



**Arab American University Palestine
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**The Role of Social Media Platforms in Serving the
National Strategic Goals: A Comparative Study between
Palestinian and Israeli – Official Facebook and Twitter
Accounts - (2017-2022)**

By

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**This thesis was submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master's degree in
Strategic Planning and Fundraising
2022**

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By

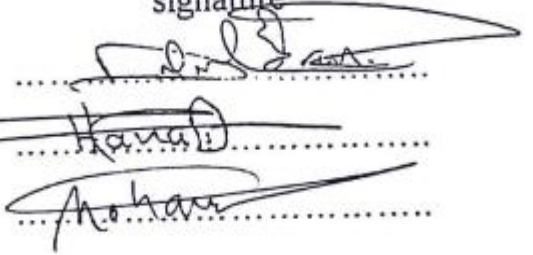
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This Thesis was defended successfully on January 25, 2022 and approved by:

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signature



The image shows three handwritten signatures on dotted lines. The first signature is for Dr. Dalal Iriqat, the second for Dr. Hanadi Dwikat, and the third for Mohammed Abualrob. The word 'signature' is written above the first signature.

Declaration:

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Eythar Ahmad Abdel-Haq



18/08/2022

Acknowledgment:

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr.Dalal Iriqat, for her guidance and for her endless support throughout her supervision on this thesis and for her confidence in me. I highly appreciate her efforts from the beginning of this thesis until the completion of it.

Special thanks to the committee members for their time and for their comments and discussion.

Sincere gratitude and special thanks to Dr.Nasser al-laham for the valued information he gave me while interviewing him.

Finally, sincere thanks and respect to my master colleagues and anyone contributed and assisted in achieving my thesis and of course to my Arab American university members and staff.

Dedication:

First, I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to my family and friends, starting with:

- My great parents “Ahmad and Naila “for their endless support and for being source of inspiration all the time.
- My dear husband “Ashraf” for his continues love, support and encouragement, for being patient and understanding and for being source of inspiration.
- My lovely kids “Rayan and Kinda”.
- My brother “Aram” , My sisters “ Petula , Suba and Yara”
- “Yamam, in loving memory.” Who couldn’t see this achievement.
- My father-in-law and my mother-in-law.

Abstract:

Social Media is playing a key role in publishing information and news, it is used widely around the world, it has almost substituted the traditional media tools, and this research is conducted to study the role of this effective tool in serving the national goals for both the Palestinians and the Israelis. This research relays on interviewing different experts in Palestinian and Israeli strategic planning, expert in social media and it depends on analysing some retrieved data from Facebook and Twitter, so this research methodology is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. It has been found that both Palestinian and Israeli did not use social media to serve their national goals but it also shows that Israelis use social media in better ways than Palestinians; they use the political platform (Twitter) more efficiently than Palestinians, they use many Arabic official pages and accounts to share their story. This research finds it important for Palestinians to use such powerful and available tool to share their story better and to defend the Palestinian case in a very simple way, experts in social media and digital diplomacy should be a part of any Palestinian ministry in order to enhance the use of social media and benefit the most from their capabilities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Social media has changed the way information is generated, gathered and published around the world. In the past, the decision makers controlled the flow of information; they determined what, when and where to share information, the Internet has changed this. It eases the follow and the access of information, so that the information is spread everywhere and at any time. Social media has even accelerated this process. It has shifted the world towards free-flowing information and ideas. It has created an equilibrium in information gathering and sharing and in decision-making.

Social media has become a part of most people daily routine because it has turned from private network for personal communication with friends into a wider range where it allows people to speak up and share their opinions in deferent aspects of public life.

Many governments around the world realized the importance of social media and its capabilities so they started to use social media for different reasons; social media allows them to know their people better and to share ideas with them, it provides mass public engagement; moreover, its high ability to spread information more efficiently. In addition to its low costs, so governments start to utilize from social media capabilities in political life since social media are very powerful tools that ease the interaction between politicians and their audience.

Social media became a main source of information and news, posts, photos and videos are shared and spread easily. Regular people have also turned to be news

transmitters instead of being receivers only with the new feature provided by social media's live videos feature.

Social media tools especially Facebook and Twitter have seriously affected the Arab world, they were key factors in influencing and arranging the (Arab Spring uprisings) in Egypt and Tunisia since 2011 as social media has removed the barriers to communication. Protesters used Facebook pages and Twitter accounts to publish awareness materials regarding the protests and the importance of revolution also these pages and accounts were used to publish the information about the coming protest.

1.2 Problem Definition

Social media is the most recent trend nowadays, since this technology is used as a facilitator for virtual interaction and communication between people from different places all over the world. This technology has become part of daily life especially after the latest technological revolution and the invention of Smart phones since most of the social media applications are available and can be easily downloaded on smart phones.

The tendency towards using social media is rapidly increasing; statistics show that the number of social media users' worldwide equals 3.80 billion in 2020 Which is 83.7% of internet users with over 4.54 billion monthly active users, social network Facebook is currently the market leader in terms of reach and scope and these figures are expected to grow. (Currey & Nazir, 2020)

If we perform a quick search on the Palestinian official Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, we will reveal that there are few official Palestinian pages that try to narrate and publicize the Palestinian story and use Palestinian hashtags. (Sehwail,2018)

Some of them are the official page of the Prime Minister [Dr. Mohammad shtayyeh](#), the official page of the former Prime Minister [Dr. Rami Hamdallah](#), the official Facebook page of the [president Mahmoud Abbas](#), the official Twitter account of Palestine Liberation Organization- Negotiation Affairs Department named [Palestine PLO-NAD](#) and official Twitter account of the mission to the united nation under the name of [state of Palestine](#), the Twitter account of late [Dr. Saeb Erakat](#).

However, most of the Palestinian pages do not provide modern forms of digital content, such as videos or infographics, as well as the absence of statistics on the Palestinian losses resulting from the conflict with the occupation. We can also note that there are limited numbers of anti-Israeli hashtags. While the Israeli pages such as (the Facebook Page Israel Speaks Arabic – [اسرائيل تتكلم بالعربية](#)), the Facebook page [Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) and the official Twitter account of [Benjamin Netanyahu](#), used a unified name to pass their own story by using alternative Israeli hashtags for each Palestinian hashtags used.

An interesting research showed that the Prime Minister of Israel, Binyamin Netanyahu, is using technology in a very professional way since he believes that we live in a world of technology and that Israel should keep up with the track. His Facebook page has more than two million followers from all over the world, because of the effective media campaigns also because he engages with the public directly and engages in dialogue via this page. That is why he was selected as the 10th most

admired person in USA according to You Gov poll World's Most Admired " 2 0 1 6 " . (D a h l g r e e n , 2 0 1 6)

Political life is not limited to internal interaction of politicians with people inside one's country, it could be also the way the country represents itself in other countries (diplomacy)

There is no doubt that technology reshaped the way the world works nowadays, including emerging a new age of diplomacy called digital diplomacy. Recently diplomats use social media as a strong tool to serve their nations' interests and to improve the way they communicate with people.

Many diplomats start taking advantage of the opportunities offered by technology to enhance and improve their work, spread the information among a large number of people using internet. Applying internet in the diplomacy field and interchange between traditional diplomacy and digital diplomacy helps in placing foreign ministries in leading positions.

The popularity of digital diplomacy is rising and competition continues between countries to attain a high ranking in digital diplomacy scale. The results of digital diplomacy review 2017, conducted by Istanbul Center for Digital Affairs shows that Israel has been ranked as the ninth country in using digital diplomacy, while Palestine has been ranked in the 85th place. (Diplomacy Live, 2017)

Considering the huge shift towards using social media and as there is a huge difference between utilizing from its capabilities by Palestinian politicians and Israeli politicians, leads us to spot the light on the role of using social media (specially

Facebook and Twitter official accounts) in serving the Palestinian national goals, this research covers the period of the period (01st January 2017- 30th June 2020).

It is important to mention that this research dose not aim to investigate digital diplomacy although of its importance. Digital diplomacy was mentioned during this research as one of the fields that was affected and enhanced by social media.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The widespread of the Internet and the evolvement of social media networks has been reflected on the political life; social media has become an important source of information and important tool to spread ideas, including political ones.

In Palestine, social media networks have become popular and been used widely, they became a growing force among the Palestinian youth groups. They became a platform for people to spread and promote their opinions.

Palestinian youth started to spread invitations and campaigns through social media pages, to share their perspective against the racist Israeli policies and try to get support for the Palestinian cause. Nevertheless, the question that arises is have Palestinians officially used these tools to serve national goals?

This research will contribute in explaining the role of using official social media pages as a strategic tool to serve the strategic national goals (agenda) by performing a comparative study and analysis on the Palestinian official pages Vs. the Israeli official pages on social media.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The results of this study will give us a clear vision towards the importance of utilizing these powerful platforms to deliver the right message to the Palestinian people in the

first place and the world secondly. It is going to be a sort of defending Palestinian legitimate cause this will help in planning, upgrading, and evaluating our approaches of using these social media tools.

This study is relevant to strategic planning since there is nothing more important to plan for more than the legitimate and fair cause of Palestine since Palestine is under occupation and its crucial to plan for such environment that considered full of uncertainties.

Strategic planning in the face of uncertainty present a major challenge to decision maker, but the scale of uncertainty is in the Palestinian situation is extraordinary. Decision makers have to make important decisions that depending on highly uncertain internal and external factors.

In Palestine, everything is unstable and uncertain, the consequences, circumstances, conditions, and the events are unpredictable, and the possible outcomes cannot be guaranteed.

Burt even if these outcomes cannot be assigned with credible probabilities, but still we should analyse the internal and external factor and try to minimize the weaknesses, maximize the strengths, grab the opportunities and avoid as much threats as we can.

The outcome will give decision makers a perception of the power and importance of the social media tools and their great capabilities in communicating and sharing information with citizens, in addition, it will give them an idea of the number of times they have used these means in promoting strategic national goals.

It will spot a light on the need to enhance using these tools in spreading the Palestinian narrative locally and internationally, it will also show strengths and weaknesses in Palestinian use of these sites. Which will help in suggesting different action to be taken to utilize form these powerful free websites.

1.5. Thesis Structure

In order to get the desired results, this thesis consists of six chapters; the first one is a brief introduction regarding the topic of this thesis.

In the second chapter, the theoretical framework is presented, starting with the social media definition, followed by a briefing on social media and digital diplomacy and then some capabilities of social media are mentioned.

Then, we present a summary of Palestinian National Policy agenda and another summary for Israeli socioeconomic assessment.

In the third chapter, a review for the literature is done to benefit from previous related studies.

While the fourth chapter explains the research methodology, population, and samples.

After that, the analyzed data is shown and a discussion of the results is provided.

Finally, the results and the further recommendations are listed so others can benefit from this thesis and continue in other aspects.

Chapter 2: The Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.1. Social Media

Social networks have developed over the years until they became the way we know.

Social media is an old concept. It did not start with the computer; it started with the

telegraph invention and sending a successful message from Washington to Baltimore in 1834. Then by the invention of the telephone in 1876, the innovation continued until the 1990s, the first social site was known particularly in 1997 under the name Sixdegrees, this site allowed its users to create profiles and to friend each other.

Another mean of social sites is the blogs that appeared in 1999, and then in 2002 Friendster was widely known and used as a social site, followed by LinkedIn in 2003. One year later Google created its email services under the name Gmail, then the giant Facebook started in 2004, followed by YouTube in 2005 and in 2006 Twitter was established, there were many other famous social media sites created during the same period and after but few are mentioned in this thesis.

This chapter introduces information about Social media. It presents the definition of social media, the contribution of social media in digital diplomacy and finally, the capabilities of social media in both the Arabic and the Palestinian context.

2.1.1 Definition of Social Media

As a result of the digital world revolution, the usage of social media sites and the huge expansion in the smartphone and table industry, simple access to the Internet from any place and at any time, huge change occurred in different aspects of life. Using social media became more like a daily habit, which resulted in decreasing barriers between people. Not to mention the ability to exchange and share thoughts, images and files over social media.

First, we need to define the expression social media, after reviewing the literature, many definitions have been set to social media, some are mentioned below:

“Social media and social software are tools that increase our ability to share, to cooperate, with one another, and to take collective action, all outside the framework of traditional institutional institutions and organizations” (Shirky, 2008, P. 20–21).

“Social media represents the technologies or applications that people use in developing and maintaining their social networking sites. This involves the posting of multimedia information (e.g., text, images, audio, video), location-based services (e.g., Foursquare), gaming (e.g. Farmville, Mafia Wars)” (Albarran 2013, P.2).

“Social media describes a specific set of internet-based, networked communication platforms. These use a business model of a database built by its own users. And they enable the convergence of public and personal communication. This definition includes Facebook and Twitter, Reddit and Tumblr, Pinterest and Instagram, Blogger and YouTube, among others” (Meikle, 2016).

“Social media manifest a convergence between personal communication (to be shared one-to-one) and public media (to be shared with nobody in particular)” (Meikle & Young 2012, P. 68).

“Social network sites web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site” (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, P.211).

As noticed above, most of the definitions are similar but with different descriptions, so for the purpose of this research the first definition is going to be considered as the social media definition.

Because of the digital world revolution, the usage of social media sites and the huge expansion in the smartphone and tablet industry, the simplicity of accessing the Internet from any place and at any time, therefore huge change occurred in different aspects of life. Using social media became more like a daily habit. Not to mention the ability to exchange thoughts, images and files over social media.

Social media sites have many capabilities; besides helping people communicate with each other, share thoughts and interests; they are powerful tools in which can be used in business and marketing to promote for a brand.

They can also be used in sharing news, a huge shift in news delivery has been made since the invention of smart phones with good camera, regular people can share events, by shooting live videos and share them in real time, people can watch and comment on what is happening instantly.

In order to understand these platforms, brief about Facebook and Twitter is now to be introduced.

- Facebook is one of the famous social websites established in February 2004. Founded by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg and another three cofounders; when the site was launched, it was limited to Harvard students use. Then the privilege was extended to other universities such as Stanford, Columbia and Yale, later it was available for high school students and after that to everyone who is 13 years or above.

Facebook users' can create a profile; add others as friends, and send messages to each other, share posts, photos, videos, create groups or pages and instant notifications are available. Statistics on Facebook website shows, that there are 2603 million monthly active users on Facebook on average for Mar 2020 (FACEBOOK INC, 2020).

-Twitter is another well-known social media website launched in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams, it offers micro blogging service where people communicate with each other in short messages called tweets. Each tweet length is limited to 280 characters. Users can post, share photos, videos, likes, and retweet tweets. Statistics show that it has 340 million monthly active users on average for January 2020 (Currey & Nazir, 2020).

If we focus on the Palestinian context, we are going to find that at the end of 2019 according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics PCBS, the percent of the Palestinian families that have internet access is equal to 80%. It has been found that 88% of them are Facebook users, while 23% are Twitter users, according to a study conducted by a website called *ipoke*.

Moving to the Israeli context, at the end of 2019 the Internet users in Israel are 84% of the population, 83% of them are Facebook users while twitter users are only 9% of the population, according to a study conducted by Vision Center for Political Development.

Another study prepared by the Arab Center for the Advancement of social Media (7amleh), showed that the Israeli government keep preventing Palestinians from expressing their thoughts against Israel over Internet. According to this study in 2019, around 5500 Palestinians have been arrested by Israeli forces and charged for

incitement after sharing posts against Israel on social media (Moller, Hegazi, & Fischer, 2020) and this is part of a policy of censoring content which is a violation of right of expression and human rights against Palestinians.

7amleh has also prepared another interesting report, showing that “the rate of racism and hate online has increased in 2019 since every 64 seconds an inciting post, the total number of these posts reached to 495,000 posts out of 5.4 million post, the posts called for violence, racial profiling and insults against Palestinians. In addition, one out of ten posts encourage violence against Palestinians. Most of these posts were related to political issues and increased within the two rounds of Israeli elections (Nadsoft, 2020).

This rate has increased 5% in comparison with 2018, since every 66 seconds an inciting post was shared, with a total number of 464,000 inciting posts out of 4.7 million post. Most of these posts were related to political issues especially the Jewish Nation State Law, over 115,000 racist posts were published over social media at that time. It has been noticed that 66% of the violence and racism were published and shared via Facebook, while 16% via Twitter” (Nadsoft, 2019).

2.1.2 Social Media & Digital Diplomacy

The use of social media has expanded and it is not limited anymore to social life and personal use only, nowadays it is used on several levels, starting from personal use, to business use and marketing, in education and even in politics.

Politician use social media to present their ideas and to promote election campaigns; moreover, diplomats started to harness the social media and apply these powerful tools in diplomacy, turning the traditional public diplomacy into digital diplomacy.

Public diplomacy is defined as “an international actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public” (Cull, 2009, p.12).

Diplomacy has been used to avoid war and violence, to represent global issues and to expand the political and economic bonds between countries. Diplomacy can be carried out through multi channels in the international system; one of the most famous method is the diplomatic missions, diplomats used to play an exact role in traditional diplomacy. They played the role of a messenger between their government and the government of another country they were sent to, they were given specific topics to focus on.

The Revolution in the digital sector provided the chance for easier access to information. Before the internet became available to public, it was limited and restricted to the government use. Then it became popular and one of people’s daily routine. Diplomats utilized from social media to improve services provided and to distribute their point of view for the maximum number of people around the world and the term digital diplomacy arose.

If we perform a quick search on digital diplomacy, we might find different names for it, these includes E-diplomacy, Cyber-diplomacy, Net diplomacy and Twi-diplomacy. Although these terms should not replace digital diplomacy because each prefix stands for a specific area. Starting with the prefix “e” it stands for the issues related to business manners, while “cyber” is used for computer security issues and finally the “Twi” is an abbreviation for Twitter so it should be used when we are

talking only about twitter and none of these prefixes reflect the correct mean of digital diplomacy. (Verrekia, 2017, p.15)

Digital diplomacy is known as: “diplomacy equipped with a range of new tools. The main tasks of diplomacy are still to observe, analyse, report and act with the goal of promoting a country’s interests” (Hocking & Melissen, 2015, p.44.)

The beginning of digital diplomacy was from the United States. To be more specific, when former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, decided to shape the foreign policy strategies of the State Department to benefit from new technology, she used social media to utilize them as a tool for statecraft. Clinton believed that social media have great impact on the diplomacy field that is why there is 25 different nodes at Department of State’s headquarters for digital diplomacy, with more than 1000 of employees. Department of State monitors information posted online and twitter feeds in many languages on a daily basis so it can change and update messages in response to the people. (Verrekia, 2017, P.16)

The adoption of social diplomacy started quickly, after almost a decade since the innovation of social media website, 90% of United Nation member have created Twitter accounts with 325 million followers and 88 percent have created Facebook accounts 255 million, which enables these millions to interact instantly with ministries of foreign affairs and embassies (Bjola, 2018).

Digital diplomacy dose not substitute traditional public diplomacy, but it greatly enhanced it, especially in public relations. The development of the digital world today, with the increasing reliance on social media that is used by a huge number all

over the world, make them effective tools in diplomacy, policy guidance and achievement of goals.

As mentioned above, the Istanbul Centre for Digital Affairs, placed Israel 9th country in using digital diplomacy, while Palestine in the 85th place.

Digital diplomacy in Palestine is still lagging behind; it is necessary to take a step forward and utilize the social media capabilities in order to make noticeable leaps that influence the world public opinion against the Israeli narrative. The position of Palestine in using digital diplomacy shows that the practice of Palestinian digital diplomacy still requires a lot of work, deep understanding of its role in changing perception of other countries.

It is essential to provide Palestinian embassies with experienced Human resources to practice of digital diplomacy in different languages and to cope with other countries in this field.

There is no doubt that one of the reasons that encourage Israel to focus on digital diplomacy is to compensate for the weakness in its traditional diplomacy, caused by the boycott movements, these movements significantly contributed in harming Israel's image at various levels: political, economic, cultural and academic levels so Israel started to search for alternatives. Digital diplomacy was one of them not to mention the great technological development in Israel.

It is obvious that the Israeli government tries to improve the image of Israel in the Arab world, it tries to reach the Arab youth through social media therefore many of the shared content is of a humanitarian, cultural and artistic nature.

2.1.3 Examples of the Capabilities of Social Media

It has been clear that social media has many capabilities and they have changed the way we deal with several things; they have effected many aspects of peoples' lives. They played a significant role in initiating, empowering, and influencing changes. One of the most important examples of the changes occurred due to the influence of social media, is (Arab Spring uprisings). Social media was a key element in these changes and played a critical role in the uprisings in different countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain and Syria.

The experience of the changes that had taken place in the region since 2011 and the demonstrations in Egypt and Tunisia are the real evidence of the role social media can play in people's lives.

When Arab spring uprisings have started, the revolution of social media was at its peak, so protesters took advantage of the capabilities of these sites. Tunisia protests that ended up with the fall of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali influenced the Egyptians to take a move towards demonstrations against the regime in their country. Back in of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, after a Tunisian citizen "Mohamed Bouazizi" committed suicide as a result of bad economic situation, Tunisians arranged a series of protests against the bad economic situation such as the food inflation, the high unemployment percentage rate in addition to the restriction applied on the political freedom. Protests continued and grew bigger expressing frustration over the regime of long-time President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the people called him to resign. After a number of protests, Ben Ali resigned in January 2011.

Following the success of the Tunisian protesters, group of Egyptians organized a protest in Cairo in January 2011 against what they called the abuse performed by police. This protest also was against the bad economic situations of unemployment, corruption, in addition to the lack of political freedom, and then a series of protests continued until the resignation of Hosni Mubarak, during the protests Egyptian protesters utilized both old media and social media.

Different studies emphasized that social media was the main tool to exchange information between people inside and outside the countries. Egyptians planned their movement regarding the movement in Tunisia by sharing their images and videos via Facebook and Twitter during the protests, these two platforms were the main tools of interaction and communication between Egyptian protesters. They used Facebook pages and Twitter accounts to define the dates they want to go down the streets to join the movement against the 30 years rule of President Hosni Mubarak and to create hashtags that reflected what was happening and what was planned for the next move. Even on the streets, social media assisted protesters to share what is happening, these protesters turned into citizen journalists, using smart phones connected to the internet and transmitting the news of what was going on during the protest instantly.

During this revolution, even the Egyptian government has recognized the importance of social media and the role they played in expanding the number of the people in the streets who are against the president, so the government decided to cut off Internet and cellular phone and that lasted for five days. After a number of protests, President Hosni Mubarak announced his resignation in February 2011.

Social media has helped in changing the regimes that ruled different countries for many years, in the Palestinian case; social media has been used effectively but as initiatives from the public. One example of these is calling for the peaceful unarmed “Great March of Return” protest near Gaza borders, which began on March 30, 2018 with calling for ending the Israeli siege on Gaza and the right of return of refugees. Hashtags and event has been created weekly to encourage more participation, to inform the participant the information regarding the coming week activity in addition to publish photos and videos to illustrating the reality of violence against Palestinians during these protests.

Another case is the protest held against the social security law; The Palestinian government had drafted on a social security law (Law no. 19, year 2016), based on the experience of some countries, taking into consideration the Palestinian special political, economic and social context. This law is the first of its kind in Palestine, but since its introduction raised a community movement asking for amendments to be applied, but the government had approved the law after applying minor modifications. As a result, many employees rejected the law and called for a series of protests, many Facebook pages has been created for this purpose and many hashtags had been published until the president finally announced the cancelation of the law in January 2019.

Social media tools help people to communicate with each other; they are platforms that enable users to share different types of information and data such as sharing photo, audio and videos. In addition, the capabilities of sharing live videos, creating

polls and many other features. These huge capabilities encourage governments to adopt social media as a part of open governments.

Governments nowadays utilize from social media features and start shifting towards open government, public participation, e-government applications, in addition to government-citizen interaction over social media.

Governments are facing a real issue in collecting data from different social media websites, the retrieved data are (big social data), unstructured data, full of subjective statements, emotions, behaviors, characteristics. This data is low quality data, which will force governments to develop data models and strategies to mine useful data in order to benefit from the mined data.

Using social media by governments is considered as a sort of new technological innovation that help in enhancing citizen engagement, but governments still have to adopt clear strategies to stimulate citizen participation and the governments should keep on evaluating and enhancing these strategies. (Chun & Luna-Reyes, 2012)

An example of using social media on the political level , the 2016 U.S presidential election campaign, it was obvious that social media tools , specially Twitter was used as a direct source of news by the two candidates at that time; Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Both candidates used Twitter as their main online tool to share information with public; Twitter was also used as a platform for debating and critiquing these campaigns. (Enli, 2017)

2.2. National Policy Agenda (2017-2022)

Planning occupies a prominent position in the administrative process; it is considered as the first administrative function, it precedes all administrative processes, it also

affects all other administrative functions and it leads to utilize financial, human and technical resources in a way that achieves the objectives of management.

Recently, strategic planning emerged and adapted for planning in many organizations around the world. This type of planning has changed how organizations plan to develop and implement their strategies. Strategic planning has become an essential tool for organizations to learn, evolve, achieve excellence and respond effectively to rapidly changing global changes.

Thus, what is strategic planning? The word strategy originates from the Greek word Strategos, which means “a general”, its root came from the word “army” and “lead” (Bracker,1980, p.219). Therefore, the term strategy has been used long time ago; it was widely known in the military field as “the employment of the battle as the means towards the attainment of the object of the War.” (Clausewitz,1873/2013 ,p.311).Later this term has evolved and entered the business field after World War II because business environment became more competitive due to rapid development in science and technology and applying new technologies. Nowadays, it is used in different contexts such as business strategies, marketing strategies etc.

Through the 1920s, Harvard Business School initiated a model for the methodologies of strategic planning called Harvard Policy Model; it defined the strategy as a set of principles and policies describing the business, it focused on the resources available, the management and the available information and the organizational structure. Then in 1950s, strategic planning focused more on the risk management, the industry progression and growth so the strategic decision were derived from the analysis

competitive power relationships. While in 1960s, strategic planning was known as a standard tool in management and was used by many companies (Blackerbry,1994).

Strategic planning takes into account internal and external variables, it identifies the sectors, target market segments and method of competition. It also answers the question “Where are we going” taking in consideration the future vision of the company, the relationship and integration between the aspects of the organization.

It also reviews various activities of the organization and the way these activities integrate. Unlike traditional planning, it depends on percept into the future of the company.

While the vision is defined as “the ability to perceive something not actually visible, as through mental acuteness or keen foresight'. In corporate terms, strategic vision is: A coherent and powerful statement of what the business can and should be after a predefined period of time” (Wilson,1992).

Strategic plans developed to achieve a particular goal in the end depending on the plans, procedures and resources available in the present .

Strategic Planning for countries is defining the vision of the country and utilizing the available resources to attain the end goal taking in consideration the internal (strength and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats).

Strategic planning helps organizations to define the goal it intends to achieve and to determine the path needs to be taken to achieve that goal. It inspires managers, employees and stakeholder to think together coherently in all elements, rather than focusing only on one side. It gives people the ability to predict changes, which might

have negative impact on the process and how to deal with these changes to cope with them. It helps people in charge to determine the available resources and utilize these resources to reach the goal. Strategic planning also helps in evaluating budgets effectively and properly. Which will lead to creative and effective initiatives that optimizes the outcomes. Based on the above, it is obvious that strategic planning process is a dynamic process, needs to be reviewed, examined and audit periodically to achieve the goal.

Strategic goals are the specific financial and non-financial objectives and results a company aims to achieve over a specific period, usually the next three to five years, there is three types of goals, they are the end goal, performance goals and process goals.

As for the end goal (outcome goal) refers to the desired result and it is never entirely within our control. While the performance goals identify a specific standard to be achieved, they contain critical elements of end goal and they are always entirely within our control, however, the process goals they deal with the technique or strategy necessary to perform well.

After the previous brief of strategic planning, this chapter is going to introduce the national strategic planning in Palestine in addition to the Israeli National planning.

2.2.1 Summarizing the Chapters of the National Policy Agenda (NPA)

All the countries try to develop their economy by achieving a set of economic and social goals. Therefore, they use different tools and resources. Plans are an important tool for expressing governments' strategy for varying periods. Plans often seek to improve economic and social indexes and to address crises in the economy.

Palestine follows these countries by preparing plans and trying to implement them, the implementation process in Palestine is different from other countries in the world, where there are external factors related to the Israeli occupation, which impedes the implementation of plans and strategies and thus hinders the achievement of goals.

Planning in Palestine started since 1994, at that time the responsibility of planning and fund management was Palestinian Economic council for development and reconstruction (PECDAR)'s.¹

Strategic planning in Palestine has started since 2008, four plans were prepared until now, the first one was for the period (2008-2010) under the name "Palestinian Reform and Development Plan", while the second was for the period (2011-2013) named "National Development Plan: Establishing the state, building our future", the third was for the period (2014-2016) named "State building to sovereign". The last one was different since it is a policy agenda, this Agenda was named "National Policy Agenda: Citizens First".

Since this thesis came to study the Role of Social Media in Serving the National Strategic Goals, it is important to review the Palestinian national policy agenda (2017-2022). Therefore, in this section the researcher is going to summarize the chapters of this Agenda and then conclude the main observations.

This Agenda is the fourth Palestinian plan, under the name Putting Citizens first, it is important to mention that it was the first time that the National plan was divided into policy and crosscutting strategies instead of being a holistic plan as the three previous plans.

¹ An independent institution it was established to fully cooperate and coordinate with the donor community to Palestine in support of the peace process.

This national policy agenda consists of five chapters; the first chapter gives a general idea about the policy, the second one is about the obstacles and constraints. While the third one explains the national vision and national priorities and policies, then the fourth chapter covers how to manage the available resources in an effective and efficient way while the last chapter shows how will the government achieve the defined goals.

Starting with the first chapter, the government decided to adopt the title of this agenda “putting citizens first”, to emphasize on its commitment towards its citizens and serve them in the best possible way. In addition, to ensure that Palestinian should gain their human rights as citizens of an independent state living in peace within their neighbours as it is mentioned in the Agenda.

This Agenda came also to complete what previous national plans did. The previous plans focused on building the Palestinian public institutions, while the role of this plan is taking the next step by activating the role of these institutions to serve citizens using the available resources in an efficient and effective way in order to enhance the citizens’ lives.

NPA have another common target with previous plan, this target is the Independence of Palestine on the 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as capital. NPA will work on defining strategic path that guides preparations for ending the occupation and developing strong national public intuitions.

Then in the second chapter, the agenda also defines the main obstacle facing the execution of this agenda and that faced the previous plans too, this obstacle is mainly the Israeli Occupation. Moreover, some of the facts that affect achieving the goals of this Agenda and that are directly related to occupation are listed below.

- 1) The settlements which keep on spreading across the West Bank
- 2) The siege on the Gaza Strip and the unacceptable and inhuman living circumstances there.
- 3) The Israeli government forbidding the Palestinian utilisation in Area C, which constitutes 64% of the West Bank and only 0.5% of this area is available for construction by the Palestinians, furthermore the separation wall annexing over 9% of the West Bank and isolating the Palestinian people including the citizens of East Jerusalem and the green Line.
- 4) Israel takeover the natural resources and the most obvious example is the robbery of 80% of West Bank's potential water resources.
- 5) Violence against Palestinians has increased, also the destruction of the Palestinian properties has also reached to an unprecedented level.

Furthermore, the Agenda has defined the following challenges that are not directly related to occupation and they are:

- The contribution of forging aid has decreased by 81% since 2008 because it has been agreed that this aid is supposed to support Palestinians to build the national institutions as a step towards independency, but the occupation has exaggerated while the aid has decreased.

- The demographics is another issue since Palestine's population is expected to double by the year 2050 therefore percentage of youth is going to increase which will lead to higher pressure on job market, also the huge pressure over employing females to apply equal opportunities for both males and females.

After defining the obstacles, the agenda identified the national vision in the third chapter, which is all about freedom and independence of Palestine (West Bank and Gaza on the pre-June 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital) even though there is no clear way to achieve that. In addition, and as a part of the vision Palestine is a democratic country that guarantee equal rights and duties to its people. The National Vision of this Agenda is “Palestine is an independent Arab state with sovereignty over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on the pre-June 1967 occupation borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Palestine is a stable democratic state that respects human rights and guarantees equal rights and duties for all citizens. Its people live in a safe and secure environment under the rule of law and it promotes equality between men and women. It is a state, which values highly its social capital, social coherence and solidarity, and identifies itself with Arab Palestinian culture, humanistic values and religious tolerance. It is a progressive state that values cordial relationships with other states and people in the global community. The Palestinian government is open, inclusive, transparent and accountable. It is responsive to citizens’ needs, delivers basic services effectively, and creates an enabling environment for a thriving private sector. Palestine’s human resources are the driving force for national development. The Palestinian economy is open to other markets around the world and strives to produce high value-added, competitive goods and

services, and, over the long term, to be a knowledge-based economy.” (Palestine. Palestine Cabinet,2016. P 16)

Then the planners of this Agenda divided it into three pillars, under these three pillars there are ten national priorities and thirty national policies. A brief of each pillars is going to be mentioned below.

First pillar: Path to Independence.

The Planners perceive that this pillar can be accomplished by executing three national priorities starting with the first one; ending the Occupation, this priority came to support the first part of the vision, which is the free independent state. It has been suggested that this can be done through international support to the Palestinian cause and by holding Israel to account since there are many UN resolutions against the continuing occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The next step in the path of independency is the national Palestinian unity, the unity of people and land; it suggested that after the Independence there would be no division of Areas into area A, B and C or any other type of division. In addition, both West Bank and Gaza are connected and Jerusalem is accessible by all Palestinians.

Another important issue is the refugees issue; there must be a fair solution for them.

In order to achieve the second priority, Gaza and the West Bank must reunite also maintaining democratic principles is very important through holding regular elections in Palestine at all levels.

The third priority is strengthening Palestine international status and motivating the international community to interfere in the Palestinian cause to perform pressure on Israel to restart serious negotiations in order to achieve the two state solution.

Second pillar: Government Reform.

Implementing this pillar will have a vital impact on the citizens' lives, since reforms lead to enhancing the services provided to the people. These reforms include, forming a citizen-centred and effective government by launching service-oriented public institutions and updating different policies so that they serve the people in the best way they could. The government through this agenda promised to apply two major improvements over the six years of the Agenda.

First, restructuring local government so citizens are involved in decision-making. Second, improving the quality services provided to the citizens.

It is important to mention that National Palestinian Agenda showed that Palestinian's Government Effectiveness rank has improved between 2012 and 2015, it has moved from 27th to the 36th percentile as the World Bank Governance Indicator for Government shows, and this percentile is very good compared to the countries around such as Egypt, Algeria, Jordan and Lebanon

Third pillar: Sustainable Development.

The agenda has divided this pillar into five national priorities and for each priority a number of corresponding policies.

The first policy related to sustainable development is the Economic Independence. This priority is about strengthening the Palestinian economy by trying to create new jobs opportunities and starting strong and independent economy that can compete the Israeli economy in order to rely on after the independence.

To accomplish that, a huge national campaign should be launched and there must be a collaboration between government and private sector to support the national products and to also support the new business enterprises and to develop a suitable economic strategy.

Another important issue related to this priority is to fill the gap between Gaza and West Bank by rebuilding the industrial base in Gaza to enhance the situation there.

The planners moved to another factor that will lead to sustainable development in Palestine if it is achieved, this factor is the Social Justice and Rule of Law.

As a country under occupation, the people of Palestine are deprived from their basic rights of social justice even though Palestinian government tried to meet its responsibilities and obligations to the Palestinian people by assuring the basic rights, such as human rights, equality and so on.

Moreover, Palestine has consented international treaties and conventions most of them assign state responsibilities towards commitment.

The eighth priority is the Quality Education for All Palestinian. Palestine intends to maintain quality and equality in the education sector. It is obvious that there are many improvements done regarding this issue for example the percentage of literacy has increased from 89% to 97%, the number of kindergartens as the number of children attending them has also increased, the number of students per class has decreased in the secondary schools as it was mentioned in the national policy agenda.

Moreover, it was mentioned in the Agenda that an improvement has also been noticed in high school and higher education especially for females, the percentage

of females who have attained high school increased by almost 10.4% by the year 2015.

Now the government is focusing more on improving the quality of education but improving the quality of education is not the role of the state only. UNRWA and private sector take part of the responsibility since they are responsible for some schools. To do so the following National Policies and Policy Interventions to help implement this priority.

The Quality Health care for all is also another priority for this agenda, Similar to the Education Sector, the Health care sector has improved in many aspects and there are many indicators that show these improvements over the last years particularly since 2000.

These indicators include: the number of hospitals has increased by 15 new hospital; the number of primary health centres has also increased 595 to 767 and many other indicators that were mentioned in details in the Agenda.

This sector is also collaborative between the government, private sector and UNRWA, so they should work together in order to improve the quality of the provided services.

While the main role lies on the Government to provide affordable and accessible health care in addition to review the public health insurance system and to enhance it.

The last priority in the NPA is Resilient Communities; being a country under occupation, with a number of various communities. Palestinians face many

restrictions such as geographical separation, difficulties in movement and many others.

Thus, the role of the government is to help these communities to take over these restrictions and difficulties, encouraging people to invest in area C and support the people there.

The forth chapter suggested that Palestinians must manage the available resources in an efficient and effective way; therefore, this chapter started with defining the challenges that faces the microeconomic and fiscal challenges.

Palestine faces huge challenges related to the macroeconomic and fiscal level due to the occupation, the decrease in the foreign aid and the weak economic development all these restrictions prevent the government from issuing new reforms or expanding the old ones.

Thus, the most critical economic problem that faces the Palestinian economy arises from the Israeli occupation and the restrictions they apply on the aid deployment besides the reduction in the foreign aid. It has been noticed that the percentage of foreign aid has declined from 2008 to 2015 by 81 %; all that lead to a decrease in the GDP growth since 2011. (Palestine. Palestine Cabinet,2016. P 46)

Regarding foreign aid, it plays an important role in funding the Palestinian economy; moreover, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have emphasized that additional international aid is needed at least until the Palestinians are able to access and control their economic potential. Especially the utilization of the development in area C since this development could cause an increase in GDP by 35%.

While there are various Israeli actions regarding the economy, mostly due to implementing the policies of Paris protocol which causes a loss equal to 2.3% in the GDP and it is almost equal to 285 million dollars yearly, furthermore Israel dominates the fees that are paid at Allenby exit fees.

As mentioned above, the Palestinian economic sector is facing many challenges, which cause shortage in budget relying on unfinanced deficits, to solve the issue a comprehensive fiscal review is going to be done in a way that expands the revenues and decreases the expenditures by examining a number of critical economic issues to come out with an optimum fiscal strategy.

Finally, we reach to last chapter of the national policy agenda; it discusses the actions that needed to be taken in order to implement this national policy agenda successfully and avoid repeating the same mistakes of the previous three plans. These mistakes include that some of the goals in the previous plans were not achieved and the plans were not fully implemented since there were many reasons as mentioned in this agenda such as the occupation, the insufficient funding and in some cases, the goals were not realistic.

The Government considers that this agenda is politically, fiscally and operationally realistic and that it is concerned with the citizens and putting them first, so that makes the policy more applicable and it makes it easier for the government to keep its promises.

The government has also adopted a new approach for planning and budgeting called the strategic results framework. This framework is based on two principles; one of them is planning for the outcomes, which mean identifying the results that help in

implementing the national policies within the available resources. While the other one is focused on the implementation which means setting a monitoring system to measure the performance and that confirms that the plans are implemented right on time and easily respond to emergencies.

The national policy agenda divided the strategic results framework into three components:

- 1) International Benchmarks
- 2) NPA Strategic Objectives.
- 3) NPA Results and Action Plans.

The three components are going to be reviewed periodically and in a predefined manner; a progress report is going to be issued and released. By applying this framework the national policy agenda is expected to be successfully implemented. Finally, the agenda verifies that Palestine's unique situation and circumstances should be taken in consideration while planning, that the real national goal is independence, and that the ultimate success is going to be when the occupation ends.

2.2.2 Analysis of NPA

After summarizing the NPA, the following are noted, the NPA Cannot be considered as a full strategic plan, since this plan is a collection of 30 polices that organize the government program during the coming years, but each policy is connected to a sector and there is a crosscutting strategy.

NPA has a defined time line, but none of its priorities or policies have a specific timing to be achieved.

If we considered each of the three pillar is an end goal (although it is not recommended to have more than two end goals), each priority as a performance goal and each policy as a process goal, none of them is stated in a SMART² way.

In the last chapter of the agenda it is mentioned that strategic goals (objectives as referred to in the agenda) are going to select many goals and each will be considered for one of the thirty national policies, they may contain some of the Sustainable Development Goals, and these goals are going to be SMART as mentioned in the agenda.

If we moved to the evaluation of the plan and the Key Performance Indicators (KPI)³, it was clearly mentioned that international measures are going to be adopted without specifying these measures and the KPIs were not defined. It is also important to mention that the mission statement was not included.

It has also been noted that this agenda focuses on the challenges and obstacles without giving an alternative. Moreover; it emphasizes more than once on the two state solution and the peace process in all chapters although it is not applicable recently, since negotiations with Israelis has been stopped over a decade ago. Trigger variables are a major obstacle in face of implementing this plan due to the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation.

Now, as we summarized the NPA and commented on it, we are going to review and summarize the Israeli strategies, their plans and comment on them.

² SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timed.

³ KPIs : are the information that tell us we are on track.

2.3 Israeli Strategies

Research Institutions and researchers in Israel play a critical role in analysing the circumstances of Israel and developing researches that help decision makers in developing strategies and objectives. Different long-term plans were developed by research and development institutions which included critical issues to Israel.

For example, Israel 2020 plan was prepared by 250 Israeli and foreign researchers and experts under the supervision of the Samuel Neaman Institute at the Technion.

They planned for 25 years in three main scenarios:

First scenario, what is the future of Israel as a developed country to cope with the industrialized countries? Secondly, Israel's relationship with the Jewish people in the world, since the plan indicates that Israel is going to be a gravity centre of Jewish.

The third, Israel and peace with Arab neighbours.

Along with these three alternatives, the Plan provides thoughtful estimates of economic, social, cultural, geographical, political and security (military) capacities.

Each of these alternatives has also four options: first, if the current situation continues as it is the second, an optimistic perspective and another pessimistic (or lower) and the last is the most likely to happen (Abu sttiah,2005. P26).

The planning for the Plan (Israel 2020) started in 1994 and was completed in 1997 where 18 volumes were issued in several disciplines supported by many tables, maps and drawings.

Another example is "Israel 2028 Vision and strategy for economy and society in global world"; this plan has been initiated by the US - Israel Science and Technology Commission and Foundation. This plan was developed in 2008 by a team of 73

persons these include scientists, businessmen, researchers, managers and Jewish experts in Israel and from foreign countries, in cooperation with the Samuel Neaman Institute at the Technion which participated in performing the needed researches, along with the main initiators US - Israel Science and Technology Commission and Foundation. It took them almost two years to develop this plan.

This plan was the first plan that was presented and discussed by Israeli government in May 2008; the goal of developing (Israel 2028) is to place Israel between the 10-15 leading countries over the twenty years of this plan. It covered a various number of topics such as economy, globalization, science and technology, education and many others.

The initiators of the plan believed that Israel has to maintain a high quality education system, advanced science and technology infrastructure, strong economy and justice should be applied on the society to overcome the challenges that it faces.

Strategic planning on the socioeconomic level started at 2012; as a result, to a governmental decision (decision number 5208) and it was delegated to the National Economic Council at the prime minister office.

In 2015, a strategic socioeconomic assessment has been prepared to the 34th Israeli government and it was approved by it. The assessment described the economic and social situation of Israel and the related issues that facing it.

2.3.1 Summarizing the Strategic Socioeconomic Assessment.

A holistic assessment has been done in order to design and implement Israel's strategic socioeconomic designs. On June 28, 2015, Israeli government under Resolutions 145-151 adopted the following strategic assessment and the included

suggested directions, it was agreed that the government will implement the resolution by formulating work plan and adjusting the needed budget. It was also decided that the government should be updated on a yearly bases on the progress of implementing the resolution and a new assessment will be prepared as soon as new government takes office.

This assessment has been done on two levels; the first one was called central trends and characteristics: in this part, the assessment evaluated the Israeli socioeconomic issues with global trends.

The second was called Strategic issues: where threats and opportunities for the Israeli economy were represented and the long-term actions to be implemented by government in the coming years.

The assessment started with identifying the global trends; a summarized review of the economic situation for the developed countries⁴, after the global crisis , it stated that growing rates of these countries after 2008 were low, public debt rates has increased so the interest rates have decreased and reached to the lowest previously recorded levels.

Next, the assessment presented the reasons of aging population around the world and gave an expectation related to the global growing rates and to aging, it also provided a diagram to compare the ratio between population of working age of individuals (20-64) Vs the elderly population for both Israel and Western Europe for the time period (1980 up to 2030).

⁴ Strategic Socioeconomic Assessment define the following as the developed countries: U.S, Canada, EU15, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Japan, Australia and New Zealand

The gravity centre in the whole world is changing and moving from US and Europe towards the east which means that the developed countries will constitute the economic forces in the future in gradual change.

Then graphs were presented to show that the developing countries GDP⁵ will increase from 65% in 2011 to 49 % in 2030 while the developed countries GDP will change from 35% to 51% (Israel. National economic council prime minister's office,2015. P8).

Another major issue that affects the whole world and has been taken in consideration is the climate change as it might cause a reduction in accessibility and availability of critical resources in different regions such as water and food resources. The solution would be to offer alternatives such as renewable energy.

The world is facing a new technological revolution, which will have an impact on the global market and the existing industries and as a result, it is expected to improve the quality of life. This new revolution is caused because of the huge amount of information that exists.

Finally, the assessment presented a graph showed that in 2015, the amount of information is 8,600 billion Gigabytes and this will sharply increase and reaches 40,000 billion of Gigabytes in 2020.

The assessment team thought that Israel faces many security threats thus; the government is forced to pay more expenses to protect the country from these threats,

⁵ GDP: Gross Domestic Product, according to international monetary fund, GDP measures the monetary value of final goods and services—that is, those that are bought by the final user—produced in a country in a given period of time

which affect the Israeli economy. Moreover, the uncertainty of the geopolitical situation reduced the chances of investment in the economy.

In spite of all the security issues that face Israel, it was able to develop new technologies such as hi-tech and cyber technology industries. It was shown in the assessment that Israel has spent 5.8% of its GDP for security purposes in 2013, which is the highest among other countries such as (Germany, turkey, US, Russia and others).

At the time the National Economic Council did the assessment, Israel had no economic relations with surrounding countries. It only had trading relation with Europe and the US that are geographically very far. This had highly affected the cost of living Israel and the quality of life in addition to the effect on the domestic competition. A graph was presented showing that Israel export rate to neighbouring countries out of its total export was 6% in 2013.

Then moving to the natural resources potential part, where it obviously showed that Israel has a huge amount of natural resources and that, it could produce large quantities of chemical material, natural gases, in addition to Israel capabilities of extracting large quantities of oil shale's and petroleum.

After that another important topic was discussed, the internal emigration towards the center of Israel, this emigration is increasing especially by young and educated people. This weaken peripheral regions and increase the load on the center cities⁶. This will also cause shortage of land reserved for construction since they will be fully used, in addition to the overflow of traffic on roads.

⁶ Tel Aviv, Ashkelon and Hadera .

Then the assessment described the Israeli demographic. It is clear that the Israeli society and government think that both Haredim (ultraorthodox Jews) and Arabs are different from the rest of the Israeli population, because their fertility rates are high and their proportion in population is going to grow rapidly in the coming years, which will affect the Israeli society, economy and fabric of the population.

The assessment team stated that at the time this assessment was made, there were high inequality rates in Israel due to different reasons. A statistical graph in the assessment showed the differences for the men's average monthly income between Arab, Haredim and other Jews in 2012, the numbers were as following:

Arab men monthly average income 6,950 NIS

While Haredim men monthly average income 9,450 NIS

No-Haredi Jews and others monthly average income: 13,100 NIS

The inequality also is applied against women , since women also get paid less than men in the Israeli society, the numbers for the women's average monthly income between Arab, Haredim and other Jews in 2012 as the assessment showed, were:

Arab Women monthly average income 5,250 NIS

While Haredim women monthly average income 5,300NIS

No-Haredi Jews and others monthly average income: 8,200 NIS

Due to the previously mentioned verity in demographic, Israel is expected to face a deficit on tax payers. This will cause a decrease in the quality of provided public services, which will also lead to lowering Israel's credit rate internationally and increase the governmental debt interest rates. To solve these issues, taxes should be increased and public expenses should be minimized. Assessment team suggested that

government must take a step towards establishing strategic policies to avoid the expected scenario.

The reality of Israel's situation is very complex, so the assessment team suggested that the Israeli government must develop a strategic perspective and create new systems in order to respond effectively to the changes. These systems must be flexible and can deal easily and smoothly with threats and opportunities.

After that, the assessment turned to a new chapter called "strategic issues", these issues were divided seven main issues Human Capital Development and Utilization, Productivity and Competitiveness, Financial Infrastructure, Digital Israel, Preparing for Population Aging, Housing Strategy and Regional Economic Development (Israel. National economic council prime minister's office, 2015. P20).

Starting with Human capital and utilization, different changes are expected to be noticed due to the technological development, changes expected to affect labor market. Moreover, some difficulties are expected to be faced if companies and workers are unable to adapt themselves.

Therefore, the government has significant role to provide its citizens' with the basic needed skills to cope with the future circumstances especially in the labor market.

To achieve that, the assessment team suggested six categories to be developed, enhanced and reconsidered, they are: early childhood skills, Education system K-12, Army and civic service, Post-secondary education system, employment policy and the future of the jobs.

It is obviously clear that there are gaps in eligibility for matriculation rates against Haredim and Arabs in Israel. since their proportion to population is increasing, the assessment team emphasized on the importance of providing well education and training system that allow all kids to own the needed tools that help them in the future and to be ready for the labor market.

At the time the assessment was done, the assessment team found that the Israeli non-academic post-secondary graduates are not prepared to fit into quality position in the Israeli labor market. Besides, the higher education graduates cannot fill that gap in the economy's need. It was also noted that there was a shortage in numbers of hi-tech engineers.

After that, the assessment presented two modules for labor markets, the first one is the Northern Europe module/policy, which focuses on workers within the whole economy while the second module, the southern Europe module/policy, focuses on the worker's workplace. Then the assessment team recommended that Israel should adopt a policy for the market structure and the labor relations in order to be able to face the challenges. They believe that the northern policy is the one to be chosen.

After reviewing all the challenges that were facing the Human capital and development, the assessment team suggested a number of direction of action were in order to enhance the Human capital in Israel. Which mean that the assessment team provided solutions to the challenges that they had previously defined.

Then the assessment team moved to another strategic topic, related to productivity and competitiveness.

It was noticed that there was an increase in numbers of employees and that led to an increase in Israel GDP, but it was also noted that there was a number of unskilled workers who enter the labor market, that affect the average of productivity specially if that was compared with developed countries. However, these unskilled workers mainly affected industries that were not subject to competition as mentioned in the assessment.

The assessment team believes that the regulation in Israel was not simplifying the business activity instead, the regulation was considered as a burden on the business and the team engorged the government to continue what they have already started in taking action against these burdens specially after the deteriorating of Israel situation comparing with OECD⁷ Countries.

In order to overcome the obstacles related to productivity and competitiveness, the team suggested again different directions for action so they can minimize productivity gaps between different economic sectors in Israel by adopting advance technology and working methods in order to increase productive in different industries especially in traditional industries and in small and medium businesses.

Moving to another major strategic issue, financial infrastructure. There seemed to be a significant change in Israeli financial system, institutional investors were growing fast and started to take the role of banks as financing sources. It was expected that after a decade from the time this assessment was done, these investors of the financial institutions are going to manage more institutional assets 50% larger than banks, so the assessment team suggested that the Israeli government should take a step forward

⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development consist of 37 countries.

and act in a way that encourages financial institution to focus investments for the benefit of savers, and enhance the responsive actions to financing needs in various sectors of the economy.

Small and medium enterprises and the public in Israel faced many obstacles when the need fund. It was not easy to get financing from banks when needed. Furthermore, hi-tech companies exclusively get their fund from foreign investors in most cases.

In order to overcome this strategic issue, Israeli government was advised to do a number of actions such as enhancing the capital market and reform the Israeli stock market and establishing a financial stability committee.

The next strategic issue that was discussed throughout this assessment is housing strategy. The team believed that Israel should develop a long – term plan for housing in order to avoid housing crisis.

The assessment team expected that housing needs were going to rise by 30% in the coming years, they also presented a graph that showed that the demand for apartments was 45 thousand in annual average between 2011-2015, while it is going to increase to 55 thousand in annual average between 2021-2025 and up to 65 thousand in annual average between 2031-2035.

The team said that Planning and construction apartment in Israel take 12-13 years (6 years in preparing and getting approval for plan in the district committee for planning and construction, 1.5 years for the development plan, 0.5 year for tender, 3 years construction permit and 2-2.5 years for construction).

That limited the government's ability to cope with continues demand on the housing market, which also affected the costs of construction and increased the cost so much.

The team suggested direction of actions to solve the housing issues including developing and adopting a strategic housing plan that addresses the country's future needs, in addition to minimizing the apartments' production time and others.

This socioeconomic assessment present another strategic issue, regional economic development, starting with the low income for workers in periphery areas that led to create a new phenomenon in Israel, centralization. Israeli government started to reduce the relocation from different areas to the centre by investing money in developing peripheral regions.

Another related issue to the regional economic development is the metropolises, the assessment team recommended that the government should formulate a regional approach that benefit of periphery and enhance the employment quality and public services there that may help in changing these regions from peripheral regions to quotidian centres.

To overcome the previous issue, the assessment team recommended a number of suggestions; such as formulating a development plan for the north and supporting the weak local authorities and strengthen their capabilities and others.

Then the assessment moved to another crucial strategic issue, preparing for population aging, since according to the assessment elderly in Israel is expected to increase to almost 1.6 million in 2034, public services, long-term services and health services for older population should be enhanced.

In Israel, the employment rates of older people are high compared with other countries all over the world. The assessment team advised that the government should benefit from older people capabilities and experiences in the labor market in addition to modify retirement age with responding to the expected rising life expectancy.

The team sat a group of direction of action to enhance the dealing with elderly issues since they believe that the elderly issue is very crucial. One of these directions is formulating a long-term perspective policy and fixing the financial issues in a way that revenues should be adjusted with the long-term liabilities, also by engaging the older people in employment and in their community and modifying care and health systems and prepare related long-term policies.

Finally, the last strategic issue is Digital Israel. Israel is one of the hi-tech industrial countries. By the time the assessment was done, the team believed that Israel was not utilizing from this opportunity to its maximum, especially in the public sector. They even titled this section of the assessment “Does the Shoemaker’s son go barefoot?” They recommended that the country should benefit from the technological capabilities in governmental public services in a way that support the growth of the economy.

They also believed that the deployment of technology in the country might create new opportunities for Israeli citizens and Israeli economy; they also highly recommended the equality in access to technology and information in order to reduce gaps between centre and periphery

Then the assessment team provided some direction to be implemented to solve the issues that faces Israel regarding the digital and technology deployment, they called these direction “the government’s adaption to the information age”. For example, formulating a national digital program that describes and guides governmental policies and in the coming years, this program must bring’ digital quantum leap’ also accelerating the placement of fiber optic. Moreover, providing digital services for all citizens.

It is important to mention that the researcher is going to discuss this part of “Digital Israel” in the results chapter.

2.3.2 Analysis of Strategic Socioeconomic Assessment 2015

After summarizing the strategic socioeconomic Assessment 2015, reviewing the strategic issues and the direction actions. It clearly stated the status of Israel among other countries and it highlighted the weaknesses that face Israel, in addition, it focused on its citizens’ and the quality of their lives.

Similar to the NPA it cannot considered as a full strategic plan, but it is more specific, structured, detailed and organized.

If we moved to the evaluation of the plan, a follow up plan in 2018 provided a summary of the situation referring to the findings in these assessments.

Regarding Key Performance Indicators (KPI) they were not clearly defined.

Somehow, the assessment provides some sort of SWOT analysis, since it mentioned in some section number of strengthen, weaknesses, opportunities and Threats

The common issue between the two plans is focusing on the citizens and developing the educational sector.

Regarding the political situation unlike NPA, the strategic issues are not dependant on stable political situation.

This plan has also mentioned the Arabs inside Israel, in all cases Arabs are treated in an unequal way; Human Rights Watch has also documented Israel's apartheid against the Palestinians. In April 2021, Human Rights Watch released report named "A Threshold Crossed," concluded that Israeli authorities are committing apartheid and persecution against Palestinians. Based on Israeli government policy and perspective to keep the domination by Jewish Israelis over Palestinians as well as grave abuses against Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

Many violations against Palestinian were reported, these include "separation and inequality" in school for Palestinian inside Israel, expulsion Palestinians out of their homes in East Jerusalem, the grave violations of rights by Israeli settlement enterprise in the West Bank, and the suffocating closure of the Gaza Strip (HRW. 2021).

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Reviewing Previous Studies Related to the Topic

Many previous studies focused on technology since it has achieved an evolutionary step in communication field, it has enabled creating new societies over the internet, allowing people to communicate outside boundaries. This evolution has eased the activities of media and lead to transfer power and communication capacity to different users, such as citizens, negotiators and others.

Internet has created a new virtual environment based on communication over computer networks; this environment has eliminated geographical boundaries, which

facilitated communication between people around the world, in addition to the freedom of expression granted via the Internet when it is compared with other means. Internet has provided different services that eased people's lives such as chat rooms, electronic stores, electronic banking services, and electronic classrooms. (Rabayah, & Morrison, 2017).

Due to the increasing prevalence and the tendency towards using the Internet, a set of applications have been developed, known as social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, YouTube and others. These applications have attracted millions of users because they facilitate communication between individuals. In addition, according to the study, technology widens the way that these people give meaning to their lives. Social media has become one of the most important ways in which young people express their personal identities, moreover social media plays a significant role in influencing them, which lead to many interactions and interventions from different parties (Rabayah, & Morrison, 2017).

Many studies show that social media has turned from private network for personal communication with friends into a wider range where it allows people to speak up and share their opinion in deferent aspects of public life. (Auer, 2011) Moreover, using social media emerges from its ability to engage the ordinary people with the political life, also it enables politicians and diplomats to share different messages in addition to promote their ideas and work with the people of the country they work for. (Jiang & Bjola, 2015)

Communicating with the public is very important, the messages to be delivered are also important, but the methods we use to deliver these messages are also crucial and

here the role of internet and social media appears, they transfer the countries influences, its national images and also they provide a new method to practice public diplomacy .(Kretschmer, 2017)

As the usage of social media is rapidly increasing, politicians should benefit as much as possible from the features provided by these platforms' indifferent aspects, the world is heading towards using social media as a new discipline so sharing the experiences and building relationship should be considered in a precise way. (Natarajan, 2014).

There is no doubt that using social media is growing rapidly and that leads to a huge change on the way the news is produced, distributed and then discussed. There's a strong relation between social media use and political engagement, social media tools help people to become more politically engaged with what happened at their countries (Nielsen & Schröder, 2014)(Xenos, Vromen, & Loader,2014).

Another study shows that Palestinian consider the internet as a main source of information, especially Facebook, they mainly concerned about youth issues. It also shows that social media is a key factor of informing public knowledge among Palestinian youth. (Almasri & Abu Jaber,2018)

Traditional media has changed due to technology revolution; nowadays people from public can play the role of any journalist with the cameras of their smart phone they can shoot any seen and transfer it directly to any place in the world. In addition, social media has changed the way that the news is distributed. Decision makers should be aware of the source of the news is not always reliable to avoid an inappropriate reaction. (Mayfield, 2011)

Different researchers studied the role of social media in the political field and found that social media provides different capabilities such as instant messages and live updates which enable transferring the information faster and easier. (Rabayah & Morrison,2017)

A study shows that expressing political opinion online has improved the effects political mobiles aps, media and social media on the political participation (Yamamoto, Kushin, & Dalisay, 2015)

Using Social media to share news can directly affect political participation by political expression, moreover; it has the power to mobilize protests of people against government. In fact, social media has the capability to support civil society and public community (Zúñiga, , Molyneux, & Zheng,2014) (Shirky,2011)

It has been known that social media contributes in enhancing the interaction and transparency of public sector and in promoting some forms of accountability. So now it is important to benefit as much as possible of social media in promoting even higher levels of transparency and much engagement of citizens as a way of enhancing citizens' trust in governments (Bonsón, Torres, Royo & Flores, 2012)

Digital diplomacy is being mainly used as a tool for sharing the information and sometimes for engaging the people in a two-way dialogue. This allows diplomats to learn about the opinions of their followers and sometimes to reconsider their tactics and strategies. Social media present different benefits for diplomacy. It offers powerful and effective tool for delivering information, it also help the intended

message to spread and reach the target audience, and it allows bilateral conversation between diplomats and foreign public. (Jiang & Bjola,2015).

While developing any strategy a very important part to be taken into consideration is dealing with the available resources and utilizing them in the most appropriate way. So if social media has been considered as one resource, social media must be defined in the program of the people who will implement the strategy, define them as an important asset and determine to who extent they would be used. (Mayfield, 2011)

Social media has been considered as a strategic tool that organizations use in managing crisis communications, within a short period of time, there is many available social media platforms that organizations can use in crisis management, but Facebook and Twitter are considered the most used platforms in crisis communication management.

even though; social media still cannot be assumed as an open electronic space that guarantees the freedom of sharing information and expressing opinion at all levels in an equal or fair manner for everyone .(Abo Sareea',2017)

Twitter is one of the powerful tools that are used recently in digital diplomacy, it can present information in a direct way, it is accessible by all which ease the communication between government and public since all can express their opinion and interact by tweeting up to 280 character per tweet. (Kretschmer, 2017)

One of the most popular examples on using social media is when Israel benefit from social media capabilities to spread the news regarding the military operation in Gaza (November 2012) from their point of view, they wanted to deliver an image in a

particular way for their citizens and for foreign audience. They used Twitter to send different messages even to their opponents through these feeds (Kretschmer, 2017)

In addition, Kretschmer stated that Israel is very active in digital diplomacy, Israeli politician are engaged in digital diplomacy more than many other politicians. (Kretschmer, 2017)

Finally, social media can be considered as a strategic tool to be used by politicians in order to build agenda in conflict response or any other sort of political engagement. As a result, politicians recently tend to hire skilled and experienced users of social media so that might help in accomplishing their work to reach out wider range of people (Zhang,2013). (Auer, 2011)

It is important to mention here that a conference was recently held by The Policy and Conflict Resolution Studies at the Arab American University entitled “*Where do we go from here? Palestine between the Local, Regional and the Global*”. One of issues discussed was digital diplomacy and social media; speakers on this session have agreed that digital diplomacy and social media can serve the Palestinian cause very much. However, unfortunately, there is a poor participation from the Palestinian politicians in social media; the speakers have also agreed that Palestinians could publicize their cause through these tools, because they can highly affect the international public opinion. Therefore, they end up with the following recommendation of establishing a committee that aims to recruit youths to work on functioning social media that serves the Palestinian cause, and its followers. Also monitoring the Israeli’s social media, and censor content against the Palestinians on

social media and try to present a counter narrative by opposing what Israeli social media includes of both incitement and terrorism against the Palestinians.

Another vital topic to this research is the strategic planning, many studies focused on Strategic planning. According to one study, strategic plan provides a blueprint for achieving organisation's goals. Strategic plan is a document used to communicate with the organization, the organization's goals, the actions needed to achieve those goals and all of the other critical elements developed during the planning exercise. However, strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment (Maleka,2014).

Strategic planning is defined as a set of procedures and tools used to determine organizations' strategic direction and the needed resources to attain strategic goals. Strategic planning is not a task that should be done only by managers; different stakeholders should collaborate to achieve the defined goals.

It is very important to analyse the internal and external factors that may affect our plan, the more we analyse, the more we can come up with a reliable outcome of the planning process. Another important issue is to review the available resources in order to benefit as much as possible from them because this will increase the possibility of success in the implementation process. (Elbanna, Andrews & Pollanen, 2016)

Strategic planning is very important to any organization, regardless of the type of the organization whether it is a large corporation, nonprofit organization, and local government. A strategic plan identifies the strengths and weakness of the organization; also, it provides a road map as to where the organization is going. In addition to the major role of strategic planning in the evolutionary process of the organization. (Moody,2006)

Public institutions and government programs should reflect the societies and citizens' needs. They must meet the defined mission and deliver the goal; these institutions exist to serve the public. However, there are different stakeholders and their satisfaction level vary which lead an organization in a multitude of directions. In order to reach a high level of success we need to clearly identify and build strategic capacities which require identifying the stakeholders then developing a plan to meet their needs and allocating reasons for the existence of the institution. That is why the strategic planning for public institutions and for government arises. (Giraudou & Mclarney,2014)

The context and the nature of any organization defines the Strategic management approaches that should be adopted; government agencies performance can be improved if strategic planning is applied. Public institutions that initiated strategic plan can gain many benefits. (Giraudou & Mclarney.2014)

Therefore, the research question arises about the role of social media in serving the strategic national goals in defending the Palestinian cause.

3.2 Defining the Knowledge Gap

After reviewing the literature regarding this topic, there was not any research showing the role of using social media tools in serving the strategic national goals and defending the Palestinian cause, all the previous resources are related to a specific topic of the study, either to role of social media, digital diplomacy or strategic planning. None of them was directly similar to this thesis.

Therefore, this study is going to answer the following questions:

The Impact of Social Media political official pages / accounts (Facebook & Twitter) in achieving the national agenda (a comparative analysis between Palestinian and Israeli).

The sub questions are:

- 1) How do Palestinian government benefit from social media platforms?
- 2) How do Israeli government benefit from social media platforms?
- 3) How can governments use social media as a strategic tool to serve their goals
- 4) How do Palestinians use social media in promoting national policy Agenda?
- 5) How do Israelis use social media in promoting socio economic plan?
- 6) How do Palestinian's social media accounts interact with public?
- 7) How do Israeli's social media accounts interact with public?

The hypothesis will be:

Hypothesis 1: Palestinian official social media is a strategic tool that was used properly to achieve Palestinian national agenda

Hypothesis 2: Social media users prefer following verified pages for politicians so they can get reliable information from them.

Hypothesis 3: Israeli official social media is a strategic tool that was used properly to achieve Israeli strategic goals and deliver their view and messages to the world.

Hypothesis 4: Israeli verified social media pages/accounts that offer Arabic feeds has successfully influence the Palestinian and encourage them to interact and follow them.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher explained the type of the used data, sample of population, the way used to collect the data, the way the analysis was done and the tools that helped in collecting the data.

4.1 Methodological Approach:

The research used both quantitative and qualitative data; as for the quantitative; some statistical numbers were retrieved from previously published statistics by official institutions, such as the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, other quantitative data was retrieved from the chosen Facebook pages and Twitter accounts.

As for the qualitative data, literature helped in getting some of the needed data, interviews were also conducted for the same purpose, also few of the retrieved data from Facebook and Twitter were qualitative also.

All the used data are going to be discussed in the coming sections.

4.2 Data Collection Methods:

This research relied on different types of data from different resources, these types and resources are clarified in this section.

- Qualitative Data:

The research depended on qualitative data from several resources, these include, existing data; like the data that was published on the website of the Palestinian cabinet regarding the Palestinian strategic plans and the National policy Agenda; these plans are: Palestine Reform and Development 2008-2010, Establishing the State Building our Future 2011-2013, State Building to Sovereignty 2014-2016 and Putting Citizens First 2017-2022.

The Israeli strategic plan “socio economic assessment” was also retrieved to be analyzed from the website of “National economic council prime minister’s office”.

Another qualitative method used in this research is the Interviews; five interviews were conducted to enrich the research; the interviewees were: Dr. Nasser Al-Laham, Editor in chief of MAAN Agency, Mr. Mahmoud Attaya, Director General of policy and reform at the prime minister office, Dr. Saleh Abdel-Jawad, Professor at Birzeit University and; Dr. Jihad Al-Aysa, Assistant professor in Public Administration and Public Policy at Birzeit University, Mr. Mr Ammar Jumhour, a Palestinian journalist specializing in media management and strategic communication.

- Quantitative data:

The purpose of this research is to study the role of social media in serving the national strategic goals; so, some of the data were retrieved from social media and analyzed as quantitative data; these includes for example the number of likes, comments, shares, favorites, tweets and retweets, media types that were used by each page or account, and others. More details about the criteria that was used is going to be discussed in the results chapter.

Also, some published statistics were used as secondary data; these statistics were taken from both the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics.

4.3 Analysis Methods and Tools:

This researcher used more than one analysis method to achieve the purpose of the study; depending on the used data type, as for the existing data that were retrieved from the websites and the interviews, the researcher made a comparative analysis using the existing data to compare between the Palestinian side Vs. the Israeli side, also a simple content analysis is done by retrieving the existing data on social media sites.

Content analysis is defined as a way of analysis by which qualitative material is transformed into quantitative.

The data that exists in the Palestine cabinet, the national economic council at the prime minister's office, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; and the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics was reviewed and the needed data was used.

As for the data retrieved from both Facebook and Twitter, special tools were used to retrieve the data in order to perform the required analysis; for Twitter; two websites were used, the first one is www.twitonomy.com; the other is www.vicinitas.io/.

While for Facebook pages, the researcher used a software called QDA miner downloaded from this website: www.provalisresearch.com; most of the Facebook data was retrieved by this software such as the published post, the number of comments and the number of likes, while the rest were retrieved manually by the researcher and these data were (the number of shares, the type of shared media and

the used language). Then the needed analysis was done to find out the required results.

4.4 Sample of Population for the Quantitative Data

In order to find out the role of social media in serving the national strategic goals, the researcher selected eight Facebook pages and nine Twitter account for both Palestinians and Israelis to study the period 2017-2020, more details regarding these pages and accounts are given in the coming chapter.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Contrast Strategic Planning Practices

In this section, the researcher is going to introduce a contrast between the Palestinian and the Israeli strategic planning and practices, the information that are provided in this section were collected from different resources, such as previous studies and interviews with some experts in Palestinian and Israeli affairs .

5.1.1 Palestinian Strategic Planning

In this section we are going to discuss the planning process in Palestine; starting with the beginning of planning on the national level, some information were collected from literatures and from the published plans while the rest is being collected throughout conducted interviews with specialist in the Palestinian affairs.

If we begin with the Palestinians, we found that the first Palestinian plan was developed in 1994 by the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR).

The researcher thinks that planning in Palestine can be divided into three main phases; the first phase between 1994 until 2008, this phase started with the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994, at that time PECDAR was responsible for the development process in Palestine, so it was also responsible for receiving and managing grants.

Some plans were developed during that time, but they were not comprehensive plans, rather they were based on a group of projects, these projects were prioritized between sectors.

At that time, different plans were developed in order to serve achieving different goals, these include improving the Palestinian economy that was destroyed by the Israeli occupation, through improving the national goods production, as well as rehabilitating the infrastructure, attracting investments towards the most critical sectors such as agriculture, health and tourism, building and developing state institutions.

Over the years, some of these goals changed slightly to cope with the changes, such as the goal of building public institution has been developed to activating them.

In addition to encourage the private sector to be a part of the development process, moreover, creating a legal environment to protect investments and activating these legal frameworks.

During that phase, the Ministry of Planning was established in accordance with Cabinet Resolution No. (228) for the year 2004, it became responsible of issuing plans. Despite of establishing Ministry of Planning, planning during this phase was characterized as the following: the donors significantly influenced the plans,

planning was random similar to a shopping cart. There was no clear or direct relationship between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning at the time, as well as the relationship between different institutions and ministries at the level of planning was very weak. The criteria for defining the priorities were not clear, either the expected outcome of these plans were not obvious.

It is necessary to note that this phase was just before the Palestinian split that occurred between the West Bank and Gaza in 2007.

During 2007, the Palestinian National Authority requested \$5.9 billion from the international community to support national plans and obtained approximately \$7.7 billion (Awad, 2008).

As for the second Phase, 2008 to 2016, it was the starting point to shift towards strategic planning; during this period, three strategic plans were prepared. The first one named Palestine Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010), the second: National Development Plan: Establishing the State, Building our Future (2011-2013) while the third one named State Building to Sovereignty Plan (2014-2016).

During this phase, the Ministry of Planning took the responsibility of the planning process, until the Ministry of Planning was merged with the Ministry of Finance in 2015. The ministry of finance and planning became responsible of creating the plans, it is worth to mention that planning teams and budget teams were created in all ministries to carry out the planning process. The aforementioned plans were comprehensive plans for all sectors each contained a national policy agenda, during this phase follow-up and evaluation programs were developed, but unfortunately, the evaluation was not done in a proper way.

As for the first plan, Palestine Reform and Development Plan (PRDP) (2008-2010), PRDP was considered as the first strategic national medium term plan. It was formulated in a way that allocated government resources in the best way, throughout this plan, Palestinian National Authority showed a willingness to adopt policy-making, planning and clear budgeting process. All ministries and related parties provided detailed Planning and Budgeting assumption; they also identified their goals.

The Palestinian authority was looking forward for developing Palestine and for reforming the Palestinian institutions; By clearly identifying ministries, agencies and other public bodies' activities; In addition, to set basis for defining priorities in the allocation of resources especially the financial recourses.

This plan had a vision for Palestine as an independent state. The plan contained four main aspects: improving the quality of life, encouraging progress and prosperity, good governance and finally safety and security. The plan has also included an anti-unemployment program, it focused on self-reliance of the Palestinian, facing settlement and developing area C.

When this plan was formulated, the division between West Bank and Gaza was already existing, so the government and the ministries in the West Bank did the planning process.

As for the second plan, National Development plan: Establishing the State, Building our Future (2011-2013) the authors of the plans were convinced that Palestine is

ready for independence, at that time, the planners attempted to reach to a point where Palestine should reduce the dependence on foreign aid.

This plan was the second mid-term plan, three years planning, this plan was developed with the related stakeholders and as a result twenty-three sectors strategies were prepared.

Just like PRDP the top national priority was the establishment of the independent state; furthermore, this plan took PRDP as a reference.

This plan focused on several aspects like good governance, anti-corruption, justice, equality, social development, in addition to economic development and focusing on developing some sectors like tourism, industry and agriculture, especially the Jordan Valley, because of its competitive advantage to Palestine, in addition to infrastructure rehabilitation.

The third midterm Palestinian Development Plan, State Building to Sovereignty plan (2014-2016): focused on the structure of the economy and social protection. The plan shared the same ultimate vision with the previous plans, to liberate the land and own a sovereign state with full control on natural resources, developing area C and the Jordan Valley, furthermore, retrieve East Jerusalem and Gaza strip.

The plan had also focused on strengthening Palestinian economy and achieving economic independence besides encouraging private sector in order to enhance its ability to compete and to create new job opportunities. Public sector also has a significant role, so planners intended to strengthen the public institutions, maintain quality of the delivered service, and maintain the financial stability for them.

The planners wanted to achieve a number of goals in different aspects such as minimizing poverty, decreasing unemployment rate, attaining social justice, protecting and ensuring human rights, respecting freedoms, enhancing education system in order to enable the Palestinian state to be an effective member in developing the society. Furthermore, developing a better healthcare system and provide high quality health services.

The planners added important topics to this plan, the implementation process, underneath the implementation process; the planners defined the implementation framework, the risk management framework, monitoring, and evaluation, and it is known that the monitoring and evaluation is a main component of any strategic plan. Furthermore, the plan included of Palestine performance indicators with respect to the international standards.

After 2016, new phase of planning has started, this phase started with National Palestinian Agenda (NPA): Putting Citizens First (2017-2022), the planning duration is longer, previous plans were reviewed and a new technique has been adopted in planning. Formulating the plan was divided into two levels, the first one was developing the twenty-three sectorial strategies and the ministry of finance responsibility; while the second level is developing the national Agenda and this was the Prime minister's office responsibility.

Planning during this phase, characterized with the following: the plan became for five years instead of three so the evaluation process can be better performed, planning and budgeting were done at the same time and were correlated, planning and budgeting teams in each ministry were merged into one team for each ministry, under

the lead of the minister. Different stakeholders were invited to participate in formulating this plan, beside the related people in different ministers, private sector, civil society and others.

The NPA was developed in a top-down planning process, it presented the governmental program, the Agenda was the main plan and twenty-three spirited strategies for thirty-two sectors were formulated.

NPA has three pillars; the Path to Independence since this ultimate goal has not been achieved yet; the second pillar was about Government Reform, while the last pillar is Sustainable Development, the planners also have defined ten national priorities, thirty national policies and one hundred thirty-five related crosscutting strategies.

All the Palestinian plans shared the same vision, which is the Independence of Palestine, and all faces many obstacles, mainly the occupation that lead to the instability of the political situation and therefore instability in the economy, the reliance on the external aids and funds was also a major issue, evaluation process was not applied properly.

In order to explore more on the Palestinian Development plan, the researcher conducted two interviews, the first interview Mr. Mahmoud Ataya, Director General Policy and Reform unit at the prime minister office, Mr. Mahmoud is one of the key persons in formulating Palestinian development plans, he answered many questions related the NPA (2017-2022). A major change occurred on the planning process in 2017, Mr. Ataya believes that this change was a part of the development and evolvement in Palestine. The planning shifted from mid-term to long term planning, this plan was done in a top-Down method, even the budget and expenditures planning

has changed. Before 2017 operating budget⁸ was used, after that that the ministry of finance took the responsibility of preparing the budget, the budget items has been also modified, the budget was also directly related to the planned projects. The ministry of finance did the budget planning in this phase by studying and calculating the financial status of the country, making the needed assessment regarding the income and the expenses, then the plan is done upon the previous assessment and calculation.

Mr. Ataya also assumes that the new changes needed major institutional changes, enhancements were done inside the Palestinian institutions and ministries, the communication inside the same ministry has been enhanced.

All the related stakeholders have participated in the planning processes, when the government started the planning process; they invited the planning teams in the public sector, the private sector, civil society and international partners.

Before 2017, the National Policy Agenda was a part of the development plan that was prepared by the government, at that time the agenda contained four main sectors: the economic sector, the social development sector, infrastructure sector and governance sector, and a strategic objective for each sector. While in NPA 2017-2022, the Agenda was moved to a separate document that includes three pillars; the Path to Independence; the government Reform and the Sustainable Development.

Mr. Ataya believes that the change is necessary, and it is very important to define the priorities, the policies and the interventions in a separate document with the needed

⁸ An operating budget consists of all revenues and expenses over a period of time (typically a quarter or a year) which a corporation, government or organization uses to plan its operations. It is prepared in advance of a reporting period as a goal or plan that the business expects to achieve. <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/templates/excel-modeling/operating-budget/>

details so all the related parties collaborate to achieve the desired objectives. Then the different sectors developed their strategic plans that meet the predefined objects in the NPA.

Regarding the monitoring and evaluation processes, Mr. Ataya thinks that it is done efficiently by the related party, he also said that each plan was reviewed before formulating the new plan, and that the planning process before around a year – year and a half from launching. He assures once again that the main obstacle is the Israeli occupation and was one of the main reasons that hinder Palestinian government chances in implementing the previous plans and it might be a reason of not being able to implement objectives inside this agenda.

He also thinks that the government is going to adopt the same planning process in the coming years by developing the agenda, then the strategic plans for each sector. Another interview was conducted with Dr. Jihad Alayasa⁹, Assistant Professor in Public Administration and Public Policy at Birzeit University, he teaches Strategic Management in Birzeit University. The interview with dr. Jihad covered planning in Palestine, he believes that strategic planning in Palestine has started in 2008 when the first national development plan was announced (2008-2010), although the planning processes was not ideal and some defects were there, but still we can consider the Palestine started planning strategically since 2008.

At that time, three plans were developed each plan was a mid-term plan, with three years' duration, Dr. Jihad thinks that we may consider three years plan a strategic plan since as he said most literature and researches define the duration of strategic

⁹ Dr. Jihad Alayasa holds PhD from Portland State University in Public Administration and Policy Affairs with focus on sustainable development policy implementation.

plans, three years or more. It should be noted that in some cases even two years' duration plans could be considered a strategic plan. He thinks the instability and the ambiguity that Palestinian government face, are unpredictable circumstances and implementing many of the national objectives are related to the permission of the occupation, this is the main reason that made the Palestinian government avoid planning for more than five years.

The researcher agreed with Dr. Alaysa that not only the duration of that define whether a plan is strategic or not, a plan with a short duration can be considered a strategic plan if it has a significant impact or change.

Then Dr, Alaysa continues that during that time, ministry of planning was established and after few years, it was merged with the ministry of finance, the planning processes was done considering the budget preparation, it was also an added value to train and prepare experienced planning and budgeting teams in each ministry, the planning process was comprehensive and was done with the different stakeholders. He thinks that the evaluation processes were not done properly.

He thinks that more participation in planning process was needed, he says that by letting more stakeholder participate, the planning process is going to encourage these participants to help in the implementation process, since they are going to implement something they played a role in planning for it.

He thinks that one of the issues that faced the plans in Palestine that there was no enforcement for implementing the plans that were developed by the ministry of planning and that is why the government decided to merge planning under the ministry of finance.

He also believes that the NPA 2017- 2022 (Putting Citizens First) has a new clear and systematic methodology, by planning from top to bottom, the related stakeholders were invited to participate in the planning process. He also thinks that there was an obvious improvement on applying strategic planning on the national level. Where the sectorial strategic plans are correlated with the national policy agenda. The techniques that were used to formulate the plan were good; he agrees that Palestinian planning has switched from shopping list planning into real strategic planning.

He thinks that this agenda is a very good strategic plan, great effort has been done, a lot of money has also been paid to formulate it. Many academics took it as case studies and good example of strategic planning. He also agreed that many ministers have started talking about the NPA in different occasions.

Dr. Alayasa has few concerns regarding the implementation of the plans, and he inquires to what extent does the Palestinian government stick to the predefined objectives? He also wondered if the government has succeed in implementing the defined objective, especially that the first half of the interval is already over, and that the planning for the new agenda or strategic plan is going to start soon.

Dr. Alayasa thinks that the evaluation process is still not performed properly. He also said that everything is good as long as it is implemented but until now we do not know if it is really being implemented as he said. He also hoped that this plan is not going to be another plan that has only been formulated with that great effort without execution.

5.1.2 Israeli Strategic Planning

Strategic planning in Israel on the socioeconomic level is relatively new, in 2012, the Israeli government decided, by decision number 5208, to adopt strategic planning on the national level (or as it was called socioeconomic planning), and the national economic council was responsible for formulating the socioeconomic plans.

Nevertheless, many academic institutions suggested and developed a number of strategic plans before the government did, one of these strategic plans is “Israel 2028—Socioeconomic Vision and Strategy in a Global World”, this plan was developed in 2008 by a number of Israeli and American, businessmen, scientists, researchers, politicians and Jewish experts from Israel and from other countries. The plan was developed in cooperation with the Samuel Neaman Institute at the Technion along with the main initiators US - Israel Science and Technology Commission and Foundation. Then plan was an outcome of two years of efforts, it was mentioned in the research because it was the only plan that was not developed by government but still presented and discussed by the Israeli government after it was published in May 2008.

Even some Israelis considered the goals of this plan as a reference to Israeli development, this was obvious in the paper that was prepared and discussed by the governor of the bank of Israel Dr Karnit Flug, in 2018 at the Eli Hurvitz conference that was held in Tel Aviv, to discuss Economy and Society in Israel. Mr. Flug was wondering where is Israel from this plan after a decade of its formulation because he believed that this plan inspired the government to work strategically, he also

presented the situation of the Israeli socio-economic plans that were developed by the Israeli government.

That plan focused on different objectives and even divided the numeric objectives into milestones along the years. It presented a vision that place Israel between the tenth to fifteenth leading countries within the twenty years period. The plan discussed different topics that might help in achieving the defined vision; these include economy, globalization, science and technology, education and many others.

Then in 2012, as it was mentioned before, the Israeli government adopted strategic planning; the mission was delegated to the national economic council at the prime minister office. The council is responsible of formulating a plan depending on an assessment that showed the socioeconomic situation and some suggested action plan and strategies, then these suggestions were presented to the government to give their recommendations. The first assessment was presented to the Israeli government in 2013; it outlined the Israeli socioeconomic situation, a comparison between the global levels and the Israeli levels were done along different areas, then the assessment covers six strategic issues and they were population aging assessments, digital Israel, human capital development, growth engines, housing strategy and financing infrastructure.

In 2012, when the government adopted strategic assessment, they agreed on the following:

- 1) A socioeconomic strategic assessment should be established and presented to the government within its first 100 days.
- 2) Creating a strategic management team to discuss the strategic issues.

3) Founding Deputy Directors of planning and strategy in the different ministries.

Then the council prepared another socioeconomic assessment in 2015 and presented it to the government, it defined the Israeli socioeconomic status, global trends were defined and Israeli situation was compared with these trends and levels. The assessment covered seven strategic issues; Human Capital Development and Utilization, Productivity and Competitiveness, Financial Infrastructure, Digital Israel, Preparing for Population Aging, Housing Strategy and Regional Economic Development. The assessment also suggested a number of directions of action to be done in response to these strategic issues and the government approved those actions by preparing detailed work plans and by allocating the needed budgets.

Going back to the paper presented by Dr. Flug at the Eli Hurvitz conference, he mentioned that there were many similarities between Israel 2028 goals and the strategic issues in the socioeconomic assessment that were defined in 2015, he also revealed that there is a serious tension facing each government between promoting their working plan that they were elected for versus the long term strategic issues that are defined by the council. He believes that governments tend to focus on implementing short term achievements in order to show the people faster outcomes rather than following strategic path that was defined by previous government (Flug,2018).

In order to understand the Israeli strategic planning, two interviews were conducted with experts in the Israeli affairs, the first one, Dr.Nasser Al-laham the Editor-in-Chief of MAAN Agency, PhD holder in body language in the Israeli media. Dr. Al-laham believes that there is no chance for socioeconomic planning as long as the

conflict exists, since there would be unstable situation, he continues that Israeli history is full of wars starting from 1948, 1956, 1967, 1976, 1987 and continuing until today. He believes that if any government, organization or even individuals want to invest strategically, there should not be any conflicts.

He also added that Israel trying to deceive the world by pretending to be one of the developed countries, but that is not true; Israel receives aid from the US in billions of dollars on annual basis. The unemployment rate is quietly high, there is more than million unemployed persons.

He repeated the words of Sever Plotzker, chief economic editor of Yediot Ahronot Israeli newspaper, as he said that *any developing country has four characteristics and all exists in the Israeli society, first political disputes, second armed citizens, third poverty and fourth wars.*

He also gave another example; Avraham Burg, former of Jewish Agency chairman and Knesset speaker, he stood in the keenest and spoke out to the audience that *the occupation is corrupt, it spoiled us and I am resigning the political life.*

He also said that people inside Israel suffer from racism, there is no social justice, the suicide rates are relatively high, and it is more like a military company inside a settlement. He also believes that the Israelis failed in strategic planning on other levels rather than the socioeconomic, he added that the Israeli government made many mistakes such as destroying Al Hula Lake, when they decided to drain it and they still suffering from that bad decision.

He replied to a question related to the history of socioeconomic strategic planning in Israel with the following, he said that he does not think that Israel has a

socioeconomic planning, it just has military planning starting with Ben-Gurion¹⁰, precede by Weizmann¹¹. Even though these two men had failed in planning for the Zionist movement. He said that they established Israel by violent actions rather than establishing it on an economic, political, or even sociological predefined plan. It was established and declared upon the robbery of land and nation. He continued that Israeli came and still the Palestinian heritage, they did not bring civilization to Palestine as they pretended, the railway, the seaports, the airports were already existing when they came to Palestine, they actually robbed the land and destroyed what they called later (their country) they destroyed Al Hula lake, dead sea and Jordan river, Nasser explained.

The Israeli money is invested in a consumption project, he said that he does not see that Israel is a successful model; Israel has not adopted strategic planning. He also thinks that Israelis are good businessmen and that they rule Israel as a company. Dr. Al-laham assumes that Israel has many businessmen and that they are very good in the business field, as he said the Ashkenazi Jews (the western Jews), founded Israel as a company, then they left it to the eastern Jews and the Russian Jews. Moreover, many Israeli generals and military commanders added the word “business man” to their identification cards, one of these examples is Yossi Beilin¹², he also said that most of the Israelis work in the business field in Europe, others open international

¹⁰ David Ben-Gurion: Zionist statesman and Israeli political leader, the first and defence minister of Israel. He delivered Israel’s declaration of independence of Israel in 1948.

¹¹ Chaim Weizmann: Zionist leader, active in the Zionist movement from its early stages, and first President of the State of Israel.

¹²Yossi Beilin: Israeli Minister of Justice and is known as the architect of the Oslo Agreement. He is the founder and president of Beilink International Affairs, Ltd.

series of hotels and some are involved with weapon trade in Africa. So, Israel can be considered as a successful business project.

He said that they have huge amount of money but they invested it in an inefficient way and waste that money, he is sure that if any other country rather than Israel had the money that was provided to Israel since 1948 until today, would be enough to make it a great and strong country.

Dr. Al-laham considers that there was no strategic planning on the Israeli national levels, neither in the 70s, nor in the 80s, 90s until today. He said that Israeli strategic planning is just a myth.

He also gave another example showing that Israeli do not practice strategic planning, the separation wall, this wall was one of the major Israeli projects, it has affected the environment, the plants and the animals' life, it was the main reason for destroying the environment and it caused brink of extinction of many animal species and cutting a huge number of trees. Dr. Al-laham supposed that the Palestinian situation is not better than the Israeli is but he said that the cause of the Palestinian failure in improving the economic situation and implementing the strategic plans relied on the Israeli actions and policies against the Palestinian so they have their own excuse while the Israelis do not. He said they blew up Gaza's Airport and seaport, they destroyed the old city of Nablus, they even imposed siege over the church of nativity in Bethlehem. In the end, Dr. Al-laham concluded that no national plan would ever see success without a national comprehensive project that includes enhancement on all aspects of life, such as culture, tourism, education and others.

The researcher agrees with Dr. Al-laham, national strategic plans should be comprehensive; they should cover all the sectors. Planning processes should be held with the related stakeholders, also a continuous monitoring and evaluation should be done in order to modify whatever needed to be modified and to overcome the weaknesses if there were any.

The second interview was conducted with Dr. Saleh Abdel-Jawad, Historian and Professor of Political Science at Birzeit University. Dr. Saleh Abdel-Jawad believes that Israel has successfully adapted strategic planning on political and military levels and he mentioned different examples that support his idea.

He said that if we step back to the settlements history that has started since 1878, everything was precisely planned, the Jews established an agriculture research institution in order to benefit from the land in a proper way.

He also gave another example, building a new settlement has predefined plans, with all the related information, such as the duration of time for each stage, the shape of the settlement, the number of buildings in it and even the design of the infrastructure is defined before starting the implementation process.

On the political level, Israel used strategic planning long time ago that can be noticed obviously in the Basel conference that was held in 1897 and was considered as the first Zionist congress, establishing Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet) in 1901, that was responsible for buying and developing land in Palestine.

He also believes that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was planned strategically; he said that the decision of occupying West Bank was taken in 1963, and in 1964, they chose

a governor for the WB, in the same year, the Israeli military well trained pilots were ready to perform the planned actions, when the war started in 1967.

He thinks that the Israelis succeeded in most of these military and political plans, but still they failed in others, he also supposed that if the Israelis dealt with socioeconomic plans the same way, they would success in achieving their goals.

5.2 Comparing Progress in Common Strategic Issues on Both Sides:

This study presents a comparative analysis for both the strategic plans on the national level for the Palestinians and Israelis, to do that, the researcher reviewed the plans that were published by the two sides. As it was mentioned earlier strategic planning in Israel started in 2012 and the National Economic Council presented the first assessment to the government in May 2013, so the two assessment (2013 and 2015) are going to be covered.

While as Palestinian started strategic planning before, the research is going to cover the plans that were done at the same period, so the last two plans are going to be covered (2014-2016) and (2017-2022).

Starting with the Palestinian plans:

The following strategic issues were mentioned in the (2014-2016) plan:

- 1) Ending occupation.
- 2) Economic Development and Employment
- 3) Good Governance and Institution Building
- 4) Social Protection and Development
- 5) Sustainable, Equitable Palestinian Infrastructure,

As for (2017-2022)

- 1) Ending the Occupation;
- 2) National Unity
- 3) Strengthening Palestine's International Status
- 4) Citizen-Centred Government
- 5) Effective Government
- 6) Economic Independence
- 7) Social Justice and Rule of Law
- 8) Quality Education for All
- 9) Quality Health Care for All
- 10) Resilient Communities

While for the Israeli side:

The 2013 socioeconomic assessment covers the following strategic issues:

- 1) Population aging assessments
- 2) Digital Israel
- 3) Human capital development
- 4) Growth engines
- 5) Housing strategy
- 6) Financing infrastructure.

While the strategic issues of 2015 socioeconomic assessment are:

- 1) Human Capital Development and Utilization
- 2) Productivity and Competitiveness
- 3) Financial Infrastructure
- 4) Digital Israel

- 5) Preparing for Population Aging
- 6) Housing Strategy
- 7) Regional Economic Development.

If we reviewed the strategic issues for both the Palestinian and Israeli governments, we are going to find that there were some common strategic goals for the covered period; in this section, the strategic goals that are going to be covered are focused on economic development. In addition to digitalization, by linking digitalization with the three priorities in the NPA, while on the Israeli side, Digital Israel that was one of the strategic goals.

5.2.1 Economic Development:

Starting with the Economic development, the research is covering two main factors for both sides: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and unemployment rate.

The research is not going to discuss if the goals of the economic development were achieved or not, it is just going to highlight the values of these indicators over these years for both sides.

I. Palestinian GDP and unemployment rates:

GDP:

GDP gives an indication of the country's economy size and performance; GDP can be used to determine if an economy is growing or experiencing a recession.

The GDP of Palestine during the defined period was:

Table 5.1: Palestinian economic indicators

Year	GDP (USD Million)	Unemployment
2013	13,492.40	23.4%
2014	13,471.10	26.9%

2015	13,972.40	25.9%
2016	15,211.00	26.9%
2017	15,426.90	28.0%
2018	15,616.20	31.0%
2019	15,764.40	25.0%
2020	13,999.10	27.8%

These data were retrieved from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

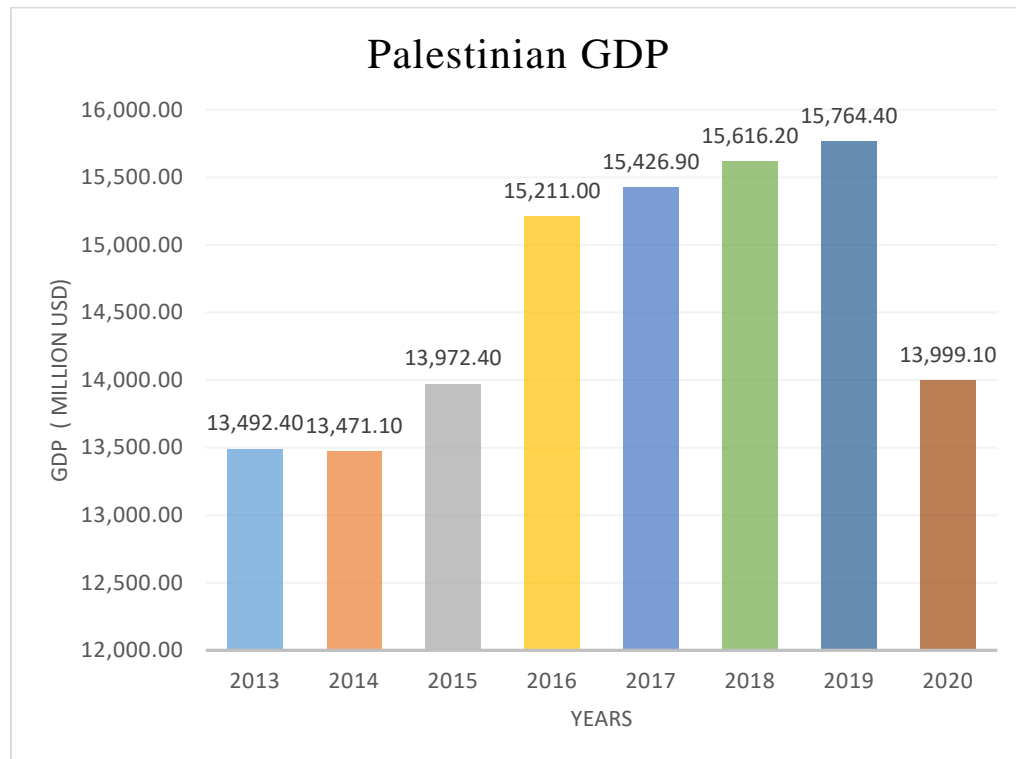


Figure 5.1: Palestinian GDP over the years 2013-2020

The Palestinian economy has witnessed some changes over the previous years, starting from 2013, the GDP was 13,492.40 million dollars, then it has declined a little bit and reached 13,471.10 million dollars in 2014, after that in 2015, the GDP results has enhanced slightly and reached 13,972.40 million dollars, then it kept growing over the last 4 years, starting with 15,211 million dollars in 2016, to 15,426.9 million dollars in 2017 then 15,616.20 million dollars in 2018 and in 2019 it reached to

15,764.4 million dollars, after that we can notice a huge decline in the GDP by 2020 due to the Covid-19 circumstances.

That shows that the Palestinian GDP is enhancing over the years but comparing with the neighbour's countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt, the Palestinian GDP is the lowest between them all.

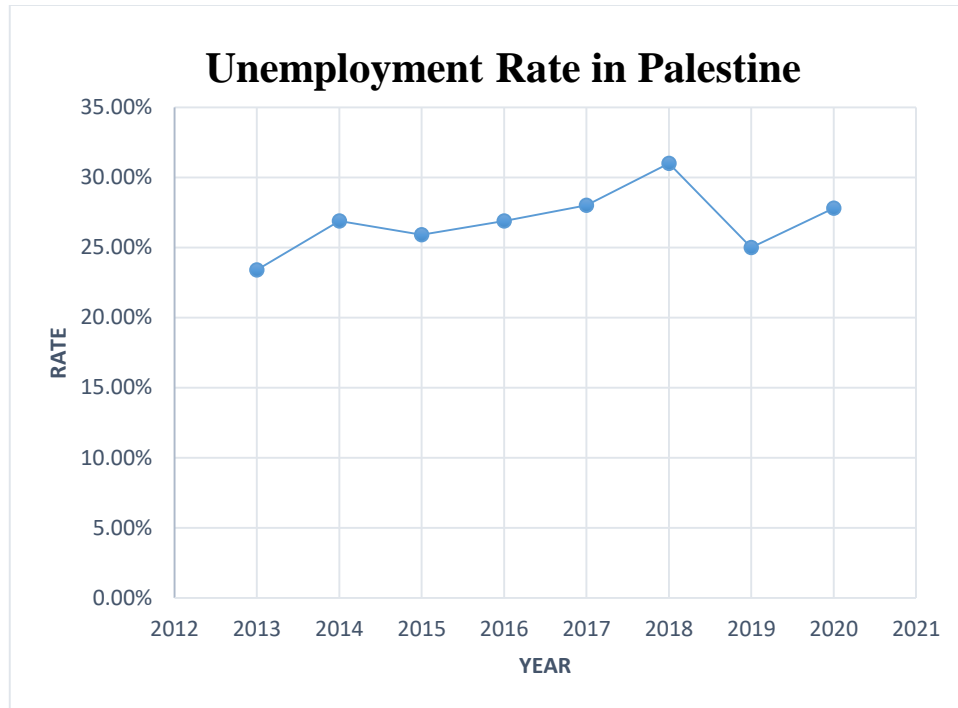


Figure 5.2: Palestinian Unemployment rates over the years 2013-2020

Moving to the unemployment rates, the unemployment rates are slightly high in Palestine, it also keeps growing instead of declining, but it is important to mention that the unemployment rates in Gaza are extremely higher than the rates in West Bank and that affects the total rate of Palestine.

The unemployment rate in 2013 was 23.4% then it increased to 26.9% in 2014, it has witnessed a little enhancement in 2015 and decreased to 25.9%, then it increased again and reached to 26.9% in 2016, since then, it kept increasing and

reached 31.0% in 2018, after that in 2019 it has decreased to 25.0, and in in the previous year it has increased to 27.8% due to Covid-19.

These numbers gave an indicator that Palestinian youth are facing a real issue in finding jobs and enhancing the quality of their lives, 25% of the Palestinian youth are still unemployed which is a huge percent, the results also present that the Palestinian plans were not able to achieve the goals that were related to the economic development, even though the GDP numbers had increased over the years but the economic situation of the country is still unstable.

II. Israeli GDP and unemployment rates:

Table 5.2: Israel economic indicators

Year	GDP (USD Million)	Unemployment
2013	261,123	6.2%
2014	270,937	5.9%
2015	277,142	5.3%
2016	288,178	4.8%
2017	298,370	4.2%
2018	308,674	4.0%
2019	319,521.52	3.8%
2020	402,64	4.3%

These data were retrieved from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics.

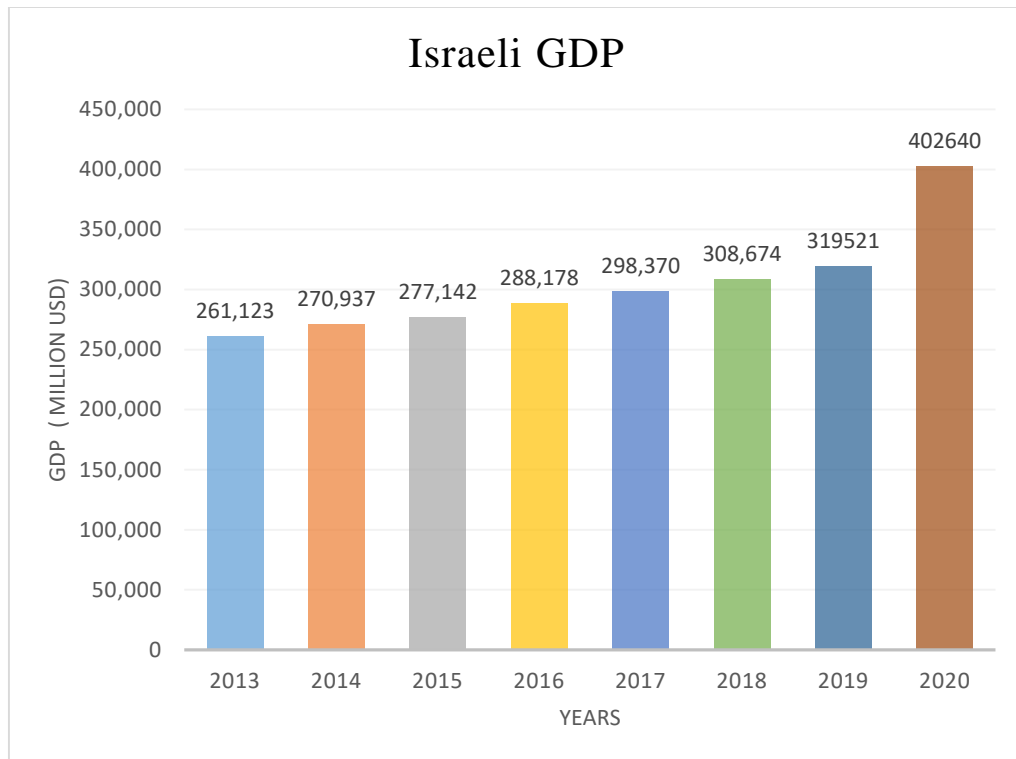


Figure 5.3: Israeli GDP over the years 2013-2020

The Israeli economy is known as strong economy it keep growing over the years, if we get back to 2013, the Israeli GDP was 261,123 million dollars, then in 2014, it has grown to 270,937 million dollars, after that in 2015, the GDP results has enhanced more to 277,142 million dollars, then in 2016 it was 288,178 million dollars, the progress continues and reached to 298,370 million dollars, after that it grew to 308,674 million dollars, in 2019 it reached 319,521 million dollars and finally 402,640 million dollars in 2020.

That shows that the Israeli GDP is enhancing over the years in a very good way and that leads to a stable and a growing economy.

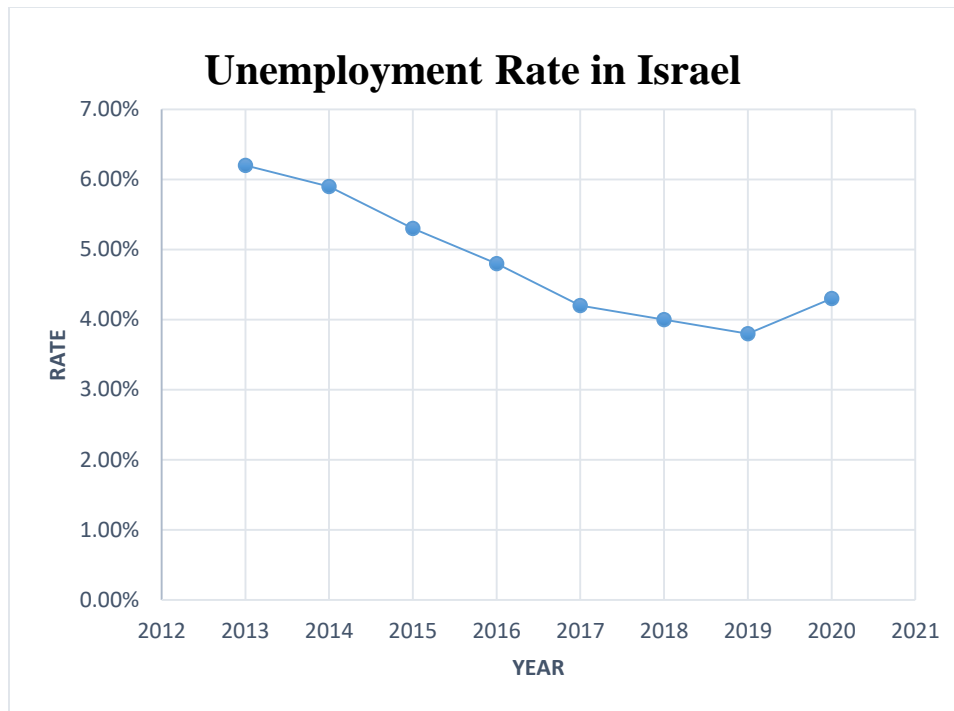


Figure 5.4: Israeli Unemployment rates over the years 2013-2020

Moving to the unemployment rates, the unemployment rates are quite low in Israel, it has showed improvement over the last years by decreasing the rates.

Starting from 2013, the unemployment rate was 6.2% then it decreased to 5.9% in 2014, in 2015 it also decreased to 5.3%, after that, in 2016 it reached to 4.8%, then it decreased again to 4.2 % in 2017, declined another time to 4.0% in 2018 and moving to 2019 it reached to 3.8%., last year it has increased to 4.3 % due to Covid-19.

These numbers gave an indicator that Israeli government is achieving good results in creating new job opportunities for youth and graduates over the years, since the percent is kept on decreasing.

We may consider that the Israeli plan has achieved the economic goals since the GDP results kept on increasing and the unemployment rates kept on decreasing.

5.2.2 Digitization:

Digitization is known as using new digital technologies in different business processes.

Since this research is focusing on social media, the following part is going to discuss how both Palestinian and Israeli interacted with digitization in their strategic plans.

5.2.2.1 Digitization in Palestine:

Even though different Palestinian governments have developed a number of strategic plans over the previous years, unfortunately none of them included the digitization.

Although technology has been an important part of most Palestinian lives, 80% of Palestinians have internet access but still we did not see a governmental engagement towards digitization.

For example, NPA (2017-2022) title was putting citizens first and to achieve that the following priorities were defined citizen-centred government and effective government, it would really be more efficient if the planners had included digitizing the governmental services especially after the world tendency towards it.

Government should develop governmental e-services in order to increase the efficiency of the provided services and to minimize the needed time and effort.

The planners had also defined another priority for NPA, regarding strengthening Palestine's international status, in this part of the plan; the planners focused to keep joining international treaties and conventions. Moreover, to keep trying to gain membership in more international organizations.

Also increasing the number of countries that have bilateral relations with Palestine and deepen the existing relations, but the planners did not mention that they would

seize the most powerful available tool to achieve that goal through technology. Nowadays anyone can pass any message simply via internet, it would be very effective if the planners thought to head towards innovation and publish the Palestinian story officially through this tool.

This research was not developed to analyze or judge the government decisions; it just highlighted the digitization issue since this research is going to analyse the role of social media in serving the national strategic goals, so if there was a defined Palestinian policy assessing the contribution of Palestinian social media, it would be easier and more effective.

The coming section is going to cover the social media part.

5.2.2.2 Digital Israel:

Israel was aware of the importance of digitization long time ago; the government has interfered directly to encourage digitization. Israel socioeconomic assessments 2013 and 2015 discussed “Digital Israel” as a strategic goal. The Israeli government decided to keep up with the digital revolution that have a high impact on different aspects of life such as economic growth, improving quality of life, increasing the productivity rates and reducing social gaps.

Therefore, in December 2013, the Israeli government decided to formulate a policy that uses information technology as a part of socioeconomic strategy, by a governmental resolution no. 1046. The policy aimed to develop the innovation in the country, to provide online public services in different sectors such as education, health, sharing governmental information, encourage e-commerce and many others. The government has also established a digital Israel bureau that is responsible for

formulating the national digital program, the bureau was first established under the responsibility of the prime minister office then the responsibility of it has been moved to the ministry of social equality.

Even though the digital bureau is responsible for formulating and implementing the national digital program, other entities are also collaborating with the bureau in order to achieve the required objectives all in their own specialities.

The government defined some areas that should be covered by the plan; these areas include health sector, education sector, economic, social affairs and service, human capital development and e-government services.

A plan has been formulated, and three main goals were defined and they are narrowing socioeconomic, encouraging economic growth in addition to create electronic smart government.

As for narrowing gaps, a digital literacy course was held to enable the participants to access different online services independently and to improve their quality of life. In addition to providing Land Registry online and many other achievements. While for accelerating the economic growth, a major result on this area was adopting programming and robotics in the curriculum for 4th graders.

To reach smart government, Israel has joined the International Open Government Partnership and has established Gov.il Website that provides access to public services with three languages Hebrew, Arabic and English, the website provides all the information related to all government offices and all ministries.

After that, a comprehensive plan was developed under the name “the national digital program of the government of Israel”; it defined the main areas that are going to be covered and the interventions that will be done in details.

This research was not developed to analysis or judge the Israeli national digital program, nor its achievements, but the researcher focused on this plan since the Israelis were aware of the importance of digital tools, have adopted these tools, and formulated a comprehensive plan for this purpose since 2013. They applied technology in most aspect of life; they adapted technology to enhance the citizens’ lives and they used it to reach the people around the world and transfer their own message and the story from their perspective.

This can be noticed from the number of verified Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, beside the type of messaging that are delivered through them. In the next part of the research an analysis of some pages and accounts is going to be presented, and more details related to the messages and interaction are going to be discussed.

In order to understand status of the digital use in Palestine and Israel, the researcher has interviewed Mr Ammar Jumhour, a Palestinian journalist specializing in media management and strategic communication; he is also a researcher in digital diplomacy. He holds a master's degree in media management and another master’s degree in international relations. When asked about the role of social media in Palestine and Israel on the political level, Jumhour said he thinks that social media at the political level does not rise to achieve what is required to convey the Palestinian narrative; it does not reach to a level by which official pages can prepare and post in a politically correct manner. He also believes that Palestinians are not fully aware of

the importance of social media and that they have not understood this concept yet on the political level.

He added, the government has not adopted social media as a strategic tool and it seems that it still does not realize the importance of social media. He added that most of Palestinian politicians, especially ministers and ambassadors, are not very familiar in using social media as part of their work, and that they are still using the stereotypical and traditional way.

On the institutional level, Ministry of Foreign Affairs started adopting social media strategy, especially “Facebook”, it developed an official page for the Ministry on “Facebook” in Arabic and began updating and feeding it with different materials, such as press releases, some videos and photos - relatively few with what is required - these posts include the ministry’s most prominent activities, events and political stances.

The ministry has also created another page in English named Palestinian Public Diplomacy with a deeper and more focused content, based on presenting topics related to the implications of Palestinian soft power in various fields of public diplomacy, including cultural, artistic, tourism and others, depending to some extent on the activities of Palestinian embassies in different countries. However, the number of followers for this page is very low.

In addition, he assumes that Palestinians are still unable to work on producing the needed type of posts with the right text, image and video materials in form of professional info-graphic and video-graphic.

Mr Jumhour added, Palestinians still cannot distinguish between the way the post should be prepared and share and the traditional press release, Palestinian pages uses the traditional media material (the press release) that are published in media and they publish it on social media as is, Palestinians should know that the way of publishing the news on social media should be completely different.

He believes that in general, there are no invested potentials to develop the use of social media on the political level, and there is no real detailed plan to develop that, in addition to the absence of specialized staff in social media and digital diplomacy in most of the governmental institutions and the shortage of the budget to develop that.

On the other hand, there is a specialized department in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is following up on the spread of its narrative in this field.

Audience believe that Israeli security and civilian officials have pages that are a reliable source of news, information, rumors and lies as well, while on the Palestinian side, digital diplomacy is almost absent from this scene.

He also said that Palestinians have not realized yet that Israelis started a technical battle with them and that Palestinians are not dealing well with that file.

That is why the Palestinian's ranking in digital diplomacy is very far from the Israeli and in late position, while the Israeli is in the top ten, they created pages speaking Arabic and they communicate with the Arab audience, they also utilize social media to share their narrative.

Palestinian digital diplomacy is a prerequisite in order to strengthen the Palestinian narrative and to promote it internationally by diplomats and politicians, and to target

basic components in the structure of Western society. In addition, to address the fallacies and contradictions of the foreign policy and its contradictory narratives regarding the Palestinian issue.

Therefore, focusing more on social media will help in supporting Palestinians to defend their cause and narrative.

Another interview was conducted with Mr. Iyad Al-refaie, an expert in social media and the director of Sada Social Center, which specializes in protecting Palestinian narratives on social media

Mr.Al-refaie believes that the use of social media by Palestinians varies on different levels for different reasons and due to different factors, but on the political official level, he said that the official social media accounts and pages are used in a very weak manner, especially if we compare that usage with the practice of the Israelis.

He also adds that there is a real problem in using and investing social media platforms to promote the Palestinian cause, and this problem can be divided into two parts. The first one is related the policies of social media platforms that are biased to Israel, which restrict what journalists and people share any posts that are against Israel , these platforms may sometimes close the accounts and pages of those people as a result of their use of terms related to the Palestinian cause.

When the researcher asked Mr.Al-refaie why don't Palestinian focus on using the political platform Twitter more, he answered that there is no scientific reason or a clear justification for using one platform rather than another in a country, he added that Facebook is the most used platform in the Levant region.

Then Mr. Al-refaie said that Israel is one of the most advanced countries in using social media platforms, they use these platforms to promote the Israeli narrative, and since Israel is considered one of the top five countries in using the digital space and the Internet. He also said that there were several Israeli initiatives in using some of social media's capabilities, and the credit was given to Israel. For example, Netanyahu was the first politician to use the live broadcast feature on Facebook to send greetings to Christians around the world from Jerusalem.

He also believes that the policies of Israel's use of social media platforms are systematic and structured; the messages that are sent to audiences are designed in a way that these messages are compatible with the ideas and orientations of the living conditions for the targeted audiences. For example, the Palestinian community is targeted and addressed by multiple official and unofficial pages, promoting the economic prosperity, and promoting freedom of movement that will be given by Israeli etc., while other messages are addressed to Arab countries and totally different messages are addressed to the European societies.

He also mentioned that the big difference between the use and the rate of digital diplomacy between Palestinian and Israel is due to several reasons: one of them is that there are huge investments in the digital field in Israel, since Israel is one of the most developed country in the Middle East especially in digitization and technology. Moreover, Palestinians are not taking in consideration when budgeting for Palestinian embassies around the world to allocate part of the budgets to strengthen the Palestinian narrative digitally; recently there has been a tendency by the

Palestinian government to move forward with this issue, but so far, there are no obvious results yet.

Another reason is the policies of social media platforms towards the Israeli side constitute a major obstacle for the Palestinians to promote the Palestinian digital narrative, since these platforms are biased against Palestinian and they remove many posts that are related to Palestinian context.

Another interview was conducted with Mr. Ahmad Barakat, a consultant and expert in marketing and social media;

Mr. Barakat thinks that Palestinians start using social media platform in a good way, knowing that previously they were not using social media at all, but unfortunately, there is no clear methodology for using these platforms, they are mainly used for sharing news, each ministry shares its news and therefore we do not take the desired result from those tools.

He also believes that Palestinians are facing a real problem in using social media platforms to communicate with the public, and that is because the Palestinian media is very weak in all of its details, the messages delivered by different media is not unified unlike the Israeli side. A unified message will strengthen and increases the public's confidence in the media. As for Palestinians' media with all of its components, even social media, the communication between the government and ministers with citizens is very weak, and therefore when an event occurs, their weakness appears in transferring and covering this event, in addition to the lack of citizen's confidence in the announced news by the government.

In addition, since the communication internally between the government and citizens is very weak, therefore communication with other communities and audiences is also weak, there are many problems in the international Palestinian representation, we noticed different issues facing the Palestinian representatives, for example, some of them have weakness in the language of the country in which they are located. Even though, we can find some success stories but actually they are individuals success stories, for example in Britain, we can find that the Ambassador Husam Zomlot is a strong representative, but that's due to his strong and successful personality. So if there were a group of strong people in the government and embassies, this would have changed the world's view of the Palestinian narrative, but unfortunately, there is no governmental intention to strengthen the Palestinian international representation nor to unify the story in order to transfer of the unified Palestinian narrative.

The Israeli use of social media is systematic and directed in a unified way, for example, when the government publishes a certain news, after few minutes, Avichai Adraee publishes the same news on his official pages on social media, then we will find that the Israeli coordinator of government activities in the Palestinian territories has published the same information in another way. So we are going to find that all pages and accounts are sharing the same story, this has strengthened the Israeli media and other means of communication, moreover, Israeli share their news on social media platforms in different languages, in order to spread their news widely. If we perform a quick search on Israeli social media, we are going to find that they started using Arabic language long time ago,

Moreover, they did not rely on pages in Arabic language for all the Arab audience around the world; they create different pages for different Arab audience in different areas and countries, in order to share posts that suitable for each nationality. Therefore, we are going to find special accounts and pages for Palestinian audience, others for Iraqi, and some for Egyptian and so on.

Thus, the strength of the Israeli social media platforms is due to different reasons, the first one is their unified posts, in addition to their presence in different social media platforms. For example, Netanyahu has joined Tik Tok to address some messages to the Israeli youth, especially teenagers.

Mr Barakat, says that he believes that Israeli are going to use Tik Tok to address their messages to the Palestinian youth. Another reasons that Israelis continue delivering the unified messages even if their posts were rejected by Arab societies , Israelis have not stop , they insist to continue sharing in order to reach the Arab audience, they considered the negative comments a sort of interaction and they kept presenting their content without stopping.

Mr Barakat said, unfortunately, we have begun to find that some Arabs started to adopt the Israeli narrative in their media, for example, the issue of Gaza underground tunnels, some Arabic media adopted the Israeli narrative, and start arguing that the Aid of reconstruction of Gaza may be directed to these tunnels. Moreover, Palestinian citizens also start arguing the Palestinian government regarding security coordination with Israel, and this is what the Israelis intentionally do in order to disrupt the Palestinian and Arab societies and to convey the world in the Israeli narrative..

There is very strong Israeli strategy to communicate and delivered a unified speech to the Palestinian community, and the strongest example account of the Israeli coordinator of government activities in the Palestinian territories and other similar pages. Mr. Barakat believes that the Israeli are using social media with Palestinian and Arab audience in a very smart way, they reply to the first five comments, using a convincing reply that may cause doubting the true narrative, therefore the comments that were replied to are going to appear at the beginning. This strategy may affect the audience believes after a while, and adopt the Israeli narrative.

As for the huge difference between digital diplomacy index between Israelis and Palestinians. There is an institution that has been working in a clear, systematic and continuous plan and vision for many years, on the other side, another institution does not work clearly and work randomly according to the attitudes and mood of specific people. There is no clear and complete Palestinian vision towards digital diplomacy, moreover, social media specialists presented initiative to the Palestinian government more than once in order to improve and activate the role of social media in different areas especially in digital diplomacy, by providing all the support and experience needed by these specialists but no action has been taken.

These specialists have also encourage government to prepare a clear strategy in order to promote the Palestinian narrative but no serious step has been taken so far. Mr. Barakat believes that most of the times, Palestinians are sharing targeted, partisan, and annoying posts. Which weakens the Palestinian social media pages and accounts.

5.3 Analysing Social Media Pages:

The purpose of this thesis is to study the role of social media in serving the national strategic goals, so some analysis has been done on two types of social media platforms they are Facebook verified pages and Twitter verified accounts.

The sample of this study consists of eight Facebook pages, in addition to nine Twitter accounts for each side.

This section will start with brief introduction for each page or account, followed by the analysis.

First of all, it is important to emphasize that the sample of the Palestinian side was either verified governmental pages and accounts, that are directly related to the research topic (such as the Prime ministers for the period that the research cover 2017-2020. etc) or for pages and accounts that represent Palestinian liberation organization such as (Dr. Saeb Erekat and PLO-NAD).

As for the Israeli accounts and pages, the directly related verified pages and account were used such as the prime minister pages and accounts and the pages and accounts that are considered a key source of information for the audience.

It is also important to mention that the researcher knows the importance of using content analysis for similar research , but two reasons prohibit that, the first one was that after reviewing the frequency of the keywords , the researcher find that the words that were directly related to the (National Policy Agenda and The socioeconomic assessment) it was found that these words were not used very much , the other reason is that the period that is covered is long period and some data had been retrieved manually so it was not possible to perform this kind of analysis.

The researcher has studied Facebook pages for both Palestinian and Israel since 1/1/2017 until 30/06/2020, Part of the analysis focused on the interaction of the people with the shared posts, so the number of likes, comments and shares were defined by the following criteria:

Table 5.3. Facebook Pages Interaction criteria.

rate Interaction	Low	Medium	High
Number of likes	0-999	1000-1999	≥ 2000
Number of comments	0-499	500-999	≥ 1000
Number of shares	0-45	50-99	≥ 100

It should be noted that the Facebook interaction numbers that are above 1000 have been rounded to the nearest hundreds.

The analysis has been done for each page separately then an overall analysis for the frequency of some keywords that are related to the research problem has been done over all the pages and the results are shown in the coming sections.

Where for the twitter accounts, the researcher has studied the accounts for both Palestinians and Israelis to cover the period 1/1/2017 until 30/06/2020, but Twitter does not allow extracting more than 3200 historical tweets. The accounts that have shared less than 3200 tweets within this period, all their tweets were covered, while the accounts that exceeded this number, only the latest 3200 were analysed and it was mentioned in the analysis that it does not cover the whole period.

Some of the analysis reflect the people interaction on the tweets, so the number of favourites (likes) and number of tweets that have been retweeted by others were defined by the following criteria:

Table 5.4 Twitter Accounts Interaction criteria.

Interaction rate	Low	Medium	High
Number of Favourites	0-400	401-800	≥ 801
Number retweeted posts by others	0-300	301-600	≥ 601

The analysis has been done for each page and account separately and has been added to the annex of this thesis then an overall analysis for the selected pages has been done for the languages that have been used, the media type, the people interaction, number of hashtags and the frequency of the keywords for the both Facebook pages and Twitter accounts.

Before moving to the analysis, the researcher has chosen fifteen keywords for both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides; the following table shows these keywords. The Palestinian keywords were English and Arabic; since none of the chosen Palestinian pages has published any post in Hebrew. On the other hand, the Israeli keywords were English, Arabic and Hebrew.

Table 5.5 Palestinian Keywords vs. Israeli Keywords

Palestinian Keywords.		Israeli Keywords.	
Used word.	Synonym in English.	Used word.	Synonym in English.
1. NPA.		Socioeconomic Assessment.	
2. المواطن أولاً.	Putting Citizen First.	Strategic plan.	
3. أجندة السياسات الوطنية.	National Policy Agenda.	Digital.	

4.	National Policy Agenda.		Palestine.	
5.	Palestine.		Palestinian.	
6.	Palestinian.		Israel.	
7.	Israel.		Arab.	
8.	القدس.	Jerusalem.	Jerusalem.	
9.	Jerusalem.		اورشليم.	
10.	Area C.		فلسطين.	
11.	مناطق ج.	Area C.	اسرائيل.	
12.	فلسطين.	Palestine.	הערכת כלכלית-חברתית	Socioeconomic Assessment.
13.	اسرائيل.	Israel.	ישראל	Israel.
14.	Strategic Plan.		ירושלים	Jerusalem.
15.	Putting Citizen First.		פלשתינה	Palestine.

5.3.1 Palestinian Facebook Pages:

The researcher has chosen the following eight Palestinian Facebook pages that are directly related to the goal of the study. Only verified pages were supposed to be studied, but two important unverified pages were added to the scope of the study because of their significant role to the study, these pages are (The Palestinian Institute for public diplomacy (Rabet) and Palestinian Public Diplomacy *الدبلوماسية الفلسطينية* (العامة الفلسطينية)).

The following table summarized the names of the chosen pages, brief introduction about each page and number of likes per each.

Table 5.6 Palestinian official Facebook pages

No.	Facebook pages	Brief Introduction	Number of likes
1.	Dr. Rami Hamdallah - د. رامي الحمد الله	Dr. Rami Hamdallah is Former Prime Minister of Palestine since 2013 until 2019, this verified official page was created in June 9, 2013.	2,160,114
2.	الرئيس محمود عباس - President Mahmoud Abbas	Mr. Mahmoud Abbas is the Palestinian President since 2005 and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization since 2004; this verified official page was created in September 28, 2010.	926,528
3.	Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh الدكتور محمد اشتية	Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh is the Prime Minister of Palestine since 2019, he used to be a minister for different ministries, this verified official page was created in December 21, 2010.	359,450
4.	Dr.Laila Ghannam د.ليلى غنام	Dr.Laila Ghannam is Governor of Ramallah and Al Bireh since 2010, this verified official page was created in September 3, 2011.	279,651
5.	مكتب رئيس الوزراء- دولة فلسطين	This page is the official page of the Prime Minister of Palestine, this verified official page was created in May 4, 2014	262,015

6.	وزارة الخارجية والمغتربين الفلسطينية	This page is the official page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, this is a verified official page and it was created in May 20, 2012.	51,583
7.	The Palestinian Institute for Public Diplomacy	The PIPD is a non-governmental organization; aiming to share the story of Palestine with the world; this is an unverified page, it was created in November 13, 2017. This page's name was changed in 2020 in to Rabet	49,659
8.	Palestinian Public Diplomacy العامة الفلسطينية الدبلوماسية	This is a governmental page managed by of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it is an unverified page, it was created in November 21, 2018.	3,337

The analysis has been conducted for each page separately. The researcher retrieved the related posts and the results are shown in detail in the Annex.

Following are an overall analysis for the chosen Palestinian Facebook pages:

I. Language:

Five out of eight pages used Arabic as a main language to publish their posts and they are (Dr. Rami Hamdallah, Dr. Mohammad Shtayeh, Dr. Laila Ghannam, مكتب وزارة الخارجية و المغتربين & رئيس الوزراء), while two used English as their main language and they are (The Palestinian Institute for public diplomacy and Palestinian public diplomacy), and one page used both English and Arabic together to share it posts and this page is the page of President Mahmoud Abbas .

The numbers are shown below:

Table 5.7 Languages used by each page.

No.	Facebook pages	Arabic	Hebrew	English	Combination (Eng & arab)
1.	Dr. Rami Hamdallah - د. رامي - الحمد الله	685	0	376	236
2.	الرئيس محمود عباس - President Mahmoud Abbas	164	0		1185
3.	Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh الدكتور محمد اشتية	542	0	9	14
4.	Dr.Laila Ghannam د.ليلى غنام	2397	0		
5.	مكتب رئيس الوزراء- دولة فلسطين	1615	0	178	4
6.	وزارة الخارجية والمغتربين الفلسطينية	2011	0	86	30
7.	The Palestinian	16	0	959	

	Institute for public diplomacy				
8.	Palestinian Public Diplomacy الدبلوماسية العامة الفلسطينية	7	0	595	77

II. Media Type:

The researcher analysed the media type that were used by each page and the percentages of these types regarding to the number of the shared post, it is noted that 4 out of 8 pages has shared more than 80% of their posts containing either photos or video, with two exceeded 99% and they are Dr.Laila Ghannam and Palestine Public Diplomacy as shown below, the following figure shows the percent of photos and videos that were shared by each page.

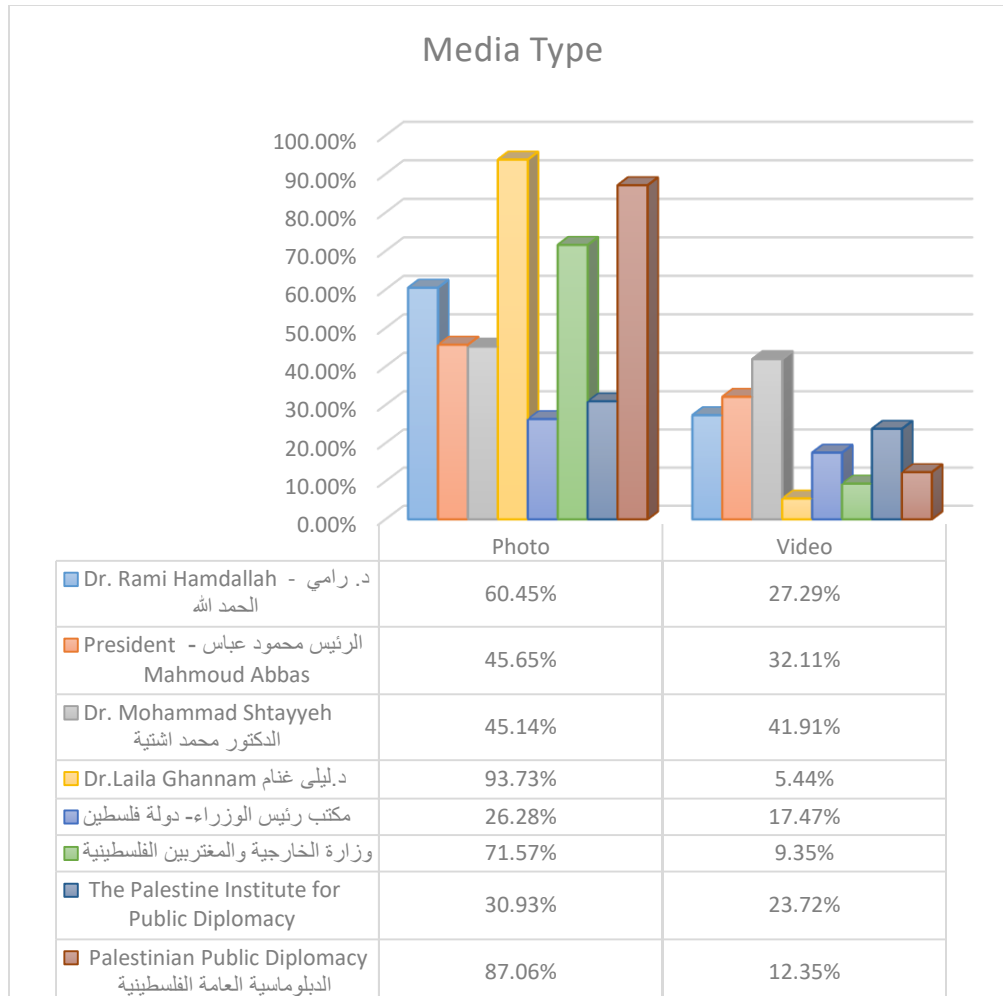


Figure 5.5 Media type used by Palestinian Facebook pages

III. Interaction:

Moving to the Interaction of the people with the shared posts, the researcher has studied the number of likes, comments and shares for the posts within the previously defined criteria, and the following was found:

A. Likes per each post:

The number of the likes on the shared posts of the Palestinian pages concentrated in the low rate, the following figure shows specifically the rates of likes for each page.

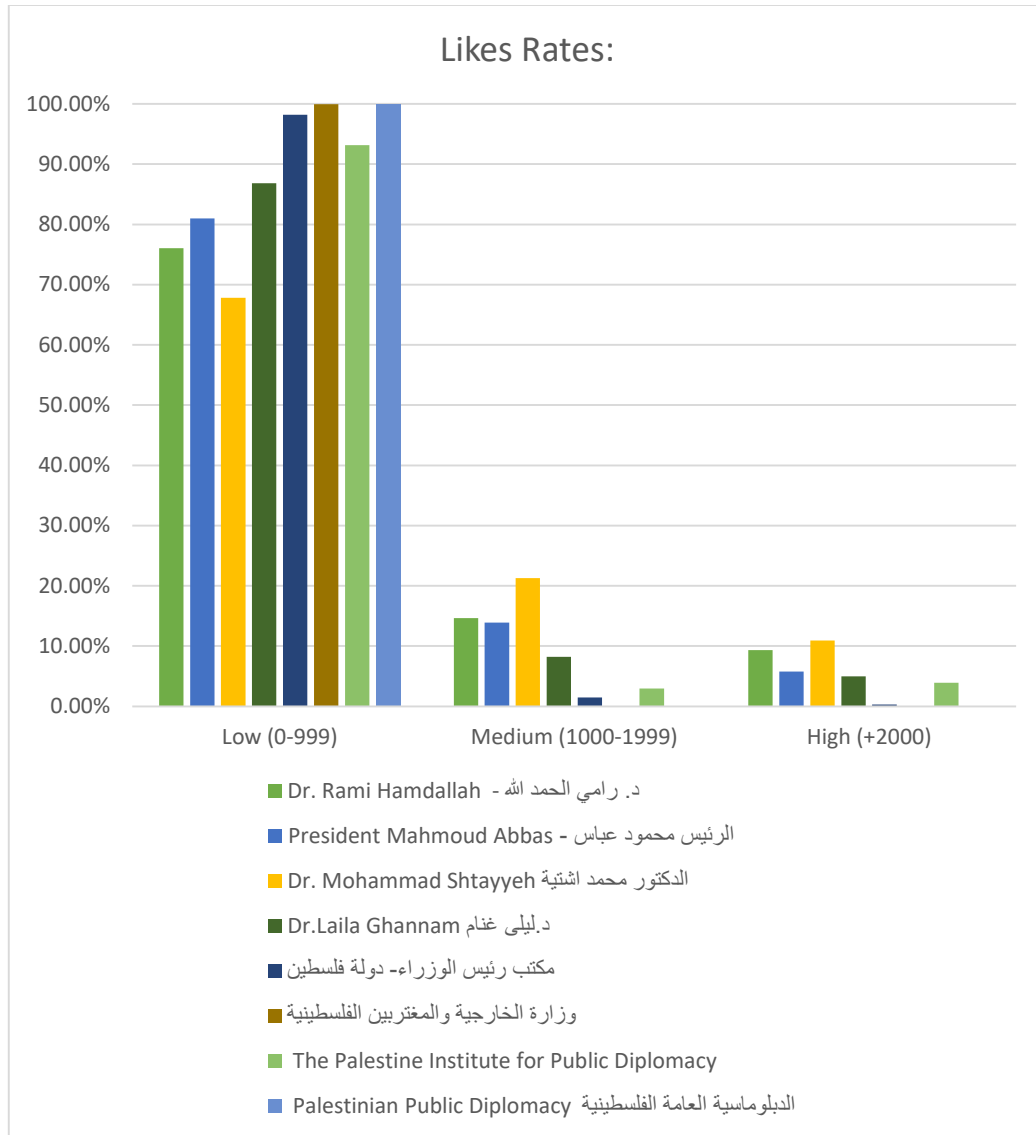


Figure 5.6 Likes Rates- Palestinian Facebook pages-

B. Comments on the shared posts:

The number of the comments on the posts of the Palestinian pages concentrated in the low rate, the figure below shows the rates of comments on the posts for each page.

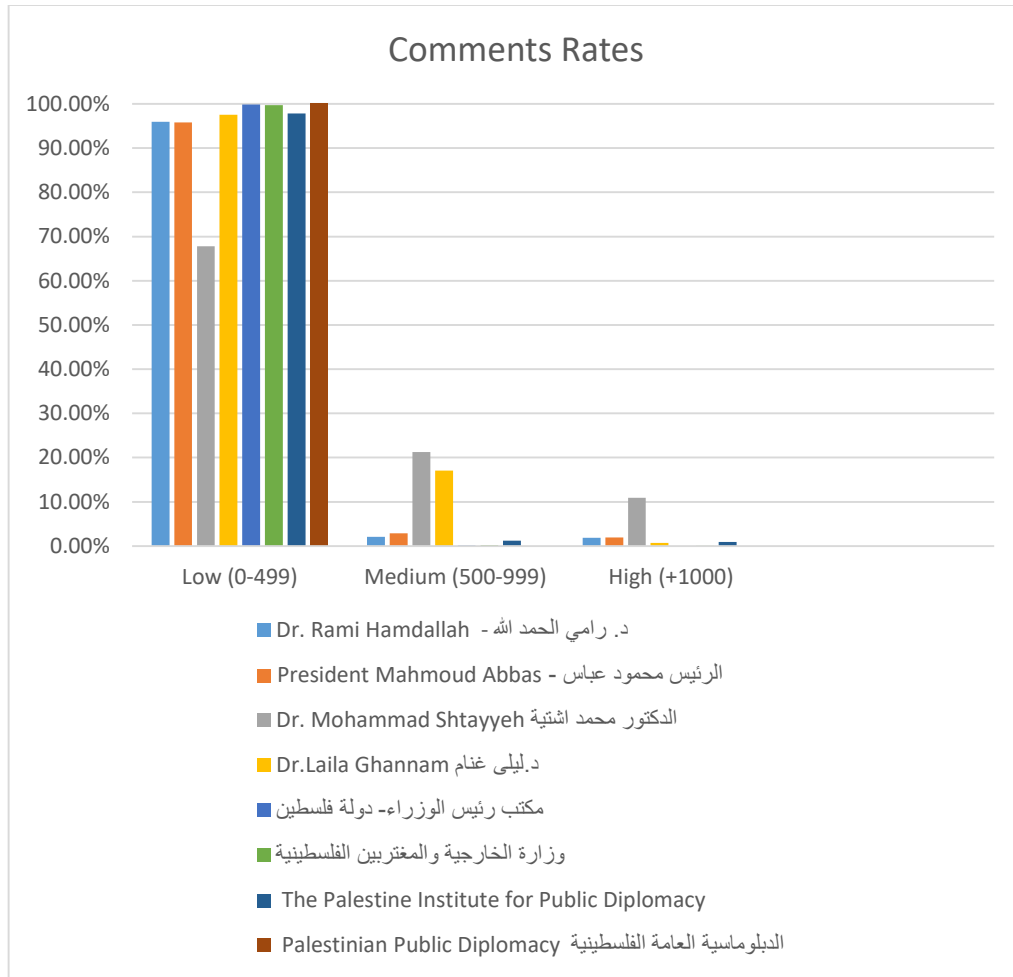


Figure 5.7 Comments Rates- Palestinian Facebook pages-

C. The number of shares for the posts:

The third type of people interaction is sharing the posts; the people reshared the posts in low rates as shown below:

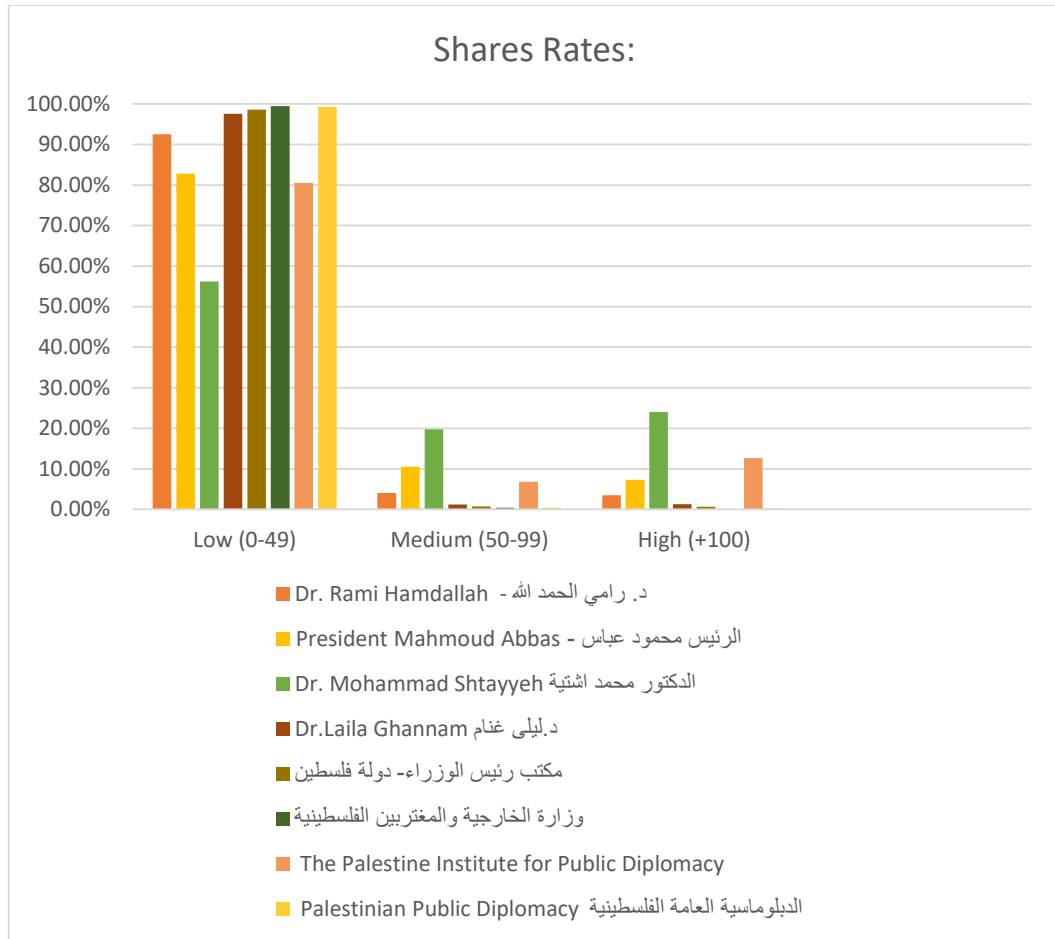


Figure 5.8 Shares Rates- Palestinian Facebook pages-

Now, moving to the overall analysis for the frequency of the Palestinian keywords in the Facebook study sample and the number of posts that contains hashtags in these pages.

The following table represent each keyword and the frequency of using these keywords of it in each page, in addition to the overall repetition for the same word.

The researcher noticed that the word (فلسطين) was used 3313 times in the sample, while the abbreviation (NPA) was not used at all; the other five keywords that are directly related to the National Policy Agenda were not repeated very much; it has also been noticed that the keyword (National Policy Agenda) was used only once, while (Strategic Planning) was used twice and (Putting Citizens first) was also used

twice; the two relative Arabic words were used a little bit more, it has been noticed that (المواطن أولاً) was used twelve times and the keyword (أجندة السياسات الوطنية) was used twenty times by all the pages during the defined period.

Table 5.8 Keywords Frequency in Palestinian Facebook pages

Page Keyword	Dr. Hamdallah	President Abbas	Dr. Shtayyeh	Dr. Ghannam	مكتب رئيس الوزراء- دولة فلسطين	وزارة الخارجية والمغتربين الفلسطينية	PIPD (Rabet)	Palestinian Public Diplomacy	sum
NPA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
المواطن أولاً	4	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	12
اجندة السياسات	6	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	20
National policy plan	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Palestine	112	96	5	0	29	99	23	179	543
Palestina n	151	118	4	0	124	50	73	261	781
Israel	80	25	3	0	75	39	77	157	456
القدس	88	82	42	103	118	190	0	3	626
Jerusalem	40	70	0	0	16	31	12	50	219
Area C	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	6
مناطق ج	3	0	2	1	9	9	0	0	24
فلسطين	268	743	239	493	455	1093	4	18	3313
اسرائيل	67	36	80	16	201	320	2	2	724

Strategic Plan	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Putting citizen first	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2

The following graph represents the above table

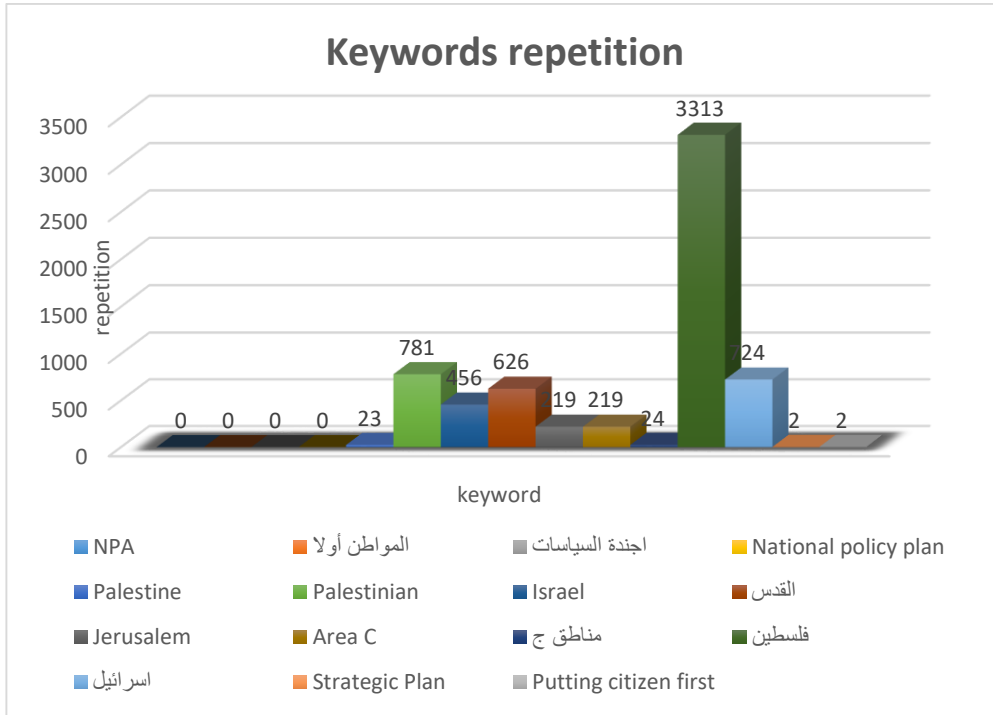


Figure 5.9 Keywords Frequency in Palestinian Facebook pages

Then the researcher has calculated the number of posts that contain hashtags, it has been found that the Page of Dr. Laila Ghannam is the most page that has used hashtags with a sum of 631 posts, while the Palestinian Public Diplomacy page came in the second place, finally Dr. Rami Hamdallah page is the least page that used hashtags with only two posts contain hashtags, the following table and graph represent more details.

Table 5.9 Number of posts that contains Hashtags

Page	Number of posts that contains Hashtags
Dr. Rami Hamdallah	2
president Mahmoud Abbas	6

Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh	27
Dr. Laila Ghannam	631
مكتب رئيس الوزراء	44
وزارة الخارجية الفلسطينية	256
The Palestinian Institute for public diplomacy	147
Palestinian Public Diplomacy	620

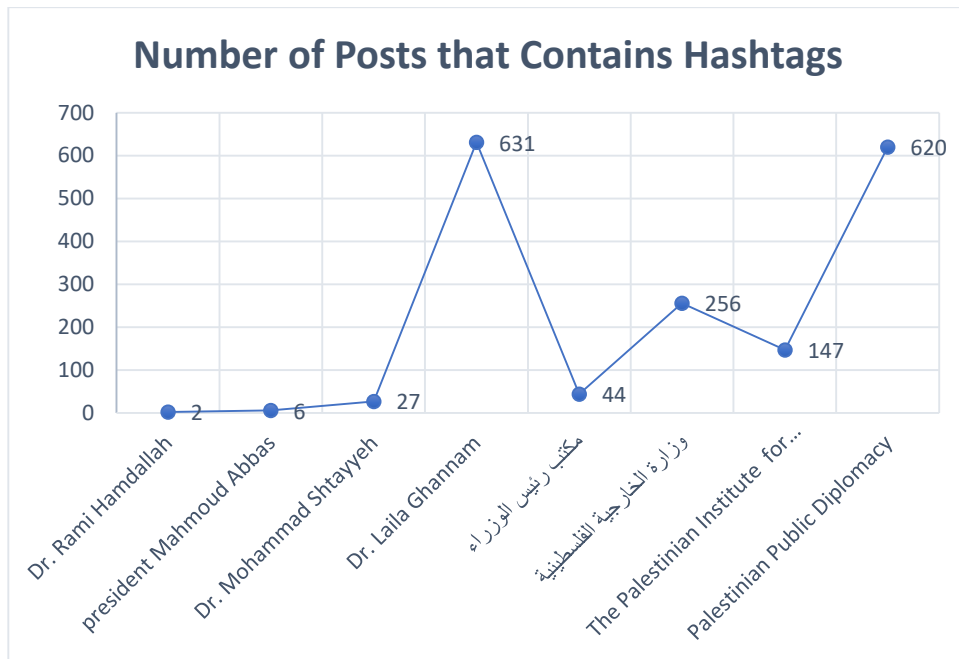


Figure 5.10 Number of posts that contains Hashtags

5.3.2 Palestinian Twitter Accounts:

The researcher has chosen the following nine Palestinian Twitter accounts that are directly related to the goal of the study. It is important to mention that it was supposed to study the verified account only, but three important unverified accounts were added to the scope of the study because of their

significant role to the study, these pages are (Dr. Saeb Erakat **الدكتور صائب عريقات**, PLO Department of Public Diplomacy & Policy and The PIPD).

The following table summarized the name of the chosen accounts and number of followers for each.

Table 5.10 Palestinian official Twitter accounts

No.	Account	Brief Introduction	Number of followers
1.	State of Palestine	This is an official Twitter account of the mission to the United Nation, this verified account joined Twitter on July 2013, since then the account has tweeted 3,797 tweets.	55,529
2.	Palestine PLO-NAD	This is an official Twitter account of the Palestine Liberation Organization - Negotiations Affairs Department joined Twitter on June 2011, since then the account has tweeted 6,325 tweets.	47,955
3.	Hanan Ashrawi	This is an official Twitter account of Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, Member of PLO Executive Committee joined Twitter on September 2018, since then, the account has tweeted 1,123 tweets.	27,709
4.	Dr. Saeb Erakat الدكتور صائب عريقات	This is an official Twitter account of Secretary General of the Palestine Liberation Organization, head of Negotiations Affairs Department, he joined Twitter on October 2018, since then the account has tweeted 5,567 tweets.	16,497

5.	Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh .د محمد اشتية	This is an official Twitter account of the current prime minister of Palestine, Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, he joined Twitter on March 2014, since then the account has tweeted 710 tweets.	14,003
6.	PM of Palestine	This is an official Twitter account of the prime minister of Palestine, joined Twitter on October 2009, since then the account has tweeted 4,969 tweets.	13,070
7.	Rami Hamdallah	This is an official Twitter account of former the prime minister of Palestine, Dr. Rami Hamdallah, it joined Twitter on June 2013, since then the account has tweeted 4,512 tweets.	8,549
8.	PLO Department of Public Diplomacy & Policy	This Twitter account represent the public diplomacy and policy department at Palestine Liberation Organization, joined Twitter on January 2013, since then the account has tweeted 4,512 tweets.	4415
9.	ThePIPD	This is Twitter account represent the Palestinian institute for public diplomacy, PIPD is a non-governmental organization; aims to share the story of Palestine with the world; it joined Twitter on November 2011, it shared 6,765 tweets. This page's name was changed in 2020 in to Rabet	1,870

The analysis has been conducted for each account separately. The researcher retrieved the related tweets and the results are shown in more details in the Annex, the following present an overall for some issues.

Following are an overall analysis for the chosen Twitter accounts:

I. Language:

Seven out of nine twitter accounts used English as a main language to tweet and they are (State of Palestine, Palestine PLO-NAD, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, PM of Palestine, PLO Department of Public Diplomacy & policy), with more than 90% of their tweets in English ,while one used Arabic as its main language and it is Rami Hamdallah account with 77% of its tweets in Arabic, the last account is Dr. Saeb Erakat account with 46.59% Arabic tweets and 53.28% English tweets, the numbers are shown below:

Table 5.11 Languages used by each account.

No.	Twitter Account	Arabic	English	Others (Spanish or French)
1.	State of Palestine	38	938	8
2.	Palestine PLO-NAD	57	1143	5
3.	Hanan Ashrawi	30	1093	
4.	Dr. Saeb Erakat	1399	1600	4

	الدكتور صائب عريقات			
5.	Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh .د. محمد اشتية	13	131	
6.	PM of Palestine	132	1707	
7.	Rami Hamdallah	977	277	3
8.	PLO Department of Public Diplomacy & Policy	7	3049	2
9	The PIPD	8	801	18

II. Media Type:

The researcher analysed the media type that was used by each Twitter account and the percentages of them regarding to the number of the shared tweets, it is noted that five out of nine pages has shared more than 55% of their tweets containing photos, video or GIF, the twitter account (PLO Department of Public Diplomacy & Policy) was the most twitter account that shred media with 69.59% photos, 3.53% videos. The following figure shows the percent of photos, videos and GIF that were shared by each account.

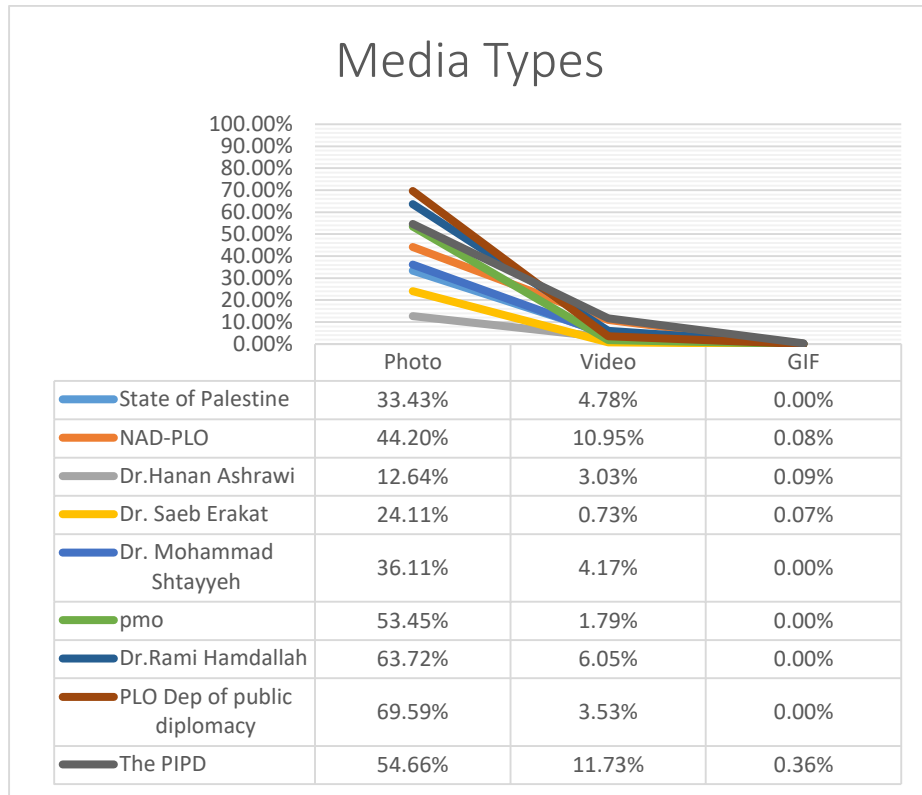


Figure 5.11 Media Type Used by Palestinian Twitter Accounts

III. Tweets Type:

The types of tweets are divided into three categories, tweets, retweets and replies, the percentage of these types in the Palestinian accounts, as the figure shows, most of the tweets were original tweets shared by the accounts, the retweets and the replies got fewer percentages, the figure below shows more details:

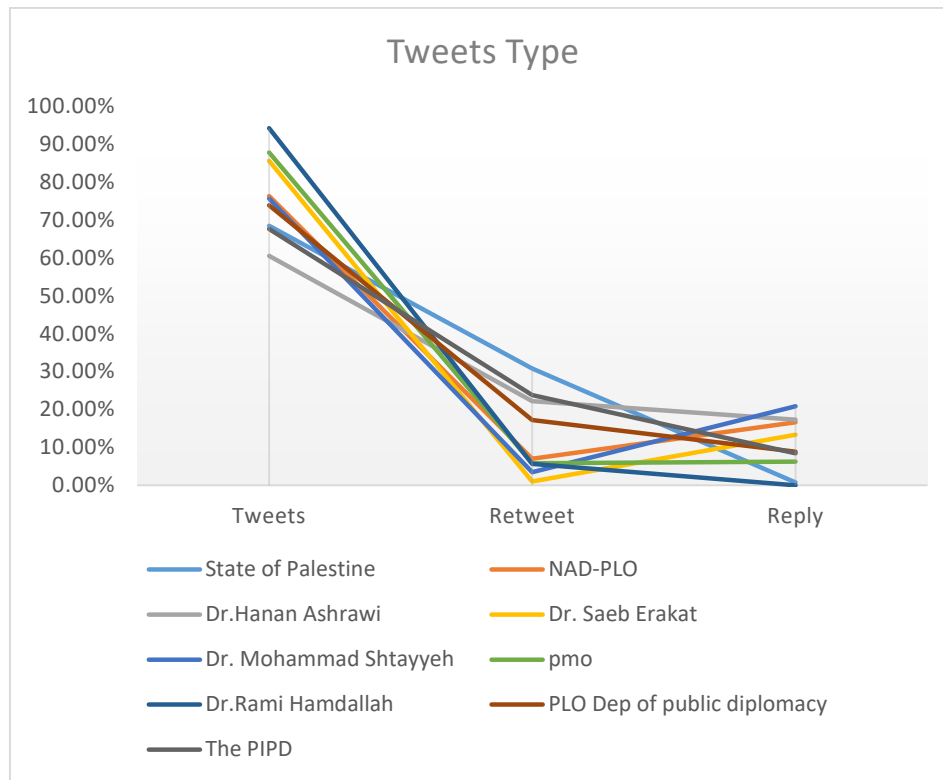


Figure 5.12 Tweets Type by Palestinian Twitter accounts

IV. Interaction:

Moving to the Interaction of the people with the shared tweets, the researcher has studied the number of likes (formerly known as favourites), and the number of shares, known as retweets:

A. favourites:

The number of favourites for the tweeted posts was in the low rate for all the Palestinian accounts, if we look at the following figure, we are going to find that more than 90% of the tweets in all the Palestinian accounts has not exceeded 400 favourites.

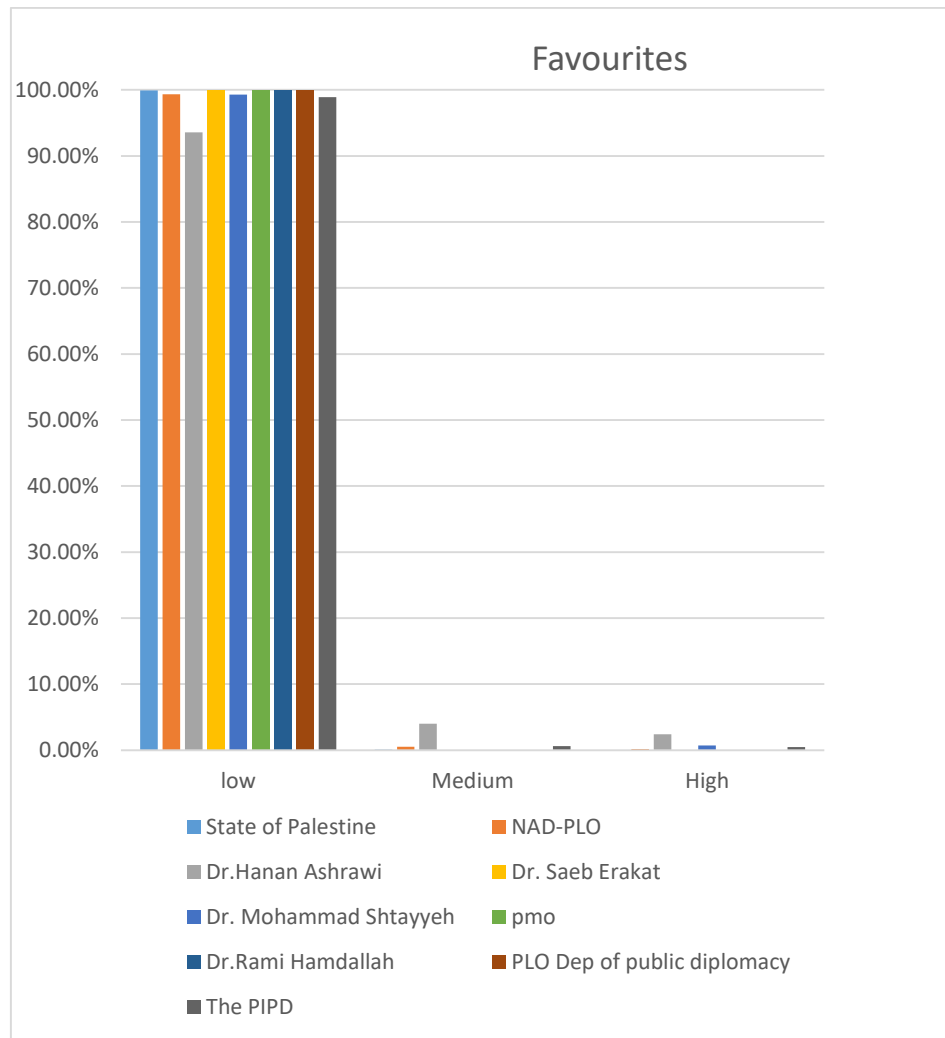


Figure 5.13 Favourites rates- Palestinian Twitter accounts-

B. Retweets:

In Twitter, the process of sharing a tweet is called retweet, the number of the retweeted tweets by other in the Palestinian accounts, it has been noticed that more than 97% of the tweets in the Palestinian accounts has not been retweeted more than 300 times. The figure below shows the percentages for each account:

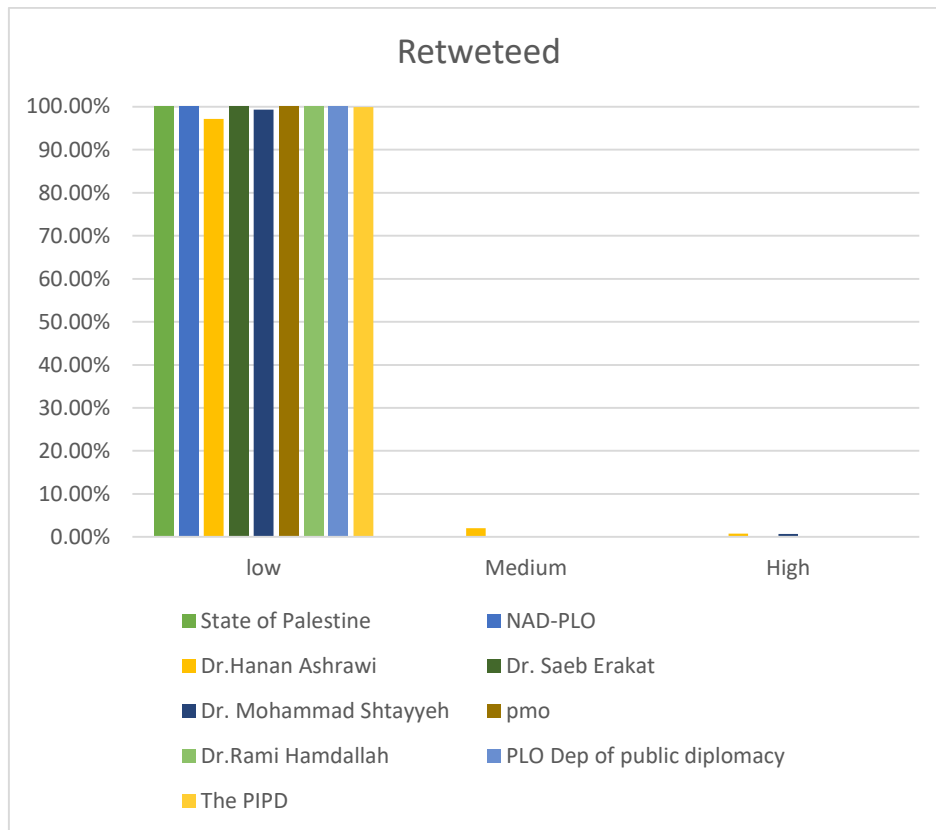


Figure 5.14 Rate of Retweeted Tweets- Palestinian Twitter accounts-

Now, similar to Facebook analysis, an overall analysis for the frequency of the Palestinian keywords in the Twitter study sample accounts and the number of Hashtags used by these accounts.

The table below represents each keyword and the frequency of using these keywords in each account, in addition to the overall repetition for the same word.

The researcher noticed that the word (Israel) was used 4223 times in the sample, while the abbreviation (NPA) and the keyword (strategic plan) were not used at all; the other four keywords that are directly related to the National Policy Agenda were not repeated very much; the keyword (National Policy

Agenda) was used eight times, while (Putting Citizens First) was also used only once; the two relative Arabic words were used a few numbers of times, it has been noticed that (المواطن أولاً) was used once and the keyword (أجندة السياسات الوطنية) was used four times by all the accounts

Table 5.12 Keywords Frequency in Palestinian Twitter Accounts

Account	State of Palestine	PLO NAD	Dr. Ashrawi	Dr. Erakat	Dr. Shtayyeh	PMO	Dr. Hamdallah	PLO Dep of public diplomacy	PIPD	sum
NPA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
المواطن أولاً	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
اجندة السياسات	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4
National policy plan	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	0	0	8
Palestine	544	572	311	313	74	587	109	502	195	3207
Palestinian	256	364	331	347	46	621	117	1227	434	3743
Israel	227	542	454	496	61	467	69	1514	393	4223
القدس	3	10	2	192	1	12	103	1	2	326
Jerusalem	151	264	76	188	12	273	47	300	48	1359
Area C	1	0	0	1	1	15	2	5	1	26
مناطق ج	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	6
فلسطين	30	26	10	702	10	32	332	2	7	1151
اسرائيل	4	13	3	320	2	12	78	3	3	438

Strategic Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Putting citizen first	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

The following graph represent the above table.

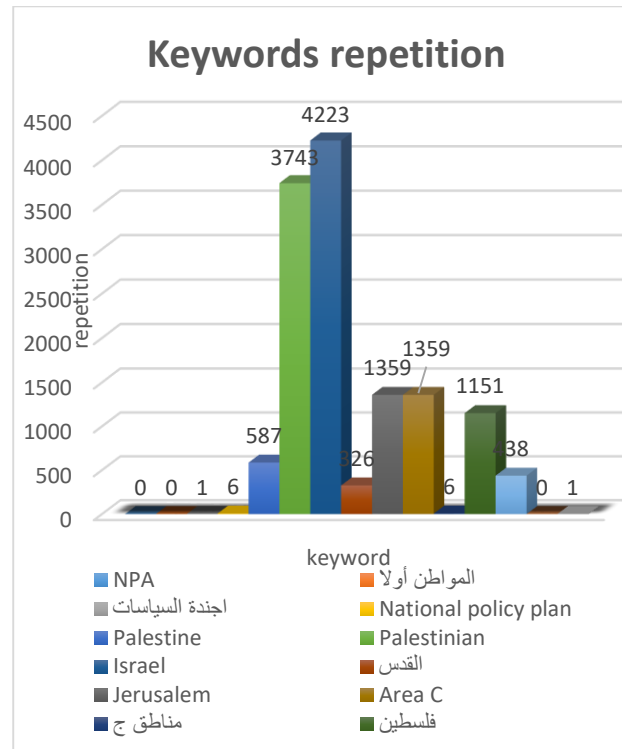


Figure 5.15 Keywords Frequency in Palestinian Twitter Accounts

The researcher has calculated the number of Hashtags used by each account. It has been found that the five out of the nine accounts used more than 1000 hashtags, these accounts are (State of Palestine with 2336 hashtags, PM of Palestine with 2001 hashtags, PLO Dep. of Public Diplomacy with 1472 hashtags and the PIPD with 1291 hashtags). Finally, Dr. Rami Hamdallah account is the least account that used hashtags with only 23 hashtags; the following table and graph represent more details.

Table 5.13 Number of Used Hashtags

Account	Number of Hashtags
State of Palestine	2336
Palestine PLO-NAD	1559
Hanan Ashrawi	619
Dr.Saeb Erakat	279
Dr. Mohammad Ishtayyeh	122
PM of Palestine	2001
Rami Hamdallah	23
PLO Dep. Of Public Diplomacy	1472
ThePIPD	1291

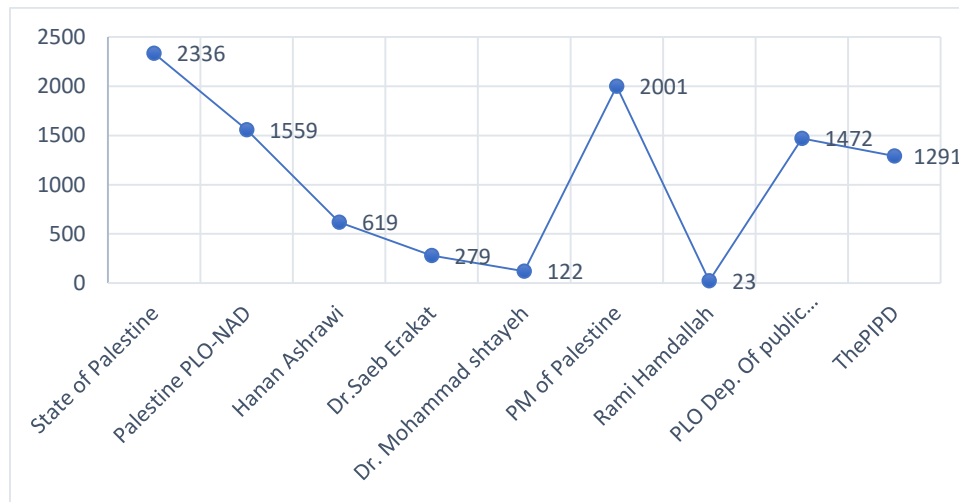


Figure 5.16 Number of Used Hashtags - Palestinian Twitter accounts-

5.3.3 Israeli Facebook Pages:

The researcher has chosen the following eight Israeli Facebook pages that are directly related to the goal of the study. All the chosen pages are official and verified.

The following table summarized the name of the chosen pages and number of likes per each.

Table 5.14 Israeli official Facebook pages

No.	Facebook pages	Brief Introduction	Number of likes
1.	Benjamin Netanyahu - בנימין נתניהו	Benjamin Netanyahu is the Israeli Prime Minister since 2009, this verified official page was created in January 27, 2010.	2,532,976
2.	اسرائيل تتكلم بالعربية	This the official Arabic Page created and managed by The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a resource of	2,002,048

		information on the State of Israel in Arabic, this verified official page was created in January 10, 2011.	
3.	افيخاي ادروي	This the official Arabic Page for the head of the Arab media division of the Israel defense forces, this verified official page was created in July 17, 2011.	1,469,227
4.	The Prime Minister of Israel.	This is the official Page for the Prime Minister of Israel, this verified official page was created in January May 7, 2010.	1,318,057
5.	Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs	This the official Page for the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this verified official page was created in July 10, 2009.	638,180
6.	المنسق	This the official Arabic Page for the Israeli coordination of government activities in the Palestinian territories, this verified official page was created in February 2, 2015.	561,464
7.	رئيس الوزراء الاسرائيلي	This is the official Arabic Page for the Prime Minister of Israel, this verified official page was created in August 30, 2011.	315,498

8.	Reuven Ruvi Rivlin - ראובן רובי ריבלין	Reuven Ruvi Rivlin is the President of Israel for the period of this study, this verified official page was created in June 18, 2010.	302,420
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The analysis has been conducted for each page separately. The researcher retrieved the related posts and the results are shown in detail in the Annex.

Following are an overall analysis for the chosen Palestinian Facebook pages:

I. Language:

Four out of eight pages used Arabic as their main language to publish their posts and they are (اسرائيل تتكلم العربية، افخاي ادرعي، المنسق، رئيس الوزراء الاسرائيلي)) while two used Hebrew as their main language and they are (Netanyahu and Reuven Rivlin), and other two used English to share their posts and these are (Prime Minister of Israel and Israel ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The numbers are shown below:

Table 5.15 Languages used by each page.

No.	Facebook pages	Arabic	Hebrew	English	Combination (Arabic & Hebrew)	Others(includes multiple languages)
1.	Netanyahu		1905	39	2	335
2.	اسرائيل تتكلم العربية	2300				
3.	افخاي ادرعي	2278				

4.	Prime minister of Israel	1		1931		7
5.	Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs		1	2037		
6.	المنسق	2283				
7.	رئيس الوزراء الاسرائيلي	1853		14		1
8.	Reuven Rivlin		1387	2		121

II. Media Type:

The researcher analysed the media type that were used by each page and the percentages of these types regarding to the number of the shared post, it is noted that 7 out of 8 pages has shared more than 80% of their posts containing either photos or video and one 70% as shown below, the following figure shows the percent of photos and videos that were shared by each page.

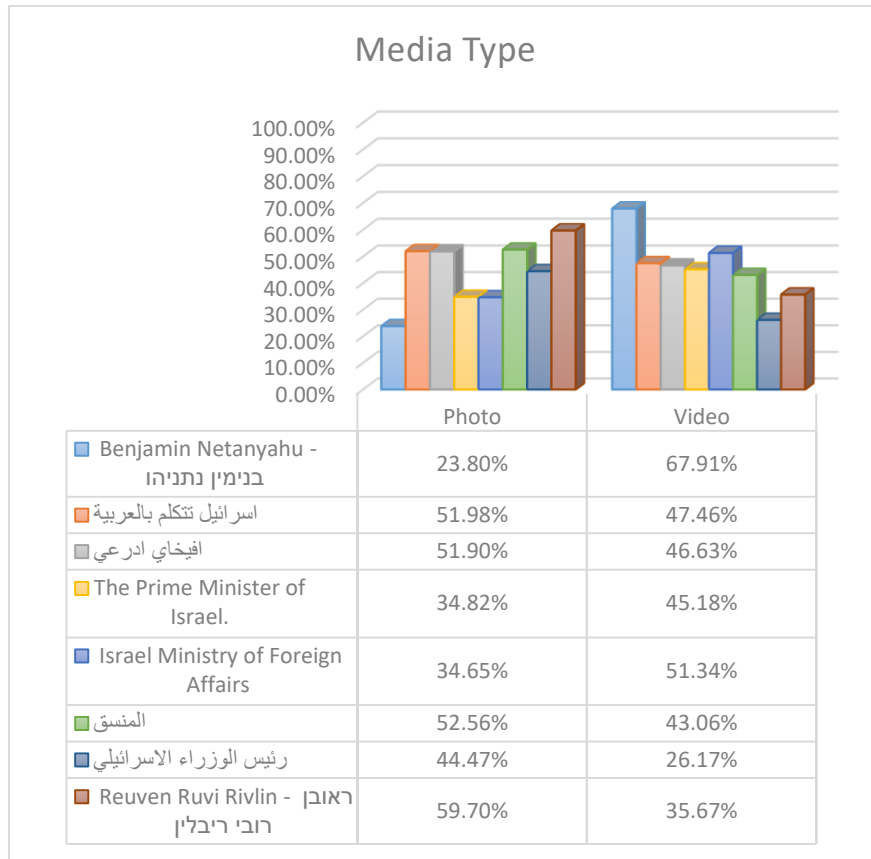


Figure 5.17 Media type used by Israeli Facebook pages

III. Interaction:

Moving to the Interaction of the people with the shared posts, the researcher has studied the number of likes, comments and shares for the posts within the previously defined criteria, and the following was found:

A. Likes per each post:

The number of the likes on the shared posts of the Israeli pages varied between the three rates, 99.86 % of (رئيس الوزراء الإسرائيلي) has gotten low rate of likes, while Netanyahu Page's posts has gotten 95.58% likes in the high rate, the following figure shows specifically the rates of likes for all pages.

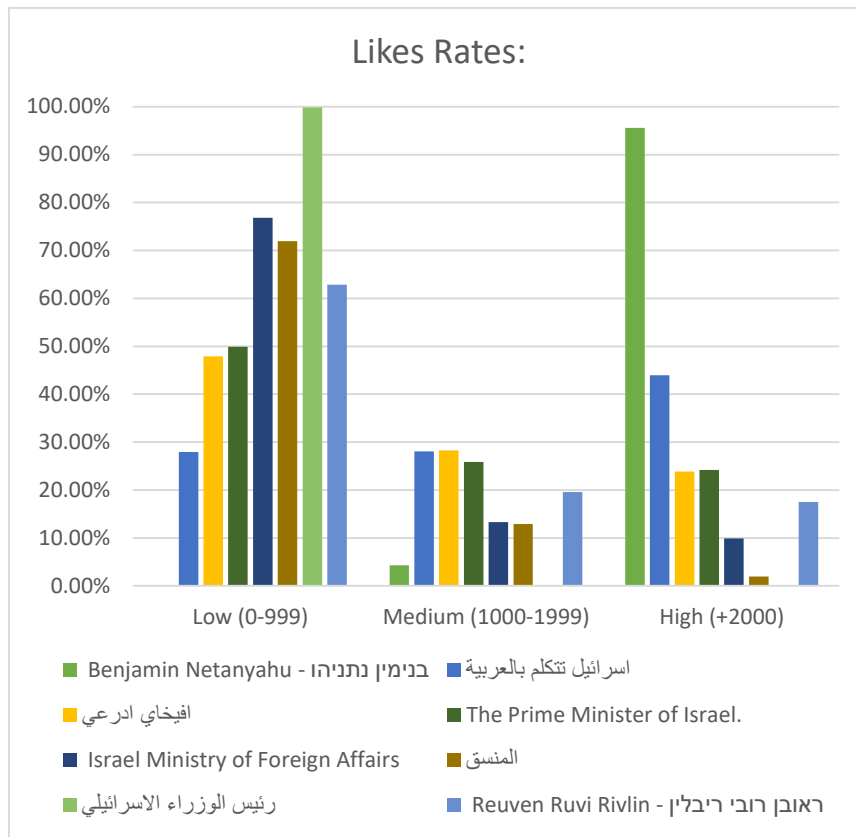


Figure 5.18 Likes Rates- Israeli Facebook pages-

B. Comments on the shared posts:

Five of eight Israeli pages have received more than 93% low rate comments on their posts, the figure below shows the rates of comments on the posts for each page.

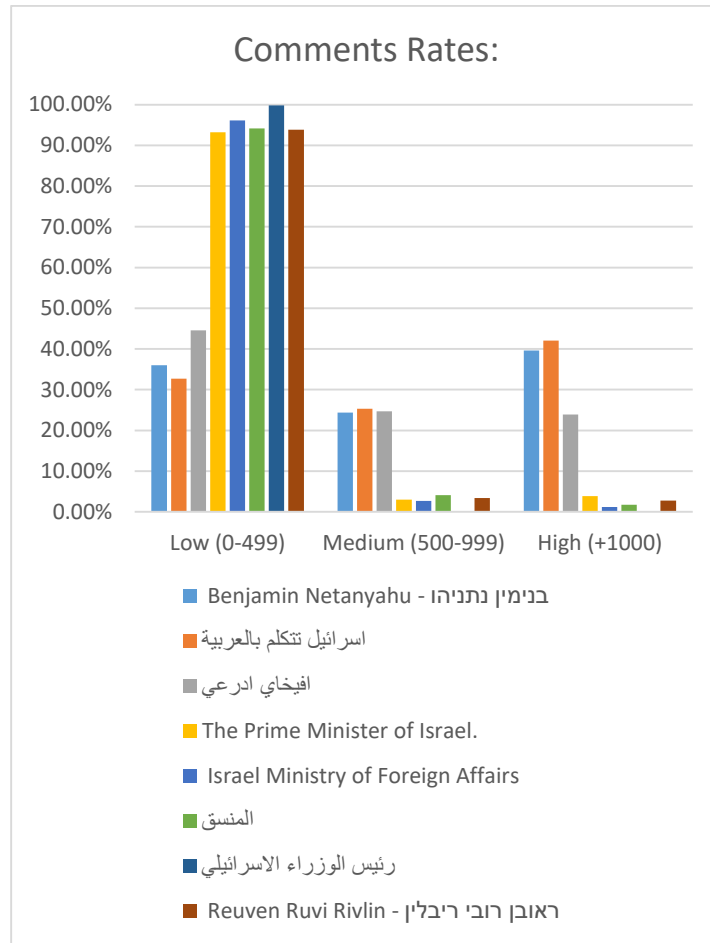


Figure 5.19 Comments Rates- Israeli Facebook pages-

C. The number of shares for the posts:

The third type of people interaction is sharing the posts; the people interacted differently in sharing the posts, four pages have their posts shared more than 50% in the low rate category and another four have exceeded 100 shares of the posts (high rates), the shares as shown below:

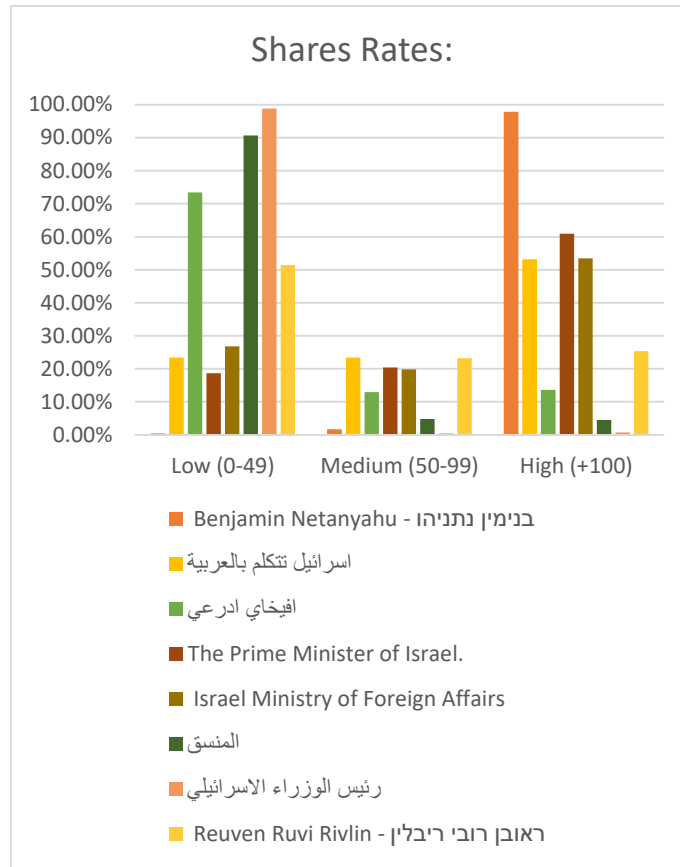


Figure 5.20 Shares Rates- Israeli Facebook pages-

Now, moving to the overall analysis for the frequency of the Israeli keywords in the Facebook study sample and the number of posts that contains hashtags in these pages.

The following table represent each keyword and the frequency of using these keywords of it in each page, in addition to the overall repetition for the same word.

The table below represents each keyword and the frequency of using these keywords it in each account, in addition to the overall repetition for the same word.

The researcher noticed that the word (اسرائيل) was the most repeated word in the post of the chosen pages, it was used 3655 times in the sample, while the keywords that are related to the strategic plan were not used at all except the words (digital), these words are (socioeconomic Assessment, strategic plan and the Hebrew term of

The following graph represent the above table.

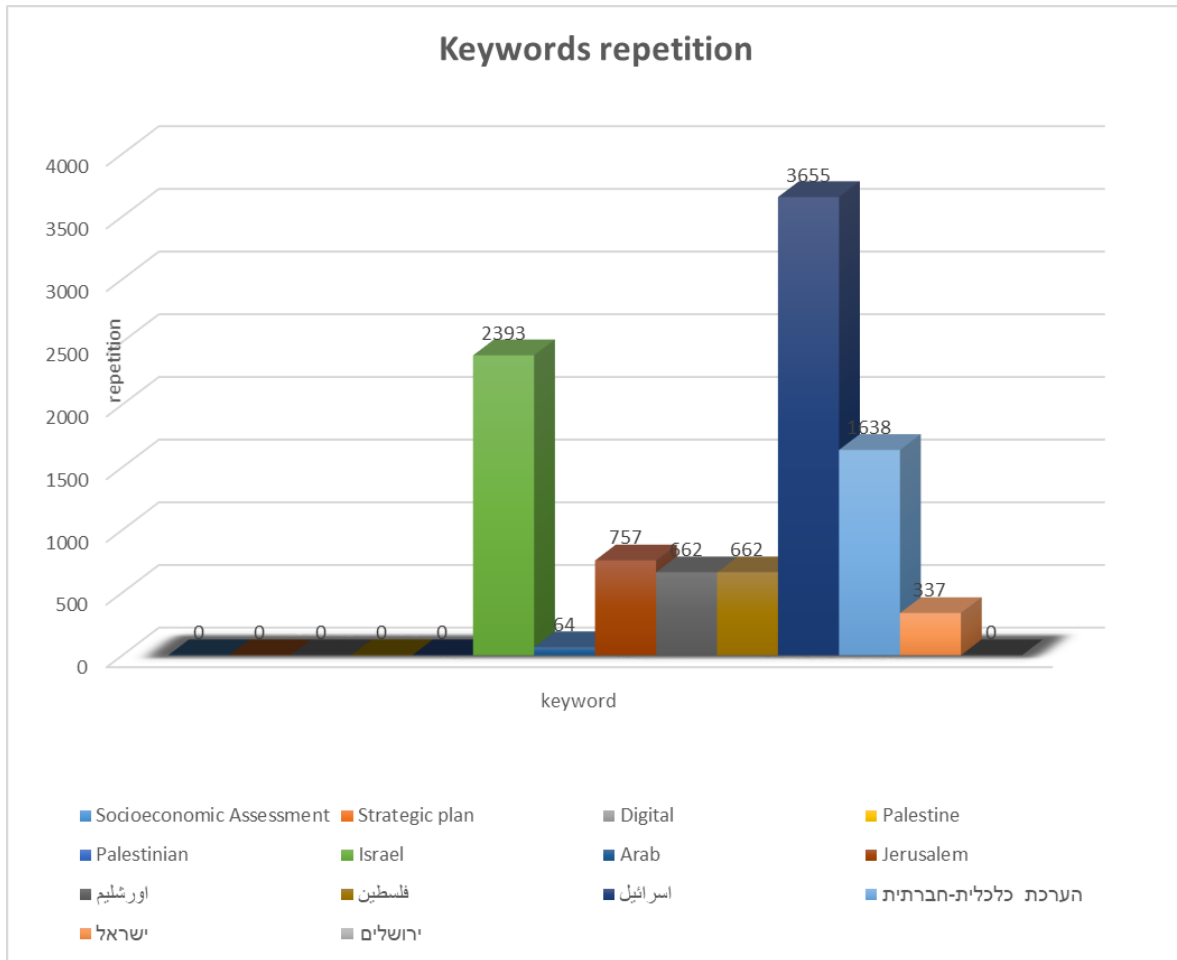


Figure 5.21 Keywords Frequency in Israeli Facebook pages

Then the researcher has calculated the number of posts that contain hashtags, it has been found that the Page of المنسق is the most page that has used hashtags with a sum of 2056 posts, then افياخي ادوعي with 2052. Finally, Benjamin Netanyahu page is the least page that used hashtags with only 10 posts containing hashtags; the following table and graph represent more details.

Table 5.17 Number of posts that contains Hashtags

Account	Number of posts that contains Hashtags
Benjamin Netanyahu - בנימין נתניהו	10
تتكلم بالعربية اسرائيل	47
ادري افياي	2052
The Prime Minister of Israel.	16
Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs	211
المنسق	2057
الوزراء الاسرائيلي رئيس	26
Reuven Ruv Rivlin - ראובן רובי ריבלין	71

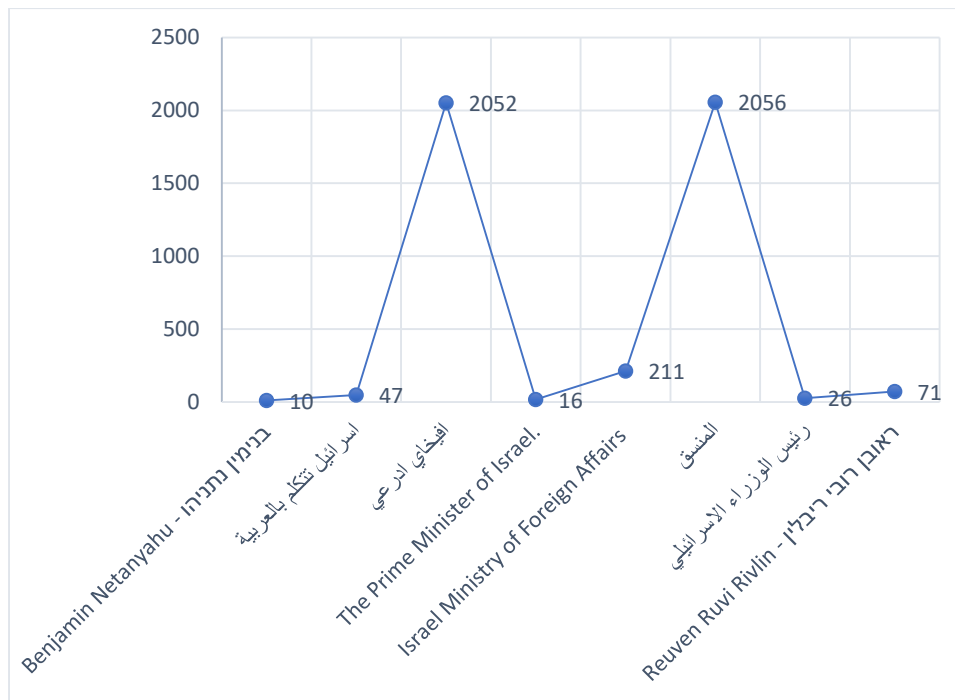


Figure 5.22 Number of posts that contains Hashtags

5.3.4 Israeli Twitter Accounts:

The researcher has chosen the following nine Israeli Twitter accounts that are directly related to the goal of the study, all the accounts are official and verified.

The following table summarized the name of the chosen accounts and number of followers for each.

Table 5.18 Israeli official Twitter accounts

No.	Account	Brief Introduction	Number of followers
1.	Benjamin Netanyahu	This is an official Twitter account of the Prime Minister of Israel, joined Twitter on October 2008, since then the account has tweeted 6,773 tweets.	1,837,947
2.	PM of Israel	This is an official Twitter account of the Prime Minister of Israel, joined Twitter on May 2010, since then the account has tweeted more than 12,800 tweets.	830,025
3.	Israel ישראל	This is an official Twitter account of The State of Israel's official twitter channel, managed by ministry of Foreign Affairs' Digital Diplomacy Team, joined Twitter on July 2009.	636,384
4.	إسرائيل بالعربية	This is an official Arabic Twitter account for the State of Israel, joined Twitter on January 2011,	347,679

		since then the account has tweeted more than 13,300 tweets.	
5.	افيخاي ادرعي	This is an official Twitter account of the head of the Arab media division of the Israel defense forces, joined Twitter on June 2011, since then the account has tweeted more than 17,700 tweets.	346,390
6.	Israel Foreign Ministry	This is the Official account of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, joined Twitter on October 2009, since then the account has tweeted more than 25,000 tweets.	246,599
7.	بنيامين نتنياهو	This is an official Twitter account of the Prime Minister of Israel, this account shared Arabic tweets, joined Twitter on December 2012, since then the account has tweeted 9,415 tweets.	226,724
8.	Reuven Rivlin	This is an official Twitter account of President of Israel, joined Twitter on November 2014, since then the account has tweeted 1,557 tweets.	127,768
9.	المنسق	This is an official Twitter account of the Israeli coordination of government activities in the Palestinian territories, joined Twitter on May 2016, since then	11,614

		the account has tweeted 6,946 tweets.	
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The analysis has been conducted for each account separately. The researcher retrieved the related tweets and the results are shown in more detail in the Annex, the following presents an overall for some issues.

Following are an overall analysis for the chosen Twitter accounts:

I. Language:

Four out of nine twitter accounts used English as a main language to tweet and they are (PM of Israel, Israel, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Reuven Rivilin), with more than 96% of their tweets in English. Four other accounts used Arabic as their main language and they are (بنيامين , افخاي ادري , اسرائيل بالعربية) (المنسق , نتياهو) with more than 98% of their tweets in Arabic.

Only one account publishes its tweets mainly in Hebrew, with 85% of its tweets with Hebrew and this account is Netanyahu's account.

The table below shows the numbers in details:

Table 5.19 Languages used by each account.

No.	Twitter Account	Arabic	English	Twitter Account	Others(French ,Persian, Russian, Spanish)
1.	Benjamin Netanyahu (@netanyahu)		2686	441	3
2.	PM of Israel	3	2	3059	2
3.	Israel ישראל	1		2865	

4.	إسرائيل بالعربية	3057	5	5	
5.	افيخاي ادراعي	3066	2		3
6.	Israel Foreign Ministry		1	3066	6
7.	بنيامين نتניהو	3134		29	15
8.	Reuven Rivlin	10	1	1183	7
9	المنسق	3138			

II. Media Type:

The researcher analysed the media type that was used by each Twitter account and the percentages of them regarding to the number of the shared tweets, it is noted that five out of nine pages has shared more than 55% of their tweets containing photos, video or GIF, the twitter account (المنسق) was the most twitter account that shred media with 65.04 % photos, 10.83% videos. The following figure shows the percent of photos, videos and GIF that were shared by each account.

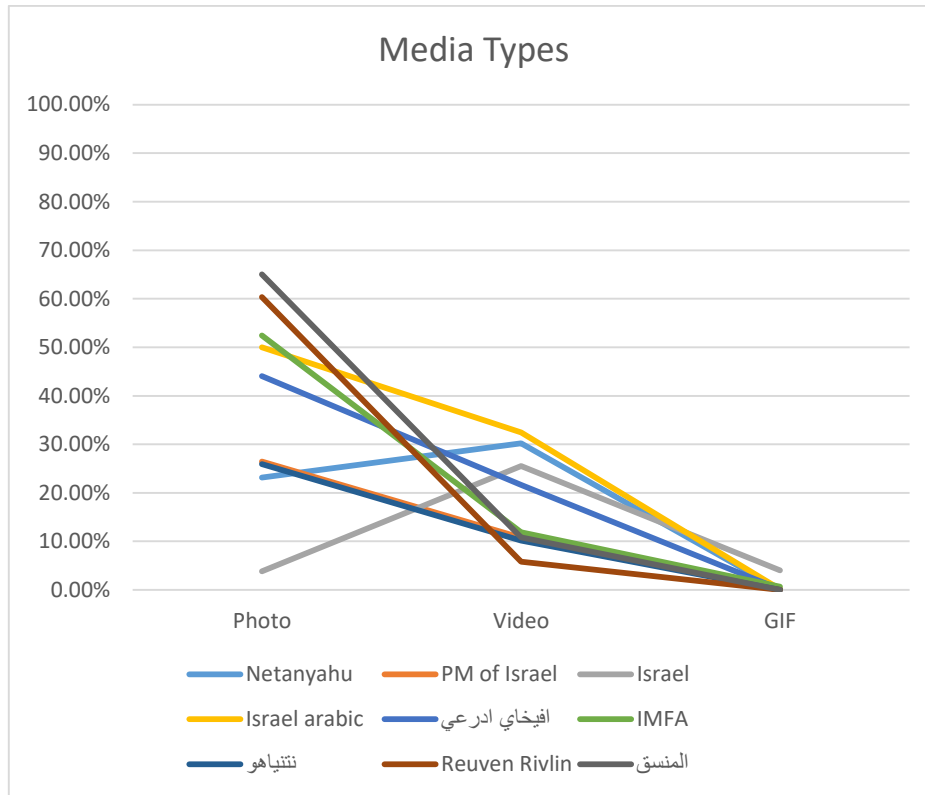


Figure 5.23 Media Type Used by Israeli Twitter Accounts

III. Tweets Type:

The types of tweets are divided into three categories, tweets, retweets and replies the percentage of these types in the Israeli accounts, most of the tweets for the selected accounts were either tweets or replies on others, one account was different this account is Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs that almost 84% of its tweets were retweeted.

The figure below shows more details:

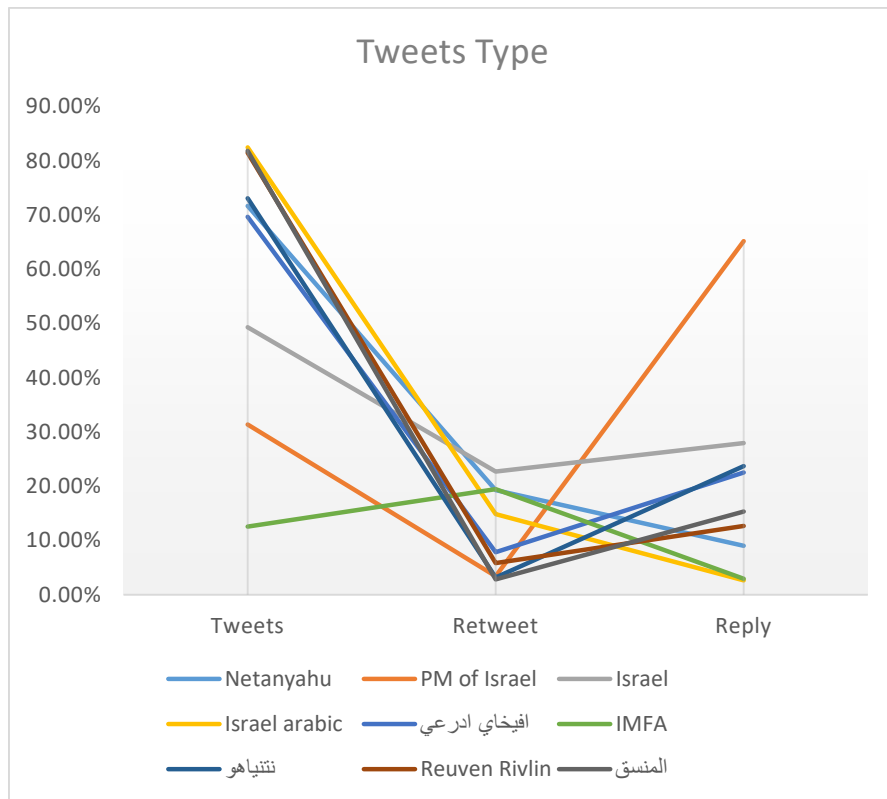


Figure 5.24 Tweets Type by Israeli Twitter accounts

IV. Interaction:

Moving to the Interaction of the people with the shared tweets, the researcher has studied the number of likes (formerly known as favourites), and the number of shares, known as retweets:

A. favourites:

The number of favourites for the tweeted posts was in the low rate for all the Israeli accounts, if we look at the following figure, we are going to find that more than 90% of the tweets in seven accounts out of nine the Israeli accounts has not exceeded 400 favourites. On the other hand, it is also obvious that more than 800 persons have favoured the 68% of the tweets shared by Netanyahu accounts.

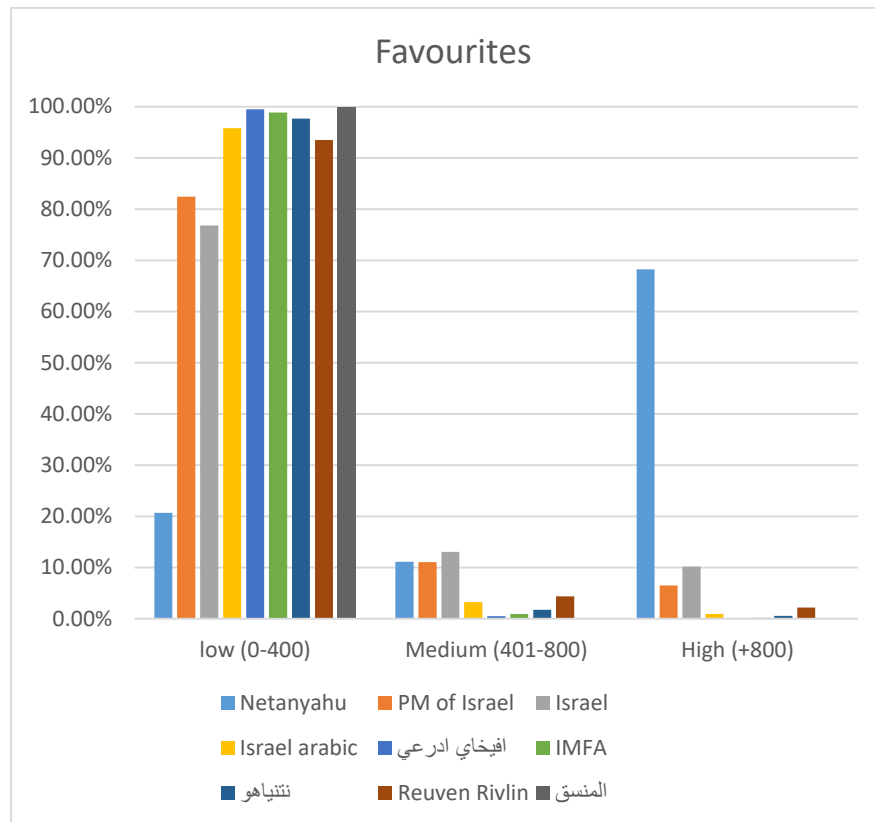


Figure 5.25 Favourites rates- Israeli Twitter accounts-

B. Retweets:

In twitter, the process of sharing a tweet is called retweet, the number of the retweeted tweets by other in the Israeli accounts, it has been noticed that all the Israeli accounts that were reviewed were retweeted less than 300 times, which is considered low according to the predefined criteria, the figure below shows that 92% of the tweets for eight of the pages were retweeted low, while 72% of Netanyahu's tweets were retweeted low.

The figure below shows the percentages for each account:

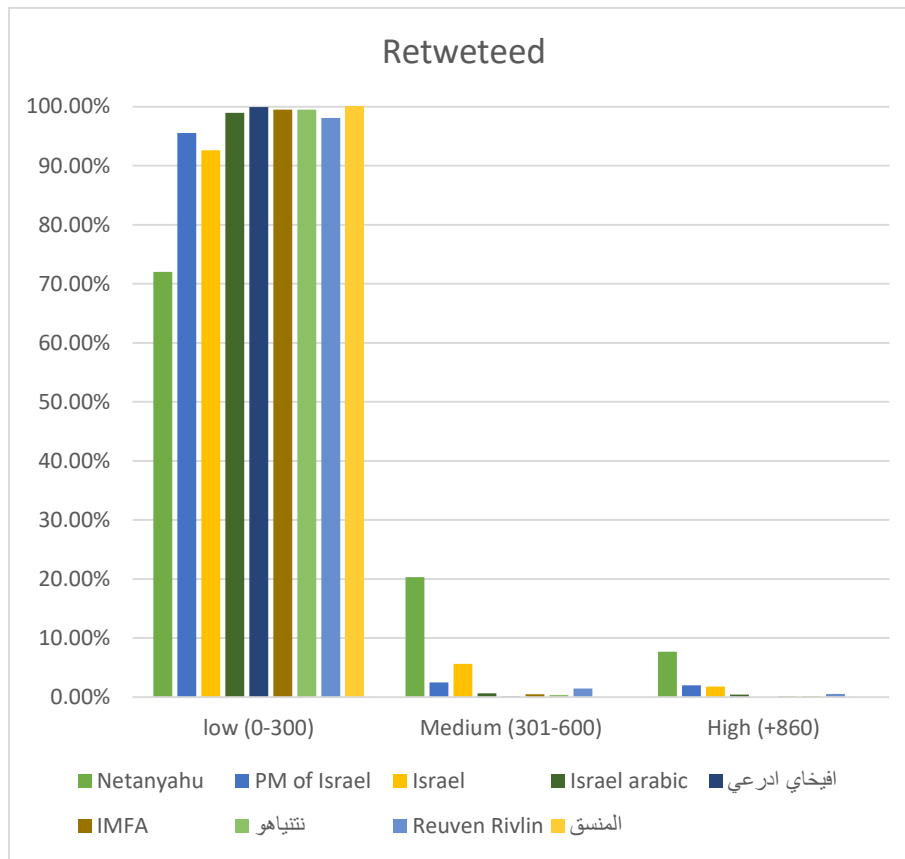


Figure 5.26 Rate of Retweeted Tweets- Israeli Twitter accounts-

Now; similar to Facebook analysis, an overall analysis for the frequency of the Israeli keywords in the Twitter study sample accounts and the number of Hashtags used by these accounts.

The table below represents each keyword and the frequency of using these keywords in each account, in addition to the overall repetition for the same word.

The researcher noticed that the word (Israel) was used 5840 times in the sample, while the keyword (socioeconomic Assessment) was not used at all; the other three keywords that are directly related to the Israeli socioeconomic plan were not repeated very much; the keyword (strategic plan) was used once, while

פלשתינה	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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The following graph represents the above table.

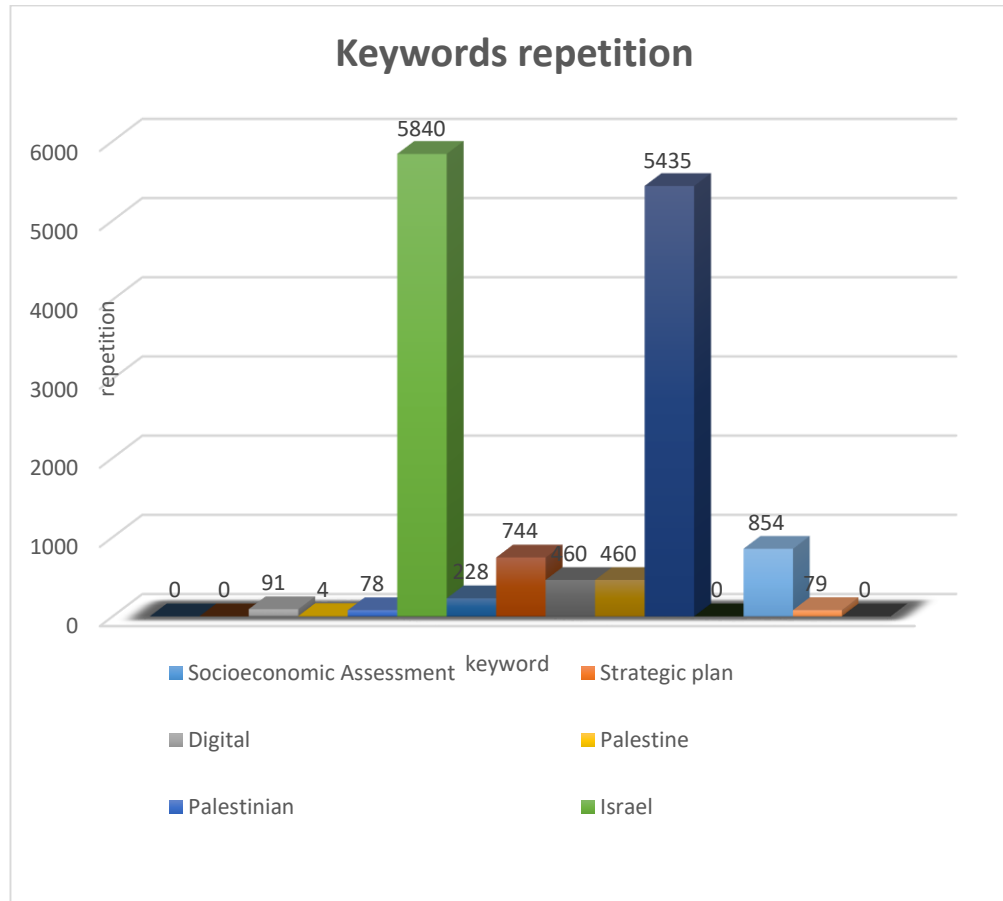


Figure 5.27 Keywords frequency in Israeli twitter accounts

The researcher has calculated the number of Hashtags used by each account, it has been found that the four out of the nine accounts used more than 1000 hashtags, these accounts are (المنسق with 7567 hashtags, افياخي ادري with 6889 hashtags, Israel with 4260 hashtags and اسرائيل بالعربية with 1735 hashtags) it is important to mention that three out of these four account are targeted to the Arabic audience, the following table and graph represent more details.

Table 5.21 Number of Used Hashtags

Account	Number of Hashtags
Netanyahu	60
PM of Israel	221
Israel	4260
اسرائيل بالعربية	1735
افياخي ادري	6889
Israel Foregin Ministry	444
نتنياهو	280
Reuven Rivilin	871
المنسق	7567



Figure 5.28 Number of Used Hashtags

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

Through this research, the researcher attempted to find out how was the social media used to serve the national strategic goals on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides; this comparative analysis was done on Facebook and Twitter platforms. Before proceeding to the conclusion and before answering the research questions and hypothesis; it is important to mention the following observed outcomes.

As for the Palestinian side; out of the eight Facebook pages, five used Arabic as their main language, two used English and one shared all its posts in both English and Arabic. While in the nine Twitter accounts; seven of them shared English tweets, one shared Arabic tweets and the last one shared almost half of its tweets in Arabic and the rest in English.

Moving to the media Type; Palestinian Facebook pages used media (photos and videos) in the shared post with good rates; however, it is recommended that they use more media and focus more on videos especially on English videos or at least translate these videos to English. As for the Twitter accounts, we noticed that the use of media is weak, video and GIFs should be used more also English videos should be published as much as it is possible. It is also noticed that most of the tweets are original tweets and the number of replies tweets is still minor.

After reviewing the followers' interaction, most of the chosen Palestinian Facebook posts received low interaction rate from the followers, the interaction includes the number of likes, comments and shares. The Twitter accounts are also the same; they also received low rates in the number of retweets and the number of favorites.

Finally; after studying the frequency of the chosen keywords, it was found that the Arabic term of Palestine "فلسطين" was the most repeated word in the Palestinian Facebook Pages and the related terms to the National Policy Agenda were only used 37 times since 2017 by the eight pages. While the term Israel was the most used term by the Palestinian Twitter accounts and the related terms to the National Policy Agenda were only used 14 times since 2017 by the nine accounts.

It is also important to reveal that the maximum number of the Facebook posts that contain Hashtags was only 63 hashtags shared by Dr. Laila Ghannam's page, and 2336 hashtags by the Twitter accounts shared by State of Palestine Twitter account.

As for the Israeli side; out of the eight Facebook pages, four used Arabic as their main language, two used English and the remaining two used Hebrew as their main languages for posting. While in the nine Twitter accounts; four of them shared English tweets, four shared Arabic tweets and the last one shared Hebrew tweets.

Moving to the media Type; Israeli Facebook pages used media (photos and videos) in the shared post with excellent rates; as for the Twitter accounts, we noticed that the use of media is good, it is also noted that most of the tweets are original tweets.

We can also note that most of the videos are translated to other languages especially if they are originally in Hebrew.

After reviewing the followers' interaction on the Israeli Facebook posts, the interaction of the followers varies between the three rates (low, medium, high), the interactions include the number of likes, comments and shares. The Twitter accounts are also the

same; they also vary between the three rates, the interactions include: retweets and the number of favorites.

Finally; after studying the frequency of the chosen keywords, it was found that the Arabic term of Israel "اسرائيل" was the most repeated word in the Israeli Facebook Pages and the related terms to the socioeconomic assessment and digital were only used 22 times since 2017 by the eight pages. And the term Israel was the most used term by the Israeli Twitter accounts and the related terms to the socioeconomic assessment and digital were used 113 times since 2017 by the nine accounts.

It is also important to reveal that the maximum number of the Facebook posts that contains Hashtags was only 2057 hashtags shared by "المنسق" page, and 6889 hashtags by the Twitter accounts shared by "افياخي ادري" Twitter account.

After this quick summary and review of the research results, we can now answer questions and discuss the hypothesis as well. As for the research question:

1) How do Palestinian government benefit from social media platforms?

Palestinian government has shifted towards using social media to interact with citizens, many official verified pages and accounts were created for different governmental institutions and ministries to share and interact with public, but it was noted that Palestinians use Facebook more than Twitter.

They mainly share news related to their work by these tools. Palestinians use media especially photos, but still not in the best way, they could.

2) How do Palestinian government benefit from social media platforms?

Israeli government has shifted towards using social media to interact with public, many official verified pages and accounts were created for governmental institutions and ministries to share and interact with public; they focus on both platforms Facebook and Twitter.

Israelis are benefiting from social media's capabilities, they use polls, they also use media very much, they also have some initiatives in using some features, for example, Netanyahu was the first politician to use the live broadcast on Facebook to send greetings to Christians around the world from Jerusalem.

3) How can governments use social media as a strategic tool to serve their goals?

Governments can use social media in various ways, most of social media features are free and available for people, which will ease the process of promoting governmental plans. This can be done by publishing the plan and the needed goals to the public; it can also be done by interacting with citizens and if there are goals that are related with digitalization, using social media is going to be one sort of achieving that goal.

It is important to add that the process of interacting continuously with public in addition to unify the posts in different platforms, pages and account will help achieving this.

4) How do Palestinians use social media in promoting national policy Agenda?

Palestinians were not strategic in utilizing these tools in serving the national goals, it has been noticed that the words that are related to the national policy agenda were not mentioned very much. Moreover, the posts that were published by different pages were not unified most of the times except few times when there is a huge

Palestinian event, but the rest of posts were directly related to the news of the related ministry/ person.

5) How do Israelis use social media in promoting socio economic plan?

Israeli were not strategic too in utilizing these tools in serving their national goals, it has been noticed that the words that are related to the socioeconomic were not mentioned very much. But the difference between Palestinians and Israelis social media's post that the news published unified most of the time which help them in different area (serving the Israeli narrative).

6) How do Palestinian's social media accounts interact with public?

All the official pages and accounts use either Arabic or English to share posts, Palestinians are not benefiting from social media's capabilities as they could do. They also have not use social media to promote for the National Policy Agenda.

7) How do Israeli's social media accounts interact with public?

They have pages and accounts with different languages in order to communicate with different audiences; they also have use social media to promote for their narrative, but still they have not use social media in a way to serve their socioeconomic goals.

The Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Social media is a strategic tool that was used properly to achieve Palestinian national agenda

Social media is a strategic tool but it was not used properly by the Palestinians to achieve the national agenda.

Hypothesis 2: Social media users prefer following verified pages/ accounts for politicians so they can get reliable news from them.

Yes, because it was noticed that the number of followers for the verified pages/ accounts is huge.

Hypothesis 3: social media is a strategic tool that was used properly to achieve Israeli strategic goals and deliver their views and messages to the world.

Social media is a strategic tool but it was not used properly by the Israelis to achieve their national strategic goals, however, it was used properly to deliver their views and messages to the world and to Arab societies.

Hypothesis 4: Israeli verified social media pages/accounts that offer Arabic feeds have successfully influenced the Palestinians and encouraged them to interact and follow them.

Yes, Israeli verified social media pages/accounts that offer Arabic feeds have successfully influenced the Palestinian and encouraged them to interact and follow them.

The researcher concludes that Palestinians focus more on their Facebook pages rather than their Twitter accounts, Palestinians do not have many accounts on Twitter and the available accounts are not used in their optimum way. It was noted that there are many journalists who use social media in a very strong and professional way, but they represent themselves and do not represent the government while this research aims to study the usage of social media by government.

In addition, Palestinian focus on using Arabic in publishing their post and tweets more than using English, it also noticed that none of the Palestinian official accounts or pages

has published posts in Hebrew to reach Israeli Audience, while the tweets of Israeli officials are published in English, Arabic and Hebrew.

It is also concluded that Palestinian official pages/ accounts should publish more media in their posts / tweets and should also work more on publicizing these pages and accounts more in order to spread their posts to a wider range of people.

On the other Hand, a lot of official Israeli account and pages, use media in a very good way, also most of the videos are translated to English or Arabic when they are originally in Hebrew. They also use Twitter more than Palestinians do. Palestinians also do not use hashtags as much as Israeli do.

This research also shows that social media is a strategic and powerful tool since it helped in making major changes with long term effects such as what happened in the (Arab Spring uprisings), in addition to its capabilities to reach a huge number of people. Therefore, it is important for Palestinians to utilize social media in the best available ways.

Both of the Palestinians and the Israelis did not benefit from the capabilities of the social media platforms in serving their national goals that where mentioned in the relted agendas/ plans, but it is very obvious that Israeli are using social media in a way that help them to publish their perspective and their story in different languages. While Palestinians are still not using these powerful tools in the best way, they can in order to show the world the Israeli actions against Palestinian and to share their part of the story to defense the Palestinian cause.

Moving to the recommendations, the researcher recommends that the Palestinians should start using Twitter more since it is widely known as a political platform.

Therefore, if Palestinians want to defend their story, they should start using Twitter more.

Moreover, it is important to start publishing more English posts in Facebook and Twitter, also it is really needed to create more English official Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. It is also crucial to find a way to deal with the Israeli pages and accounts that reflecting a wrong image about Palestinians.

It is also recommended to start sharing more media specially info graphics and video graphics in the Palestinian pages and accounts since they can help in delivering the needed messages in an easier way. It is also recommended that Palestinians should start translating videos or publish English videos in their media.

The last recommendation for both sides, Palestinians and Israelis, social media is a great available powerful tool, it can be used strategically in many different ways specially in serving governments in achieving their national goals but none of both sides has really utilize this tool in its optimum way for achieving these goals.

Although Israelis have used different social media platforms in an excellent way to interact with people all around the world (digital diplomacy) and deliver their own message regarding the Palestinian –Israeli conflict, by creating multi-languages accounts and pages and by hiring social media specialist in order to improve their image in front of the world and especially the Arab world . Therefore, it is really recommended that Palestinians learn from the Israeli experience in this field.

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Interviews:

- Online interview with Ahmad Barakat, a consultant and expert in marketing and social media (2022,May 14)
- Phone Interview with Mr Ammar Jumhour, a Palestinian journalist specializing in media management and strategic communication.(2020,July 22)
- online interview with Mr. Iyad Al-refaie, an expert in social media and the director of Sada Social Center, which specializes in protecting Palestinian narratives on social media.(2022,May 10)
- Personal interview with Dr. Jihad Al-Aysa, Assistant professor in Public Administration and Public Policy at Birzeit University.(2020,February 27)
- Personal interview with Mr. Mahmoud Attaya, Director General of policy and reform at the prime minister office. (2020,February 27)
- Personal interview with Dr. Nasser Al-Laham, Editor in chief of MAAN agency.(2020,June 16)
- Personal interview with Dr. Saleh Abdel-Jawad, Professor at Birzet University.(2020,February 26)

الملخص:

تلعب وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي دوراً رئيسياً وهاماً في نشر المعلومات والأخبار المختلفة، فهي تُستخدم على نطاق واسع في مختلف أنحاء العالم، وقد بدأت تحل بشكل تدريجي مكان وسائل الإعلام التقليدية في نقل الأخبار. بناء عليه تم العمل على اعداد هذا الدراسة لبحث دور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في خدمة الأهداف الوطنية الاستراتيجية عند الجانبين الفلسطيني والإسرائيلي.

اعتمد هذا البحث على إجراء مقابلات مع مجموعة من الخبراء في مجال التخطيط الاستراتيجي الفلسطيني والإسرائيلي، وخبراء في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، وأيضاً اعتمد على تحليل بعض البيانات الموجودة على منصتي فيسبوك وتويتر.

تم استخدام منهجيتي البحث الكمية والنوعية للوصول إلى النتائج المرجوة، وقد تبين أن كلا من الجانبين الفلسطيني والإسرائيلي لم يقوموا بتوظيف وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بالشكل الأمثل لخدمة أهدافهم الوطنية، لكن تبين أن الإسرائيليين يستخدمون وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بطرق أفضل من الفلسطينيين؛ وأيضاً يستخدمون المنصة السياسية توتير بشكل أفضل وأكثر كفاءة من الفلسطينيين، إضافة إلى استخدامهم العديد من الصفحات والحسابات الرسمية الموثقة والناطقة باللغة العربية لمشاركة روايتهم وبهدف ايصالها للجمهور العربي.

يؤكد هذا البحث على ضرورة قيام الفلسطينيين باستغلال واستخدام هذه الأداة القوية والمتاحة لمشاركة الرواية الفلسطينية بشكل أفضل مما يساهم في الدفاع عن القضية الفلسطينية بطريقة بسيطة للغاية، إضافة إلى ضرورة تواجد كوادر مؤهلين وكفؤين في مجال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والدبلوماسية الرقمية في كافة الوزارات الفلسطينية من أجل تعزيز استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بالشكل الأمثل ومن أجل تحقيق أقصى استفادة ممكنة.