



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

**Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Peace Education, in the
current Social Studies textbooks in the Palestinian
Education System and its contribution to concepts of
peacebuilding**

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Thesis Approval

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Declaration

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree qualification.

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LAILA DUAIIBES


Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, with their love and support I am who I am today.

My late father, Sameer, whom I know is looking over me so ever proud.

My beautiful inspiring mother, Alice without her I would not have done this work.

I dedicate it for all children around the world, especially Palestinian children. For them to have the love, safety, and space to access equitable inclusive and meaningful education.

For my nephews and nieces for giving me so much love, inspiration, and growth.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the social studies textbooks of the Ministry of Education in Palestine for the portrayal of the concepts of conflict, conflict resolution and peace education. It aims at analyzing the way that the current education system presents narratives, and content supporting the understanding of conflict/s, history, the Palestinian conflict narratives, and the view of the world, conflicts around it, and ultimately how the Palestinian students navigate conflicts and understand peacebuilding. Moreover, the thesis explores the existence or absence of appropriate modalities of conflict resolution and peace education in the curriculum. Using a mixed qualitative methodology, the researcher conducted a content analysis approach on 23 social studies textbooks taught to grades one to the twelfth in the Ministry's schools in the West Bank. The researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with experts and education professionals who have been involved in the process of the development of the curriculum or have expertise in conflict resolution and education, in addition to using a reference to conflict and conflict resolution theories. The research concluded that the textbooks of social studies reinforced a Palestinian political identity with strong nationalist principles and values as to what Palestine is to the Palestinian child, ultimately seeking to establish the same identity for the Palestinian people. The textbooks portray conflict under the framework of wars with no direct definition and presentation of conflict as a broader concept. The textbooks passively passed conflict through the historicity and the narrative of historic events, more predominantly wars pertaining to Palestine, the Arab and Muslim world, and the world in general. The textbooks did not proactively, or intentionally explain or presented conflict; it was just passed indirectly or delivered through the subtext and the underlying narrativity of the topics and lessons at hand. The textbooks approached the Palestinian conflict in an integrative manner to represent a national Palestinian perspective to an extension of settler colonialism represented by the Zionist occupation. Conflict resolution exists in a limited way through integrated and

limited components responding to some conflict resolution modalities mostly imbedded as a comparison of the peaceful Islamic approaches to conflict resolution or a window to social respect, tolerance, and forgiveness of the other. The main abundant conflict resolution or education was the reference to international law, International Humanitarian law and international conventions as well as Human rights. Civic education was also a major component. Peace education does not exist in the textbooks, nor is the use of the term peace, thus not quite providing a clear understanding of peacebuilding to students. Nonetheless, the textbooks provide a remarkable example of attempting to decolonize the curriculum and show the ability to challenge the ongoing incitements, attacks, and conditional withheld funding to the Palestinian education system. The study of the social studies textbooks is limited compared to possible wider research parameters which could have included all other subjects where conflict, and conflict resolutions modalities could be embedded. In addition, results only relate to the textbooks being taught whereas a wider work could have expanded the understanding through analyzing the guidebooks to the textbooks or through further interviews with social studies expert supervisors with the Ministry of education. The research is only limited to what is taught in the West Bank as East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip have different contexts in which those textbooks are presented.

Table of contents

Chapter I: Introduction and rationale	1
I.I Introduction	1
I.II Research problem, questions, and hypotheses	5
I.II.I Research Problem	5
I.II.II Research Significance and Justifications	7
I.II.III Research Objectives	8
I.II.IV Research Questions and Hypotheses	8
I.III Research methodology and methods	9
I.III.I Research Methodology	9
Chapter II: Theoretical Framework	12
II.I Violence and the relationship between conflict and education	12
II.II Conflict Resolution	17
II.III Conflict Resolution curricula	19
II.IV The conflict pyramid in conflict resolution	21
II.V Conflict Resolution Education	23
II.VI Peace Education	26
II.VII Education in Palestine and the colonized curriculum	28

II.VIII Literature review of curricula and the insertion of conflict resolution and peace education in education systems	39
Chapter III: Data collection and results	47
III.I Data collection and analysis	47
III.I.I Content analysis	47
III.I.II Semi-structured interviews	48
III.I.III Theories of conflict	48
III.II Results	48
III.II.I First to fourth grade	49
III.II.II Fifth to Ninth Grade	53
III.II.III Tenth to Twelfth Grade	62
Chapter IV: Discussion and conclusion	67
IV.I Conflict and war	70
IV.II Conflict resolution and conflict resolution education	75
IV.III Conclusion	79
IV.IV Study Parameters	83
References and Bibliography	84
Annex I List of Social Studies Textbooks analyzed in this thesis	91

Annex II Semi Structured Interviews questions	92
Abstract (Arabic)	93

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Salmi forms of violence in the context of education	22
Figure 2. Negative and Positive conflict in Education, Davies (2006)	25
Figure 3. Cohen's conflict pyramid, in Hakvoort,2010	29

Chapter I: Introduction and rationale

I.I Introduction

This thesis aims to expand research on the Palestinian curricula, more specifically the social studies textbooks and explore if they reflect and/or portray conflict, conflict resolution and peace education. The research is set out to understand how the social studies textbooks present the concept of conflict, concepts, and basics of conflict resolution and/or peace education. The social studies textbooks in the Palestinian curricula are used to provide knowledge, skills and concepts of social and political life, global citizenship, history, geography, and civic education all in one. Therefore, exploring such textbooks should give an idea on how all the above is presented, defined, built and connected. More importantly, how its portrayal shapes the understanding of conflict and whether it offers, essentially in its structure and philosophy first and content second, some ways of conflict resolution rationale subsequently offer a positive peace building model. The research presents first how conflict can be defined, how violence and conflict can be connected to education, then an introduction to conflict resolution, conflict resolution education and peace education. For that to well sit with the proposed research questions, the research explains the context and undergoing dynamics that shaped the current Palestinian curricula through the history of its inception, until the latest reform and presentation of curricula. This includes introducing important questions of peace to Palestinians and the attempts to decolonize a colonized education system. This is also done through references to theories on conflict and education. The research then analyzes the textbooks and offers an understanding of the interconnectedness between grades and threads and timelines of historic representation and narrative in those textbooks.

Palestinians consider education an integral part of their lives' milestones. It holds an importance to how they define themselves and of which they take pride whether through

academic degrees, professional achievements, and intellectual status. According to UNESCO, the illiteracy rate among the Palestinian population 15 years old and above has reached 2.3%, dropping from 13.9% (1997-2021) and placing second after Jordan amongst 11 other Arab countries in 2018 (PCBS, 2022). In an occupied land with a long history of colonization, Palestinians view education as a pillar of resistance and a chance to a good life. Unfortunately, this is not as simple as it may look. The education conditions in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip are worsening by the day. This includes schools' closures by the Israeli forces, the killing and detention of school students and teachers, blockades, demolition orders for schools in Area C, harassment, and direct attacks from Israeli soldiers and or illegal settlers to Palestinians on their way to and back from schools. Last year, 2022 was a bloody year where around 230 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli forces including 36 children. The Institute for Middle East Understanding, a non-profit non-governmental NGO, stated that this year Palestinian children began to carry goodbye notes in their pockets when going to school in case they were killed by the Israeli forces (IMEU, 2023). Last year, Rayyan, a 7-year-old second grader from South Bethlehem died of literal fear while being chased by Israeli forces around school in Takou' south of Bethlehem. With such a challenging environment, the importance of education for the Palestinian population must be acknowledged. One also needs to wonder on the meaning of education under occupation and how it might influence or be influenced by conflict and efforts of conflict resolution.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) described education as “a building block of human development” (2005, p.159), where education assumes an important role in providing an essential foundation of development to children and young adults. As with many things, which can be used or abused during conflict and war, education has become a tool, whether political, economic or social during conflicts. If we take formal education as an example, Lynn Davies reiterates how education could be a catalyst for war or a tool, which amplifies

inequalities and conflicts (Davies in Novelli et al, 2008, p.479). Davies (2005) showed that education systems can exacerbate economic patterns where marginalized people can be further marginalized, gender patterns where masculine or specific gender stereotyping can be reinforced, and reinforce existing ethnic, religion, tribal or nationalistic patterns. Hence, an argument made by Smith (2005, p.374), that education can be used as a “tool for ideological development”. In the particular cases of war, we can describe the education systems as holding one or both possibilities of being a ‘victim’ or a ‘perpetrator’ (Novelli et al, 2008, p., 478). This translates into an education system either a victim of occupation and colonization or a tool to reinforce a perpetrator’s mindset and agenda.

Conflict is a part of our lives as humans. Many scholars and theorists have struggled to define conflict. As Davies (2004) put forward many definitions, which some scholars discussed, she agreed on one specific definition of a dispute. As quoted in Davies, (2004), Coser (1956 and 1967) defined conflict as struggles of “values, or competition for status or power”, in which opponents would aim to “neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals (p. 8). Roche (1996) defined it as “the playing out in violent form of political relations” (cited in Davies, 2004). However, for the purpose of this thesis, and how it will approach conflict and conflict resolution, Davies’s choice of definition of Agerback to dispute resonates well:

“In the sense of dispute, conflict is of course universal in the politics of family, community and nation. In that sense, any dynamic human system is by nature a conflictive one, encompassing the play of opposing interests. The crux lies in how such conflict is managed. So long as the social and political processes provide channels for dialogue, participation and negotiation, conflict plays a constructive role. Where such channels are blocked, and yet basic needs go unmet, then resentment and desperation

build up. The outcome is protest, repression and violence". (1996: 27, cited in Davies, 2004)

In a sense, it is about the dynamic of the human system where we, as humans, are taught or brought up to processes, skills, and strategies to navigate conflict in our lives. Some are reinforced as positive conflict – those that can reach a positive resolution or become an unresolved dispute or conflict, which can build up to broken relationships, behaviors, wars or anything else. Conflict in the social and political sense has been shaping the culture and structures in which children grow up and shape them as people interacting with their surrounding human and non-human environments. How we educate our children is what helps them shape their understanding of conflicts, grasp their realities, and establish how they can navigate them. This can be within the bringing up of children in the family, by parents, in their communities, their society, the wider world, and formal and informal education systems. The focus of this thesis is on the formal education system, how it portrays conflict, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and may address personal, social, political, or universal conflicts. This may include specific conflict resolution and peace education, or other modalities and pedagogies embedded in the philosophy or objectives of the education system at hand.

Bringing the above into the Palestinian case, there is an urgent need to investigate how the curriculum and the education system have developed amidst wars, conflicts and how those variables shaped each other. To be more specific for the purpose of this thesis, there are questions regarding social studies, the one component in the curriculum designed and planned to offer students an understanding of the world, their own community including history, politics and views of the Palestinians of themselves and the world around them. The question of this thesis is: how do the social studies textbooks portray conflict, and does it offer students conflict

resolution and peace education, and how do they ultimately present concepts of peace and peacebuilding, if any?

As straightforward as these questions can be, they are also contentious. Palestine is a conflict-ridden country with a long history of consecutive occupations and a long legacy of colonization, which persists until this day with the longest military occupation in modern history. The Palestinian people, for generations, have been subjected to oppression, violence, wars, immigration, unstable livelihoods, lack of independence or any sort of freedom of movement. Having been colonized for so long, one might as well assume that Palestinians have forgotten what freedom and sovereignty mean, regardless of whether the terms of their meaning are shaped by the Western world or by what Palestinians would originally like to believe. Not to mention the cultural, religious and socioeconomic legacies carried out through all those historic events the Palestinian people have witnessed, adding to that the impact of world wars, globalization, regional instability, war on terrorism and the new changes the modern world brings.

I.II Research problem, questions, and hypotheses

I.II.I Research Problem

According to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education annual statistical book, by the school year of 2018/2019, there were over 1.2 million children attending school of first grade up to the twelfth grade in over 3,000 public, private and UNRWA schools in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and some parts of East Jerusalem (Ministry of Education, 2019). According to the Human Development Index for Palestine, the expected years of schooling are 12.8 years (UNDP, 2019). With a high completion rate of education of around 90%, a conclusion can be made that Palestinians are immersed in the Palestinian education system, making it one of the

most significant influences on their education and life skills for the first 16 to 18 years of their lives.

The research aims to delve into understanding how the Palestinian education system reflects important concepts in conflict resolution, peace education and peacebuilding. Many of these students experience their education within a complicated context: where some school students are subject to Israeli occupation forces terrorizing them while going to schools, with the possibility of being arrested or experiencing violence; where they might need to cross checkpoints to reach their schools; or encounter ad hoc or sometimes regular violence from illegal settler groups. Furthermore, living in an Arab Palestinian traditional society where inherited patriarchal and religious and cultural traditions underpin both the attitudes of society, and how it is reflected in the education system.

The political system with the impact and consequences of the occupation and the history of Palestine, the social patriarchal culture, the education system to include the Ministry of Education and its teams, the curriculum developed and used, as well as the capacities and the skills development of teachers and schools, are all pillars that shape the identity of young people in Palestine and influence their ability to navigate differences: most importantly the ability to identify and resolve conflicts whether internal or external to the person her/himself, or to Palestine, or the outside world. The education system, thus, shapes the view and practices of peacebuilding, conflict resolution and peace education. Therefore, whatever influences the system -structurally- will subsequently influence students' understanding. Hence, it is compelling to examine the system and investigate how the above, i.e the curriculum, the narrative behind it, the education pedagogy, and the modes of delivery, portray peacebuilding, conflict resolution and dialogue education. This thesis however will examine the curricula, more specifically the social studies textbooks.

I.II.II Research Significance and Justifications

The importance of this research lies in the lack of existing studies on this topic from the perspective of the Palestinian scholar or individual. The contentions of such a topic to approach whether through the curriculum itself or discussing it, perhaps hinder the understanding of what the curriculum offers and how it shapes young Palestinians' understanding and grasp of their personal or national conflicts. Investigating and analyzing what formal education offers is a first step to knowing where it stands, while identifying good pedagogies or narratives to reinforce the best outcome. Can something be done to help young students better understand conflict, resolve it, or use proper tools? Once this first step is accomplished, substantial suggestions could be offered. Multiple stakeholders can be involved, such as decision makers, young people themselves, educators and offer new opportunities for Palestinians to have a space to formulate judgment free and proper space to learn and build skills and knowledge of conflicts, conflict resolution and peace education.

The researcher is a Palestinian master student with a diverse background of academic and professional work. She undertook this research in an academic investigative manner with the intention of unfolding and understanding the matter at hand. After working for over 12 years in the education field and close to schools, teachers and students, the research questions arise from an actual thirst to understand what the curricula offers to Palestinian children to shape them amidst occupation. As a result, research is important on the professional and personal level. The researcher is currently an education expert in an international non-governmental organization. This research has a crucial importance for her ability to influence and recommend changes which could better present students with relevant education on conflict. Personal bias was acknowledged and mitigated by sticking to the rigor research tools; by presenting results,

offer possible explanations in reference to the theoretical background along with critical views on them.

I.II.III Research Objectives

The research aims to:

1. Examine and analyze the way that the current education system presents narratives, and content supporting the understanding of conflict/s; history, the Palestinian conflict narratives, our view of the world; conflicts around it; and ultimately how the Palestinian students navigate conflicts and understand peacebuilding.
2. Explore the existence or absence of appropriate modalities and narratives of conflict resolution and peace education in the curriculum.

I.II.IV Research Questions and Hypotheses

The questions that the research will be trying to answer are:

1. Do the Palestinian social studies textbooks present the concept of conflict, conflict resolution and peace education? If yes, how? How could this be improved? Or why not?
2. How does the representation and use of conflict resolution and peace education - if any - in the curriculum shape the understanding of peacebuilding for Palestinian students?

The research hypotheses are:

1. The Palestinian social studies textbooks have limited representation of conflict, conflict resolution and peace education.
2. The social studies curricula do not properly emphasize or instill the understanding of conflict and peacebuilding.

I.III Research methodology and methods

I.III.I Research Methodology

The research adopted a mix of qualitative research designs. Using the Palestinian education system as a case study on the use of conflict resolution and peace education and subsequently the understanding of peacebuilding.

“Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p35). Stake and Yin, cited in Creswell & Poth (2018), assert, “Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2012, 2014).” While Swanborn explained that cases can be located at the micro (persons and interpersonal relations), meso (organization, institution), or macro levels (communities, democracies, societies) and involve one actor or multiple actors (in Denzin & Lincoln (2018)). These theoretical premises confirm that approaching this research through a case study design best fits the work at hand.

The case study design was detailed using hypothesis and theory testing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This allowed the researcher to use the hypothesis, analyze the case inductively to gather evidence and explanations to explain and test theories on the conflict narrative, conflict resolution and peace education.

As Mahoney stated, “qualitative researchers conduct many observations within a single case and use different observations to develop and test their theories” (cited in Denzin & Lincoln (2018). Key data was collected in a variety of ways; “collecting evidence (from histories, archival documents, interviews, etc.) that these causal processes and mechanisms, in fact, took

place. Then, identifying alternative explanations for these effects; and collecting evidence that these alternative explanations did not take place and/or lead to the effects." (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The research methods the researcher used are content analysis of the social studies curriculum, a critical review of historic representations of conflict narrative, and conducting semi structured interviews with a range of stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews, unlike structured ones, give room to follow up on some angles, which can be explored beyond the primary structure of questions asked (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p1002).

The researcher undertook an analysis of the data through content analysis. "Content analysis is a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, assumptions, and meanings" (Berg & Latin, 2008; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Neuendorf, 2002 cited in Berg & Lune, 2017). The content analysis was inductive in order to collect material, texts, and narrative which were used to prove or disprove the hypotheses and test the theories. While the content analysis examined the textbooks, the study did not delve into pedagogy in detail.

The research is focused on the Palestinian Education System and investigated this through a content analysis of the social studies textbooks of the first grade up to the twelfth grade. The analysis included an interpretation on students studying these textbooks in the West bank only, excluding East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip as they have different realities and circumstances to education. That was followed by conducting semi-structured interviews. Interviewees were first the head of the Curriculum Development Center, and legacy personnel contributing to the development of the curriculum. Moreover, key informants from the Ministry of Education who have witnessed the development of the curriculum and/or their roles connected to curriculum development and implementation. And other consultants and experts on conflict resolution and education. The consultants and experts interviewed helped shed some focused opinions on

certain issues that by just analyzing the textbooks would not be evident. The interviewees were able to explain some questions on the process of curricula development, some untold conversations or specific choice of adding or omitting lessons, concepts and subjects. Some consultants were experts in dialogue in education or were historically connected to the early years of the Palestinian curricula development. Their insights and answers helped the researcher develop more angles and points of view while interpreting the results. The researcher also used theories on conflict and conflict resolution to analyze and reference to the results of the content analysis. Particularly theories that discussed conflict and violence in education, liberation education and approaches to conflict when building the curricula.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

II.I Violence and the relationship between conflict and education

While defining education, the UNDP in its Humanitarian report (2005, cited in Novelli et al., 2008), stressed how conflict can undermine education's physical and non-physical structures, explaining how conflicts can inflict its violent actions into educational institutions and strategies (p., 2). “Violent conflict destroys education infrastructure, reduces spending on schools and teachers and prevents children from attending classes. Schools are often a target for groups hostile to the government because of the association with state authority, (UNDP, 2005, p. 159)”. Therefore, on one hand, third world countries, poor ones and those lower in the power hierarchy will have an intensified negative impact on their education system with all of these overlapping impacts. Not only they will not be able to build schools, mitigate wars or protect students, they will also not be able to mitigate the impact of violence, hostile groups attacking education, which will subsequently affect the education environment, curriculum, and systems. The Palestinian situation is a vivid example of this.

As indicated by Johan Galtung, founder of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, in his piece on Cultural violence (1990) that violence comes in three ways: direct violence, cultural violence, and structural violence. Direct violence is an obvious result of war, where communities are subject to killing, bombing, shooting and become victims of physical, psychological, and even cyber-attacks. Cultural violence on the other hand, stems and represents its cultural components in communities, which would legitimize direct and structural violence. Laws, or lack of laws, resulting in a systematic reinforcement of violence (Gultang, 1990, p.291), reinforce structural violence, a term coined by Gultang. This means that all three types of violence in a conflict can alter actions, attitudes and behaviors of the communities and the political structures would yield to disrupted systems influenced by structural components, thus building its culture and

understanding of conflict and peacebuilding. When reflecting on those definitions, one must think of the Israeli occupation systems and their impact of structural and cultural violence on Palestinian students and the education system.

In a study in 2000, Salmi (cited by Seitz, 2004) described four types of violence within the contexts of schools; their significance and their manifestations (figure 1). If we examine those types closely, we can start relating them to the Palestinian case and measure the level of their impact, which will be discussed after the analysis. However, the argument here is that analyzing these forms of violence in a low income, conflict-ridden

country and what has reinforced their influence into the current education systems when it comes to approaching conflict, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Direct violence can deprive children of their parents, family members, and peers (amongst others). In addition, violence can also impact the ability of parents to economically sustain their children's education, let alone protect them, (Davies, 2004, p.95-99). In the Palestinian case, direct violence has become a daily event in the lives of many Palestinian students going to and from schools. As stated above, conflict can contribute to how education can instigate or reduce violence. Particularly in a context where students' lives are filled with examples of them being personally apprehended, or their schools being raided by Israeli occupation forces. The generational trauma of occupation has shown to affect the levels of violence in the Palestinian community. Additional examples are the exacerbated impact of the economic and political violence by the Israeli occupation on Palestinians. Subsequently, a more observed level of

Table 1

Forms of violence in the context of education—typology according to Salmi (2000)

1. Direct violence ("deliberate injury to the integrity of human life")	E.g. effects of violent conflicts, weapons and violence in the school, corporal punishment, sexual abuse, suicide of students due to failure
2. Indirect violence ("indirect violation of the right to survival")	E.g. illiteracy, inequality of access to education, inequality of education opportunities, insufficient educational infrastructure (lack of hygiene, etc.)
3. Repressive violence ("deprivation of fundamental political rights")	E.g. absence of democracy and co-determination opportunities in schools
4. Alienating violence ("deprivation of higher rights")	E.g. culturally biased curricula (dominance culture), suppression of subjects/views/language of ethnic minorities, no teaching in mother tongue

Source: Seitz (2004, p. 51).

violence amongst communities whether at home, schools or within the fabric of the community. As quoted in Boxer et al (2012), “Observing violence stimulates violence” (Bandura,1977; Huesmann, 1997; Huesmann & Kirwil, 2007 cited in Boxer et al. 2013, p. 163). A longitudinal study was conducted by Boxer et al. to examine the influence of political violence on the development of aggression with children. Using Bronfenbrenner’s theory of social ecosystems (1979), over three years (2007-2009), 600 Palestinian children, 451 Israeli Jewish and Israeli Arab Palestinians were interviewed. The study showed that the political violence to which the Palestinian children were subjected influenced an increased aggressive behavior (p. 172). According to the study and the theory on which it is based, an individual as a child is at the center of their social ecosystem, where around them there would be different influences to their systems, referred to microsystems (164). That first layer (microsystem) includes the family, school, neighborhood, and peer groups. The study found that political violence affected the microsystems of children, which subsequently increased aggressive behavior (p. 172).

If the life of Palestinian children is seen under a microscope or from a large-scale perspective, violence surrounds their lives in the most direct and subtle ways at the same time. Violence has become an inherent element to daily interactions, verbal, and nonverbal communication, as well as their learning experiences. The circles of interaction of children reflect many incidences and experiences of violence due to the violence reflected in their family, community, and their education circles. The complex layers of violence, which are intertwined in their core learning experiences, bring it closer to fuse within their daily behaviors, what behaviors and actions to which they are subjected and subsequently becomes an integral part of their thinking processes, thoughts, beliefs and actions. Political violence, one of the greatest root causes of violence seen in Palestine, transcended into the microsystems of children, into economic and social violence, subsequently making children more prone to it.

In the second intifada, in the period 2000–2005, the Israeli occupation forces killed 576 Palestinian students (KG-12 grade) and 32 teachers (Najjab 2020, p.3). During 2022 alone, 230 Palestinians were shot and killed by the Israeli occupation forces of which 36 were children, in addition, 17 children were killed during the latest aggression on Gaza that same year (DCIP, 2022). This also includes the threats of the Israeli occupation to education including demolition orders to schools and education establishments, checkpoints and closure of roads to schools, and scrutiny of the Palestinian curriculum particularly in the city of Jerusalem. To use Gultang's model we can see that violence has moved from, direct violence to a systematic one towards the human and physical structures of education in Palestine. This includes the education system itself, the curriculum and education strategies and policies.

Conflicts can also cause education to become a factor to increase the social inequalities between those who receive education and those who do not, and what some receive in their education against what others are taught (Novelli et al, 279). Bush and Sartarelli as cited in Novelli (2008) state examples of how education can exacerbate existing education inequalities whether through unequal access, further cultural repression, denial of access to education, the segregation between ethnic or religious groups, as well as the conscious manipulation of textbooks and the use of education as a political weapon (p. 479). The development of the Palestinian education system provides numerous examples of this impact, including East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip and Palestinians living in the occupying state of Israel. Moreover, as the thesis will go further and discuss the development of the Palestinian curriculum, it will be realized how the conflict and the occupation used the argument of 'using education as a weapon' to accuse the Palestinian curriculum of incitement against the Jewish people and that such curriculum teaches hatred to students. An example was the report of the Center for the Impact of Peace on the Palestinian curriculum in 2000 (Brown 2001). Therefore, we can see

the pattern of the three types of violence, which Gultang has discussed, structural violence that becomes cultural through sustaining such models in education.

The above explains the somehow state of play in Palestinians communities and schools. The ongoing prolonged occupation has exacerbated forms of community violence where children are witnessing all forms of it in their families, community, and schools as part of those communities. Hence, Salmi's explanation of types of violence shows that Palestinian children are subjected to it variably which reflects on their understanding of violence, conflict which becomes necessarily connected to violence. Therefore, models of conflict become essentially a reflection of reality, which can again be affected negatively or positively in the school environment which can reinforce conflict and violence or reinforce a better understanding, hence fighting back with a positive approach to conflict and the ongoing violence.

Davies (2006) argues that education can be used to reinforce a positive conflict or build a very rich environment towards a negative conflict, knowingly or unknowingly. As seen in figure 2, a positive or a negative approach can be used to reinforce conflicts, respectively. This would mean that in many cases, influences such as

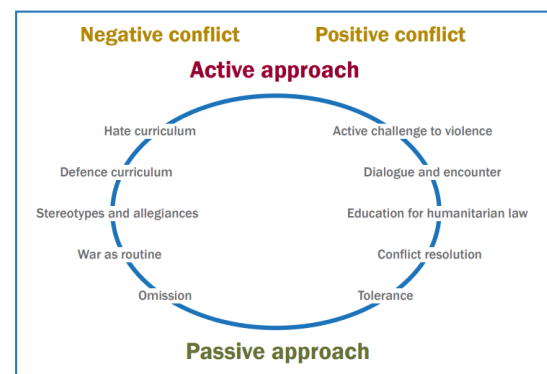


Figure 5 - Negative and Positive conflict in Education, Davies (2006)

political conflict, or social and religious conditions such as patriarchy or certain religious abuses can unintentionally contribute to a negative conflict environment. It is then empirical to examine the relationship between conflict and violence and the structure of the Palestinian education system and how those elements interact to produce a certain approach. Subsequently, the research analysis should result in locating the textbooks and what they offer in the above demonstration of a passive or a negative approach to conflict.

As an example, of such a subtle type of violence is ‘violence by omission’ (Salmi, 2004). This is when an authority or a decision maker can omit or ignore discussing or addressing a certain event, an issue or a concept, which in turn does not give the opportunity for learners to enquire about, understand or analyze the situation (Salmi, cited in Davies 2010, p.491). This includes what Davies (2010) refers to as producing Hate Curricula, or the deliberate negative portrayal of the “other” (492), and analysis of historicity or historic representation and narratives.

As a result, some education systems might be structured in such a manner as that described by Bush and Sartarelli (2000). Where the curriculum is manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally by either political will or a generational inherent culture and understanding of curricula from a traditional perspective, to present a subjective or partial view of how certain issues can or should be presented, yielding a skewed learning experience, and perhaps offering a negative conflict model (p. 27, cited in Novelli et al, 2008, p. 481).

II.II Conflict Resolution

According to Wyn et al. (in Carter, 2010) the ability of individuals to transform conflict faces many challenges, which comprise systemic, cultural, or individual (p. 7). Therefore, the ability of that individual to transform conflicts within their own lives will empower them to resolve conflict more successfully on a systemic and cultural level more effectively, and most likely contribute to “create opportunities for the development of a global culture of sustainable peace” (p. 7). As Olusakin stated: “For peace is not merely the absence of war, but also involves freedom, justice, conflict resolution, nonviolence, community building, and democratization of authority” (2007). Then, the global efforts to conflict resolution aim to highlight the main concepts and practices of what we -as global citizens - ought to be teaching children to well instill peace as an imperative of their day-to-day thinking and actions. Nevertheless, what would that mean for education? Such a transformation would have considerable implications

for the curriculum, pedagogy and policies of education. This transformation would require a focus on components including conflict resolution education, curriculum, skills, or processes or programs.

Within the context of Palestine and the development of the education system under the Palestinian Authority it is important to investigate if all these underpinning factors have influenced the development of curriculum, pedagogies, and conceptualization of conflict in the formal education system. Ultimately, the goal of the Palestinian education system is to be able to offer an education, which would help a Palestinian individual to learn about conflict, navigate negative ones, and transform them to be able to contribute to a culture informed by conflict resolution. The argument is not as easy as it may seem, as each Palestinian individual, whether a teacher or a learner is part of a community, governed by religious and cultural traditions including patriarchal norms, and struggles with an illegal occupation and a colonial legacy. Both of those mentioned pre-existing conditions have already established and entrenched systems and cultures of violence and of peace. The challenge this thesis is attempting to check is how those pre-existing understandings can be navigated to establish, from both bottom-up and top-down perspectives of building a culture of peace, and whether, as learners, teachers, parents, and the religious and political establishments want it.

To understand further, a deconstruction of the elements of education for children is needed, to include the schools, the school staff and administration, the policy makers, the ministry of education, the government directives and strategies on education, parents, members, and structures of the community. So, even though the goals were clear when an education system was handed over to the Palestinian Authority for them then to re-build a Palestinian curriculum to concur with the political, social economic status at hand- the implementation was a lot more difficult considering the changing dynamics of all those stakeholders involved in the process.

A new authority with a colonized education system, with new political avenues of establishing a state, and within around 30 years of massive political turmoil which influenced and impacted that curriculum being introduced. Adding to that the inherent traditions of culture, religion and patriarchy which were essentially part of the social system and of the curricula and the education system as well. Not to forget the regional connections and comparative lens to a Arab Muslim education systems. As a result, all those elements at play to establish a curriculum to Palestinian children where dependent variables with no constants. Subsequently, the process to control, observe or rationalize a curriculum building process was distorted with so many ever-changing elements, even to include the delivery of the curricula and the overall interaction with the education system itself.

As stated by Turk (2018), schools play an imperative role to deliver “core life skills” (p. 26). Part of those skills include the students’ ability to “claim responsibility for their actions when they solve conflicts with their own skills” (Smith et. Al 2002, cited in Turk, 2018). As a result, “Conflict resolution skills also help students to gain empathy, effective communication, anger management and problem-solving skills” (Lane-Garon, cited in Turk 2018, p. 26).

II.III Conflict Resolution curricula

In his paper (1989), Levy reviews the design and development process of conflict resolution (CR) in elementary and secondary education. He explained that such curriculum, like any other, should have a specific purpose, audience, and outcomes (p.73). He pointed out an important notion of how such curriculum can be presented, whether through “memorization” of historical conflicts by just reciting or presenting past known conflicts, or whether it represents conflict as defined above by Agerback. As cited in Levy, Tyler (1949) reported that curriculum development process should include setting specific objectives for those curriculums, accompanied by the educational experiences envisaged for those objectives. Those

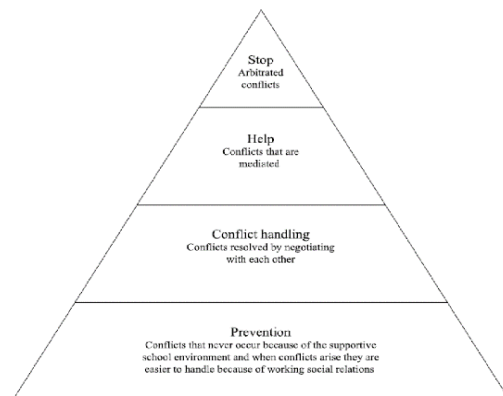
experiences, he continued, must also be well organized with pre-determined ways to measure their impact (Tyler, 1949, p1 in Levy 89). Eisner (1985), on the other hand, proposed five elements that curriculum development must include. First, education must strengthen the students' cognitive processes (quoted in Levy, 1989, p. 75). Secondly, the use of academic curriculum study of core subjects, those identified that students should be learning. Thirdly, an awareness of students' social situations, so that curriculum development reflects the needs and concerns of the society in which they live and prepares them to play a positive role therein. Fourthly, curriculum as a technical component in which technical abilities to be used by the students, and the pedagogies that are used to deliver them are clearly understood. Finally, a learner centered curriculum which is not designed by educators only, but also includes students' and learner's voices, to what he referred to as "curriculum humanism" (Eisner, cited in Levy 1989, p 76).

As we discuss this, it is important to state that curriculum design, as Levy reported, is also a political process (1989, p. 80). Because curricula design involves multiple layers of those who influence its development. Whether the authorities in charge, educators, parents, policy makers, influential cultures, and religions, and so on. Which mainly trickles down to the core of this thesis, exploring how those curriculums were designed and delivered.

II.IV The conflict pyramid in conflict resolution

The Palestinian case is as complex as a conflict-ridden zone could be. Palestinians have suffered a long legacy of oppression and colonization resulting in a long-lasting military occupation. Adding to that a complex socio-economic structure, which with the occupation, presents a difficult reality to conflict. Models that could present conflict and possible conflict resolution levels are numerous, however the model to be presented below can locate the possible options of the insertion of conflict resolution in schools. This means that political status plays a role in choosing a modality which can fit the status quo for it to equip with knowledge and skills for conflict resolution or to peace education. For example, being in a sovereign country with no ongoing conflicts could need peace building, while a country with some conflicts whether national, internal, or foreign could need some modalities for conflict resolution, or a country post a conflict which would need some peace building or build up positive conflict resolution.

Hakvoort (2010) analyzed Cohen's conflict pyramid (figure 3) and its use in conflict resolution in schools. In addition to the CRE programs mentioned above, Hakvoort added that CRE models could take various topics such as anti-bullying, citizenship education and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) (p. 157).



Cohen (1995/2005, p.35) portrayed conflict resolution in four levels. Each level signified a level of intervention or a key to one of the peace end goals, which is sought, peace building, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. In Level 1, as shown in figure 3, prevention is described by Cohen “conflicts that never occur because of the supportive school environment” (Cohen 1995/2005, p. 35). In this level, as Hakvoort explained, prevention is equivalent to attaining

the goals of peacebuilding. This would include activities and skills to build a supportive school environment, where we would find

“Effective classroom management, a democratic school structure, engaging curriculum, value education, discussing morals, ethics and deeply rooted attitudes, working with self-esteem, group dynamics, empathy training, emotional awareness, communication exercises, group processes, effective listening, perspective-taking, life orientation, classroom massage, circle time discussions, and social competence, (p. 162).

This would mean that such a level works at a cultural and a structural level where there is grounded work being done to pave the road for such stable, violence-free environments. Yet, some might argue that this level one could also be reached when a conflict ends and efforts are being made to establish a peacebuilding environment. In that case, this level is commissioned to achieve peacebuilding.

As for level 2 and 3, Hakvoort explained how they are interconnected to peacemaking. Level 2 acknowledges the existence of conflicts, where it is part of human nature, and that conflict may happen. Most programs focused on this level to include working on some conflict resolution strategies and skills such as “conflict analysis, negotiation, dialogue and collaborative problem-solving, and strategies for observing our own and others’ prerequisites and circumstances in specific conflict situations” (Hakvoort, 2010, p. 163). At level 3, certain conflicts cannot be managed, and Cohen identified this level as “conflicts are mediated” (Cohen 1995/2005, 35), where a third party intervenes to resolve or manage the conflict. This could include peer mediation or other forms of art, or mediation models. Both levels aim towards what Hakvoort referred to as “restorative justice” (p.164) where both parties display their own stories, truths and needs. As for level 4, arbitrated conflicts are the ones which are not resolved,

need to be stopped and are described as peacekeeping (imposed peace). This level includes actions where the conflict must be stopped before any other conflict resolution actions and measures are taken.

When Cohen's model is used to examine the Palestinian cause and current situation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it can describe the political level in a deadlock situation where there is an imposed "peace" status of merely the absence of war, yet conflict is ongoing. This includes the multi-layered factors adding to the occupation of Palestine and how it impacts conflict resolution, such as the internal Palestinian political situation, the internal divide, lack of national elections since 2006 and the absence of a legislative council ever since. That is in addition to the socio-economic situation and the defragmentation of the social fabric and increased community-based conflicts. Eventually, Palestinians can be placed on various levels, and depending on how the problem is diagnosed or planned to be addressed, some certain conflict resolution or peace education modalities ought to be used. Therefore, while change can be instilled by working on the structural and cultural level and striving to push for peacebuilding strategies, this is a later stage that can be introduced once we tackle concrete needs laying in the second and third levels. Thus, driving to the question, does the Palestinian social studies curriculum offer any kind of contribution towards curriculum conflict resolution within education? As the case is presented, of a complicated political status with no apparent or close avenues for any conflict resolution, how do the Palestinian textbooks present conflict resolution, if any and does it offer any kind of conflict resolution or peace education curricula to represent any of the current statuses of conflict happening on the ground?

II.V Conflict Resolution Education

The Association for Conflict Resolution in 2002, identified Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) as that which "models and teaches, in culturally meaningful ways, a variety of processes,

practices and skills that help address individual, interpersonal, and institutional conflicts, and create safe and welcoming communities” (Jones, 2004, p.1). As Jones put it: “Conflict resolution education programs provide students with a basic understanding of the nature of conflict, the dynamics of power and influence that operate in conflict, and the role of culture in how we see and respond to conflict” (Jones, 2004, p.233)

According to Jones, in a study on CRE in the US (2004), there are four broad goals of CRE programs to include creating a “safe and constructive learning environment, enhancing students’ social and emotional development and creating a constructive conflict community” (p. 234-236). CRE programs can include peace education, violence prevention, social and emotional learning and anti-bias education (Jones, 2004, p 236). Those education programs can be part of foundational education or separate CR curriculum. This puts these kinds of programs into two categories, one that would tackle political, social or global conflicts while the other is about individual or personal conflicts. Yet, they are both interconnected as we can argue that the skills needed on a personal level to transform or resolve personal conflicts, as Wayn et al. explained, can support those individuals to contribute to peace around them, including social and global ones. Some of the processes used for students’ CRE education are “peer mediation (Cohen, 2003), dialogue (Johnson, Johnson, and Tjosvold, 2000), use of expressive arts (Conte, 2001), and restorative justice (Ierley and Claassen-Wilson, 2003),” (cited in Jones, 2004, p. 237).

Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) is widely acknowledged with the objective to “facilitate constructive resolution of interpersonal and institutional conflicts and create safe communities” (Baraldi & Iervese, 2010, p.423). Baraldi & Iervese in their article discussed the importance of adults involving children in dialogue and mediation in conflict resolution. However, dialogue is quite different from other conflict resolution skills and tools such as conciliation, facilitation,

and negotiation. Bryn (2015) argued that while conflict resolution modalities can address and resolve current conflicts, it does not actually address what he referred to as the "driving force". He continued that he believed that dialogue focuses on that driving force trying to address the conflictual relationship that might result in understanding (p.369).

Literature shows the need to explore conflict resolution modalities in education and the difference of their impact on the abilities and skills of students to manage or resolve conflicts. Other education pioneers have added education philosophies and modalities of dialogue, democracy, and conflict resolution education. Hedeem (2005) discusses Montessori, Dewey, and Freire's contributions. According to Hedeem, Montessori contributed to inserting major elements on democratic education, a conducive environment to learning, a teacher as a facilitator and progressive skills development (p. 189). Dewey contributed to several fields of pedagogy, ethics, and psychology. His contribution entailed the reflection-on-experience in democratic education (Hedeem, 2005, p. 190). Finally, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire for his prominent work on dialogue which revolved around calling for teachers to reject what he called the "Banking model" of education where the teacher possessed all the knowledge, and he would pass it to students in a one-way road (Bartlet, 2005). He promoted a "problem-posing" method in which teachers and students learn together, through dialogue. Problem-posing education depends, then, on a dialogical theory of praxis and knowledge and a revised relationship between teacher and student. (Bartlet, 2005, p. 345). Freire argued that no one is ignorant of everything nor is there anyone who knows everything, confirming that "Knowledge is not a piece of data, something immobilized, concluded, finished, something to be transferred by one who acquired it to one who still does not possess it." (Bartlet, 2005, p. 346). He also tackled the difference in the freedom and power between students and teachers, which might result in an authoritarian model in the classroom.

However, Freire's main work was to advocate for the potential of education to offer a transformational approach to achieve or pursue liberation. Freire believed that learning "involved the total process of becoming aware of the concrete situation, understanding how that situation could be changed and acting to change the situation" (Bellet, 1998, p. 134). Freire explained what he meant through a term he used "conscientization", which meant that children will develop a socio-cultural critical understanding of their situation, and reality in order to understand it and be able to change it. He believed that conscientization was a "human phenomenon" (Freire, 1971b, p.10 cited in Bellet, 1998, p.133). Freire's theory is that once you can provide the child or student with the ability to critically analyze the reality, the perception of reality provides the kind of knowledge and realization which builds a belief or a "level of opinion" (Bellet, 1998, p.133).

Freire's premises and theories are closest to what Palestinians are in need in their education system; a system that does not see them as cups to be filled with knowledge that is traditionally possessed by the teacher. Rather, a system that builds and supports the critical thinking and conscientization of their reality which will produce an understanding of the situation and hence figure out and come up with solutions to that reality.

II.VI Peace Education

Salomon offered an insightful perspective to understanding peace education. Salomon (2002) argued that peace education could mean different things for different contexts and kind of education we address (p., 3). In the Palestinian context, perhaps peace is more mirrored into justice and finding a just solution to a colonial legacy and an endured military occupation for over 75 years. For example, some may take peace education to aim changing mindsets of people, promote understanding or tolerance towards "yesterday's enemies" (p.4). While others can mean that peace education can be about acquiring conflict resolution skills and non-violent

modalities. Moreover, it could mean calling for human rights, “environmentalism, disarmament, and the promotion of culture and peace (p.4). What is interesting is the distinction of where this education is taking place and within which context. Reverting to Gultang’s definition of peace, there could be a negative peace or a positive one, which directly links to the kind of peace education sought (p. 5). A negative peace which could be the absence of direct violence or merely the absence of war or stoppage of war, whereas positive peace can be around “collaboration, integration and cooperation” (Salomon, p.5). Another relevant distinction about peace education is the sociopolitical context in which it takes place Solomon argued (2002). He explained three contexts under which peace education is a different region; regions of “intractable conflict” (coined by Rouhana and Bar-Tal, 1998) such as the Palestinian case, regions of interethnic tension “regions of racial or ethnic tension with no overt actions of hostility”, and “regions of tranquility and cooperation” (p.5). Moreover, further distinctions are about the changes desired whether on a personal, individual level (micro level), or a global collective one (macro level). In addition, a last distinction is the target of such education, whether it is for different ethnic groups, yesterday’s enemies, “conqueror versus conquered, or perpetrator versus victim” (p. 6). In the Palestinians case, peace education is rather a plan being spoken of once there is a political “settlement” or solution to the occupation and the ongoing conflict.

Conflict resolution education and peace education are two different types and concepts, however interconnected. Conflict resolution education focuses on concepts, skills and pedagogies for resolving and addressing conflicts, while peace education delves into building understanding and promoting a culture of peace and peace practices between groups (Salomon, 2004, p.124). Both concepts are relevant to Cohen’s model for conflict resolution which can place or determine which kind of education can be used and when. For example, in a preventive measure or in a peaceful environment or post conflict, peace education may be more suitable

to prepare or sustain and build a state of peace. While during any arising conflicts, conflict resolution education could equip students with skills to navigate conflict and transform them into positive ones. Conflict resolution education can also be used at times of peace or post conflict to reinforce skills to address conflicts, as they are essentially part of human nature. On the contrary of Peace education, where it might be impossible to introduce at times of contention and long lasting or historical legacy of conflicts, such as the Palestinian case, unless the conflict is resolved.

What could be contested in those arguments on conflict resolution education and peace education, is that the Palestinians are still under a military occupation and in one of its most violent cycles with no positive or possible political resolution soon. This means that any insertion or consideration of addressing conflict had to realize that and build upon those circumstances. Therefore, the investigation this thesis is attempting to do is to understand how under all those underpinning circumstances, the understanding of conflict is portrayed and whether the curriculum could bear any conflict resolution or peace education components.

II.VII Education in Palestine and the colonized curriculum

Faul in 2021 identified five relevant fields that are needed to address a decolonizing approach in education: “teaching, research, institutions, estates and reparations” (Global Challenge, 2021). She states that decolonizing education would mean to identify the power relations set in history, which enabled the colonial powers to be structured within today’s current relations, institutions, and processes. Faul suggests that to do that we must question those historical legacies and their “dominant forms of knowledge”. This would include the change needed to have a local, contextualized education, which is inclusive, multi-cultural and multilingual. Where also the stories of the marginalized are present and education is not set against the colonized used standards.

In September 2022, the UN held the “Transforming Education Summit “to respond to the global education crisis- “one of equity and inclusion, quality and relevance” (Transforming education summit, 2022). The UN reported that 90% of children around the world had their education interrupted due to Covid-19 (Transforming education summit, 2022). The summit took place during the 77th session of the UN General Assembly. The rationale was to assert the need of the education systems to transform to respond to the ever-growing changes for a more learner-centered education. An education that is dynamic and inclusive, which would guarantee collaboration and innovation. As part of the summit, 450 thousand young people were consulted in the period of June to August 2022 and were asked to present their demands since they are the learners and receivers of education. The Youth Declaration on Transforming Education set out 25 demands to achieve such transformation. The third demand was urging:

“Decision-makers to decolonize and democratize knowledge production, pedagogy, and learning by improving and mandating curricula that dismantle colonial, racist, misogynistic, and other discriminating attitudes, as well as recognizing the value of indigenous and local knowledge” (The youth declaration on transforming education, 2022)

Connecting that to the Palestinian case it is imperative to unfold the Palestinian curriculum’s formation and development, understand how the long colonization affected it and what contributed to its evolution until our modern day. As Al Haj, Mari’ and Tibawi explained in Abu Saad (2006) that many “current educational dilemmas/issues” can be attributed to the colonial legacies which have been imposed on Palestinians since Ottoman rule from the 16th century (p. 1035). As a result, we must acknowledge and ensure that this perspective is adopted when analyzing the current formal education system.

The formal education system was first developed/initiated during the Ottoman rule (1516-1917) followed by a British mandate (1917-1948), and then the use of the Jordanian and the

Egyptian curriculum in the West Bank and Gaza Strip respectively, until 1994 throughout the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This resulted in the censorship of materials by the occupation forces and their influence over curriculum, education institutions and administration. As Nadia Najjab stated that, we should examine and evaluate the direct actions and interventions of the Israeli occupation to the Palestinian curriculum as “an extension to colonial practices” (Najjab, 2020, p.4).

During the Ottoman rule, elementary schools started forming in 1846 and secondary public schools only started to appear after 1869, although the Empire took the responsibilities of education in Palestine by 1846 (Abu Saad, 2006, p. 1036). According to Suleiman (2006) this is the same year where the Ottoman Empire started allowing printing presses to be established in Palestine, starting with the Franciscan printing Press in 1846 (p. 85). It is worth noting that printing presses established were only religious, specifically to Christians and Jews as Islamic printing presses were delayed due to a fear of the Quran being forged or altered by printing (Suleiman, p. 89). The first Arab printing press owned by George Hanania was only licensed by 1906. Those printing presses, particularly the Christian ones, were the first to print in Arabic. Leyla Dakhli argued that the role of the Franciscan Printing Press was distinguished from other churches printing presses as it introduced the Arabic language as a factor shaping the construction of national identity through the Arabization of the people of Jerusalem (Dakhli in Berg et. al, 2020, 288).

According to several resources cited in Abu Saad (2006, p 1036), schools established by the Ottoman rule modeled the French education system and standards, only translated into Turkish, which made it difficult for Arab Palestinians to attend as of their poor relevance and the language barriers. Besides those schools, there were also the “Kuttabs”, Muslim traditional schools, which the Ottoman rule expanded as well. Those schools though, as cited in Abu Saad

(2006), were usually a single private room in mosques or social settings where a male with no education or qualification to teach taught children 5-12 how to read the Quran and how to write, with some arithmetic added later (Tibawi, 1956 as cited in Abu Saad 2006, p 1037). This left little space for school aged children to learn, where only 22% of the Muslim population was able to attend those schools by the end of the Ottoman era. Fifty percent of those who attended school went to private missionary schools, which offered education in Arabic and were more developed, “with better teachers and overall better conditions” - meanwhile the Jewish Palestinian community had their own network of private schools teaching in Hebrew (Abu Saad, 2006, p 1036). According to Abcarius (1948), in 1911, only 34% of boys were attending schools and only 12% of girls (cited in Abu Saad p., 1037). Moreover, high schools were not available, so students needed to go as far as Damascus, or Beirut to pursue further education (Mari’, 1978 cited in Abu Saad 2006, p, 1037). That implied that only those who could afford it could be further educated. University education was only possible in Istanbul, but this posed other difficulties; the military nature of those universities and the concerns of Ottoman rule for Arab Palestinians due to rising demands for independence (Szyliowicz, 1973 and Mari’, 1978, cited in Abu Saad 2006, p, 1037).

As the British mandate took over, they expanded schools of the Ottoman rule and took over most of the Kuttabs (Abu Saad, 2006, p 1038). While the British mandate expanded elementary schools, they completely controlled the education system ensuring Arab Palestinians had no say about their education. Saleh Assoul in his extensive article on education in Palestine during the British mandate (2014) explained how the British built the system where Arab Palestinians had poor and unequal access to education. Although Arab Palestinians were more than two thirds of the Palestinian population in 1947/1948, the Arab Palestinian schools received as little as 9% (£32,000) - as support for schools- compared to the support Jewish schools received the same year (£370,000) (Assoul, 2014, p 245). Assoul added that even beforehand, the Mandate

acknowledged Jewish schools as official educational institutions with their own independent systems in 1933 (p, 245). One manager for educational affairs who reported to the Secretary General of the Government of Palestine administered the education system for the Arab Palestinians.

“This non-Arab manager took decisions in public policies, teachers and staff appointments, promotions, opening schools decisions, and with central management of the system with the support of one British deputy and 5 assistants: one for technical education support, administrative affairs, vocational education, Jewish schools affairs, Girls schools affairs with a system of supervisors .” (Assoul, 2014, p. 246).

In addition, three more personnel were responsible for physical education, an engineer, and a third to lead the English curriculum. Palestine then was divided into four districts where inspectors were assigned to oversee the work in each district (Samaan, 1978, p 24-25 as cited in Assoul 2014, p 246). Arab Palestinians contributed during this period under the mandate to build and finance Palestinian schools as a response to the authorities’ policies toward their education (Assoul, 2014, p 248). The British administration intentionally limited opportunities for elementary education; where 7 years of elementary education were offered in cities and big towns only four was available in villages and remote areas. According to Samaan (1978) that unlike Jewish Schools, Arab Palestinian ones in elementary education lacked “Palestine studies, comprehension, history, intellectual and national issues, cultural history, the Arab labor movement, physical education, artifacts, gardening, the national anthem or any folklore singing “ (p, 28). Secondary education was unattainable for all as only three full secondary schools were established in 1947/1948 and 13 others providing only two years of secondary education out of the four full years (Matthews and Aqrawi, 1949, p 287-288 as cited in Assoul 2014, p 249). Education inequalities during the mandate affected some groups more than others, such

as Muslim students versus Christian and Jewish students residing in cities versus villages or Bedouin communities. Only 20% of Muslim school-aged children were able to attend schools and only around 50% of Palestinian villages had schools in them (Samaan, 1978 p 28, as cited in Assoul 2014, p 250). This was attributed as Assoul explained that most of the Muslim population resided in villages where even the school hours were only offered for 4-5 years while the other schools in the cities were offered for 6 years (p, 251).

Lastly, the high note of education control by the British administration, as a common characteristic to a colonial power such as the British empire where it ruled, ensured that no nationalistic education was offered and pushed towards a more traditional and uptight religious education and moralization to take over so as Arab Palestinians would not develop any nationalistic aspirations. (Al Haj 2006, 0 89-90, as cited is Assoul 2014, p 255).

After the 1948 Nakba, the education system was more fragmented, as it came under multiple authorities. The Jordanians administered the West Bank schools, the Gaza Strip schools the Egyptians, while UNRWA administered that in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria (Abu Saad, 2006, p 1041). While the Jordanian and Egyptian curriculum were used, the Israeli occupation fully controlled schools and their activities. Palestinians felt that the chosen curriculum were irrelevant and that they poorly reflected their nationalistic identities and needs. Though Holt (2001) explained that this was a deliberate strategy by the Israeli occupation, as it did not want to encourage any national feelings (as cited in Abu Saad, 2006, p 1043). Moughrabi (2001) reported that in both curriculum “The word ‘Palestine’ was removed, maps were deleted, and anything Israeli censors deemed nationalist was excised” (p. 6). Moreover, Graham-Brown reported that the education system under the Israeli occupation administration “was characterized by insufficient supplies and facilities, restricted access to the schools themselves, an inadequate educational budget, an inappropriate

curriculum, and staffing controlled by security agencies” (As cited in Abu Saad 2006, p 1043). Nonetheless, those policies only awakened the nationalistic sentiments and awareness of students. The military occupation continuously harassed children in schools and instigated violence. By 1988 and 1989, the Israeli occupation authorities forcibly closing 1,194 schools for 9 months and 8 months respectively, aiming to suppress national activism and resistance:

“Although no official reasons were given for the closures, the Israeli authorities defended them on the grounds that schools were acting as “hot beds of Palestinian nationalism” and “centers of violent protest” (Al-Ramahi & Davies, 2002; Holt, 2001, as cited in Abu Saad 2006, p 1044).

As Najjab (2020) stated, those actions were intentional and were deliberately made to delegitimize the resistance to occupation (p., 2)

In 1994, the newly formed Palestinian Authority (PA) took responsibility to build a new Palestinian education system. The PA, which was still coming to terms with the political realities on the ground, received an education system with all the legacies outlined above. This included the education systems hierarchy, curriculum, pedagogy and other colonial standards and structures. The education system, which the PA started working with, had been neglected for as long as it had started evolving, particularly since the Israeli occupation took over (Moughrabi, 2001, p 6). As Moughrabi (2001) described, there was no investment in the schools’ infrastructure, nor the curriculum or teachers and the system (p, 6). The first step taken by the newly created Ministry of Education was to initiate the first curriculum center and assigned Ibrahim Abu Loghoud and his colleagues to establish this. The team conducted their studies, interviewing a range of stakeholders, including teachers and education personnel in both Gaza and the West Bank. Dr Ali Jarbawi, one of the team members who specifically studied the history and social studies curriculum to try to establish what should be included in

a social studies curriculum for Palestine (Moughrabi 2001, p 7). As a result, the new Palestinian curriculum started to be developed with the first grade and the sixth-grade curriculum introduced in 2000, then successively introducing two grades each following year. Thus, the revised curriculum for the second grade and seventh grade would be introduced in 2001, and so forth. Al Jarbawi then suggested five main principles that curriculum should incorporate; first, that curriculum should be built on critical thinking skills for students where no facts are presented as “eternal truths. Second, encouraging children to be themselves with their own different abilities. Third, the new curriculum should build a concept of citizenship that stresses individual rights and responsibilities and intelligent political participation. Fourth, instill democratic values which accentuate justice, tolerance, accountability, pluralism, empathy, cooperation, and respect for other people’s opinions. Fifth, “students should be taught how to read primary texts, to debate, link ideas, read maps, interpret statistics, and use the Internet as well as how to verify facts, sources, and data critically and scientifically.” (P, 7). In his study, Moughrabi stated that the first editions published used a more student-centered approach yet avoided addressing “unresolved political issues” (p7). The curriculum developed reached its first final version of the full curriculum by 2005, where by then the second Intifada broke and most importantly, a wave of attack on the new curriculum was ignited, particularly by a Jewish-American nongovernmental organization called the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP) in November 2000. Therefore, as soon as the curriculum was getting ready to start developing, CMIP issued a report stating that:

Ever since the PA [Palestinian Authority] became responsible for education in 1994, Palestinian children have been learning from their schoolbooks to identify Israel as the evil colonialist enemy who stole their land. . . . The new PA schoolbooks fail to teach their children to see Israel as a neighbor with whom peaceful relations are expected.

They do not teach acceptance of Israel's existence on the national level, nor do they impart tolerance of individual Jews on the personal level. (CMIP cited in Brown, 2001).

The report was controversial particularly in pro-Israeli and anti-Palestinian circles (Moughrabi, 2001, p 9). The report was used in the US to attack the PA and their education system. That led to the withdrawal of stakeholder support to the curriculum and the education system, more specifically by December 2000, the Italian government announced that it will no longer be supporting the education sector in Palestine; followed by the World Bank announcing that they have diverted budgets, which were planned to be directed to education, into other sectors. A few articles rebutting the claims of the CMIP were published; Moghrabi (2001) and Brown (2001) were reports investigating the allegations of the report and arguing that the report itself was Hasbarah. Moughrabi (2001) delved into details about two core allegations by the report which were the claims that the curriculum delegitimize Israel and that the PA is using old antisemitic textbooks and was able to rebut them (p, 8). Brown (2001) explained the process that the Palestinian curricula development went through, to include the incitement attacks by some Israeli organizations. As Brown stated, Ibrahim Abu Loghud was asked to form the curricula Development Center and to produce with his team a report on how the Palestinian curricula should be changed to represent a Palestinian view (p.2). Abu Loghoud and his team produced a lengthy report explaining changes that the curricula should undertake, including a very progressive lens to include teaching pedagogy and changing the view that students are cups to be filled with knowledge. Brown concluded that whilst the new curricula did not adopt the proposed changes for some pedagogies and how it addressed the shift of learning values away from religion books, the incitement claims by the Center for Monitoring the impact of peace were not exactly true. Brown showed the challenges such an education system which was created amidst an occupation and a patriarchal Arab legacy. In 2016, The Ministry of Education conducted a reform of the Palestinian curriculum, which resulted in the issuing of

revised and updated curriculum material. A General Reference Framework documented this process and established the reference to it. The document pointed to the reasons why there was a need to review and further develop the curriculum, its reference points, and main pillars. The first of reasons for this reform was the outdated curriculum which by 2015, was already fifteen years old. During those years, the global and national tests taken with students showed low results of students' attainment scores¹. In addition, field studies showed poor presentation of critical thinking in the previous curriculum as well as life skills. Moreover, the need to change and enhance curriculum and update their components as there were too many crowded textbooks. Thirdly, the need to follow the fast changes and development in education, technology and knowledge which would help students, teachers, the education system and the curriculum to keep pace to new and evolutionary curriculum and changes. Finally, the needs of the Palestinian individual and community to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, prepare for new vocations, incorporate scientific developments and open new avenues for prosperity and advancement, and lastly the massive need to re-instill the national and value-based structure, which will contribute to the Palestinian community and cohesion (Reference document, 2015, p. 10-11).

As a result, the current Palestinian curriculum for all grades were issued and used in 2016-2017. This included edits and updated editions of textbooks including the social studies textbooks, which are the subjects of this thesis. The social studies textbooks substituted various textbooks, which were separated into geography, history, social studies, civic and national studies at various levels and for different grades. The 2015-2016 issues have accumulated them into one book to include social, national and life studies, history, geography, and civic education.

¹ Such as the TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study)

This reform, as expected, did not escape criticism. The textbooks were attacked for inciting hatred against the Israelis and Jews, as a result in 2021, financed by the European Union the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research issued a “Report on Palestinian Textbooks” to address those allegations. To produce this report, the research used an academic review based on a conceptual and methodological framework. The report investigated “how textbooks address central issues of Global Citizenship Education, whether and how peace and tolerance are incorporated into Palestinian textbooks, to what extent they contain incitement to violence and hatred, and, if so, in what ways.” (p. 8). The review analyzed a sample of 156 textbooks and 16 teacher guides of “Arabic language, social studies and social upbringing, history and geography, religious education, mathematics, natural sciences and life sciences.” In addition, after the primary conclusion of the report, some 18 textbooks were reviewed as well as they went through changes in a 2020 version of those textbooks (p.28).

The report concluded that the textbooks included a lot on global citizenship education, conveying principles of tolerance, forgiveness and justice. Moreover, citizenship education was present with features of pluralism to the Palestinian political arena. The report also concluded that the textbooks did refer to human rights and based their references to violations of human rights on international conventions. The report went on that while rights of specific groups were very clear such as women, children, and persons with disabilities, it was not the same for the Israelis. Elaborating on that, the textbooks referred to the violations of the Israeli occupation towards the Palestinian people in that sense. The report stated that the textbooks conveyed “antagonistic narratives and one-sided representations of the Israeli ‘other’ in textbook portrayals of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” (p 171). The adversary, the occupation, was mostly referred to as the “Zionist occupation” rather than “Israeli occupation” in most instances. The curriculum materials used maps that did not recognize Israel where the report found this alarming to the recognition of Israel as a state. Finally, on violence the report found

that the textbooks stated facts about existing violence and referred to the Israeli occupation as violent and hostile. The report added that the textbook somehow viewed violence committed by the Palestinians whether through historic events such as against the British mandate or later against the Israelis as legitimate and part of resistance. Nonetheless, the report stated, “The language is however, for the most part, objective in tone and avoids inflammatory expressions.” (p 172).

To sum up, conflict affected the Palestinian education system existing now by filling it with the legacies of the consecutive colonization and their residues, which still lie in the system. The violence by omission, the censorship, the attacks, the incitement allegations, the unequal access, and the administrative and historic systems, which still show their influence and presence. Hence, a need to examine these curriculums and explore what type of conflict is portrayed, how it is navigated, narrated and whether there are tools for conflict resolution.

II.VIII Literature review of curricula and the insertion of conflict resolution and peace education in education systems

This review examines what has been done and what studies have investigated any use of conflict resolution studies or education, peace education or any conflict resolution modalities in the formal education systems in Palestine, the Arab region, the Middle East or the world. The researcher chose to focus on countries in the region and models where there were political conflicts.

Turk (2018) conducted an evaluation on the effect of conflict resolution (CR), peace education (PE) and peer mediation (PM) using meta-analysis of studies conducted in Turkey. Turk analyzed 23 studies, which examined the effect of CR, PE and PM in Turkey. The studies had to have used semi-experimental or experimental patterns, with an independent variable to be

either conflict resolution, peace education or peer mediation and a dependent value to be conflict resolution skills. Moreover, studies needed to have had a control group, a provided average, and standard deviation values presented. The study revealed that conflict resolution, peace education and peer mediation are effective and that school-based modalities are important, as they are very efficient in building constructive conflict resolutions skills for students. Moreover, those programs could be beneficial for preventing violence in schools (p. 39).

In another study by Akgun and Araz (2014), in Turkey as well examined the effectiveness of conflict resolution education on conflict resolution skills, social competence and aggression in Turkish elementary school students. The study concluded that the training program applied “we can resolve our conflict” based on both the social interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1973, 2000 and 2001) and the social information processing model (Crick and Dodge 1994), “increased students’ constructive conflict resolution skills and social competence and consequently decreased reactive and proactive aggression levels. (p, 30). The study, however, examined a temporary program administered by psychology students and not the schools’ teachers, where it could have been more systemized or could be an integral part of the schools. Moreover, both studies on Turkey have not mentioned the other factors of the need for conflict resolution such as the political ones or for students living in war zones of conflict-ridden areas. Using Northern Ireland as a case, Hayes, and McAllister (2009), investigated the long-term impact of segregated, mixed, and integrated schooling on adults’ “attitudes towards community relations and levels of contact between the Protestant and Catholic communities” (p. 437). The study showed that adults who attended integrated schools showed more inclined to have a wider social contact beyond the religious division. Moreover, those adults who attended integrated schools showed more positive views of the future, living together with others outside their religion as well as the greater social network. The study delineated an important notion, which

is that education systems “can be a source of both conflict and cohesion depending on the nature of the school system as well as the particular source of division to be addressed.” The study investigated a post-conflict setting of a specific religious divide amongst one population who identify as one nationality. This example might be like the Palestinian case, however, sheds an important light on the role of education systems on the attitudes and behaviors towards conflict whether personal, ethnic, political or other. In addition to that, it also discusses the integrative factor as a systematic approach in conflict resolution and not only as a program to be inserted or implemented as a separate project.

Another interesting paper from Armenia (Mikayelyan and Markosyan, 2007) showed a close example to the one being under study in this thesis. The NGO Women for Development implemented a peace education and conflict resolution project, which aimed at “the formation of peace culture and conflict resolution ideas among teachers and schoolchildren in order to involve peace education in school curriculum.” (p. 101). The strategy of the NGO was to integrate formal and non-formal education components of PE and CR in Gyumr, which is the second largest city in Armenia. Through non-formal activities with students at schools, non-formal activities in the pedagogical institute of the organization, the NGO undertook training for teachers and a collaboration between the NGO and the Ministry of education and science to “develop a joint policy on the introduction of peace and conflict resolution education in secondary school curriculum (formal education).” (p. 101). According to the paper, the non-formal part of the project succeeded where students were taught various ways to nonviolent conflict resolution. On a formal level, teachers were trained in the targeted schools and had a plan for other training sessions. Moreover, the joint discussions between the Ministry and the NGO were successful in integrating components of PE and CRE in the social studies curriculum and syllabi of the formal education system (p. 103). An external evaluation team who assessed the impact and efficiency of the project in the targeted schools showed that the

program was beneficial by noting reduced conflicts in the school, and a raised sense of responsibility among the students. In addition, the program enabled students to “express their opinions and feelings freely, taught them to listen to and understand each other, and helped them build relationships with other people” (p. 106). Furthermore, teachers reported that students had better listen and discussion abilities. (ibid). Another survey reported in the paper indicated that students attended with much enthusiasm as of the learning atmosphere created to help them navigate their daily conflicts with “timely” skills, concepts, and experience (P. 106) attended the program. This demonstrates that comprehensive formal and non-formal programs can influence the ability to do both structural and community and school-based forms of conflict resolution and peace education. It also targets students and teachers altogether. It is worth further investigating the socio-political context of the region where the program applied and whether this included any interventions regarding a post-conflict setting or others.

For similar experiences in conflict and post conflict education, we also address Northern Ireland. Despite the Good Friday Agreement signed in 1998, there was still a persistent gap reported between the united ethnic groups. Belloni reported in 2008 that even after ten years of the agreement “conflict management and intergroup co-existence remain problematic for most Northern Irish citizens” (2008, p.224). He added that the historic segregation and community-based differences with a prolonged political violence can only deflect such parity (p.224). After the agreement, decision makers and academics were determined to bridge this gap and enhance reconciliation by targeting the education systems, in an attempt to better the social and political cohesion (Hayes & McAllister, 2009, p. 438). Several studies have analyzed the post conflict modalities used in Northern Ireland which aimed at bringing more peacebuilding efforts to the segregated population. Hayes & McAllister conducted a study on a sample of over 15,214 adults who were surveyed between 1998- 2006, examining whether attending a segregated or an integrated school would have an impact on the community relations (2009, p. 439). With

their questioning methodology they were able to divide the responders into three main categories: “individuals who reported attending an integrated school that was a formally integrated school; individuals who reported attending an integrated school that was just fairly mixed; and individuals who said that they had not attended either a mixed school or integrated school in Northern Ireland “(p.440). Out of the 15,214 people in the sample they were 1.6%, 10.4% and 88% affiliated to the three categories stated above, respectively. The results of the survey showed that attending integrated schools lessens the communal difference and enhances the chances to what they coined as “a more integrationist outlook” (p.442). The contentious part of this study is that it might not reflect a similar case in Palestine as the conflict is still an active one, so one cannot discuss a post conflict setting. What this article could show is the greater impact of the segregation in the education systems, which does reflect a reality to the different education segregation from which the Palestinian students suffer. This segregation is represented into the different education systems between the West bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, as well as the different education system to which Palestinians inside occupied Palestine ‘Israel’ are subjected. One must also add the education systems the Palestinian refugees receive in the hosting countries. And a more important addition, is what the Israeli students’ education system and its portrayal of Palestine and the conflict. Which is a different comparative study to be done separately.

Coming to the Middle East, Mohammad (2018), explained that challenges in instilling peace education programs in the Arab Muslim world stemmed from two major factors. Firstly, the possible imposition of Western ideas for such programs without various considerations to local context and, as Roland (2004) described, that the “war values and oppressive methods of teaching are rigid and deeply rooted in the structure of the majority of Middle East education systems” (p. 40). In his paper (2018), Mohammad reviewed literature on Peace Education Programs introduced to schools in the Middle East including Iraq, Iran, Palestine and Egypt.

Mohammad conducted this review contrasting the challenges of the introduction of such programs within a context that offers peace teachings through religion. He continued to clarify why such processes to introduce those programs might fail if the support to those programs came from an international source with a liberal approach to peace education, which has not considered the local context or the inclusion of the local experience and stakeholders. Moreover, the problem of excluding the various ethnic groups, considering that the Middle East is a multi-ethnic society (p. 42). Mohammad then underlined two crucial discourses, education, and religion, under which a lot of cultural beliefs, behaviors and attitudes stem towards the “other”, culture and to what he referred as systemic violence (p. 42). He elaborated on very delicate issues that underlie the clear challenges and state of play regarding such discourses. This is frequently compounded by a “ubiquitous culture of patriarchy”, which teaches men and boys that they are, and should be, socially dominant, which in turn encourages a culture of ‘manly’ violence, understood as more powerful than ‘female’ ideas like reconciliation and forgiveness. Finally, the notion of the spoken and unspoken of hatred and violence toward the ‘other’, which is passed to generations, without being challenged (p. 42). The argument made by Mohammad was the view of religion (Islam in this case) in driving the positive collective narrative of conflict resolution and the notions of forgiveness and the spirit of peace as opposed to the individualistic view in Western societies and in the liberal discourse. Mohammad theorized that the former one could be a valuable opening door to an integrated peace education approach. Yet, not forgetting to underline the challenges facing scholars and academics at times due to the limits on the freedom of thought to peace and conflict resolution also by religion. (p. 43). Savigh (2010) and Abu Nimer (2003) reported that they found “no Arabic or Muslim discourses in the conflict resolution policies of Hamas or Hizbullah, respectively (cited in Mohammad p. 44). While other cited studies confirmed that religion could play a positive role in conflict resolution or lack of involvement of religious contributions

can damage peace processes. Gopin (2002, cited in Mohammad 2018) argued that the fact there was no religious involvement in the Oslo Process was partly a cause of its failure.

Mohammad argued that continuous war education in most Arab Muslim countries and the hierarchical power structures against other ethnic and religious minorities makes learners accept all as facts without being challenged (p. 45). War education is how he described the curriculum and history being based on wars and main violent events that shaped relations between countries and regions. Al Issa argued that in order to reform education in Saudi Arabia, education must include content on human rights (cited in Mohammad, 2018, p45). Adding to that, the lack of representation of (women and) non-Muslims can exacerbate the othering of (women and) minorities in the Arab countries, there is a need to challenge the marginalization of non-Muslims in Arab states through empowering students to share their perspectives and experiences, in order to navigate diversity and difference. Mohammad drew conclusions that:

“Peace education should be considered dynamic, progressive and transformative and there is no one size fits all. It needs to enable the growing generation to develop strategies for sustainable peace that are relevant to Middle East culture and genuinely reflect Islamic teachings... Programs need to be context-oriented, with the local perspective being central to the whole process of designing and implementation; but also with awareness of the importance of international intervention and providing the tools to challenge this when it is an imposition rather than a cooperative effort” (p. 56)

Alayan published a study examining the Palestinian history and social studies textbooks of the Palestinian curriculum prior to the 2016 reform (2018). The study examined how the textbooks constructed the Palestinian identity and the identity of the other, specifically the Zionist one. The study showed that the textbooks worked on building a strong Palestinian identity, which

was partially constructed in opposition to adversarial colonial identities, most recently Zionism:

“The Palestinian self-image is constructed through positive historical, cultural and religious aspects of Arab and Muslim cultures on the one hand and on the other hand by presenting the conflict over land between the Palestinians and the colonial powers at first, and the Zionist movement later.” p (93)

Alayan added that despite that Jews were not particularly studied in the historic events except for historic Palestine; the materials did not link Jews who used to live in the land of Palestine to the current Zionists. Moreover, the textbooks were able to articulate a distinctive difference between Judaism as a religion and the Zionist movement. This was done by focusing on the critique of the “colonialist powers and the Zionist movement as their continuation, thus separating between the mostly European Jewish national movement, Zionism, and the Jews who were living in Historical Palestine and who were not part of a settler colonial movement.” (p 95)

The studies presented above have shown different methodologies on how conflict resolution modalities could be inserted into the education systems, as well analyzing some content of conflict and conflict resolution in conflict ridden countries and or countries in the Arab region and Palestine. It is therefore key to look into the theoretical background and theories which might have influenced, or possibly interpreted the existing systems or attempted modalities.

Chapter III: Data collection and results

III.I Data collection and analysis

The researcher collected the latest editions of the 23 textbooks of the social studies for grades 1st to 12th (retrieved from the Ministry's website for the curricula: elearn.edu.ps). Each grade has two parts (one part per school semester) except for the twelfth grade, which was made into one textbook. The textbooks are the latest edited ones of the 2016 reformed textbooks. The curriculum center of the Ministry of Education publishes those textbooks, with a committee to oversee the process. The committee consists of the Minister as president of the committee, the Deputy Minister as vice president, then the Head of The Curriculum Center and the Director General for The Social Sciences Curricula. For each textbook, a writing team is composed. It includes experienced teachers, academics, and political references, experts for the overall review, and language editors and artistic editing.

III.I.I Content analysis

The researcher read the textbooks and used a content analysis approach under the case study design. Using hypothesis and theory testing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), the researcher conducted a content analysis of the textbooks. The inductive methodology included reading the textbooks and collecting observations, notes and analyses on how the textbook material were sequenced through the grades, semantic analysis focusing on key words², how these were subsequently explained and the specific examples that were depicted. The researcher particularly analyzed the text for the inclusion and treatment of the Palestinian conflict, with careful observation of the use of words and terminologies, in addition to its timeline and

² Conflict, war, struggle, dispute, conflict resolution, peace, peace education, definitions, or representations of the Israeli occupation

narrative. The researcher also examined the textbooks for explicit or implicit means or mention of conflict resolution or peace education. This included any mentions of conflict resolution skills, modalities and how the lessons presented them. In addition, there was an investigation on the high-level planning of the historic sequencing of events, the existence of certain historic timelines or their absence regarding key conflicts or conflicts in general. There were no predetermined measures, specific wording, or any deductive methods.

III.I.II Semi-structured interviews

The researcher conducted three in-depth interviews with key personnel whose roles or status had an insight to those curricula and the making of them. The researcher interviewed three personnel from the Ministry of Education, one senior professional who was involved in the first overview of the transition of curricula in 1994, a professor specialized in Arab curricula and interfaith dialogue, and conducted a consultation with a professor specialized in education pedagogies and conflict resolution.

III.I.III Theories of conflict

In addition to that, the researcher used the theories on conflict as a cross reference and a tool of analysis to the textbook's historic representations and connection between textbooks and grades.

III.II Results

The results of the content analysis are presented based on the grade levels and findings according to the method of analysis.

The textbooks of the first two grades are titled the “National and Life Education” التربية الوطنية , and the third and fourth grade are titled “ The National and Social Formation” التنشئة والحياتية ,

, دراسات اجتماعية "Social Studies" . Fifth grade through ninth grade are titled "Social Studies" الاجتماعية والوطنية . Fifth grade through ninth grade are titled "Social Studies" , then tenth grade is titled " Palestine's Geography and Its Modern and Current History" جغرافية فلسطين وتاريخها الحديث والمعاصر . Finally, the eleventh and twelfth grades are titled "Historical Studies" الدراسات التاريخية . The researcher discovered that it was beneficial to analyze the findings of the content analysis in three parts, first to fourth grade, then fifth to ninth grade and finally tenth to the twelfth grade. This way, there was apparent sequencing and logic behind the naming of the textbooks and the level of teaching on conflict, conflict resolution and peace education.

III.II.I First to fourth grade

To start with, the names of the textbooks, the four grades aimed to identity formation (both personal and national) and life and life skills, and themes into the children aged 6-10 years. There were four distinct components in those four grades and perhaps the researcher will use them through analyzing the other grades, as they became the distinct themes throughout the textbooks. The first theme is the Palestinian identity, followed by the Palestinian conflict, Palestine as a state, and conflict resolution and peace education.

The focus on Palestinian identity was very strong throughout the four grades and the most prominent component. It started with the Palestinian child, their house, family culture, food, clothes, folklore, heritage, and nature. The children are taught about themselves as Palestinians, taught the importance of the Palestinian flag and getting to draw and know about Palestine's map and capital. That was a repetitive topic, which was extended in a gradual and consistent manner in depth in the four grades. As early as the first grade, the Palestinian national anthem is presented with the flag along with both Muslim and Christian sites of Palestine (prominently, Al Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher). There was a distinct and persistent rootedness intended in the grades into the Palestinian culture, songs, heritage, and other Palestinian components. As for the political and religious identities, the textbooks presented

Palestine as an Arab Muslim land. It showed quite early in the first grade as mentioned previously the Muslim and Christian holy sites. As it went on gradually through the grades until grade four, it showed that Palestine's religion is Islam and where Christians and Muslims live there. It also mentioned that Jerusalem is not only for Muslims yet did not emphasize or mention any other religions. Until the second-grade textbook, the Palestinian identity preceded the Arab one, while the Arab identity of Jerusalem and Palestine appeared in the third and fourth textbooks. The Arab and the Islamic Cooperation Leagues were introduced in the fourth-grade textbook and how Palestinians are part of both. It is worth mentioning that Palestine socially and politically in those textbooks was inclusive of historical Palestine³, whether in the cities mentioned across Palestine to include Jerusalem, Jenin, Nablus, Akko, Jaffa amongst others. An exploration of Palestinian society included a distinct explanation of the Palestinian community, composed of villages, cities, refugee camps and Bedouin communities.

The lessons through the first four grades' textbooks did not explicitly explain or portray the Palestinian conflict under headlines or actual lessons. However, the topic was gradually inserted within the various lessons, with references to stories, narratives and examples of the Israeli occupation, such as detaining Palestinians and committing violations of their rights. In the first-grade textbook, part one, the first mention of any of the conflict components were the detainees at the Israeli prisons. That was mentioned in a lesson on freeing a bird from a cage, and then asking children with the help of the teachers to name detainees that they might know or heard of who are detained at the Occupation prisons. Here, occupation was used as a term to refer to the Israeli occupation with no mention of the word Israeli. In the second part of the first-grade textbook, the students read a story on a trip made to Negev prison to visit detainees mentioning children who are also detained. The second-grade textbooks, both parts, displayed

³ Historical Palestine refers to the term used by Palestinian when addressing Palestine as the Pre Nakba. This includes the used map, which does not recognize Israel as part of it, and sees it whole as Palestine.

photos of Palestinian land confiscation and destruction of olive trees by the Israeli forces. The photo has no captions, only open to class discussion (Second grade textbook, part 1, p. 46). In the second part of the second-grade textbook, one activity in the lesson on Palestinian products, asked children to discuss and make posters on supporting the Palestinian products and boycotting the Occupation's one. Again, only occupation and not stating the word Israeli. Third and fourth grade textbooks became clearer and intensified the political identity of Palestine. While the map of Palestine always showed historical Palestine, there was a stronger emphasis on Jerusalem in third grade; explaining that Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine and how Palestinians will raise the Palestinian flag in it, once it is freed from the Zionist occupation (third grade textbook, part 1, p. 27). This textbook is the first time where there was a referral to the occupation and mentioning the term Zionist occupation. Another reference when presenting what one can do and see in Jerusalem, the textbook mentioned how Muslims and Christians are unable to go pray in Jerusalem due to not receiving permits and inability to pass the Zionist occupation checkpoints. In the fourth-grade textbook, when the Palestinian community was explained, the 1948 Nakba was explained in a light version showing the plight of Palestinians who had to flee their homes and go to adjacent Arab countries.

Third-grade textbooks confirmed the structures and lessons mentioned previously in the first and second grade on Palestine as a state. It built this notion starting with sovereign statehood with the declaration of independence in 1987. The declaration introduced the conditions for a state to become a state, including recognition of the state, a president, a capital, an army, a legislative council, a government including ministries and a passport. This is a turning point, from which civic education starts to take a clear structure built up from here onwards. As still the Palestinian conflict is not told yet, the textbook shows why statehood and independence is not yet possible for Palestine, to state the reasons which are the Israeli occupation, the wall of separation, checkpoints, and settlements (shown in photos, third grade textbook, part 1, p. 42).

In that instance, that was the first time the Israeli occupation was mentioned as it is, stating the right of Palestinians just like other nations to struggle to obtain their right to their independent state just like others (third-grade textbook, part 1, p. 42). While civic education components are an imperative and integrated into the textbooks, the researcher observed that from this point forward the lessons were clear on what we do when we live in a state including civic, children and human rights. It is worth stressing that it was an integrated component starting with unit two in grade one; I am a citizen (first grade textbook, part 1 p. 39). The second part of the third-grade textbook, well explained components and bodies of the state that provide safety, including police for protection and law and order, the civil defense forces, Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and the commission for ex-detainees. This part discussed the collective community, roles and responsibilities and the importance of collaboration and cooperation. It also highlighted the violations against PRCS personnel during conflicts, while the second part of the same grade textbook addressed United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right to safety and protection and presented the violations of the Israeli occupation against the rights of children. The textbook explained and presented violations of rights, particularly those of children throughout the different textbooks, whenever there was an opportunity to do so. Active citizenship and the individual responsibility towards their state and community was presented in the second part of the fourth-grade textbook.

As for conflict resolution and peace education, the third-grade textbook part one dedicated the second unit to “how I behave with others” (p. 57) to the topic. This unit taught dialogue, dialogue skills, and how learners can navigate differences by displaying scenarios of a social conflict and how one can address it. It discussed playing together, accepting having different opinions regardless of difference in religion, gender, or disability. It specifically highlighted the respect between Muslims and Christians in Palestine and discussed tolerance and accepting different people, regardless of their race, tradition, language, or origin. The unit was very

interactive and included a variety of skills for acceptance, navigating difference, and key conflict resolution skills. The unit also depicted a lesson on forgiveness and tolerance, yet from a religious point of view (an Islamic one to be specific).

The first four grades build a solid foundation for a Palestinian identity where children clearly understand what Palestine should mean for them. In addition, it shows the understanding of basic civic education principles such as sovereignty, independence, and citizenship. The textbooks also highlight the occupation to children connecting it to examples from their surroundings and possible experiences. The grades also offer interactive learning through open days for heritage, local food, and projects on making the Palestinian flag or presenting worksheets and songs on the subjects at hand. This also includes some field visits to the local police or the civil defense or hosting them at schools. However, there is a need to investigate further those pedagogies through studying the teacher guidebooks and interviews with teachers and subject experts, referred to as subject supervisors at the Ministry level.

III.II.II Fifth to Ninth Grade

The fifth grade is where children are first introduced to the term war. The first part of the book introduces war as part of an exploration of man-made disaster. The book identified war as “an armed conflict between two states or more to achieve different interests.” (Grade 5, part 1, p. 36). It added examples of wars such as WWI, WWII, 1948 war, 1967 war and the “Zionist aggression on Gaza 2014”. The paragraph added a brief on the 1948 war where Palestinians had to flee their homes, with a research assignment on the UN resolution 194 regarding Palestinian refugees. Lastly, the chapter discussed the consequences of war and its impact on education, livelihoods, and the destruction it caused.

The book goes on to introduce the history of man, with emphasis on Palestine, which described the Natufian culture in Palestine, the history of the Canaanites, reflecting whenever suitable to

the Palestinian Bedouin communities in current times and their plight caused by the Zionist occupation. A brief is made on communication and connection introducing it with a religious verse⁴ from Islam, where discussing dialogue, freedom of expression, and respect for others. This is followed with a scenario case of a dialogue within a family and some advice of the importance of dialogue skills and respect for others. A whole chapter follows that on the community, family values, unity, and communal life. From this grade onwards, we observe a pattern where the last chapter of each book includes an explicit section on civic education. In that textbook, it starts with a chapter on the definition of the state, what constituted a state and roles within a state. The pattern continues through the second book, as agriculture and human relations are introduced as a continuum to the history recited in the first book. While the history is being explained on agricultural life in ancient times, opportunities are made to reflect challenges to hinder the Palestinian agriculture under the occupation - with inclusive examples for such cases in historic Palestine not only in the West bank or Gaza. The same is used when going into livestock and food security mentioning the dangers of fishing in Gaza because of the occupation. The book then discusses Palestinian villages and cities with explanations on the 1948 massacres and destruction of villages by the Zionist occupation. In addition, explaining the impact of the Zionist occupation on cities through the two Intifadas, the Judaization of Jerusalem, and restriction of movement through checkpoints, the separation wall and illegal settlements. Lastly, when transitioning the discussion on the state formation the book stated:

⁴ الحجرات : 13 49:13 - O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.

“The Palestinian people struggles for the formation of its independent state on the land of Palestine, with its capital Jerusalem, as Palestine has a flag, institutions, an authority and has been recognized by most of countries of the world” (grade 5, part 2, p 41).

The book then explains human relations, social, economic, cultural, and political, and explores each one with a reference to a current Palestinian status, such as the economy, and need to have airports in Palestine. It also explores global politics, by examining the role and efforts the Palestinians have been doing with their application to the UN, signing international agreements, and opening embassies. Finally, the last chapter was dedicated to a civic education component Children right including the UN rights of the child, the violations of the Occupation towards Palestinian children, and what constituted a safe society.

The fifth grade becomes more rigid in presenting concepts and learning methods than the first four grades and starts a heavier load of knowledge and historic recitation where children need to intake a lot of recited information. The introduction to the history of the world is narrowed down into Palestine and the region. Presenting war at such grade is a crucial step as it builds the narrative on conflict, which sounds a bit separate than the interactive previous parts in grade three. Conflict resolution from this grade on take a more comparative trait between the West and the East as well as Islam and its history. The civic engagement part becomes more visible, yet looking at its sequence there is doubt on how each chapter at the end of book could be efficiently interlinked in between the other chapter within a school year.

The sixth-grade textbook deepens students’ exploration of history and geography, as it presented the sources of historic and geographic knowledge in the first part. Sources of history were stated as written (including holy books), oral stories (the narration), and antiquities. This chapter took the opportunity to describe how the narration and documentation of the first Intifada helped capture the violations the Zionist occupation committed towards the

Palestinians. Also, it stressed on the importance of antiquities and how the Zionist occupation made many efforts to prevent the Palestinians from accessing their historic sites and locations, the theft of antiquities and the deliberate use of competing historical narratives to justify colonialism and omitting the Palestinian component. In geography, that part continued by introducing the Arab World and its geography. That part explained the geography of the Arab Peninsula, the Levant, and North Africa, with emphasis on ancient civilizations in those areas. As the book explained those civilizations, it highlighted certain themes such as immigration, natural resources, trade, settlements and occupations. As observed previously, the themes were taken as an opportunity to link them to the current Palestinian cause. When immigration was explained in old tribes and their need to move, the plight of Palestinian immigrants and refugees was mentioned. When explaining natural resources, there was the statement of how Palestinian water natural resources were stolen by the occupation and that the Palestinians are denied access to them- including reference to the violations of Palestinian rights and the international law. In the chapter dedicated to Palestine: the land of Canaan, there were direct connections of how trade is limited in Palestine due to the occupation policies and limitations of movement and travel. Finally, invasions and occupation of civilizations were linked to the Israeli occupation. To continue the pattern, the last chapter of this book ended on the topic law and order, and how it protected the rights of citizens and highlighted their responsibilities. This civic education chapter included discussing the constitution, the democratic state and governance, and human rights.

The second part of sixth grade introduced Arabs before Islam and the introduction of Islam and the formation of the Islamic state. That introduction continued until the seventh grade as they explained the development of the Islamic state, its expansion and conquests (Futuh). The chapters in this part start depicting the lives of Arabs before Islam describing them to be good in agriculture, literature, industry and trade, “despite their bad habits”- mostly addressing that

they were pagans, or worshiped material objects. A specific term, which has been controversial, is used to describe the state of Arabs those who lived before Islam (Al Jaheliyya). This term was explained in that book as to avoid the connotation or claims, which have been asserted by some writers, that Arabs were all ignorant and knew nothing before Islam. Then a sentence within the chapter stated: “in addition, Christianity and Judaism religions were spread in some areas of the Arab Peninsula” (Grade 6, part 2, p.5). This is the only place where other religions were mentioned throughout the history of the Arab World and possibly the only place where Judaism altogether ever mentioned. The book continued describing the life of Arabs before Islam including family, tribes, good and bad qualities of Arabs, urbanism, and Bedouin communities. Throughout as previously observed there were notes on the plight of current Palestinian Bedouin communities because of the occupation. Lastly, when describing the political life of the Arabs before Islam the book stated the ways the Arabs used to resolve conflicts through wars and violence and invited students to discuss peaceful resolution of conflicts.

As the book went into describing the start of Islam and the initiation of the Islamic state, it kept mentioning relevant themes to the Palestinians. For example, when it explained the siege on the Hashemites (the people of Hashem, the prophet), the siege of the Zionist occupation on Palestinians was mentioned including checkpoints, movement restrictions, no borders, the separation wall, siege of Gaza, and the isolation of Jerusalem. In addition, how the Islamic state tolerated non-Muslims and kept them as they abided by the state (including Jews).

The book dedicated a chapter to explain Muslims ethics during peace and war depicting humanitarian values brought by Islam. The chapter included Quranic verses and a definition for values. The chapter compares examples of the Muslims’ treatment of captives during war and then compared it to the ill treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Zionist prisons. A second example of Abu Bakr’s commands to his armies on not to destroy a tree or hurt an animal or

women or children and compared it to the 4th Geneva Convention 1949 for protecting civilians at times of war.

The second part of sixth grade dedicated a chapter to specifically describes Palestine at the time of Khilafa (Times of the Islamic state). In this chapter, two instances are used to compare to the contemporary Palestinian conflict. The first was when it narrated the Fath (opening or introducing Islam) of Palestine and its freedom from the Byzantine occupation - a discussion was requested from students to write about one of the cities was destroyed by the Zionist occupation in 1948. The second was the conquest (Fath) of Jerusalem, explaining the Omar Convention (Al Ouhda Al Omareyya), which asserted the protection and acceptance of other religions. As previously observed, the book ended with a civic education chapter on the safe society; active citizenship and how the active citizen looked like. It included his behavior towards solving problems, abiding to law and order, towards his national causes and his environment (Grade 6, part 2, p. 92).

The seventh grade is dedicated to the Islamic state, the Islamic world and the chapters of civic education. The first part of the books entailed the history of the expansion of the Islamic state across continents; Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas and Oceania. It highlights the achievements of the Islamic state through those stages, and then through the second part of the book goes on the weakening of the Islamic state including internal and external factors, benchmark battles in Palestine, and the collapse of the state in Andalusia. Then a chapter on the Islamic world, its people, the Islamic world, and its connection to Palestine. The civic education chapters include discussing civil society organizations and their values in the first part, while the second part includes a chapter on Human Rights at times of war and the rights of people with disabilities.

Both sixth and seventh grades take students into a deeper journey to unfold the Arab and Muslim identities and history. While it starts with posing sources of knowledge and historic representation, further investigation is needed to establish if critical thinking and discussions take place questioning written history and the timeline of events. An important note was observed, that while the Arab identity preceded the Islamic (religious one) even since the first grade, the emphasis grows stronger on the Islamic one through the lessons. This is mostly observed on the length and details of the start of the Islamic state, its impact and the development it brought as well as its weakening. While the Arab identity is presented where it might have subtle implications of how it was not a strong political extension or addition. In an interview with a member of the curriculum development, an explanation was made that the history of the Islamic state is crucial, as it does not discuss Islam as a religion but as a political entity represented in the Islamic state and its works throughout its presence.

The eighth grade is distributed into three distinctive themes: the Arab world, world transitions and Western history and civic education. The first part of the book introduces the Arab world including its geography, people, landscape, meteorology, economic activity and water security. In addition, a chapter dedicated to political developments in the Arab world in contemporary times. That addresses pre-Ottoman political powers, the Ottoman rule, the conditions of the Arab world during the Ottoman rule and Palestine during that rule. The transition to part two of the book is done by first dedicating the first chapter of that book to discuss the European renaissance, geographic explorations, the Industrial revolution, the American colonies revolution and independence and the French revolution. Building upon that, the following chapter addressed the Western colonial greed in the Arab world including the European colonization and competition in the Arab world, the French Crusade on Egypt and the Levant and the end of the Ottoman rule. The civic education components include a chapter in the first

part on citizenship; rights and duties and fighting corruption. While, in the second part it was on gender and gender-based violence.

The first part of ninth grade builds upon the eighth grade and goes on describing the strategies used by the colonial powers in the Arab world. This included the political fragmentation policies that colonial powers endeavored including Sykes Picot, Balfour Declaration, and San Remo. The chapter discusses the formation of the Arab League, the Arab united Republic of Egypt and Syria, United Arab Emirates and The Gulf Cooperation States. Moreover, that chapter includes examples of the early Zionist movement building one of its first settlements southwest of the Jerusalem wall in 1856 (ninth grade, part 1, p. 7). In addition, it discusses colonial political policies in the Arab world, the de-education of the population and oppression. The second chapter in this part presents liberation and resistance in the Arab world. That chapter defines liberation movements, forms of resistance, cases of liberation movements in the Arab world, independence of Arab countries, and challenges of Arab countries post-independence. The second part of ninth grade goes global and addresses the diversity of the world including its nature, demography, civilization, and economy. While the second chapter dwells on modern challenges and international cooperation; wars, population explosions, famines and preserving the global cultural heritage. The civic education component in ninth grade is on participating in building the civil society in part one discussing political participation and elections, while in the second part it included discussing global citizenship and addressing poverty and racism.

The ninth grade as other grades use opportunities to insert examples on how the Zionist occupation is also practicing oppression and depriving Palestinians from their connection to the Arab world and the world through limited trade and its control of the Palestinians economy, trade and geographic connection with adjacent countries (ninth grade, part 1, p. 15). In addition, to mention the Zionist efforts to deprive the Palestinian children from education through its

arbitrary policies and laws preventing teachers from reaching their schools, having checkpoints, gates and the wall of separation, demolition orders on schools, apprehension of teachers and students, and the Judaization efforts of the Palestinian curriculum in Jerusalem⁵. Examples of oppression include land confiscation under security excuses, military ones, approving laws to confiscate the lands of those who fled in 1948, and the law, which prohibited Palestinians from returning to their villages when they fled them in 1948 even if they just left to a closer location. The apprehension of detainees and their torture, the targeted assassination of Palestinian leaders, movement restrictions by building the separation wall, checkpoints and restriction of moving from one city to another; thus, impacting the economy, agriculture, education, and health, as well and the social and life and relations of the Palestinians. It is worth mentioning that those references are regularly connected to International Law or the International Humanitarian law. In this instance, oppressive procedures of the Zionist occupation were connected to article 33 of the 4th Geneva convention (grade 9, part 1, p. 27). When discussing the resistance in the Arab world, the chapters of the book include explanations and examples on the Palestinians' armed and nonviolent resistance and connects this to the right of the occupied population to resist until liberation under the United Nations GA Resolution number 3314 in 1974.

In summary, the eighth and ninth grade widen the lens to the Arab World, which positions Palestine within the region. The expansion then until the ninth grade organizes the events, which lead to the colonization of the region, and presents a snapshot of Europe's history and following colonial legacy. These two grades attempt to build the rationale for the history of the region and uses opportunities to build the linkages between the events in the Arab region

⁵ This is not thoroughly discussed in this thesis as the Palestinian education in Jerusalem is a separate more complicated case.

with the subsequent colonization and extended occupation. This makes a swift transition to what students will learn in the tenth grade, which is dedicated to Palestine.

III.II.III Tenth to Twelfth Grade

As stated earlier, the tenth grade is dedicated to modern Palestinian history and geography, the Palestinian conflict, and the Palestinian people. The seven chapters cover the land of Palestine as in topography, location, borders, climate, biodiversity, and Palestinian cities. The second chapter presents Palestine towards the end of the Ottoman rule, to include the Ottoman central administration in Palestine in the 19th century, the foreign influence in Palestine in the same century, colonization and Zionism, immigration and the Zionist colonization during the end of the Ottoman rule, and the international conspiracies towards Palestine during WWI. The third chapter ending the first part of the tenth-grade books addresses the British mandate, including the British administration of Palestine from 1917 to 1922, Zionist immigration to the Palestinian land, Palestinian resistance against the British mandate, the Grand Palestinian revolution of 1936-1939, and the UN division resolution 181 on 1947. As for the second part, the fourth chapter addresses the Nakba of 1948; including the war of 1948, Palestine common government, the political and administrative situation of Palestine post 1948, Palestine during the tripartite aggression in 1956 on Egypt, the foundation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization PLO, and the contemporary Palestinian revolution. The fifth chapter presents the Palestinian Naksa of 1967 and its consequences. That chapter entails the war of June 1967 (The Naksa), the battle of Al Karama 1968, Zionist settler colonialism of Palestine post 1967, and the October war of 1973 and its impact on the Palestinian cause. The sixth chapter covers the Palestinian revolution and the peaceful settlement projects. This chapter starts with the Palestinian revolution 1970 to 1976 and transitions into talking about Palestine in the Israeli-Egyptian Peace agreement in 1978. Moreover, it explores Zionist aggression against Lebanon 1978 to 1982, the 1st Intifada, then the Peace process and the establishment of the Palestinian

National Authority, and the 2nd Intifada (Al Aqsa Intifada) in 2000. Lastly, the seventh chapter describes the Palestinian people and their economic activity. The last chapter included the population growth, agriculture, tourism, industry, trade in Palestine and the natural wealth and resources of energy in Palestine.

The tenth grade lays out the Palestinian narrative and a formal sequence of events leading to the occupation of Palestine. The sequence used is more of a national one used by the Palestinians. In the lessons and lesson plans, there would be sections for questions on how these topics would be discussed in class, however, there are doubts if there would be room for the teacher or learner to question the historic representation of events, intentions of involved parties and whether there are other sides to some of the stories. For example, when addressing the Ottoman rule as narrated in the lessons – the narrative made a one-sided narrative on how the Ottoman rule was a positive one for Palestine, without discussing or open questions or room to possible Ottoman negative impact on Palestine or the contribution to its occupation through its fall upon the first world war or whether through its discriminatory policies towards Palestine and the Palestinians. Thus, presenting one narrative to the historic events that portray one political or one-sided opinion.

The eleventh-grade text is composed of four chapters for the two parts. Chapter one and two in part one introduces colonialism and the theories of post-colonialism and settler colonialism and its application. So, the first chapter defined colonialism, its motives and types. Then, brings in examples of the French and Spanish colonization of Morocco, the French patronage over Tunisia and the British one over Egypt, The French Mandate over Syria and Lebanon, the British mandate over Iraq, Jordan and Palestine, and dependence and its mechanisms. The second chapter deals with the concept of settler colonialism and its motives. Then brings up examples of the European settler colonialism of America, the settlement of the white people in South Africa, French settler colonialism in Algeria, Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine, and

Italian settler colonialism in Libya. The second part includes a chapter on liberation movements, with examples including those on movements in Cuba, Vietnam, India, in the Arab world and the national democratic movement in China. The second and final chapter of the second part is on political systems and their applications. After defining political systems, it portrays examples and definitions of the Islamic Khilafa, the absolute monarchy, the parliamentary monarchy, and the republic.

The eleventh grade shows a big leap to introduce colonization as an important step to decolonize education and recognize how colonization influenced the region and Palestine. It also emphasizes the approach used throughout the textbooks to introduce the conflict in Palestine and the region through the settler colonialism lens. It is worth noting though that the examples on the liberation movements could be challenging, as there might have not been enough categorization between them. Jamison noted that some movements were violent or unsuccessful such as China democracy movements or whether how much emphasis was made on the use of pacifist techniques such as the case in the Indian liberation movements (interview, 2023).

Lastly, the twelfth grade, which serves as the Tawjihi standard year, includes four chapters in one book. The first chapter reiterates what was introduced in the fifth grade on war, however expanded into cross continental war and Futuhat (the period of Islamic conquests). As portrayed in earlier books, a lesson explains and defines wars. Apart from how war was defined in the fifth-grade lesson, an approach is used here to help students discuss:

“Some see war as bad regardless of their causes or justifications. While others perceive war as a natural thing amongst humans whether fair or unjust, as through wars some ambitions

in expansion, domination, or independence can be fulfilled. What do you think? How would you respond?" (Grade 12, part 1, p. 4).⁶

Then war is defined as: "the opposite of peace and it's a conflict between two parties, where each uses its material and non-material weapons to achieve their goals and achieve victory over the other" (*Grade 12, part 1, p. 5*). This is an interesting part as it poses questions on whether peace at that instance could become a class discussion or whether some wars are just or not.

Then, the first part proceeds to present the Islamic Futuhat (conquests), The Germanic wars 1095 to 1291 (the Crusades), WWI 1914 to 1918 and WWII 1939 to 1945. The second chapter discusses the popular revolutions starting from identifying revolutions into portraying examples as such. The examples are the Algerian revolution 1954 to 1962, The Palestinian Intifada of 1987 to 1993, and the Arab Spring 2010. The third chapter addresses cross continental empires, from explaining the system of empires to presenting the Byzantine, Ottoman, and the British Empires. Lastly, global dominance, the United States of America as an example. The last and fourth chapter presents projects of nationalism and unity. In that last chapter, nationalism and the national (patriotic) identity are introduced. Then, the chapter goes on introducing the German unity in 1871, the Arab unity projects, the Soviet Union 1922 to 1991, and the European Union.

Since the twelfth grade is subject to general national examinations it is uncertain how classroom discussions can go versus focusing on how this textbook can be included into the general tests. Though there is an interesting mix of topics where past empires are discussed as if it is extending a similar longitudinal approach of the textbooks where topics grow and extend with

⁶ This would need further elaboration in further studies given that pedagogy was not included in this research. As this could potentially, best explain how those stimulating questions are to be used in class.

each grade. When nationalism is discussed, the book poses the question of how the Arab nationalism is viewed whether in a good way where it was reinforced along with the subsequent Islamic identity, or whether the Arab nationalism was a Western product used to divide the unity of the Arab nations away from their religion. Nonetheless, those questions posed for discussion do not suggest a direct way on how they could be addressed whether through an extended paper or class discussion. The teacher's guidebooks must include directions to that; however, it must be further investigated including interviews with teachers and supervisors on the topic. Finally, the book captures an important message on the united national Palestinian identity. It emphasizes the importance of this identity as a resistance motivated necessity against the adversary, the Israeli occupation.

Chapter IV: Discussion and conclusion

When the textbooks reform took place in 2016, resulting in the textbooks under study, they were based upon three main reference documents. First of which the document of independence of Algeria 1988, a historic document which constitutes (to Palestinians and mostly to the Palestinian Authority) a base to establish a free, independent Palestinian state. Secondly, the amended basic law of the Palestinian national authority 2003 which is considered the legal and legislative reference to the state of Palestine, including articles about Palestine, the Palestinians, religion, commitments of respect for others, and the environment. The basic law states what is the capital of Palestine (Jerusalem), sets out the Palestinian legal system, freedoms and rights and responsibilities. Thirdly, the plan of the first national curriculum in 1998, which included detailed plans for each subject. Those three references established clear messages as to what the curriculum responds when it addresses the formation of the Palestinian child consciousness towards Palestine and seeks to instill shared values as well as self-identity. Moreover, those documents influenced the language, and the narrative used in the textbooks, hence shaping the view on the Palestinian conflict and portrayal of conflict including the Palestinian political one and the Arab and the Muslim ones included. The reference to those documents meant that those are essentially the political references to the textbooks and are the political references to the Palestinian official stance declared through those textbooks. Using the declaration of independence as a reference is a clear message that an independent state of Palestine is a national goal and will be referenced throughout the narrative. The reference to the basic law reinforces the first reference, however, also adds the policies, laws, and promises of the Palestinian Authority to a state. This certainly underlines clear and sometimes subtle stances that the PA holds towards the Palestinians cause, in addition to other causes around the world. As for the third reference, it indicates the commitment to the original blueprint and initial strategies set out for the Palestinian education curricula. This meant that the stances and

narratives in the textbooks might have reflected a more narrow or precise perspective rather than a wider scope to address certain issues. For example, while the 2016 reform adopted a more decolonized approach to the cause in Palestine, it kept a lot of its narrative and its political stances attached to the state's views. In a sense, there was still a directive view to narratives and viewpoints on the conflicts, their solutions or stance towards them. That was also observed to be connected to an inherent religious and traditional outlook to history, keeping somehow a status-quo on an Arab Muslim traditional view.

As for conflict, the textbooks did not address conflict in a conscious manner where there was an intention to present it as a term, or as a direct subject or present any terms on conflict resolution or transformation. To start with the definition of conflict, as referred earlier to Agerback's definition of conflict, the textbooks did not define conflict or address it when it first introduced some conflict resolution modalities as early as the third grade, or further on along the other textbooks for the older grades. It also did not introduce the term as early as they started inserting parts of the Palestinian narrative of the ongoing conflict in the first grade. The third grade's chapter on how to behave towards others offered some behavioral and value-based attitudes one should do when relating to others, which may also be identified as conflict resolution modalities; namely dialogue, forgiveness, tolerance, accepting difference to what they referred to when any difference of opinion could arise. The practice of such modalities needs to be further investigated. As far as the lessons portray, discussions on those modalities are made within class discussions. Yet, they have not identified or addressed conflict in that chapter, referring only to the use of such modalities when there is a difference of views, religious beliefs, or opinions. Conflict is explicitly introduced in the fifth grade only when defining man-made disasters that is war. There were two documented definitions of wars throughout all textbooks, in the fifth and twelfth grades. This indicated two main themes within the textbooks, a war timeline which guided the historic recitation of events whether in Palestine

or other countries or regions characterized by the wars, which have taken place, and the tolerance, forgiveness and integrated conflict resolution modalities used throughout. There were no apparent attempts to show various perspectives on why those countries took part in wars other than the logic or narrative presented. This could be challenging since it could create space to examine and discuss conflicting narratives. This could possibly make room to more than a narrative that simply states that this country did this without seeking to explain why they did it or why they thought they did it, or why people might want to see it like that. A further example was the choice of the liberation movements discussed where ‘there are no particularly positive ones (Jamison, interview 2023).

This brings to one conclusion, is that conflict has been deeply rooted in war and long history of colonization and an ongoing occupation that it is not consciously thought of otherwise. Which means that conflict if left to be defined only by the reality at hand and the continuation of occupation has ensured that conflict stays a state of play, as war and as an active one- which is well reflected in the textbooks. However, if we refer to Freire’s take on education for liberation, this approach must be changed in order to reach out to the desired and declared intent of liberation. Conscientization then would mean approaching narrative with critical views to understand reality and acknowledge how we can change it. Therefore, without building a more critical pathway to the narrative by addressing conflict, there would not be enough consciousness and grasp of reality. Palestinians realize their conflict, they know firsthand what war is and the historicity that led to their plight, yet there is not enough room to address conflict in all its aspects to realize exactly what could be the solutions to achieve liberation. The textbooks defer from centering conflict as a concept, free of its war and historic connotations, whereas it could have used its reform and decolonized approached observed in the textbooks to bring in space for children to critically think referring to their reality.

IV.I Conflict and war

The fifth-grade textbook identified war as “an armed conflict between two states or more to achieve different interests” (grade 5, part 1, p. 36). While the twelfth grade posed some questioning whether war is beneficial at times or it was bad all along, adding to it a definition “the opposite of peace and it’s a conflict between two parties, where each uses its material and non-material weapons to achieve their goals and achieve victory on the other”?” (*Grade 12, part 1, p. 5*). As a result, and since its introduction, conflict represented itself through wars only. The chapter in the fifth grade posed other kinds of conflicts, either as a difference in stance, opinion or view yet not directly identified as such. Therefore, it is observed from that point forward the timeline provided a war sequence and content to reflect conflicts with which it was usually coupled with a mention and reference to the Zionist occupation to Palestine. As a result, on that front there were parallel lines at all times of wars and conflicts and how they related, resembled, or could be used to mention a narrative of the Palestinian conflict.

The textbooks then, from the fifth grade to the ninth took students to lay down the history of the Arab and the Islamic worlds, and the conflicts that shaped those worlds. Prominently, the textbooks presented students with the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim identity, in that order. While it showed the positive side of the beginning of Islam and life of Arabs before and after Islam, wars continued to be an essential part of that history. Starting from the sixth grade until the ninth grade, an ascending line was made to link the historic background of the history of the land of Palestine, and both the Islamic and the Arab world. Started with the Arab geography, geopolitics and extensively taking time to lay down the historic foundation of the Islamic state, the wars, Islamic conquests until its weakening and ending. It built a sequence then on the colonial legacies and history recitation of events starting from Europe’s revolutions, invasions, and colonial ventures in the region. As a result, as students reach to the end of ninth grade, they have learned about the emergence of the Islamic identity over the already Arab one and how it

all trickled down to the Western colonial greed into the Arab Muslim world, specifically Palestine. This is quite problematic as it presents a pillar to the notion of the Palestinians identity and history which represents only a Muslim Arab Palestinians one rather than portraying a Palestinian with a diverse Arab and non-Arab and Muslim and non-Muslim identities, particularly oddly leaving out the Christian one. This is also compiled with the recitation of the linkages to Western history and the portrayal of non-Muslim religions as religions and political quests of invaders and colonizers. To continue the sequence, tenth grade is fully dedicated to the Palestinian narrative of the Palestinian cause, which laid out the occupation of Palestine since the end of the nineteenth century until the year 2000. The eleventh and twelfth grades are then dedicated to elaborating and establishing the understanding of colonialism, settler colonialism, the world order, and systems, as well as liberation and resistance movements. With this timeline, students are gradually subjected to an order of identity; a Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim. Later, introduced to a chronology of conflicts portrayed in wars in the world, Arab and Muslim worlds. Lastly, bringing it all together to the gradually accumulated pieces to the settler colonial occupation of Palestine and a global view to wars and their questionable benefit. As Mohammad (2018) emphasized on the education systems in the Arab world, the textbooks convey 'war curriculum' where wars form the most prominent component to represent conflicts and the approach to tell and analyze history. Which is the case for the textbooks at hand.

As for teaching the Palestinian conflict, there was an evident contextualized approach to how the Palestinian conflict was presented in the textbooks. If we could describe that, we could claim that it is a Palestinian narrative to the conflict well integrated through all textbooks. The textbooks used three ways to introduce the Palestinian conflict. First of which was the direct mention of examples of aspects of the occupation to Palestinians, Palestinian land, social, political, or economic life. Second, there was constant linkage when each topic emerged, and

a comparison was possible whether to international law or a historic event with similar attributes. Lastly, the dedicated chapters and textbooks to address the cause itself and history of the conflict.

The language used referred in majority to the Zionist occupation, but seldom the use of Israeli occupation. This was mostly to establish a key point through the textbooks that is Palestine is under a settler colonial Zionist occupation. Tharwat Zaid, the head of the curricula center at the time of the making of those textbooks, confirmed that the language used was deliberate in using Zionist for all events occurring pre-1967 and then the referral to the Israeli occupation after 1967 (interview, 2022).

The Georg Eckert report (2021) stated that the narrative used on conflict was one sided and represented the adversary (the Israeli occupation) in an antagonist way and described as hostile. Their critique included the lack of representing the Israeli view or a neutral way towards Israeli as a state and a 'neighbor'. From a Palestinian textbook perspective, one cannot see how that would be possible. If the need is recognized to decolonize the curricula and that, the narrative is a national one, which builds the Palestinian understanding to its Palestinian cause, then portraying the 'other' that is an occupying entity is difficult. Yet, to avoid incitement, attacks and comments, the reform took a human rights and international law stance towards the Palestinian cause, thus establishing a clear reference to international conventions into which mostly the international donor community looks. As recognized internationally, and according to UN and the UN Security Council resolutions (SC resolution 181 and 242) to follow regarding the matter " In the 1967 war, Israel occupied these territories (Gaza Strip and the West Bank) including East Jerusalem, which was subsequently annexed by Israel" after refusing the partition resolution (181) in 1947 (UN, 2022). Security Council Resolution 242 affirmed the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security" (UN SC resolution 242). The

resolution also affirmed that Israel should withdraw from the occupied territories. With that being recognized, the curriculum added the Palestinian narrative to it; the settler colonial occupation, or the military occupation that is an extension to settler colonialism. Even with that difference in narrative between recognizing Israel occupying Palestine on the 1967 borders or the Palestinian narrative of the Zionist colonization beforehand, the way the textbook approached the occupation, even as the Eckert report described was non-inflammatory nor violent (p.172). The content analysis found similar results were there were no violent use of incitement or calls for hatred but calls for justice for Palestine and pointing out the violations the Israeli occupation is committing against Palestinians. Through the texts in the fifth grade to ninth grade, several components were consistently observed: the comparison and linkage of events to the Zionist occupation of Palestine, the reference and comparison to international law, international humanitarian law and international conventions, as well as components and units on civic education. In part, the textbooks then were successful to keep a keen understanding and consistent presentation of the Palestinian cause. Thus, presenting the conflict in an integrative way. Moreover, there was a process where violations of human rights and comparisons made with international conventions, which not only gives a global perspective to the Palestinian conflict but also a basis to the legitimate Palestinian cause from an international viewpoint.

The textbooks on so many occasions made direct links between the demands of the Palestinians to a state with the UN resolutions to support such demands. Moreover, regularly cited and referred to the 4th Geneva Convention and the UNGA resolutions, thus building the Palestinian case through a human right and an international perspective.

Furthermore, while first grade started with “I am a citizen” and continued through fourth grade with integrated chapters and topics on one’s responsibilities towards their state and community; there was a clear integrative civic education component, which strongly continued through fifth

to ninth grade. Topics gradually presented the state, what constituted a state, duties and rights, civic responsibility, what constituted safe communities, law and order, the civil society, human rights, citizenship, gender, the participation to building a civil society and global citizenship. This in turn confirms an important aspect of integrated civic education where students are introduced to global and national citizenship. Mohammad (2018) delineated a major challenge when the Arab education curricula is/are evaluated for conflict education which is that it is being measured by Western standards and a liberal approach to peace of conflict resolution. This challenge faces the question of contextualized, national or decolonized curricula and how if we should approach conflict and conflict resolution, one must not adhere to the Western view of those matters. Jamison argues that this in itself is a challenge as the Arab education systems, such as the Palestinian one at hand, are fighting that way of evaluation by “adhering to the international law and the value-based approach- which is itself a predominantly western construct” (Jamison, 2023 interview)

To conclude on conflict, reverting to previous literature and theories on how conflict’s portrayal could represent a passive note to conflict or an active one. According to Davies (2006), the textbooks can be positioned in the middle where it included instances of tolerance, conflict resolution and education for humanitarian law, yet included war as a routine and instances of omission. The analysis may conclude that the approach is a passive one as it does not culminate or include any hate curriculum; nor does it offer dialogue and encounter an active challenge to violence. This conclusion could be a starting point where approaches can be revised to enhance the approach into a more positive one. Eventually, the occupation is a chronic ongoing conflict with no resolution.

Referring to Cohen’s pyramid, we could see that there are attempts to build a layer for a limited supportive environment for tolerance, forgiveness, and dialogue, while it also experiences the

top of the pyramid with an arbitrated stoppage of conflict. This brings the discussion to the following two important notions violence and conflict resolution and peace education.

As the textbooks were analyzed, violence was a passive element, which subtly existed through the war-inflamed timeline of historic representation. As Hayden theorized on historic representation, historicity must be coupled with narrativity (1987, p. 22). This means that in addition to pinpointing events on a historic timeline, this should be coupled with a narrative that tells the story. The narrative and timeline of chronological recitation of events used in the textbooks used a timeline of wars, which ultimately depicts violence, yet not an active or direct call for violence. Moreover, the Palestinian narrative is full of violent events where Palestinians are killed, imprisoned, injured, attacked, deported and subjected to all other violent means by the Israeli occupation. This subsequently also congested the narrative and textbooks with violence. It is key to state that violence is not instigated by the textbooks but tells what actually happened and reflects the reality children see outside the curricula and most of the times directly in their schools. So, to say more clearly, the textbooks in the Palestinian case show the direct, structural and direct violence of the Israeli occupation towards the Palestinians throughout the years. According to Salmi's analysis of violence in education, we can observe that there is one reflection of the stated types of violence, of which mentioned above on the direct, indirect violence by the Israeli occupation.

IV.II Conflict resolution and conflict resolution education

In addition to the direct civic education component and the dedicated chapter in third grade on key conflict resolution modalities such as dialogue, forgiveness, and tolerance, as for other topics, some conflict resolution approaches and ideas were inserted in an integrative approach through the textbooks. However, conflict resolution mostly appeared within a religious reference to tolerance, forgiveness, and respect for the other. Grades first to fourth included several instances where it referred that Jerusalem is for not only Muslims and that

Christians and Muslims live together in peace and respect each other. In the fifth grade again, a brief was made on communication and connection referring to a religious verse from Islam, where discussing dialogue, freedom of expression, and respect for others. The analysis showed that in sixth grade there was a chapter to explain Muslims ethics during peace and war depicting humanitarian values brought by Islam. The chapter included Qur'anic verses and a definition for values. Other instances included comparisons between how Muslims during war offered peace and peaceful solutions such as Abu Bakr's commands during war comparing it to the 4th Geneva Convention. Another instance was the comparison and mention of Al Ouhda Al Omareya, the convention of Omar of protection of the non-Muslims after the conquest of Jerusalem, including the Jewish.

While there are modalities and mention to conflict resolution, however, it is limited and underrepresented. The use of religion to approach conflict resolution is deemed useful and successful to some. Mohammad (2018) stated that having a contextualized approach to conflict resolution is helpful in ensuring it is accepted and used. He continued that in the Arab Muslim world, it is beneficial to use the religious values of conflict resolution. However, this poses another challenge, which again Mohammad referred to (2018,) as well an opinion of the researcher. The use of the religion of the majority to refer to successful conflict resolution modalities could risk the potential alienation of minorities and the marginalized thus expanding colonized education, particularly if it is within the social studies textbooks not only religious ones, which brings us to a keynote on the 'other' in the textbooks. A good practice would be bringing about comprehensive models of conflict resolution including faith based. However, for it to include all arrays of faiths as well as trying to use the work done on the ground by non-governmental organizations, including successful models from around the world.

As established above the connection and the identification of the 'other' – the occupier and the occupying state, this might have led to the omission of the other 'other'. This argument goes

in two folds. The first one and as extended by Professor Abu Al Nimer (interview, 2022), for a nation like the Palestinian one to instill unity and a national aim of the liberation of Palestine and denoting the Zionist occupation. He stated that for that purpose, the Palestinian identity must be unified with no distinction on the religious or ethnic identities but a unified form of a national Palestinian identity. As a result, not to defragment the unified Palestinian entity. On the other hand, many aspects or mention of the 'other' was not properly reflected or shown within the textbooks. This includes the other as the non-Muslims or those with a different ethnic background or gender who once resided or influenced Palestine. Although this is not the focus of this thesis, there are choices of historic representations and narratives in the textbooks, which do not consider the other 'other' not only due to political reasons but also to cultural, religious, and due to reasons connected to a persistent patriarchy.

Finally, the contested term, peace. The word peace was not mentioned once when it came to conflict resolution throughout all texts, not even when speaking of tolerance, forgiveness, or respect for others. As apparent as it can be and as asserted by the Ministry of education personnel interviewed, peace is a contentious stigmatized term that cannot be used in textbooks under any circumstance (Zaid and Abu Jamous, interview, 2022). The peace settlement was the only instance where peace was used, only as a title to describe the Oslo peace process. Moreover, and more importantly, one cannot see the proper use of the word within an ongoing conflict, which is only escalating by the day. As Salomon stated (2002), that some might look at peace education as attempting to change the mindsets of people to 'yesterday's enemies' (p. 4). However, in this case there are no yesterday's enemies as they are still, for Palestinians, the current perpetrators. As Salomon quoted Gultang on the identification of peace, there would be a negative peace where it's just the absence of war. We can relate that to how the textbooks identified war in the twelfth grade: "the opposite of peace". This particularly gives a contrast to the core issue; that the textbooks are portraying the status, which is war that is the opposite

of peace. Since this is the actual view, then it is highly unlikely to see peace or peace education in the curricula. Furthermore, as the Ministry officials voiced earlier, peace is a contested word as it is a connotation for opportunities to talk to the enemy and initiate a peace process, which is not acceptable on any Palestinian level. Hence, what is not acceptable on a national level, would certainly not be inserted within the education system. Sadly, that would also be the cause of children being deprived to be introduced to any term of peace, peace education even if it is far from any peace process with Israel per se. Thus, unfortunately, no opportunities are given to students to explore what peace might be. In addition, peace put in that context takes out the other important and actual part of peace where it does not mean surrender but is coupled with seeking justice.

IV.III Conclusion

In conclusion, the textbooks of social studies reinforced a Palestinian political identity with strong nationalist principles and values as to what Palestine is to the Palestinian child- from a perceived Palestinian point of view. Moreover, the textbooks portray conflict under the framework of wars with no direct definition and presentation of conflict as a concept.

In the wider frame to understand the curricula, the curricula still hold a strong influence of the long colonial legacies and the Israeli colonial control throughout its occupation and colonization of Palestine. There persists a powerful colonial influence on the education system and the textbooks. Because of the contention, the resistance against the Palestinian identity and the right of Palestinians to Palestine, the curricula reflect those challenges. To explain further, despite the fact the curriculum attempted to decolonize the narrative, it still chose Western terms and narratives to liberation or state building, such as Western understanding of state building, the civic education components and constant references to the international law and international humanitarian law. The textbooks still uphold traditional subliminal messages towards the construction of the Palestinian identity, with the influence of the political affairs regarding the regional, Arab, and Muslim worlds. Until now, the textbooks were not able to revolutionize, or as Freire coined “conscientize “students to critically think of conflict, make an understanding of their reality and then think of a pathway to liberation. While liberation was a clear stated goal, the narratives built do not actually add up to the true elements for liberation such as Palestinian unity, pluralism, acknowledgement of the other and have a decolonized view of conflicts in the region and around the world. Despite its effort to present a united Palestinian national endeavor for liberation, it somehow presented a preset mold or frame to how the Palestinians’ identity is or should look like, whether in defining conflict, or presenting the Palestinian ethno-cultural religious identity.

The textbooks passively passed conflict through the historicity and the narrative of historic events pertaining to Palestine, the Arab and Muslim world, and the world in general. The textbooks did not proactively, or intentionally explain or present conflict; it just was passed indirectly or delivered through the subtext and the underlying narrativity of the topics and lessons at hand. The textbooks presented the Palestinian conflict in an integrative approach through the grades' lessons to represent a national Palestinian perspective to its cause as an extension of settler colonialism represented by the Zionist occupation. Conflict resolution exists in a limited way through integrative and limited components responding to some conflict resolution modalities mostly imbedded as a comparison of the peaceful Islamic approach to conflict resolution or a window to social respect, tolerance, and forgiveness of the other. The main abundant conflict resolution or education was the use of international law, International Humanitarian law and conventions as well as Human rights. Civic education was also a major component. Peace education does not exist in the textbook, nor is the use of the term peace, thus responding to the second question of the research that the textbooks do not provide a clear understanding of peacebuilding to students. As for the first hypothesis that the Palestinian social studies textbooks have limited representation of conflict resolution and peace education is approved. In addition, the second on those social studies textbooks do not properly emphasize or instill the understanding of conflict and peacebuilding is approved.

Nonetheless, results are not a criticism of the reality of a challenged education system. As Novelli et al. stated that the education system could bear the responsibilities of being either a perpetrator or a victim (Novelli et al, 2008, p., 478). For a curriculum that has been colonized for so long and has been operating through an ongoing conflict, the textbooks made such efforts to reflect a global perspective, a national context, a decolonized curriculum, and content of civic education. Which is partly due to the political climate and ongoing political stances. The textbooks also still fall under cultural, religious, and patriarchal influence. Finally, the

textbooks could not have presented something, which would be out of context if not matched with similar changes on the ground. The textbooks and their formation are heavily connected to the political status-quo and the formal stance of the Palestinian Authority. Without change in the political reality, textbooks will not reflect otherwise. This includes a political solution, liberation, unity of the Palestinians factions, and change in political or structural will. Palestinian children are subjected daily to harassment, violence and violations of their rights by the Israeli forces, which is something that cannot be only addressed through conflict resolution modalities using Western perspective or that gives equal space to an occupier and an aggressor.

The Palestine cause is not unique in the sense of a unique experience yet has its special case. A prolonged military occupation, the longest in fact in modern history, which throws its shadows over generations of Palestinians for over 75 years this year. To address how conflict is viewed or whether Palestinians can handle conflict is as inflamed as thinking of this complex cause. It was somehow natural to assume that an education system living amidst such setting would only reflect the reality on the ground, which is the inability to foresee conflict resolution modalities or peace on any level. Moreover, it followed the footsteps of patriarchal, cultural and religious legacies at some instances while building or improving the education system. It also attempted to follow the world order and challenged the international community by inserting a world relevant language of democracy, active citizenship civic education and connection to international laws and conventions. The political stance reflected in the textbooks created comparative literature to what Palestinians are asked to do; strive for peace, yet textbooks also showed them through the curricula that Palestinians strive for justice before peace. For that instance, the curricula intended to decolonize the narrative and challenge directives to include Israel as a neighbor not as a perpetrator. This has cost the education system a lot of incitement, accusation of being a hatred curriculum and withheld donor funding.

What could change is a deeper insight into defining conflict and children should learn to perceive it. Not the political one but conflict as the basic concept of human nature, which is not only connected to one result: war. Finding proper strategies and support to ensure conflict resolution is integral within the structure and system is a million steps project which can start by one single step at a time. Engaging civil society, non-governmental organizations and expert educators who can change the landscape of how conflict is presented and how conflict resolution is not necessarily about succumbing to an occupier or about the occupier to begin with. Of course, the education system cannot make miracles that are so complex on the ground but may be for once it could start the spark of hope by giving students reasons to be at peace with their lives.

IV.IV Study parameters

The study only analyzed the social studies textbooks, which if analyzed alone apart from the whole curricula might have given a narrow perspective on what other subject textbooks could have covered about conflicts and conflict resolution. Namely, Arabic and English language, religion, and other related subjects. The study did not investigate the teacher guidebooks of the targeted textbooks, which might have given guidance to how the textbooks were aimed to be delivered. Moreover, the researcher did not interview social studies' teachers, students or expert subject supervisors of those textbooks, whose experience and exposure to the materials could also have given an enlightened understanding of underpinning issues. The research also was set to analyze the textbooks delivered only in the West Bank as East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip have different contexts and uses of those textbooks.

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Annex I List of Social Studies Textbooks analyzed in this thesis:

National and Life Education, Grade 1, part 1

National and Life Education, Grade 1, part 2

National and Life Education, Grade 2, part 1

National and Life Education, Grade 2, part 2

The National and Social Formation, Grade 3, part 1

The National and Social Formation, Grade 3, part 2

The National and Social Formation, Grade 4, part 1

The National and Social Formation, Grade 4, part 2

Social Studies, Grade 5, part 1

Social Studies, Grade 5, part 2

Social Studies, Grade 6, part 1

Social Studies, Grade 6, part 2

Social Studies, Grade 7, part 1

Social Studies, Grade 7, part 2

Social Studies, Grade 8, part 1

Social Studies, Grade 8, part 2

Social Studies, Grade 9, part 1

Social Studies, Grade 9, part 2

Palestine's Geography and Its Modern and Current History, Grade 10, part 1

Palestine's Geography and Its Modern and Current History, Grade 10, part 2

Historical Studies, Grade 11, part 1

Historical Studies, Grade 11, part 2

Historical Studies, Grade 12

Annex II Semi Structured Interviews questions

1. Can you kindly introduce yourself and your work in education?
2. How were you involved in the curricula development when the PA came to form the new Palestinian curricula?
3. In your opinion what was the starting point? Where did you start? What was evaluated in order to construct the curricula?
4. Was peacebuilding, conflict resolution or dialogue part of the curricula?
5. What did you think of the first curricula? What circumstances were at play then, and what changed throughout the different phases?
6. Do you recall any discussions on civic education as a component?
7. What do you think were key drivers to the evolving Palestinian curricula?
8. What factors played a role in what goes into the social studies curricula during the different versions of the curricula?
9. Who is usually involved in the curricula development processes?
10. Any historic background on the development of the social studies curricula?
11. Was dialogue part of the content or discussions in the social studies curricula?
12. Were there any components suggested to tackle or well define conflicts and conflict resolution?
13. Were the social factors which affected Palestinian students considered when designing/developing the curricula?
14. How do you see the historic narrative represented in the curricula describes or shapes conflict?

المخلص

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في كتب الدراسات الاجتماعية لوزارة التربية والتعليم في فلسطين لتصوير مفهوم الصراع وحل النزاعات وتعليم السلام. ويهدف البحث إلى تحليل الطريقة التي يقدم بها نظام التعليم الحالي الروايات، والمحتوى الذي يدعم فهم الصراع/الصراعات، والتاريخ، وروايات الصراع الفلسطيني، ورؤية العالم، والصراعات من حوله، وفي نهاية المطاف كيف يتعامل الطلاب الفلسطينيون مع الصراعات ويفهمون بناء السلام. علاوة على ذلك، لاستكشاف وجود أو عدم وجود طرق مناسبة لحل النزاعات وتعليم السلام في المناهج الدراسية. وباستخدام منهجية نوعية مختلطة، أجرت الباحثة مقارنة تحليل المحتوى على 23 كتاباً مدرسياً للدراسات الاجتماعية تدرس للصفوف من الأول إلى الثاني عشر في مدارس الوزارة في الضفة الغربية. بالإضافة إلى إجراء مقابلات متعمقة مع الخبراء والمهنيين التربويين الذين شاركوا في عملية تطوير المناهج الدراسية أو لديهم خبرة في حل النزاعات والتعليم. علاوة على ذلك، إشارة إلى نظريات الصراع وحل النزاعات. وخلص البحث إلى أن كتب الدراسات الاجتماعية عززت الهوية السياسية الفلسطينية ذات المبادئ والقيم الوطنية القوية فيما يتعلق بما تمثله فلسطين بالنسبة للطفل الفلسطيني، وتسعى في نهاية المطاف إلى ترسيخ هذه الهوية للشعب الفلسطيني. تصور الكتب المدرسية الصراع في إطار الحروب دون تعريف مباشر وعرض الصراع كمفهوم أوسع. لقد مرت الكتب المدرسية بشكل سلبي على مفهوم الصراع من خلال تاريخية وسرد الأحداث التاريخية المتعلقة بفلسطين والعالم العربي والإسلامي والعالم بشكل عام. لم تشرح الكتب المدرسية أو تعرض الصراع بشكل استباقي أو متعمد؛ لقد تم تمريره بشكل غير مباشر أو تم تسليمه من خلال النص الفرعي والسرد الأساسي للموضوعات والدروس المطروحة. تناولت الكتب المدرسية الصراع الفلسطيني بطريقة تكاملية لتمثل منظوراً فلسطينياً وطنياً امتداداً للاستعمار الاستيطاني الذي يمثله الاحتلال الصهيوني. تواجد حل النزاعات بطريقة محدودة من خلال مكونات تكاملية ومحدودة تستجيب لبعض طرق حل النزاعات المضمنة في الغالب كمقارنة بين النهج الإسلامي السلمي لحل النزاعات أو نافذة على الاحترام الاجتماعي والتسامح

والتسامح مع الآخر. كان الحل أو التعليم الرئيسي الوفير للنزاعات هو الإشارة إلى القانون الدولي والقانون الإنساني الدولي والاتفاقيات الدولية وكذلك حقوق الإنسان. وتشكل التربية المدنية أيضا عنصرا رئيسيا. لم يتواجد أي إشارة الى تعليم السلام في الكتب المدرسية ، ولا استخدام مصطلح السلام ، وبالتالي لا يوفر فهما واضحا لبناء السلام للطلاب. ومع ذلك، تقدم الكتب المدرسية مثالا رائعا على محاولة إنهاء استعمار المناهج الدراسية وإظهار القدرة على تحدي التحريض المستمر والهجمات والتمويل المشروط المحتجز. إن دراسة الكتب المدرسية للدراسات الاجتماعية محدودة مقارنة بتحقيق أوسع كان يمكن أن يشمل جميع الموضوعات الأخرى التي يمكن أن تتضمن فيها طرائق حل النزاعات والنزاعات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تتعلق النتائج فقط بالكتب المدرسية التي يتم تدريسها، في حين كان من الممكن أن يوسع العمل الأوسع نطاق الفهم من خلال تحليل الأدلة الإرشادية للكتب المدرسية أو من خلال إجراء مزيد من المقابلات مع المشرفين الخبراء في الدراسات الاجتماعية مع وزارة التربية والتعليم. يقتصر البحث فقط على ما يتم تدريسه في الضفة الغربية حيث أن القدس الشرقية وقطاع غزة لهما سياقات مختلفة يتم فيها تقديم هذه الكتب المدرسية.