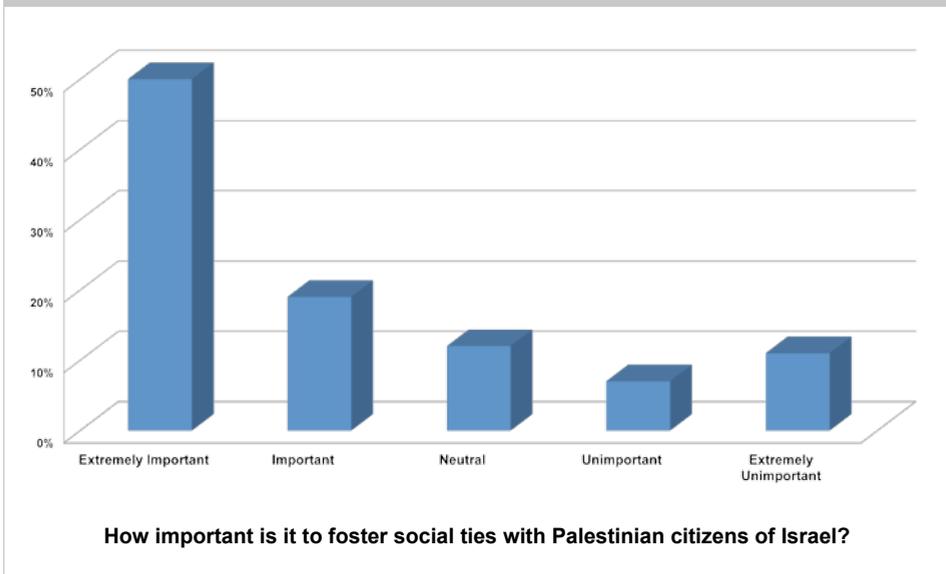
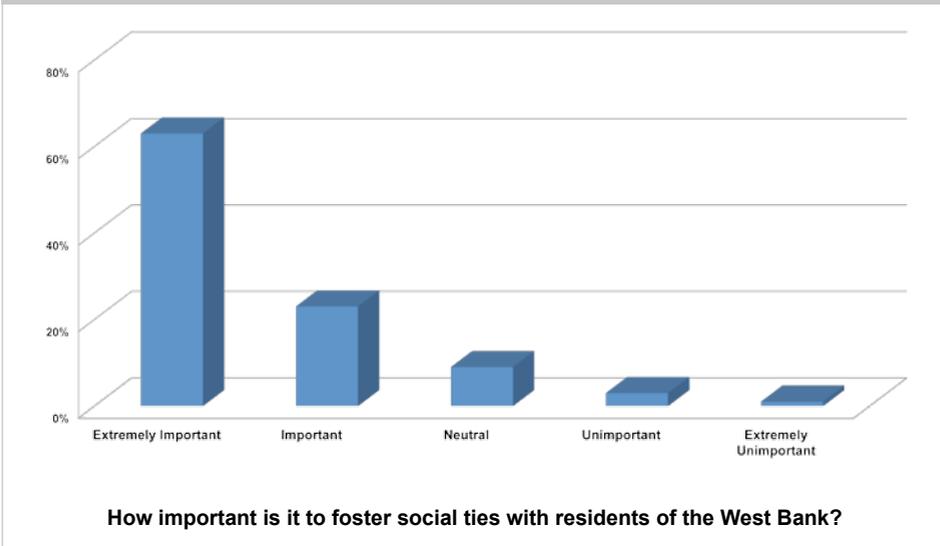
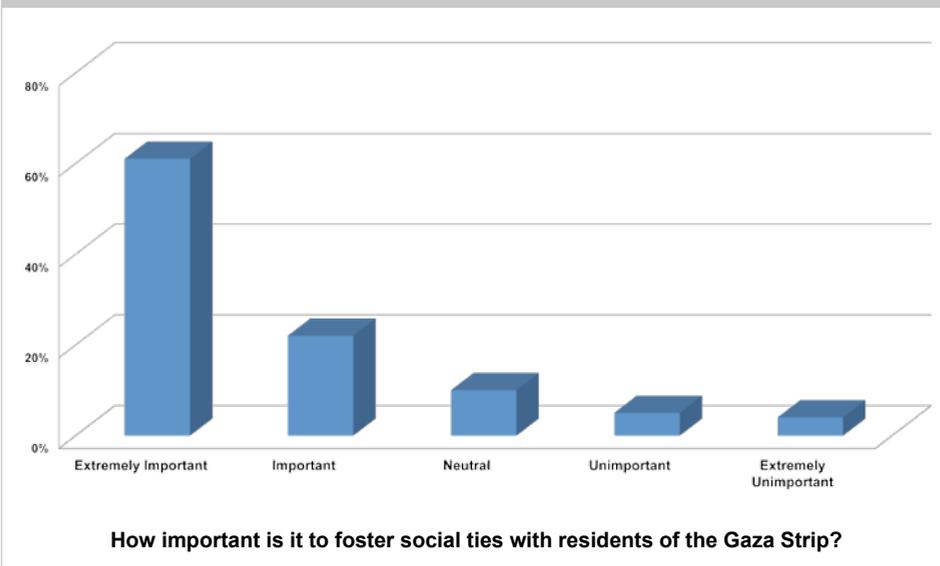


Figure 2.6.4 Palestinian Residents of Lebanon Social Ties with West Bank Residents



It is noticeable that results of Lebanese respondents do not follow the 'half-bell' shape we saw in earlier diagrams. The difference lies in the great importance that Palestinians in Lebanon attach to the fostering of social ties with Palestinians worldwide. This is an alarming indication of the extreme alienation of Palestinians displaced in harsh conditions in this northern neighbour of Palestine. Palestinian

Figure 2.6.5 Palestinian Residents of Lebanon Social Ties with Gaza Strip Residents



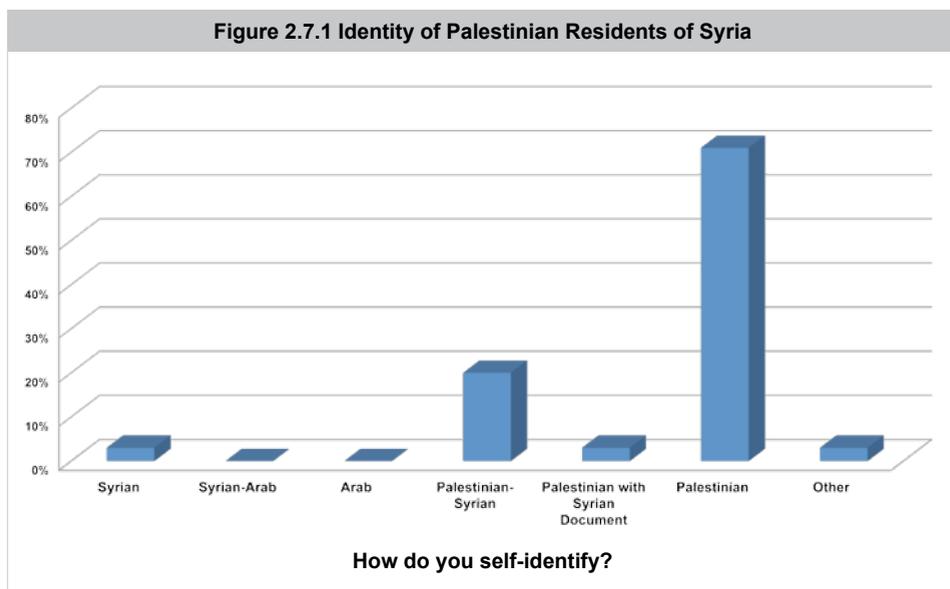
refugees in Lebanon suffer the worst conditions in terms of legal status and withholding of rights. Alienated Palestinians living in hostile conditions, as is the case for Palestinian refugees within Lebanon, seek comfort and solace with their brethren across international borders.

Yet, the attitude of Palestinian refugees towards Palestinian citizens of Israel differs slightly, as is the case in other locations. There is a small portion of Palestinian youth in Lebanon (almost 10 percent) which see establishing social contacts with Palestinians in Israel to be extremely “unimportant.”

2.7 Palestinians in Syria

The situation of Palestinian refugees within Syria is described as quite favourable. Palestinians in Syria are comparatively integrated into the social and economic life. While Palestinians in Syria are not given the Syrian nationality, Palestinian refugees have access to Government services such as Government-run schools, universities and hospitals. Furthermore, they enjoy most of the residency, social, and civil rights of Syrian nationals.²⁵

Our findings suggest a Palestinian youth community in Syria with both a strong sense of Palestinian identity, and a desire to forge social ties with Palestinians living in other areas throughout the Levant.



On the question of identity, 71 percent of respondents chose “Palestinian”, and only 21 percent self-identified as “Palestinian-Syrian”. The interaction between the Palestinian community and the host government has surely affected such an outcome, for as early as 1956 Palestinians in Syria were seen as originally Arab Palestinian by law.²⁶ In other words, the Syrian government did not seek to interfere or impose Syrian identity on Palestinian, and in taking this approach allowed Palestinian political and national discourse to develop in relative independence to other countries in the region.

However, the space that the Syrian government has allowed the Palestinian community to develop and maintain their identity has neither been absolute nor

consistent. This is true especially during periods of disagreement or conflicts between PLO and Syrian government leaders. Generally speaking, Palestinians were allowed to promote Palestinian nationality as part of the wider Arab nation. This could be mainly attributed to the governments ideology of Arab nationalism – one Arab nation, one Arab vision and future.

Figure 2.7.2 Palestinian Residents of Syria Social Ties with Jerusalem Residents

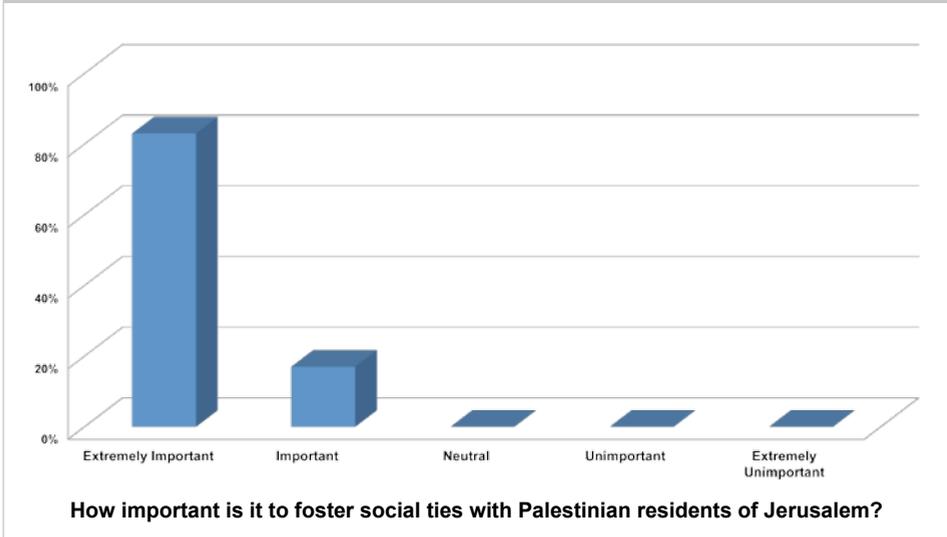


Figure 2.7.3 Palestinian Residents of Syria Social Ties with Palestinian Citizens of Israel

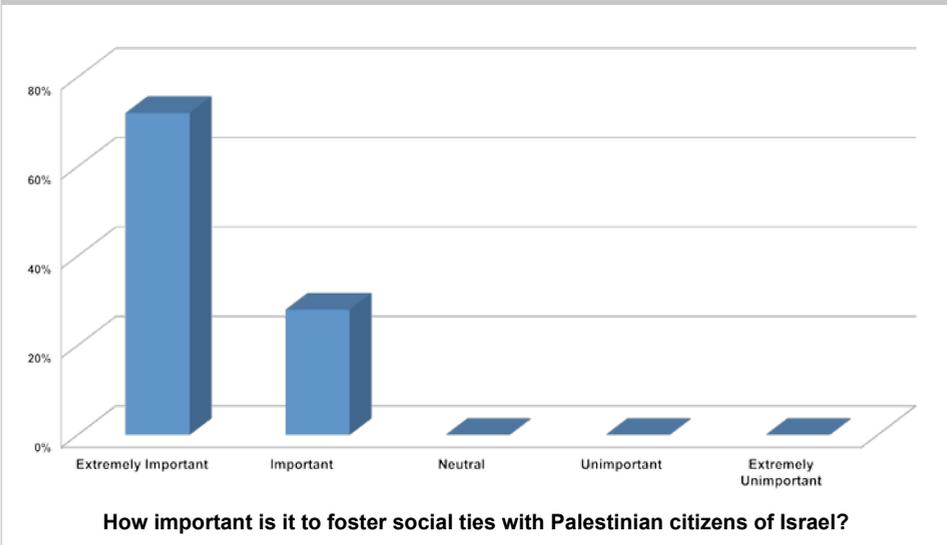


Figure 2.7.4 Palestinian Residents of Syria Social Ties with Gaza Strip Residents

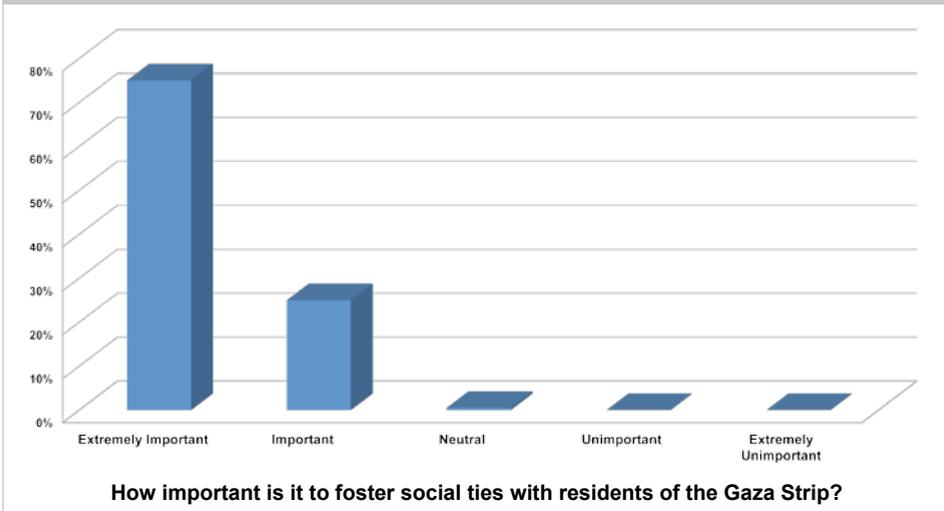
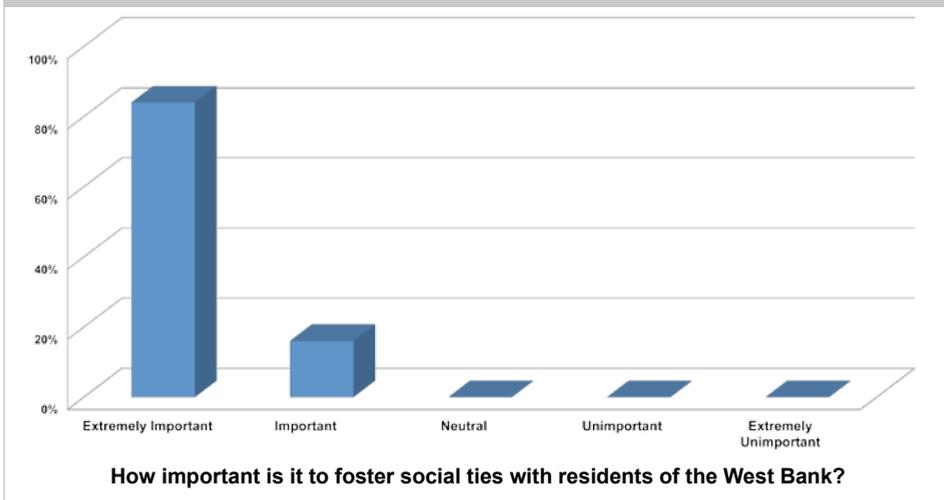


Figure 2.7.5 Palestinian Residents of Syria Social Ties with West Bank Residents



Irrespective of the government intention, what should be emphasized here is that the degree of space or freedom afforded to Palestinians residing within Syria has yielded a “*culture of return*” and an accompanying '*Right of Return*' movement. This movement emerged in response to the establishment of the Oslo framework and the threat to the right of return that this framework produced.²⁷ Accordingly, and as illustrated in the diagrams below, the respondents in Syria attached the highest importance to the notion of forging social ties with Palestinians from other areas. The attitudes among Palestinian refugees in Syria are unanimous with not a single respondent deeming the forging of such social ties 'unimportant'

2.8 Conclusion

These sample surveys prove that Palestinian youth in and around Mandate Palestine possess similar overall attitudes to identity and social cohesion. These findings mandate that we re-examine how those in power depict Palestine and Palestinian society so as to allow for a more representative Palestinian voice to emerge.

In order to move beyond the divisions in Palestinian society; divisions that stem from both a political and physical reality, Palestinians together must decide on the nature of the struggle. This unity is necessary so that Palestinians can come to a consensus regarding a number of questions fundamental to their collective future: do the majority of Palestinians support the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which could confine the return of the refugees to this state only, or do the majority of Palestinians support a united struggle? Just as importantly, are those who currently hold leadership positions inside and outside Palestine undertaking a strategy consistent with the desires of the Palestinian populace? By exploring the content of these questions, it becomes clear that each is inextricably linked to the Palestinian peoples' right to self-determination, which is a right recognized by the United Nations(UN), and is applicable to all Palestinians regardless of their location.

This research does not aim to answer these difficult questions. However, it does demonstrate that Palestinians are not solely confined to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Palestinians living in these designated territories view their society's identity more expansively than is suggested by those with an interest in maintaining the current paradigm. Researchers must pave the way for such essential questions to be addressed. While Palestinian youth largely deem the enhancing of social ties with one another as being of great importance, Palestinian leaders must take it upon themselves to make such interaction a priority. This is not for the sake of social interaction with peers with whom they share a history, but for the sake of forging a united front in the face of a movement that has found success in dividing the indigenous population of Palestine. Such a focus is even more essential given the political divisions that have marred Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip since the establishment of the Oslo framework.²⁸

In a note relevant to this and the rest of the diagrams in this paper, it is worth considering that being neutral on the subject of fostering social ties with Palestinians from other geographical regions, or even seeing it as unimportant, does not necessarily mean that Palestinians comply with divisions imposed by

political reality, or that they reflect a lesser political commitment to the Palestinian cause. One could interpret such results as reflecting the notion that Palestinian identity is borderless; forged from a shared experience of forcible displacement and alienation, therefore it is necessary to forge social ties in order to nourish this identity. This point is further emphasized by the aforementioned uniformity in results across the respondents. The fact that, typically, more respondents think it is ‘only’ important, rather than ‘extremely important’ to create and maintain social ties, may also support such a reading of the results. However, this cannot yet be considered a definitive interpretation, but rather an area of great potential impact which demands comprehensive follow-up research so as to explore and digest such qualitative issues.

This research shows that issues of identity and the desire to become closer with one another are, for the most part, shared across the board, regardless of location. This begs the question, how can Palestinians who share these views overcome the divisions enforced by Israel? More importantly, this research affirms that the question of Palestinian national identity is not merely a question of citizenship, travel documents or humanitarian privileges, but a much wider concept concerning the key principles of liberation, freedom and democracy. These principles must be addressed by the Palestinian leadership during the course of proposing durable and just solutions. Despite the overlap between nationality and citizenship, new generation of Palestinians is still committed to its national identity - much more than to issues of citizenship or place of residency. For this reason, it has been realized (based on the findings of this study) that Article 5 of the Palestinian National Charter is still governing the self-identity of the new generation: “The Palestinians are those Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine regardless of whether they were evicted from it or have stayed there. Anyone born, after that date, of a Palestinian father - whether inside Palestine or outside it - is also a Palestinian”.

Above all, the results presented above confirm the importance of a determination to bring democratic processes to the structures and institutions that represent the Palestinian people, and lead the Palestinian liberation movement to a freedom as defined by the Palestinian people. In other words, the findings of this preliminary research strongly suggest that the approach taken to decide the fate of Palestinians and resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict should consider the voices of all Palestinians wherever they may be. Palestinian identity and national discourse derive from their common predicament of Nakba and forcible displacement. 65 years later, Nakba, alienation and displacement unite all Palestinians at a regional, and possibly global, level.

Endnotes

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2. For more on Israeli violations of human rights, see the following publications by BADIL: *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and IDPs, 2010-2012, Seam Zones, Bulletin No. 25, 2012*, BADIL's *Legal Advocacy Interventions*, available at: <http://www.badil.org/en/legal-advocacy>, *Applying International Criminal Law to Israel's Treatment of the Palestinian People, 2011*, *United Against Apartheid, Colonialism and Occupation: Dignity and Justice for Palestinian People, Rights in Principles Rights in Practice, 2009*.
3. Khalidi, Rashid, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
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5. An English brief of the working paper is being prepared by BADIL. An Arabic version of the working paper is available on our website: <http://www.BADIL.org/en/documents/category/2-working-papers>
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9. As'ad Ghanem, 'The Palestinians in Israel: Political Orientation and Aspirations', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26/2 (2002), p. 137.
10. For more information please see: BADIL, 'Jerusalem's protracted demographic transformation: a policy of population transfer and a regime of apartheid and colonialism', *written statement submitted to the Human Rights Council* (March 2011). Available at: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/9AAF0B88E2050A0A8525784E0057AF09>.
11. Pappé, Ilan, *The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel* (New Haven, Conn. ;London: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 97.
12. Alyan, Nisreen, Ronit Sela, & Michal Pomerantz, *Policies of Neglect in East Jerusalem: The Policies That Created 78% Poverty Rates and a Frail Job Market* (Jerusalem: ACRI - The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, 2012), p. 1.
13. Roy, Sara., & Institute for Palestine Studies, *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), p. 14.
14. Egypt supported the creation of the All-Palestine government to impede the expansionist desires of Jordan's King Abdullah. The government served as a front for Egypt's administration of the territory following the armistice agreement with Israel in 1949.
15. Roy, Sara., & Institute for Palestine Studies, *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), p. 24.
16. It is necessary to note that we did not provide a comparable response to those living in the West Bank as such an identity does not exist in the same manner.

17. See: BADIL, *Closing Protection Gaps: Handbook on Protection of Palestinian Refugees in States Signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention* (Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, 2005), p. 16.
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20. Ibid 50.
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23. Mitri, Amjad, *Mapping Child Protection Systems in Place for Palestinian Refugee Children in the Middle East* (Beirut: Save the Children Sweden, Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, 2011), p. 40.
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25. See: BADIL, *Closing Protection Gaps: Handbook on Protection of Palestinian Refugees in States Signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention*, p. 17.
26. Law 260 of 1956: "Palestinians...are to be considered as originally Syrian in all things covered by the law...connected with the right to employment, commerce, and national service, while preserving their original nationality". Quoted in Brand, *Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration*, p. 623.
27. Anaheed. Al-Hardan, 'The Right of Return Movement in Syria: Building a Culture of Return, Mobilizing Memories for the Return', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 41/2 (2012): 62-79
28. While the rupture between the two most popular factions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip occurred in 2006, the two parties have a history of conflict. As King notes, "armed clashes occurred between Hamas and Fateh in Tulkarem and Gaza in September 1990". See: King, Mary Elizabeth., *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance* (Kindle Locations 3582-3583). Kindle Edition.

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“The Palestinians are those Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine regardless of whether they were evicted from it or have stayed there. Anyone born, after that date, of a Palestinian father - whether inside Palestine or outside it - is also a Palestinian”.