



POWER2YOUTH

The Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM): Transnational Politics, Inter/national Frameworks and Intersectional Alliances

Ruba Salih, Lynn Welchman and Elena Zambelli,
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Scope, Methodology and Ethics	
Overview: From the PYN to the PYM	
1. Transnationalism, Diaspora and Political Organizing	6
1.1 PYN: Diasporic Affective Identities	
1.2 PYM: From Network to Movement	
1.3 PYM: Transnational Activism, Between Liberation and Securitization	
1.4 Political Affects: Embodiment, Politics and Friendship in the Space of Appearance	
2 Human Rights and International Law: Framing the Future?	13
3. Intersectionality at/in Political Work	18
Conclusions	23
References	24

The Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM): Transnational Politics, Inter/national Frameworks and Intersectional Alliances

Ruba Salih, Lynn Welchman and Elena Zambelli¹

Abstract

This study illustrates findings from research conducted between 2015-16 on a transnational organization operating across various Arab and western countries: the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM). It argues that the PYM is reformulating the notion of Palestinian-ness through a type of activism that is rooted in intersectional alliances and local anti-racist campaigns. The PYM notions of national liberation and national identity stand in dynamic tension with the more classic territorial and nationally based ones. Palestinian-ness in the PYM's political praxis is co-terminus with diaspora, multiple languages, diverse allegiances, multiple belonging, inhabiting several localities. The PYM exemplifies how a diasporic standpoint can be politically productive in a redefined discourse of justice and liberation. The Palestine question is part of a wider web of interconnected forms of oppression, control, destitution and violence that are knotted together globally. Native American protests against the North Dakota pipelines in connection with settler colonialism and destitution in the occupied Palestine are both central to PYM political praxis.

Keywords: Palestine | West Bank | Gaza | Youth | NGOs

INTRODUCTION

The subject of our case study is the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), which is “a transnational, independent, grassroots movement of young Palestinians in Palestine and in exile worldwide”.² We chose this social movement because of its particular positioning as a transnational network of Palestinian youth across the Arab world and the diaspora/*Shatat*, active in advocacy and mobilizing in innovative ways. We consider this in-depth case study relevant for Power2Youth for a number of reasons.

First of all, we envisage this in-depth case study as an opportunity to shed a light on a portion of the youth population that fell beyond Power2Youth country case studies, i.e., refugees and diaspora.

Secondly, we consider that the PYM model of transnational mobilization provides an opportunity to analyse issues of youth inclusion/exclusion going beyond “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). This, in our view, artificially constrains the

¹ Ruba Salih is Reader in Gender Studies at the Centre for Gender Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Lynn Welchman is Professor of Law at SOAS. Elena Zambelli is Research Assistant and Research Officer at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton.

² See the PYM website: *Who We Are*, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=14>. In PYM's political vision, the lands constituting Palestine correspond to the territory which was under the British Mandate until the UN Partition Plan ruled the establishment of the state of Israel (UN General Assembly 1947). Unless otherwise specified, this is the meaning implied with our use of the term “Palestine” throughout this paper.

identification and analysis of the roots of the problems facing (and producing) youth, their effects, and the al/location of responsibilities for their reproduction. By enlarging the scope of our analysis beyond national borders, we can for example rearticulate the object/s at the core of the waves of “contentious politics” (Tilly 2008: 5) in the MENA region known as the Arab Spring from a singular, national political regime to “monopoly capitalism, neo-liberalism, and the suppression of political rights” (Butler 2011). Indeed, our comparative analysis of P2Y WP3 country papers highlighted that youth activists interviewed across the region voiced concerns shared by their peers who lived within different national borders, such as unemployment, wars and conflicts - both internal, and in their regional spill over - and authoritarianism (Salih et al. 2017). Analogously, we cannot ignore the fact that youth do not mobilize exclusively within national borders, but often operate through tactics, political cultures, forms of solidarity, imaginaries and networks that transcend them.

In this report we will present the main findings of our research on the PYM. More specifically, we will show how the PYM’s transnational politics and its members’ diasporic condition impact upon the construction of new youth political cultures and praxis. We will argue that the PYM offers a case study of a political formation of young men and women that operates through a “diasporic imaginary” (Mishra 1996). They shy away from classic diaspora movements coalescing for liberation or return to their homeland (Safran 1991)³ and rather articulate their identity in terms of a movement that operates through its double or multiple consciousness to read, analyse and struggle against the interlocking forms of power that operate across the globe.

Following a brief description of the history and structure of the PYM, we will discuss the meaning of its transnational political praxis in relation to the national/local contexts wherein it operates, and in relation to Palestine itself (Section 1); “classic” understandings of self-determination, human rights discourses and international law paradigms (Section 2); and the interplay of interlocking forms and hierarchies of oppression based on gender identity, sexual orientation, class and race (Section 3).

Scope, Methodology and Ethics

Our case study is based on qualitative fieldwork conducted in France, Jordan, Lebanon and the US, during which we interviewed women and men who are, or had been until recently politically active with the PYM in one or more of its national chapters. Our analysis includes literature and communication materials produced by the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN), which was the predecessor of the PYM (see next section); most of our interviewees had been either co-founders or members of the Network (PYN). However, our case study focuses on the Movement (PYM). There were no PYM international activities during the period of our fieldwork (January–September 2016); moreover, and for different reasons, at the time of our fieldwork some of the Movement’s national chapters were not actively functioning.⁴

³ For Safran, dispersal, collective memory, sense of alienation, sanctity of the ancestral homeland and a belief in its restitution, and definition of the self in terms of identification with this homeland, are the key characteristics of diasporas.

⁴ On its website, PYM lists chapters in France, the USA and Sweden, but the link to this latter is no longer functioning, and we were not able to arrange interviews with any members.

Interviews were open-ended, and we guided them based on a grid of topics we exchanged with our interviewees beforehand as part of our ethical commitment to ensuring their informed consent. All interviewees have been fully anonymized in this report. All received the transcript of their interview, which we asked them to validate, and we also circulated a first draft of this report inviting their comment.

Overview: From the PYN to the PYM

The PYN described itself as “an independent, nonpartisan alliance, founded by a group of young Palestinians scattered throughout the world as a result of the occupation of our homeland”, the liberation of which they wished to contribute to.⁵ Its main objectives revolved around the creation of a network connecting Palestinians living in the diaspora and in Palestine, thereby cutting across internal divisions based on “places of residence, factional affiliation, political ideology, or religious beliefs”.⁶ Its by-laws described an elaborate two-tier organizational structure composed of a national and an international level (PYN 2010a),⁷ with an International Executive Board (IEB) invested with the responsibility of representing the organization internationally.⁸ Its methodology included the organization of a number of international activities⁹ for which they relied, in varying amounts and proportions, on contributions received from governmental and/or local authorities, collected through fundraising, and their own contributions.

The online literature gives different versions of the date of the PYN's official establishment,¹⁰ but our interviewees and literature reviewed unanimously locate the birth of the PYM in the PYN's second International General Assembly (IGA) in Istanbul, in 2011 (Ayyash 2013: 283); and indeed, written documents available online were signed by the PYM starting at that time (see for example PYM 2011, 2012a, 2012b). The PYN defines itself as

a transnational, independent, grassroots movement of young Palestinians in Palestine and in exile worldwide as a result of the ongoing Zionist colonization and occupation of our homeland. Our belonging to Palestine and our aspirations for justice and liberation motivate us to assume an active role as a young generation in our national struggle for the liberation of our homeland and people. Irrespective of our different political, cultural and social backgrounds, we strive to revive a tradition of pluralistic commitment toward our cause to ensure a better future, characterized by freedom

⁵ See the Anna Lindh Foundation website: *Red de Jóvenes Palestinos*, <http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/node/5459>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Every two years, PYN members elected a country-based National General Assembly and National Coordinating Committee; the members of this latter constituted PYN's International General Assembly (IGA), whereas the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) was “comprised of the national coordinators of each country participating in the PYN”.

⁸ The IEB was the PYN's “international administrative body”, and any person who had been a PYN member for at least one year was eligible to run for it.

⁹ Such as international conferences, summer camps and summer schools and “speaking tours” (PYN 2009, 2010b, 2010c).

¹⁰ Ranging from November 2007, at the end of a ten-day summit organized in France, to November 2008 (PYN 2007a, 2007b, 2008).

and justice on a social and political level, for ourselves and subsequent generations.¹¹

The words above spell out clearly the Movement's ethos: young people wishing to participate in the political struggle to end the occupation of Palestine but also to revive the democratic tradition within Palestinian politics, from the standpoint of exile. As we will discuss in this report, its goals and political praxis differs significantly from those of the PYN. Organizationally, however, the transformation wasn't as clear-cut, and to date the PYM appears to have maintained the same governance structure.¹² Both online literature and our interviewees indicate that the pace of the international activities has been slowing down, in favour of a thicker engagement at the local/national level, although more recently there have been signs of renewed engagement in international movement-building activities (PYM 2017).

1. TRANSNATIONALISM, DIASPORA AND POLITICAL ORGANIZING

1.1 PYN: Diasporic Affective Identities

Sa'id, who was one of the founders of the PYN, recalled that the impetus for establishing that body had come from "a crisis within the Palestinian community" as a result of the intensifying factionalism between Fatah and Hamas in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt),¹³ and in other contexts, such as in Lebanese refugee camps (see for example Ahmad 2013: 13, Høigilt 2013: 350, Fincham 2012: 129). At that moment, there appeared to be no forms of collective political organizing that could include also the voices and sustain the aspirations of Palestinians living in the diaspora. After the first Intifada, the demands of the Palestinian national movement focused on Gaza and the West Bank (Høigilt 2013: 355), and in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords (1993), the right of return of Palestinian refugees de facto dropped off the negotiating table with Israel. In parallel, the strength and influence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) "ha[d] been considerably weakened" (Peteeet 2007: 639), and more importantly for Palestinian youth organizing, in many countries the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) had "collapsed" (Abdulhaq 2008).¹⁴

"Our project was to gather Palestinians from Palestine and around to discuss about this: who we are, what are our priorities", Sa'id continued. As they looked for means to ground their project, he and his peers discovered a similar project being developed in Spain. Eventually, they managed to combine their parallel efforts and organize a joint summit, in France, in November 2007, which gathered over a hundred Palestinians coming from "twenty-eight different countries", to which they invited mostly Palestinian politicians, activists and scholars who talked about "Palestinian identity, history".

Things that emerged went beyond our expectations: being in a room with 100 Palestinians with different origins not only geographically but also culturally, socially

¹¹ See the PYM website: *Who We Are*, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=14>.

¹² For example, during the last PYM International General Assembly, which took place in Amman, Jordan, in 2014, a new IEB was elected.

¹³ The Palestinian territories occupied by Israel in 1967 (oPt) are the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

¹⁴ Although in some countries such as France, the US and the UK, its sections are being re-activated/established.

[...] released such an energy, realizing that all of us were for Palestine, all determined to do things and we should not leave with nothing in our hands or just coordinating some activities. So we began saying that we should create a common vision.

As Sa'id recounted, factionalism initially constrained the energy unleashed in and through this transnational meeting, as people looked for hints of secret, partisan agendas in one another. Slowly, however, they managed to overcome this initial diffidence and create an organization which aimed to recreate/reinvigorate forms of pre-Oslo Palestinian political organizing.¹⁵

Rather than calling for (more) representation within the existing, although exclusive and fragmented, political framework, PYN/PYM sought to prompt a radical shift towards past or existing political forms of mobilization and alliances. Also, as relayed by most of our interviewees, the PYN/PYM refused to articulate its identity and politics on the binary juxtaposing of Palestinians living in Palestine with those living elsewhere, thereby putting these latter into a "solidarity with" positioning (Bitar 2009). "It doesn't make sense for us to stand in solidarity with ourselves!" as Aisheh put it succinctly.

Several interviewees recounted that at the Network (PYN) stage their international meetings mostly focused on how to converge on an inclusive definition of Palestinian identity.¹⁶ Such elaboration proved, however, daunting. Political praxis soon made clear that there was no unitary political language and imaginaries among diaspora and Palestine- or refugee camp-based Palestinians, let alone Palestinian youth. Competing claims of authenticity and legitimacy were particularly signified through the in/ability to speak Arabic. For example, Farah recalls the difficulties encountered in trying to elaborate "a final statement on our experience" at the end of the PYN's 2007 conference. Different registers and discourses spoke to varied audiences in distinct contexts, and inevitably reflected different, emplaced understandings of authoritativeness, legitimacy and relevance. Such complexity affected the PYN's search for a shared political language able to translate an internally consistent Palestinian identity. Eventually, as Asim recalls, the elusive definition of the meaning of "Palestinian-ness" for a people displaced and scattered in different parts of the globe, where they have been living under very different conditions and social, economic and political environments for almost 70 years, led most PYN/PYM members to acknowledge that "there's more than one identity of being Palestinian, it's not black and white, and that part of our identity is being in diaspora, part of our identity is not speaking our language and being alienated from our roots: this is part of being Palestinian."

Hence, these youth are reformulating the notion of Palestinian-ness in much less ideological and nationalist ways than the previous generation, becoming coterminous with diasporic imagination, multiple languages, diverse allegiances, multiple belonging, speaking different languages, inhabiting several localities.

As we will show in the next section, this acknowledgement is at the core of the PYM's politics and political mobilizing.

¹⁵ Significantly, the PYN considered the PLO to be "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people", and called for its restructuring (PYN 2007a).

¹⁶ In Section 3 we discuss its translation into membership rules.

1.2 PYM: From Network to Movement

As anticipated earlier in this report, the shift from PYN to PYM was decided in 2011, during the PYN's IGA in Istanbul. Although the timing would seem to indicate that it occurred in the wake of the Arab Spring, several interviewees reported that the decision had already been ripening. A crucial contributing factor was the acknowledgement by some of the PYN's founders that it was proving challenging to sustain members' engagement outside of the space of international gatherings, and to weave it into their political praxis in the national/local contexts where they lived. According to Sa'id, the Network's work reflected a "liberal" type of engagement: "individuals are active, but not engaged in the community". Differently, he and some of his peers wanted to build a more solid and politically engaged organization, which ought to be rooted in each of the members' different local/national contexts. For Sa'id, such work on the ground was (and remains) important because it departs from the Palestinian leadership's established forms of doing politics in and from the diaspora, with its emphasis on representation rather than organization. "We wanted to be organizers, on the ground, [to] organize communities and not to speak in their place", he said, which required developing a deep "understanding [of] what it is that makes a community dispersed, divided, unconscious".

Therefore, the PYM's organizational development focus shifted from expanding an international web of thin connections among its members, to building a thicker politics embedded in the different local/national contexts where its activists resided. More importantly to our discussion, however, it also appears to reflect a different meaning of the "transnational" in PYM politics, which no longer stands for a "diasporic" bond driven by a nationalist affect, but describes the PYM's positioning of Palestine as an anticolonial struggle that exceeds national/ist frameworks. "[What] we're looking for [is] real, genuine liberation, not necessarily based on national lines, not necessarily nationalist liberation", Asim recounted, "our issue is that we are a colonised people, and there's a colonial system in Palestine, and in order to be liberated, this colonial system needs to be dismantled".

This re-articulation of the PYM's political project goes beyond nationalism per se, and inscribes itself within the waves of protest for social justice in the region and in the world. Part of this analytical shift entailed the repositioning of Palestine at the core of a number of other simultaneously ongoing political struggles. Such is the view informing the concept of the "Palestinian analytic" elaborated by Lubna Qutami, one of the PYN/PYM's founders, which she defines as a "move beyond thinking of Palestine as an isolated issue, ethnic or geographic based cause [which] works through the process of considering the particularities of Zionism as part of the genealogy of settler-colonialism and injustice transnationally" (Qutami 2014b).

Concretely, such an analytical shift can for example be seen at work in the PYM's co-organization¹⁷ of the Arab Youth Conference for Liberation and Dignity in Tunis in December 2012 (PYM 2012a), which foregrounded the importance of regionalizing Palestine and making it centre stage in the region again. As Farah recounts, during that event over a hundred Arab youth from all over the MENA region and beyond converged on the statement that "the Arab world will never be free if Palestine is not liberated, [and] Palestine will never be liberated if

¹⁷ The PYM took the lead in this initiative but worked closely with and received support from official Tunisian parties (including the presidency) and different Tunisian youth groups.

the Arab world is not freed from this neo-colonial system".¹⁸ To her, this statement crucially reflected an ongoing effort to create transnational political ties among youth living in the region¹⁹ - an effort which was all the more important when assessed against the isolationism cultivated by Palestinian leaders, who "are basically, completely disengaged from what is happening in the region".

An analysis of the extent to which such political re-articulation could have affected the PYM's relationship with Palestine- or refugee camp-based Palestinians was beyond the scope of our research. An analysis of online literature confirmed that they have been part of PYN/PYM activities all along (see for example PYN 2010a; Abu Assi 2011; PYM 2014). Nonetheless, although in the oPt there are individuals who are PYM members, our interviewees recounted that the PYN/PYM did not manage to build a solid chapter in Palestine. Aisheh recounted that during the last PYM IGA to date, which was held in Amman in 2014, participants decided that the IEB should invest efforts in "building those relationships and networks in Palestine so that we have some continuously functioning relationship", because, she said, "it's really strange to have a movement for Palestinian liberation without having the heart of that being in Palestine, in the homeland".

In the next section we discuss how PYM national chapters translate this analytical shift in their day-to-day political praxis, and in the alliances that the PYM is fostering with other grassroots, justice-inspired social movements active in their different local/national contexts.

1.3 PYM: Transnational Activism, Between Liberation and Securitization

The outbreak of the Arab Spring was strongly felt by PYM activists in France, for a number of reasons touching upon individuals' multi-faceted subjectivities, identifications and mobility in a postcolonial context. The fall of the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes "ignited [a] huge and powerful dynamic in our region", Ali recounted, in that for the first time it allowed youth in France "to feel that our Arab political being was possible". According to Sa'id, France's unique "proximity" and exposure "to what happens in the Arab world, [and] in Palestine" is due to the fact that "there are always people coming in from all over" and also, that there are many Arabophone youth. Hence, "there is much attention to what happens there [in the Arab region]" and when something does happen, "the energy that is freed here [in

¹⁸ The Declaration's first principle (The Fundamentals) is: "The independence of the Arab world and its liberation and immunity is essentially linked to the dignity of every Arab individual and his/her right to a dignified life and to a political system responsive to his/her aspirations to actively participate in the conception and the building of the present and the future of our homelands. Furthermore, while our conference reaffirms that the liberation of Palestine - all of Palestine - assures the return of the Palestinian refugees to the homes they have been expelled from since 1948, it also equally stresses the interdependence between the liberation of Palestine on one hand, and the achievement of social justice and dignity for every Arab individual as well as emancipating our collective homelands from tyranny and all forms of domination and political, economic and cultural subordination on the other hand (PYM 2012c).

¹⁹ This effort also resembles the PLO's early internationalist politics, when "Palestinian fighters pioneered an innovative strategy of revolutionary struggle designed to exploit the transnational terrain of the emerging global order" (Chamberlin 2012: 258), building political alliances with other national liberation movements and revolutionary governments. During the same years, Palestinian intellectuals in Fatah and the PFLP also engaged in a political dialogue with the Black Panther Party in the US, which came to consider Zionism and Israeli colonialism as an extension of US imperialism and racial capitalism (Lubin 2016: 84).

France] is phenomenal". The intersection between diaspora and a transnational politics of decolonization stretching across the shores of the Mediterranean is what prompted and made it possible for PYM to launch the 2012 conference in Tunis referred to above. In fact, the people who had been "demonstrating with us, around us, all of a sudden were now in positions of responsibility in Tunisia, at the government, in the institutions", Sa'id continued. Correspondingly, the PYM's keywords became those embraced by Arab protesters, including Palestinians: "dignity, justice and liberation".

Today, not only do most of the claims for social justice raised by protesters during and in the aftermath of the Arab Spring remain unfulfilled, but also, the ongoing transnational conflict between certain Western countries and the Islamic State (IS) is leading to an Islamophobic upsurge in many European countries. In France, where the public display of political and/or affective bonds outside of, or against, the current postcolonial order continues to be harshly repressed (Keaton 2005, Adrian 2015: 371, Saad 2016), the recent IS-claimed wave of massacres of civilians in Europe is exacerbating the increase in Islamophobia.²⁰ French authorities have also adopted a highly repressive stance against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) international campaign (Hervaud 2015). PYM activists thus operate within a local/national scene that is heavily characterized by increasing racialized surveillance. Accordingly, their struggle ties with that of other anti-racist social movements, such as the Anti-Negrophobia Brigade (BAN).²¹ On the other hand, Ali considers that French authorities are "trying to [...] put in the same box resistance against Zionism, and Daesh [IS]", thereby increasing activists' opportunity cost. Arguably, such framing can contribute to scaring people off the streets and keeping them away from each another, in fear of being accused of harbouring terrorist sympathies.

In the PYM Bay Area chapter (San Francisco), the impact of the Arab Spring wasn't as strongly felt as in France, nor is there "as much in-your-face Islamophobia [...] as in other parts of the country", Noor explained to us. However, several interviewees reported being targeted both personally and politically for their activism, and complained that this has affected the movement's capacity to attract new members and activists. As Noor explained, "a lot of [Palestinian] parents are actually afraid to send their kids out to do anything"; and many PYM members "are being under attack by Zionist organizations [and] by the media" (see Maira 2008: 187). Hence, similarly to PYM-France, PYM-California²² textures alliances with several social movements with which it shares an experience of racialized surveillance, because "here", as Aisheh explained us, "surveillance is targeting everyone. So that has really defined the work and orientation of PYM-US in terms of really making those connections between oppressions and the ways it affects different communities".

²⁰ See for example the current debate on the ban on burkinis (Eurotopics 2016).

²¹ Also, there are signs of transnational alliances building between BAN and Black Lives Matter on the subject of police brutality against black and "minority" people (Benhassain 2016).

²² It also includes chapters in San Diego and Los Angeles-inland Empire.

Using Hannah Arendt's notion of the "space of appearance"²³ to analyse a range of contemporary social movements in Western countries ("[f]rom the Zapatistas to the global Occupy project and today's Nuit Debout movement in France"), Lennard and Mirzoeff (2016) suggested that

the politics of appearance is no longer about submitting a petition to power, but instead organizing so that people can appear to each other. That means suspending the regulation of the space of appearance by norms, above all the norms of racial hierarchy, and then refusing to move on out of that space.

Such embodied resistance to forced dis-appearance seems to be a useful framework to read PYM-US's thick web of alliances with organizations such as Malcolm X Grassroots Movements; Black Lives Matter; Colectivo Zapatista; and Filipino, Chicano, and Native indigenous organizations (see for example Quintanilla and Moghannam 2015, Qutami 2014b). If appearing to one another is, for Arendt, a pre-requisite of politics, the coming together of such different movements and subjectivities discloses each one's "specific struggles to each other so that we can clearly see our common oppressors and struggle against them together" (Quintanilla and Moghannam 2015: 1045). Visually, such commitment is for example enshrined in a T-shirt the PYM designed and merchandizes for fundraising purposes²⁴: the front design connects Palestinians in Gaza with Syrians in Aleppo, black communities in Ferguson and Oakland (US), and Zapatistas in Chiapas (Mexico); and the design on the back reproduces a powerful quote from Frantz Fanon, stating that "[w]hen we revolt it's not for a particular culture. We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe".

Differently from other PYM chapters, the US chapter was able to establish alliances also with LGBTQI²⁵ movements. As Dana explained, however, such capacity is rooted in and reflects the very specific local context of California, and particularly the San Francisco Bay Area, which has historically been "a hub of social, economic and racial justice issues", characterized by and hosting "a large context around gender issues". Hence, as she said, "if we're gonna talk about social, economic and racial justice issues [...] we're gonna talk about gender issues and gender justice". We discuss further below whether and how PYM members active in other national/local contexts have addressed gender and sexuality within their political praxis, both internally and as a matter of public debate and/or mobilization.

1.4 Political Affects: Embodiment, Politics and Friendship in the Space of Appearance

Most interviewees reported that the intensity of the dialectic between the international and the national/local level is now thinner. Some of the reasons given for this outcome revolved

²³ In *The Human Condition*, Arendt (1998: 198-9) describes it as the space "where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but to make their appearance explicitly". For Arendt (1998: 198) the space of the Polis "lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be". Hence, if all political action occurs in the space in-between two (or more) human beings who can appear to one another, the key question is who can have access to, or create, such space, and which subjects cannot. Judith Butler (2011) indeed recalled that in Ancient Greece, in fact, "the slave, the foreigner, and the barbarian were excluded from such a space" and so were women.

²⁴ See the PYM *Online Store* website, https://stores.inksoft.com/palestinian_youth_movement.

²⁵ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex.

around a perceived top-down dynamic emanating from the international level, which affected members' capacity to operate effectively and inclusively at the local level. Asim, for example, recounted his difficult engagement in political dialogues with Palestinian groups and activists in Lebanon, because the PYM's discourse and politics "came before our work on the ground rather than the other way round, or rather than in parallel [and] this turned off a lot of people".

Another reason was the different degrees of embodied affectivity invested, and circulating, in the day-to-day texturing of the PYM's political praxis. For example, Noor explained that "it is harder to be able to organize with people who you don't know, who you don't see", in relation to the tasks of IEB members, who all live apart from one another, in different countries and continents. By contrast, at the national/local level "you have to interact, we are in the same spaces, you're seeing your comrades, we are able to see each other and build on the ground". The context that she finds more enabling, therefore, is characterized by a thick field of embodied affects, which make up the space where politics occurs, what Arendt called the "space of appearance".

In criticizing Arendt's notion for its reliance on the gendering of the public sphere as male, and of its agents as detached from the labour of human reproduction, Judith Butler proposed instead to consider that agents are necessarily embodied, and that "the organic bodies that we are require a sustaining social world in order to persist" (Butler 2011).²⁶ The political can't be detached from the social, because humans who appear to one another (which is a prerequisite of politics) can't be sustained without affective bonds. Such ethos emerges clearly in Aisheh's words below:

I think that necessarily in order be a strong movement you have to know one another, to trust one another, to feel accountable to one another's well-being (not just to one's political ideas), and to practice what sort of society is it that you're striving for, you have to practice that in your everyday life, if that's where your end goal is [...]. It's about [...] I don't know [...] just creating some sort of a collective identity, as hard as it is, and there's many struggles as we go through, and as many arguments and debates that we have. I think that process of going through that together builds the fabric of accountability and trust.

Here, political praxis is the everyday affective texture that bonds the individual to the collectivity s/he builds and wishes to live in - a praxis wherein the fictional division between the sphere of the political and the social no longer holds, and where the emotional and the political feed one another. Hence, at the initiative that PYM-US and Colectivo Zapatista co-organized to protest against the wall built on the US-Mexican border, organizers supplemented the 5k-run along the wall with a space (i.e., a group circle) where activists shared the reasons and emotions that brought them to participate in the event (Quintanilla and Moghannam 2015: 1043). Discussing contemporary politics in the US, and especially the tension between

²⁶ Her proposition, in turn, enabled her to make a case for a "critical and contesting politics [addressing] how basic goods are distributed, how life itself is allocated, and how the unequal distribution of the value and grievability of life is instituted by targeted warfare as well as systematic forms of exploitation or negligence, which render populations differentially precarious and disposable" (Butler 2011).

presidential candidate Trump's rhetoric and the Black Lives Matter movement, Lennard and Mirzoeff (2016) argued for building a politics of and for the embodied human, through which we can see "another human being, not just equal to us in law, but someone that we can listen to, learn from and fall in love with".

Speaking about international activists engaged in embodied protests in the oPt against the Israeli occupation as a transnational "imagined community" (Anderson 1991), Callan (2014: 112) similarly highlights that their practice is sustained by "the affective component of the sociality of prolonged dissent". As our interviews highlighted, such sociality generates "trust" among PYM members, which is a good that is both political and social, because it is relationally built in the act of doing politics. For example, many interviewees recounted the intense debates on the contemporary Syrian wars, debates that have been traversing Palestinians communities living in or outside Palestine. For a movement such as the PYM, which seeks to recreate a unitary collective organization beyond the contemporary fragmentation of Palestinian communities in and outside Palestine, such tensions have proved painful. Hence, Ahmad recounted that they try to maintain a middle ground position - neither with nor against Syrian President Assad - in public, but "when we sit together, when we are all together, of course we can talk"; meaning that by virtue of sharing a physical space as embodied (vs. Skype-cast bi-dimensional) beings, they can take the time to navigate through conflicting positions constructively. Friendship, physicality and social organizing seem to be intimately connected in the PYM's political praxis, so much so that they appear to constitute its very fabric. "We try to be careful", Noor said when we asked her about the process of applying for PYM membership, "we have seen so many times across other movements that they have been taken apart by infiltrators, so we don't say that we offer membership to anyone". As she recounted, "friendship plays a very important role there: out of necessity we've all become friends too, because we want to keep our movement alive".

2. HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: FRAMING THE FUTURE?

On human rights and international law, the findings show that the PYN/PYM started with a general acceptance of the international law and human rights framing of Palestinian politics - or the "Palestine issue" - endorsed (although not upheld in any meaningful way) by the EU and its member states, and with international resonance particularly at the UN. Relatively rapidly however, and impacted by political developments both in the MENA region and in their own diasporic contexts, individuals and the Movement itself found this framing to be un-sustaining of their own aspirations, experiences, identities and sense of justice. According to Sa'id:

In Paris [PYN's 2007 conference], one of our principles was that our approach would be a human rights approach;²⁷ in Palestine, this is seen as an alternative approach to Oslo, so it's no longer on the political negotiations approach but for human rights, international law, going back to law. But quickly we decided that it was not our approach, there were two critiques. To ask to be given our rights, this wasn't our project, our project was to liberate our land, for justice; to see whether we can have

²⁷ The by-laws of the PYN refer to "using a rights-based approach to political advocacy".

this or that right is not what we're doing in this project. The other critique is about what it gives us; this body of law doesn't always play out in our favour. So to base our project on international law, to construct it on the basis of that law, is to construct it on something that may oblige us to accept things that are against our project and unfavourable. So it's justice rather than law, liberation rather than law.

The process of developing the approach to international law and human rights was conscious and studied. According to Aisheh, between 2008 and 2011 (when the Network became the Movement) and building particularly around summer schools, they "developed the politics of a core group of people" from different parts of the Network/Movement and produced "a series of position papers" on a range of issues that were clearly felt to be of fundamental concern and that included "the human rights issue":

[W]e were very intentional about establishing our framework as an anti-colonial liberation framework, not a human rights framework. We will utilize human rights when it is strategic to do so, it will come into things, but [...] it's never the primary focal point of things, like "we're against what Israel's doing because it's against international law". Yes, it is against international law, and they are war criminals [...] and they have a terrible track record, but that's not how we frame things. We frame things as: Israel is a settler colonial project and the way we are going to liberate ourselves is through fighting an anti-colonial struggle for liberation.

A critique of the "human rights/international law framework" is placed in opposition to "liberation struggle" for the purposes of the PYM framework by Zayneh Hindi in the PYM's 2013 Nakba publication. Drawing on the internal position paper on "The Rights-Based Approach", she argues that the human rights framework is "problematic" for anti-colonial struggle *inter alia* because the "reference point and authority" of a "juridical, rights-based discourse" are placed with and referred to "bodies, institutions, conventions, rulings and resolutions that are rooted in hegemonic, juridical structures rather than indigenous, justice- and liberation-centered ones" (Hindi 2013: 25). Palestinians are thereby placed in the position of passive victims "waiting for their rights to be given to them or implemented by external bodies" while they should instead be "decision-makers and agents of action".

The observations by Sa'id and Aisheh quoted above, as well as Hindi's written summary of the PYM's internal position paper on this subject, invoke a number of themes that recurred in discussions with interviewed PYM members in particular regard to human rights and international law, and that have wider resonance in both scholarship and activism. The idea and presentation of "human rights" as non-political, for example, is linked to the approaches of solidarity organizations, particularly in Europe. Paying tribute to the Palestine Solidarity collective, Ali stated: "We've been working inside this framework for a very long time but then when it appeared for us that our vision and discourse was not compatible with the human rights, Oslo, international law agenda of these organizations, we began to organize more independently."

Here, rather than "human rights/international law" being perceived as a strategic approach alternative to the political approach of Oslo, the notions are conflated: they are all lumped together as part of an unsatisfactory approach. For her part, Noor insists that the human

rights discourse has strategic value in reaching out to solidarity groups: “We use it, but we don’t necessarily make it our only discourse”. The reliance placed by solidarity organizations on the human rights/international law framework as the dominant approach to the political framing of Palestine reflects the way in which these concepts have come to be privileged in public discourse and all sorts of activism in recent decades. Thus Marks is able to refer to the “Age of Human Rights” in presenting the “romantic account of human rights, the story of the establishment and consolidation of the international human rights regime” (Marks 2012: 314, 309-10) before turning to the more critical approaches which have attracted scholarship in recent years. In Palestine, where the particular context produces distinct pressures, the political leadership is invested in the international law discourse and framework, and human rights “framing” has been vigorously promoted by international actors and donors, especially post-Oslo (L. Allen 2013, Carapico 2014). The BDS initiative, considered by many to be a major manifestation of and site for resistance coming out of Palestine in the last years, invokes international law in framing its appeals to allies,²⁸ and so does Stop the Wall.²⁹

The discomfort or dissatisfaction with human rights voiced by PYM members starts from the perception of human rights being presented and promoted as “non-political” (a position defended by international and local human right groups in Palestine, for divergent reasons). Critical legal scholars - and critics in other disciplines - have strongly contested the claims to ‘neutrality’ (as well as “universality”) of human rights and international law and those actors invested in promoting it as a universal good, insisting instead on their irredeemably close entanglement with (colonial and imperial) power (Kennedy 2002 and 2012, Hoggood 2013, and see Chimni 2012 on the rule of law). While these critiques are intended as global, there are also Palestine-specific contributions: Mouin Rabbani (2009), himself a former researcher with al-Haq (the first Palestinian human rights organization, located in the West Bank), published an excoriating review of Human Rights Watch’s partiality as demonstrated by the positions taken and interventions made by the organization during Israel’s assault on Gaza 2008-09, ostensibly all based on and invoking international law and “fact finding”.³⁰

Nonetheless, in Palestine critics argue that in line with the dominant discourse, the human rights frame has been promoted to intentionally depoliticize struggle. According to Lori Allen (2013: 96-7), after Oslo, “[h]uman rights organizations became a refuge for former activists who, in the critics’ accounts [...] were not to remain nationalists and resistance fighters”. In 2013, writing in a PYM publication, Loubna Qutami (2013: 6) named NGOs, “International Solidarity bodies and discourses, and the international courts and state players” as among new structures that, post-Oslo, “have aimed to fill the void of the liberation project and its leadership”. For PYM member Asim, “the attraction [of PYM] was that it was political, not a depoliticized solidarity or even humanitarian sort of initiative but a political initiative”. For PYM interviewees, the non-political or even de-politicizing presentation of the human rights/international law frame was a source of disconnect. According to Farah: “I think that the

²⁸ See the BDS Movement website: *What Is BDS?*, <https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds>. See also Qutami (2014b): “The BDS story cannot texture the experiences, aspirations, desires, voices and needs of Palestinian youth of my generation who are seeking a political framework outside of the exhausted political paradigm and vocabulary of Oslo.”

²⁹ See the Stop the Wall website: *About Us*, <http://www.stopthewall.org/about-us>.

³⁰ The article was republished in 2014 against the background of a further assault.

movement [PYM] contributed somehow [to] having a very specific, critical approach to the human rights discourse, and refusing to present it like a struggle for human rights: no, it's not just that, it's a struggle for justice, which is slightly different."

Justice is a key concept for PYM members: "dignity, justice and liberation", as voiced by Sa'id and invoked in the online literature. In October 2015 the PYM website posted an International Call to Support the Intifada, insisting inter alia that "[t]his struggle is the uprising of a new generation of Palestinians, united everywhere around principles of dignity, justice and the liberation of all Palestine" (PYM 2015). The movement aspires to a future "characterized by freedom and justice on a social and political level".³¹ Human rights and international law are not invoked. According to Ali, "What moved us was the issue of justice, the liberation of Palestine from the colonial project that is wider than the specific Zionist project"; while Sa'id insisted: "Our common notion is: we are against the colonial project, not for this or that Palestinian state. We are guided by a notion of justice, not simply in terms of international law, as we think in terms of inclusion."

PYM members insist that the PYM's platform is fundamentally inclusive: that the idea of "justice" is first and foremost applied to the Movement and their individual relations with each other. To be against the colonial project is the convergence; there is no attempt to create a consensus on or even articulate a common vision of the "what comes after" return and liberation. This articulation rejects Oslo and any presentation of Oslo as binding (politically, morally or "legally": for early legal critiques of Oslo from Palestinian jurists see for example Shehadeh 1996).

Beyond this, however, justice and inclusion mean alliances with others and recognition of the justice of other struggles, as examined above. According to Asim:

If I want to introduce PYM to someone, I say it's a transnational grass roots youth organization that takes a justice-centred approach towards achieving complete liberation of Palestine. "Justice-centred" means being in solidarity or recognizing that our struggle is not the only struggle and there are other justice struggles that need to be supported and have to be supported if we want to achieve liberation. So it has to do with cross-movement building, recognizing that the injustice perpetrated against the Palestinians was not only a nationalist oppression, there are many different levels of oppression, look at race, class and gender, so I think this is what justice means.

Aisheh similarly stressed the group's intersectional approach: "the joint struggle is really important for the US chapter" in the particularly diverse community of the Bay Area activities. Here again we find resonance with critical scholarship in drawing links between different struggles against oppression. In 2000, Makau Mutua opened his address to the annual meeting of the American Society of International Law by describing the "regime of international law" as "illegitimate" and "a predatory system that legitimizes, reproduces and sustains the plunder and subordination of the Third World by the West. Neither universality nor its promise of global order and stability make international law a just, equitable and legitimate code of governance for the Third World" (Mutua 2000: 31). Mutua was introducing

³¹ See the PYM website: *Who We Are*, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=14>.

“this broad dialectic of opposition to international law” as the thrust of TWAIL (Third World Approaches to International Law), its commitment that “[a]ll factors that create, foster, legitimize, and maintain harmful hierarchies and oppressions must be revisited and changed” (Mutua 2000: 38). He and others note shared principles with other critical scholars (Critical Race Theory, Critical Legal Studies and Lat-Crit theorists: Mutua 2000, Anghie 2000, see also Natarajan 2012, Okafor 2005, Fidler 2003). Such critique has clear resonance with PYM discourse. Having situated the PYM as part of an anti-colonial struggle for liberation, Aisheh continued:

For us it's not about “well they're violating human rights” - because we don't give the agency to international bodies that have historically oppressed us. Why would we give legitimacy to the UN? Why would we give legitimacy to something that is primarily European-driven, that goes against our values and our principles as Palestinians, as people of colour, as third world organizers? And so it's important to us not to heed or give too much respect to international law, to humanitarian, human rights law, because of all of those have roots in Euro-centric institutions. So we really draw our power from indigenous struggles, from anti-colonial struggles, and that is the key to how we look at things.

Writing from the American University in Cairo, Natarajan (2012: 177) makes a broader point about the “heavily negative perception of international law in the Arab world”. Following the so-called “Arab Spring”, she says, “youth in the Arab world have a sense of being part of their own independence struggle, recalling the independence movements of postcolonial states”. Reflecting on the way the political discourse had changed, in his case particularly as a result of the Arab revolutions, Asim drew attention to the global framing as follows:

Before, I used to see Palestine as being central to the problems that our region's facing, or as *the* central part, rather than (as I do now) as a small part of the global system, which if you accept it then it's easy to accept the situation in Palestine, Israeli colonialism, a system that accepts so much inequality both within nations and on the international level, it's easy to accept a system of apartheid and settler colonialism. [...] This is what changed for me.

The conclusion here is about the dialogic relationship between the small part and the “global system”, framed as they both are by the current articulations and boundaries of international law, together with their inequalities and injustices. This appears to underlie the varying attitudes of PYM members interviewed for this study towards the issues of human rights and international law: from highly critical to equivocal to strategic, but not binding upon the political framing of their own struggle, nor necessarily inherent to their own visions of liberation and of what justice means.

In the next section we will discuss whether and how the PYM's political praxis articulates its generation- and nationality-based identity in relation to other salient facets of subjectivities, and notably gender identity, sexual orientation and social class.

3. INTERSECTIONALITY AT/IN POLITICAL WORK

Academic literature on youth movements in the MENA region has analysed the significance of generation-based collective identity. Linda Herrera (2012: 340) talks about generational consciousness; Asef Bayat looks at youth contemporary claims in the context of repressive regimes as “social nonmovements” (Bayat 2010: 14-5) seeking to readdress their economic and political exclusion (Bayat and Herrera 2010).

More rarely studies interrogate “youth” or “youthfulness” in an intersectional way by looking at how a collective identity such as youth is intersected by other salient facets of subjectivity (e.g., gender identity, sexual orientation, social class, race, ethnicity, religion). In fact, a discussion of a movement’s political praxis necessarily entails looking at the extent to which it reflects, reproduces or challenges hierarchies of power organized along gender, sexuality, class, race (and other) differences which structure the broader contexts it operates within (Taylor 1999: 17). For example, Dina El-Sharnouby (2015) analyses the dynamics of youth participation in the “Tahrir Square experience”, disentangling its gendered and class-based connotation and representation. Shirin Moazami (Amir-Moazami 2010) analyses the problematic around the use of the notion of “youthfulness” for young Muslim pious women of the second generation in France and Germany. Mustafa Bayoumi (2010) has investigated the emergence of strong group solidarities inspired by religious identity among Arab American young men, as a reaction to the Islamophobic environment post 9/11. These youth are “self-consciously” positioning themselves as a “vanguard” generation by inhabiting simultaneously their subjectivities as “Young, Muslim and American” (Bayoumi 2010: 168).

As discussed earlier, the PYM’s identity statement emphasizes its generation- and national-based identity. Until recently, PYM membership rules followed those established by its predecessor, the PYN (Ayyash 2013: 283). For individual members,³² these entailed compliance with two complementary status-based criteria: age, at between 18 and 35, and an individual’s space- or kinship-based relationship to Palestine/Palestinians.³³ The subject making the statement, however, is gender-less, and calls for unity (also) above social differences – by which we can infer that they meant social class differences. We will now discuss the PYM’s collective identity frame (i.e., abstract) through its individual members’ embodied practices and perceptions.

Many of our interviewees recalled that when the PYN was established, the meaning of the 35-year age cap was mainly descriptive, in that it was broad enough to encompass the age profile of all its founding members. The use of the youth label, however, enabled them to create an autonomous space wherein they could elaborate and practice their own politics.

³² PYN by-laws envisaged the possibility of organizational membership for Palestinian youth-led organizations or groups “whose mission and activities do not contradict the principles of the PYN”, and the majority of whose members were Palestinian youth (PYN 2010a: 9).

³³ PYN membership was “open to any person between the ages of 18 and 35 who is of Palestinian origin” (PYN 2010a: 9). The Nakba is a crucial defining event of Palestinian-ness: in fact, by-laws defined Palestinians as: “Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine regardless of whether they voluntarily emigrated, were evicted from it or stayed there. Anyone born after that date, of a Palestinian father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, great-grandfather or great-grandmother, whether inside Palestine or outside it, is also Palestinian. A Palestinian is also that person who is entitled to Palestinian citizenship” (PYN 2010a: 21).

“We did not really theorize what it means to be youth, it was mostly [...] a message to others: leave us alone, leave us in peace [because] we wanted to build our own space”, Sa’id told us. As already discussed earlier in this report, the establishment of the PYN was triggered by youth frustration with the fragmentation internal to Palestinian communities, and critique of its leadership made of “tired, sold-out political parties that are not in communication with us people, let alone serving our interests”, as Aisheh recounted. Consistent with existing scholarship observing that especially after Oslo, leadership positions in the Palestinian movement and society have been monopolized by old men (Ahmad 2013: 5), Asim also described the impetus leading to the creation of the movement as a reaction to senior Palestinian men’s interference with youth political organizing:

We needed this space for younger people who wanted to be active politically without having someone who is 60/70 years old, who played their role, who sacrificed a lot, who we still have tremendous respect for, who we have a lot to learn from [...] but we need to be given that space and to organize on our own.

Although paying tribute to seniors as carriers of valuable experiences, Asim’s words above suggest that youth organizing served to create a space wherein the value of seniority as an organizing principle of society could be suspended, and its discredited leaders by-passed. As we will discuss further below, both young men and women take part on an equal basis in PYM’s challenge to “patriarchy-as-governance” (Kandiyoti 2014) and indeed, Asim called for building “more democratic movements, or more participatory movements, [where] women’s voices will be heard more strongly, and women’s decisions will be effected in a better way”.

The passing of time, however, is blurring what had been initially articulated as a clear-cut generation-based political divide. On one side, sustaining one’s participation in PYM’s space of appearance is becoming more strenuous, as its members’ affective ties and responsibilities diminish the “huge amount of energy and availability [they would need to invest] in some specific struggles and organizing”, as Ali told us. Reacting to the perceived lowering of creative rage with age, Asim called for lowering the age of membership, in order to make more space for “people who are angry with what’s going on and people with a future they care about, and a future they’ll invest in”. Ahmad similarly highlighted that also in Egypt “all the old people [...] are behind [al-]Sisi, because they just want security, [whereas] the young people are more risk-takers, and they’re ready to take more risks for freedom”. Nonetheless, he seemed to anticipate with some melancholy the moment when his age would demand his own exit from PYM which, as we’ve discussed earlier, is a peculiarly affect-intensive political space. “To put an age limit for this, [to define] what is a generation, is quite difficult”, he concluded.

As against existing (and scant) literature discussing gender hierarchies in youth activism (see for example Coe et al. 2013, Gordon 2008), and scholarship on gender and Palestinian nationalism and/or activism (see for example Younes 2010, Amireh 2003, Høigilt et al. 2013: 4, Fincham 2012: 127-8), our findings suggest that gender identity³⁴ does not constitute an

³⁴ Although we did not ask explicitly questions related to our interviewees’ sexual orientation, many of them were in a heterosexual marriage.

organizing principle affecting a PYM member's role and/or mobility within the movement.³⁵ The analysis of online PYN/PYM literature confirmed that its collective speaking subject is consistently constructed as gender-less, i.e., "youth" (see for example PYN 2008, PYM 2012ba). Women, however, participated in its establishment, and continue to be engaged in PYM on equal terms with their male peers, sharing roles and leadership positions, and contributing to intellectual and political debates (see for example Qutami 2014a and 2014b, Abu Samra 2013, PYM 2013). Furthermore, the PYM-Bay Area chapter has been consistently and uniquely women-led and driven, and during interviews we found ourselves in the rare position of interrogating the significance of men's absence from such space of political organizing.³⁶ Our interviewees similarly expressed their puzzlement. "It's an interesting question, honestly, and that's actually been the case, for us, since we started, it's been mostly women who are involved, [and who are] in leadership positions", said Dana. Brainstorming during interviews, reasons given included gender-based differences in organizational commitment and reliability;³⁷ gendered and class-based educational choices and/or career patterns;³⁸ and a saturated, politically competitive scene. An in-depth exploration of this issue, however, would need additional research.

Some online PYN literature articulated explicitly the organization's gender equality goals (PYN 2011: 3, PYM 2012b). Sa'id recalled that indeed, the PYM's vision of justice for Palestine did not stop short of looking at how power could operate and be institutionalized also inside PYN/PYM itself, reinforcing hierarchies of social and economic value that structure the broader context in which they aimed to effect change. The PYM's goal of inclusiveness is based on justice, Sa'id recounted, and "in our summer schools we worked on our relationships to one another in terms of social, gender, culture, geographical origin". This impression was confirmed during interviews with women active in different PYM chapters, who reported feeling considered as equals by their male peers. For example, Salwa said, "I never felt I'm less considered because I'm a woman, or excluded, or [that] my opinion is less valued or taken into consideration because of gender." Farah, a co-founder of the PYM, echoed these words, and remembered that some of her peers suggested having "a kind of day care for kids for our meetings". Such horizontal equality did not uniformly characterize the PYM's political praxis, however. Asim for example remembered that in Lebanon, "gender dynamics [...] were not exceptional to the gender dynamics that exist in society in general".³⁹ However, his self-criticism indirectly confirms that gender justice is part and parcel of the PYM's political praxis: "[W]e had to be very careful not to allow decisions to become monopolized by men. Most of the times we were probably unsuccessful, but I think in smaller gatherings, in smaller

³⁵ Investigating the extent to which gendered socialization affected PYM members' decision to engage in political activism, and/or prevented others from joining, was beyond the scope of our research.

³⁶ Significantly, we were not able to interview any male member of the PYM-US, although women interviewees reported there being a few active ones.

³⁷ Aisheh for example said that men "come to the protests [...] but when it comes to the long-term sustained political organizing, they just completely disappear; or I don't know, they just have a smaller attention span than women do?"

³⁸ Aisheh for example wondered whether women's concentration in social sciences led them "to having a sort of harmonious relationship between their career or academic pursuits and social justice organizing". Differently, men were more into natural sciences and engineering, and also, more focused "on getting a job, depending on where you are at - if you have to work in your parents' liquor store".

³⁹ We were not able to interview former women members.

sit-downs, it was possible to get through this.”

Members’ perception of the meaning and relevance of “gender” for the movement’s agenda, however, varied considerably across PYM members, as if its use in different contexts evoked different scenarios and fields of power.

As highlighted earlier, PYM-US members considered gender justice to be a constitutive part of the Movement’s struggle for achieving social, economic and racial justice, and as Noor explained to us, the organization has been supportive of “queer, LGBT, transgender” movements.⁴⁰ Such positioning, however, does not seem to be equally viable in other national/local contexts. In the US “they talk about it [the gender issue], it’s more present I think in the US society than in France or of course in Palestine”, Zayd recounted, and this “has an impact on the way that PYM members in the US will be thinking about it”. When they put “the subject on the table” during international PYN/PYM meetings, however, some PYM members reacted with embarrassment, or mockery: “We were having people laughing in the room, okay? Like people from Palestine, from Jordan. That’s like a kind of sensitivity to it.” Indeed, discussing with some of our interviewees what “it” meant proved to be elusive, and seems to indicate that on some occasions, the word “gender” is also used as a sanitized metonym of non-heteronormative sexualities. Questions approaching sexual orientations were quickly sidelined by some of our interviewees, who shifted the discussion to the more “familiar” gender in/equality framework. For example, when we asked Zayd if talking about “gender issues” included for example discussing homosexuality, he said that “no, we’re not there yet”, but then he promptly and more confidently spoke about some PYM chapters’ attempts to contribute to “empowering women”. Salwa considered that talking about homosexuality in Palestine is still a “luxury”, in a situation where “there are women killed [...] for stupid reasons and the killers are protected by law”. Nonetheless, it is possible that PYM members’ different perception of the relevance of “gender issues” in their struggle for the liberation of Palestine depends in part on the interviewees’ gender identity, and the places where they were born and raised as (gendered) beings. Hence, Ahmad promptly evoked “the vocabulary of Orientalism [Said 1979]”, and remarked that “the question of the woman is the first argument for the Western countries to enter the Third World”. Acknowledging that no society has achieved gender parity yet, he described discussing “these issues only between us”. For her part, Salwa found it “awkward that we talked about it [gender in/equality] only once or twice, and [...] never as a direct topic”, and suggested that such lack partly reflected male members’ (gendered) experience and imagination of the homeland:⁴¹

⁴⁰ Discussing the reasons for Noor’s distancing from feminist movements, and the separation of these latter from other gender- and sexuality-based social movements goes beyond the scope of our research; however it might be at least in part related to the transphobia characterizing some strands of US feminism (E. Allen 2013, Vasquez 2014). Moreover, this exclusion wasn’t consistent among her peers, as for example Dana included feminist movements among their allies. Some scholarship suggests that youth movements that practice horizontal gender equality internally, might choose to emphasize “age more than gender hierarchies” because of the “stigmatization of feminism” (Coe et al. 2013: 708).

⁴¹ In Salwa’s words it’s the “guys” who do not perceive the relevance of gender discrimination in Palestine, and there is much scholarship suggesting how such a gender-neutral view, rooted in male privilege, tends to result in the institutionalization of women’s subordination to men after liberation. In fact, Iman also said that she was “always in contact with woman in Palestine, I read the news” and expressed her sorrow for “how things go”.

The guys here [male PYM members] don't have this gender issue, this problem, they didn't live it, because for them this problem doesn't exist: we are all equals, we are all Palestinians, women and men, we have the same duties, same rights, so I don't feel that they really recognize how important it [gender] is for our society, in Palestine, because they've never been, or they've never lived in Palestine. But for me I see [it], and it will be a big obstacle for liberation.

Finally, as for the salience of social class in the PYM's political praxis, our findings present us with a mixed picture. An analysis of PYN online literature does not reveal members' preoccupation with the role of social class in facilitating/obstructing the organization's mobilization capacity and outreach to its intended audiences. The PYM's first newsletter, however, contains its members' explicit positioning as "working class students and youth" and emphasizes the non-paid nature of their commitment and efforts, distancing itself from NGOs and political factions (PYM 2012b: 14). "This is something that in PYM we've been clear about," Ali recalled, "we don't want to become NGOs with paid workers and activists". Such positioning is clearly deliberate and goes to the current situation in the oPt, as well as - presumably - to external NGO involvement in Palestine issues for the diaspora/*Shatat*. Also, our interviews confirmed that PYM chapters attempt to rely on the financial resources they can mobilize directly (e.g., through fundraisers, tabling at social events, Facebook campaigns, crowdfunding, merchandising).

Individuals' coping capacity with such voluntarism, however, possibly depended on their own economic in/security and financial responsibilities. "How do you spare needed resources and time to build this very ambitious project and action?", wondered Ali, from his new position of husband and father. Most of our interviewees were in, or had recently completed their higher education, and some of them now worked in service jobs (welfare, food sales, etc.) or in international companies, but we do not know with certainty to what extent the PYM newsletter's class positioning is representative of the majority of PYM members' socioeconomic background. It is possible, however, that it partially aimed to redress earlier perceptions of the PYN as an organization made of, as Farah recounted, "an elite of people who can eventually travel and participate in this kind of [international] activities". Analogously, Asim said that most of the PYN/PYM members "came from outside of Lebanon, and [held] university degrees, so [they were] not at all a representative sample of the Palestinians in Lebanon", and this affected their capacity to expand membership and texture local alliances. Significantly, when responding to our question as to whether PYM had ever organized activities on International Women's Day, some of our interviewees intentionally underlined the by now overlooked class-connotation of this commemoration. For example, Noor stressed: "We have been involved in International *Working Women's Day*". Some of our interviewees in fact relayed us that with the outbreak of the Arab Spring, members' different social class positioning and/or consciousness ignited a political crisis in some PYM chapters. Asim for example recalled that "many of the new bourgeois of Jordan are in fact Palestinian, the descendants of Palestinian refugees" who feared losing "what they've been able to build, like, their businesses, their wealth, their rights". Farah recounted that in Jordan, the chapter split over its participation in the ongoing struggle for "a radical reform of politics in Jordan" versus "a Palestinian nationalist approach". Such tensions between Palestinians' national identity and their class positioning is perfectly epitomized by Asim's words below, where he relayed to us the contrasting positions that emerged during the PYM's 2012 conference in Tunis in

relation to the Syrian wars: “Did the Palestinians have a role to play, or should we say “no, we’re only concerned with the liberation of Palestine, and we want any internal Arab conflict to be resolved so that we can focus our efforts on Palestine”? This was the disagreement.”

In a different space, Maha similarly found herself pondering which facet of her subjectivity should prevail in her own and in her chapter’s political praxis. Looking back at the first national summer school organized by PYM-US, Maha recounted feeling overwhelmed by the dense field of sometimes contradictory, competing affects and identities voiced by participants. “I think that there is where it became really, really difficult, to have so many people battling their own identity politics”, she recounted. Witnessing that complexity brought her to think reflexively about her own subjectivity, feeling torn in “this intricate fight within yourself [...] am I more Palestinian than a Palestinian in Gaza? Am I more Palestinian than the Palestinian who’s living in Syria?” For Maha, a big challenge for the PYM is “constantly trying to pick up different pieces to different puzzles all the time”; and we feel that the applicability of her acknowledgement travels across many borders.

CONCLUSIONS

In this report we showed how the PYM’s transnational politics provides a different angle from which to discuss youth engagement in politics and social movements in, across and beyond the MENA region. The PYM operates in an explicitly transnational setting, seeking to escape from and transcend “national” logics and spaces, whether from an organizational, ideological or cultural point of view. Rather than wishing (more) representation within the existing political frameworks, PYM politics extends beyond the conceptual, physical or even political delimitation of the nation-state, both in the Movement’s ways of thinking about self-determination and in its political praxis. The PYM articulates its identity and operates through its double or multiple consciousness to read, analyse and struggle against the interlocking forms of power that operate across the globe, and which are locally “articulated in specific situations - or territorialized in *assemblages*” (Collier and Ong 2005: 4). Such global/transnational/local connections bring the PYM to foster alliances with multiple social movements, with most of which they share an experience of racialized surveillance.

The attitude of PYM members interviewed for this study towards the issues of human rights and international law suggests these are not regarded as binding upon the framing of their own struggle, nor necessarily inherent to their visions of liberation and justice.

Although the PYM adopts a gender-neutral vocabulary in its political language, we found that both men and women actively participate in it and appear to share voice, roles and decision-making power equally. Compounded by the formulation of its youth-based identity as a label/space wherein the principle of seniority as an organizing principle of society can be suspended, PYM political praxis de facto challenges the legitimacy of patriarchy-as-governance (Kandiyoti 2014). Also, its emphasis on trust, friendship and physicality as crucial for doing politics, overcomes the traditional division of the political and the social, making a compelling case for understanding politics as an endeavour of and for embodied human beings.

REFERENCES

- Abdulhaq, Raja (2008), "Rebuilding a General Union of Palestinian Students", in *The Electronic Intifada*, 30 November, <https://electronicintifada.net/node/7821>
- Abu Assi, Fidaa (2011), "Beyond My Gaza, I See the Whole Universe", in *mrpower55* (blog), 7 January, <http://wp.me/p3bDh6-2c>
- Abu Samra, Mjriam (2013), "Nakba Day: New Challenges for Palestinian New Generations", in *Pressenza*, 15 May, <https://www.pressenza.com/?p=52166>
- Adrian, Melanie (2015), "Outlawing the Veil, Banning the Muslim? Restricting Religious Freedom in France", in *CrossCurrents*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (September), p. 371-379
- Ahmad, Ayed (2013), "Palestinian Youth: Between Patriarchy and Politics", in *The Atkin Paper Series*, July, <http://icsr.info/2013/09/palestinian-youth-between-patriarchy-and-politics>
- Allen, Emma (2013), "Unpacking Transphobia in Feminism", in *The TransAdvocate*, 9 August, <http://wp.me/p7yjFi-2AI>
- Allen, Lori (2013), *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights. Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*, Stanford, Stanford University Press
- Amireh, Amal (2003), "Between Complicity and Subversion: Body Politics in Palestinian National Narrative", in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 102, No. 4 (Fall), p. 747-772
- Amir-Moazami, Schirin (2010), "Avoiding 'Youthfulness?': Young Muslims Negotiating Gender and Citizenship in France and Germany", in Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera, eds., *Being Young and Muslim. New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 189-205
- Anderson, Benedict (1991), *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed., London and New York, Verso
- Anghie, Antony (2000), "What Is TWAIL?: Comments", in *Proceedings of the ASIL Annual Meeting*, Vol. 94, p. 39-40
- Arendt, Hannah (1998), *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed., Chicago, University of Chicago Press
- Ayyash, Mark Muhannad (2013), "Carrying the Burden of Past Violences", in *Sikh Formations*, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 279-297
- Bayat, Asef (2010), *Life as Politics. How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, Stanford, Stanford University Press
- Bayat, Asef and Linda Herrera, eds. (2010), *Being Young and Muslim. New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press

Bayoumi, Moustafa (2010), "Being Young, Muslim, and American in Brooklyn", in Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera, eds., *Being Young and Muslim. New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 161-187

Benhassain, Fayçal (2016), "Black Lives Matter Makes Appearance in French Protests", in *CNS News*, 26 July, <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/fay-al-benhassain/black-lives-matter-makes-appearance-french-protests>

Bitar, Maher (2009), "Activism among a New Generation of Palestinian Exiles", in *Forced Migration Review*, No. 33 (September), p. 54, <http://www.fmreview.org/protracted/bitars.html>

Butler, Judith (2011), *Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street*, paper presented at The State of Things, Venice, 7 September, <http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en>

Callan, Brian (2014), "Something's Wrong Here: Transnational Dissent and the Unimagined Community", in *Contemporary Social Science*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (December), p. 106-120

Carapico, Sheila (2014), *Political Aid and Arab Activism. Democracy Promotion, Justice, and Representation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Chamberlin, Paul Thomas (2012), *The Global Offensive. The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press

Chimni, B.S. (2012), "Legitimizing the International Rule of Law", in James Crawford and Martti Koskeniemi, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to International Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 290-308

Coe, Anna-Britt, Isabel Goicolea and Ann Öhman (2013), "How Gender Hierarchies Matter in Youth Activism: Young People's Mobilizing around Sexual Health in Ecuador and Peru", in *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 6, p. 695-711

Collier Stephen J. and Aihwa Ong (2005), "Global Assemblages, Anthropological Problems", in Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier, eds., *Global Assemblages. Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, Malden, Blackwell, p. 3-21

El-Sharnouby, Dina (2015), "From State Exclusionary Politics to Youth Inclusionary Practices: The Tahrir Square Experience", in *International Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 45, No. 3, p. 176-189

Eurotopics (2016), *Burkini Ban Overruled in France*, 30 August, <https://www.eurotopics.net/en/164444>

Fidler, David P. (2003), "Revolt Against or From Within the West? TWAIL, the Developing World, and the Future Direction of International Law", in *Chinese Journal of International Law*, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 29-76

- Fincham, Kathleen (2012), "Learning the Nation in Exile: Constructing Youth Identities, Belonging and 'Citizenship' in Palestinian Refugee Camps in South Lebanon", in *Comparative Education*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (December), p. 119-133
- Gordon, Hava Rachel (2008), "Gendered Paths to Teenage Political Participation: Parental Power, Civic Mobility, and Youth Activism", in *Gender and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (February), p. 31-55
- Herrera, Linda (2012), "Youth and Citizenship in the Digital Age: A View from Egypt", in *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (Fall), p. 333-352
- Hervaud, Alexandre (2015), "Le boycott anti-israélien est 'illégal' en France", in *Libération*, 28 October, http://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/10/28/le-boycott-anti-israelien-est-illegal-en-france_1409557
- Hindi, Zaynah (2013), "(Re-)politicizing Displacement in the Case of Palestine", in Palestinian Youth Movement, *Nakba 2013. Palestinian Youth Movement Booklet*, http://www.pal-youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/201305_-_PYM-Nakba-Booklet-May-13.pdf
- Høigilt, Jacob (2013), "The Palestinian Spring That Was Not: The Youth and Political Activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories", in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Fall), p. 343-359
- Høigilt, Jacob, Akram Atallah and Hani El-Dada (2013), "Palestinian Youth Activism: New Actors, New Possibilities?", in *NOREF Reports*, June, <http://noref.no/Regions/Middle-East-and-North-Africa/Israel-Palestine/Publications/Palestinian-youth-activism-new-actors-new-possibilities>
- Hopgood, Stephen (2013), *The Endtimes of Human Rights*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press
- Kandiyoti, Deniz (2014), "Contesting Patriarchy-as-Governance: Lessons from Youth-Led Activism", in *openDemocracy*, 7 March, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/node/80009>
- Keaton, Trica (2005), "Arrogant Assimilationism: National Identity Politics and African-Origin Muslim Girls in the Other France", in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (December), p. 405-423
- Kennedy, David (2002), "The International Human Rights Movement: Part of the Problem?", in *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, Vol. 15, p. 101-125, <http://www.law.harvard.edu/faculty/dkennedy/publications/humanrights.pdf>
- Kennedy, David (2012), "The International Human Rights Regime: Still Part of the Problem?", in Rob Dickinson et al., eds., *Examining Critical Perspectives on Human Rights*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 19-34, <http://www.law.harvard.edu/faculty/dkennedy/publications/International Human Rights Regime CUP 2012.pdf>

Lennard, Natasha and Nicholas Mirzoeff (2016), "What Protest Looks Like", in *The New York Times*, 3 August, <https://nyti.ms/2k6Ytua>

Lubin, Alex (2016), "Black Panther Palestine", in *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, Vol. 35, No. 1, p. 77-97

Maira, Sunaina (2008), "'We Ain't Missing'. Palestinian Hip Hop - A Transnational Youth Movement", in *The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Fall), p. 161-192

Marks, Susan (2012), "Human Rights in Disastrous Times", in James Crawford and Martti Koskeniemi, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to International Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 309-326

Mishra, Vijay (1996), "The Diasporic Imaginary: Theorizing the Indian Diaspora", in *Textual Practice*, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 421-447

Mutua, Makau (2000), "What Is TWAIL?", in *Proceedings of the ASIL Annual Meeting*, Vol. 94, p. 31-38

Natarajan, Usha (2012), "TWAIL and the Environment: The State of Nature, the Nature of the State, and the Arab Spring", in *Oregon Review of International Law*, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 177-201, <http://hdl.handle.net/1794/12605>

Okafor, Obiora Chinedu (2005), "Newness, Imperialism, and International Legal Reform in Our Time: A TWAIL Perspective", in *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 1/2, p. 171-191, <http://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/ohlj/vol43/iss1/7>

Peteet, Julie (2007), "Problematizing a Palestinian Diaspora", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (November), p. 627-646

PYM/Palestinian Youth Movement (2011), *Statement on the Declaration of Statehood*, 12 September, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=439>

PYM/Palestinian Youth Movement (2012a), *Arab Youth Conference for Liberation and Dignity*, 27 December, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=142>

PYM/Palestinian Youth Movement (2012b), *Newsletter No. 4*, April, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=132>

PYM/Palestinian Youth Movement (2012c), *Tunisia Declaration - Arab Youth Conference for Liberation and Dignity*, 30 December, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=138>

PYM/Palestinian Youth Movement (2013), *Nakba 2013. Palestinian Youth Movement Booklet*, http://www.pal-youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/201305_-_PYM-Nakba-Booklet-May-13.pdf

PYM/Palestinian Youth Movement (2014), *Conférence de la jeunesse arabe pour la libération, la justice et la dignité - tournée européenne*, 22 May, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=280>

PYM/Palestinian Youth Movement (2015), *Palestinian Youth International Call to Support the Intifada*, 25 October, <http://www.pal-youth.org/?p=496>

PYM/Palestinian Youth Movement (2017), *PYM 2017 Summer School Application*, <https://www.facebook.com/events/728398730662225>

PYN/Palestinian Youth Network (2007a), *Final Statement of the Palestinian Youth Network Foundation Conference*, Paris, November, http://www.pal-youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Final-statement_eng.doc

PYN/Palestinian Youth Network (2007b), *Summit Agenda: France 21st to 30th of November 2007*, http://www.pal-youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Seminar-Agenda_final.doc

PYN/Palestinian Youth Network (2008), *Statement of the Third Palestinian Youth Network Conference*, Madrid, November, http://www.pal-youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/PYN_Final_Statement_revised.doc

PYN/Palestinian Youth Network (2009), "The Palestinian Youth Network Summer Camps! Application due May 20th!", in *Nakba 61*, <https://www.causes.com/causes/19958-nakba-61/updates/162463-the-palestinian-youth-network-summer-camps-application-due-may-20th>

PYN/Palestinian Youth Network (2010a), *The Inception of the Palestinian Youth Network*, <http://www.annalindhoundation.org/sites/annalindh.org/files/members/booklet20english.pdf>

PYN/Palestinian Youth Network (2010b), *Newsletter No. 1*

PYN/Palestinian Youth Network (2010c), *Newsletter No. 2*

PYN/Palestinian Youth Network (2011), *Newsletter No. 3*

Quintanilla, Leslie and Jennifer Moghannam (2015), "Borders Are Obsolete: Relations beyond the 'Borderlands' of Palestine and US-Mexico", in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (December), p. 1039-1046

Qutami, Loubna (2013), "1948's Nakba: The Beginning to an Ongoing Project of Erasure", in Palestinian Youth Movement, *Nakba 2013. Palestinian Youth Movement Booklet*, http://www.pal-youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/201305_-_PYM-Nakba-Booklet-May-13.pdf

Qutami, Loubna (2014a), "No Revolution Is Perfect. Palestinian Youth Perspectives on Syria, Palestine and a Liberated Arab Region", in *PULSE*, 8 March, <http://wp.me/ppCFZ-aUD>

Qutami, Loubna (2014b), "Rethinking the Single Story: BDS, Transnational Cross Movement Building and the Palestine Analytic", in *Social Text*, 17 June, <https://socialtextjournal.com>

org/?p=4843

Rabbani, Mouin (2009), "Human Rights Watch Goes to War", in *MERIP Online*, 1 February, http://www.merip.org/newspaper_opeds/oped020109

Saad, Ali (2016), "Why Is Tariq Ramadan Demonised in France?", in *Al Jazeera*, 7 April, <http://aje.io/5ypy>

Safran, William (1991), "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return", in *Diaspora*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring), p. 83-99, <http://europeofdiasporas.eu/node/78>

Said, Edward W. (1979), *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed., New York, Vintage Books

Salih, Ruba, Lynn Welchman and Elena Zambelli (2017), "Gender, Intersectionality and Youth Civic and Political Engagement. An Analysis of the Meso-Level Factors of Youth Exclusion/inclusion in the South and East Mediterranean (SEM) Region", in *Power2Youth Working Papers*, No. 24 (February), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/7276>

Shehadeh, Raja (1996), "The Weight of Legal History: Constraints and Hopes in the Search for a Sovereign Legal Language", in Eugene Cotran and Chibli Mallat, eds., *The Arab-Israeli Accords: Legal Perspectives*, London and Boston, Kluwer Law International, p. 3-20

Taylor, Verta (1999), "Gender and Social Movements: Gender Processes in Women's Self-Help Movements", in *Gender and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (February), p. 8-33

Tilly, Charles (2008), *Contentious Performances*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press

United Nations General Assembly (1947), *Resolution on Future Government of Palestine (A/RES/181/II)*, 29 November, [http://undocs.org/A/RES/181\(II\)](http://undocs.org/A/RES/181(II))

Vasquez, Tina (2014), "It's Time to End the Long History of Feminism Failing Transgender Women", in *Bitch Media*, 17 February, <https://www.bitchmedia.org/node/18185>

Wimmer, Andreas and Nina Glick Schiller (2002), "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences", in *Global Networks*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (October), p. 301-334

Younes, Anna-Esther (2010), "A Gendered Movement for Liberation: Hamas's Women's Movement and Nation Building in Contemporary Palestine", in *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 21-37



POWER2YOUTH is a research project aimed at offering a critical understanding of youth in the South East Mediterranean (SEM) region through a comprehensive interdisciplinary, multi-level and gender sensitive approach. By combining the economic, political and socio-cultural spheres and a macro (policy/institutional), meso (organizational) and micro (individual) level analysis, POWER2YOUTH explores the root causes and complex dynamics of the processes of youth exclusion and inclusion in the labour market and civic/political life, while investigating the potentially transformative effect of youth collective and individual agency. The project has a cross-national comparative design with the case studies of Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Turkey. POWER2YOUTH's participants are 13 research and academic institutions based in the EU member states, Norway, Switzerland and South East Mediterranean (SEM) countries. The project is mainly funded under the European Union's 7th Framework Programme.

POWER2YOUTH

Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Via Angelo Brunetti 9 - I-00186 Roma

Tel. +39-063224360 | Fax +39-063224363

www.power2youth.eu



Istituto Affari Internazionali