The Shortfall of Development Policies to Address Youth Issues in Palestine

Abeer Musleh,
Bethlehem University

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Abstract

This paper aimed at learning about policies in the occupied Palestinian territories and the extent to which they are sensitive towards youth. It explored the change in the Palestinian society's perception and status of youth as a result of the shift in the sociopolitical context. The change in the perception about youth was also a result of the change in actors in the area of youth and the practices they utilize. This paper found that most of the policies are youth blind; that there is not one single definition of youth; that family and penal laws and policies are totally blind towards young people and only deal with them from the perspective of young women and children; and that intersectionality of gender, religion, location and economic status need to be included in analysis of youth.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will provide a historical context reviewing the emergence of various actors in the area of youth and examine the impact they have had on youth in terms of inclusion and exclusion. I will attempt to provide a definition of youth, and to examine the current status of youth. Further, I will review the national policies and evaluate their sensitivity or lack thereof with regard to young people. In the following section I will examine the sociological definition of youth in Palestine and how it has manifested in the work of various actors over time. This will be followed with a discussion of sources of knowledge and how they consider youth in terms of definition, socialization and transition from childhood to youth. I would like to point out that in this case study the analysis of the discourse and the inclusion/exclusion factors are similar for all of historical Palestine. Yet when discussing policies the focus will be on areas identified by the United Nations as the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), which are the areas occupied in the year 1967.

1. DEFINING YOUTH: FROM PROTECTORS TO A GROUP IN NEED OF EMPOWERMENT

The definition of youth has changed over time in Palestinian society as a result of the sociopolitical changes taking place in society. Youth were originally defined by their role as protectors of the society as a result of their active participation in the national movement. In the post-Oslo period the definition by age group came under question within the Palestinian context. Youth became a distinct population group by virtue of its role in resisting colonization and actively protecting the Palestinian society. Collins (2004) and Azzeh (2015) show that

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[1] Abeer Musleh is Assistant Professor in Social Policy at the Social Sciences Department, Bethlehem University.

Palestinian youth as a group were associated with their role in the national movement as the protectors of society. The definition of youth in the Palestinian context was strongly associated with their active role during the First Intifada as they were considered the direct actors in resisting the occupation; their role was associated with heroic acts as a generation. They were called the "Shabab Al-Intifada," the youth of the Intifada. This definition mainly looks at the transition the took place between childhood and adulthood through the action of confrontation with the colonization (Collins 2004, Azzeh 2015, Musleh 2015a). Political participation and mobilization was the way to reconstruct the power structures.

The definition of youth as a generation was also present in Palestinian society with the establishment of the national resistance movement. Mannheim's (1952) concept of generation looks at youth as a group who at a specific historical moment developed a specific identity that was reflected in their engagement process, and expression of themselves. During the period between the 1960s and 1980s in Palestine, political factions had increased control and impact on shaping youth identities and frames of thought. As the political factions provided a structural alternative to family, they weakened family power to a certain extent. Although the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) factions were established by the student movements and are a clear presentation of young people's identity during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the factions did not renew themselves internally so that youth were the ones shaping the faction's identity, structures and frameworks. On the contrary they looked at the next age cohorts as a continuation that would sustain the movement as it was, and resisted getting into discussions across subsequent cohorts about how they perceived their role. Factions did not perceive youth as a group with specific interests and needs that needed to be supported (Fasheh 2013). The factions followed the policy of the PLO, which aimed to reach various population groups and mobilize them to serve the resistance movement (Hilal 2006).[2] Hence, the youth activists realized that they had to continuously negotiate the concerns and interests of their population group and their role in the political faction as part of the national resistance movement (Musleh 2015a).[3] According to Azzeh (2015), youth as a concept during the First Intifada was not only related to age, it is a concept that analyses the hegemony of colonization and how it takes control through the traditional social structures.

The discourse defining youth, during the post-Oslo period, moved from a liberation discourse in which moving into adulthood meant confrontation with the colonizing power, into an institutionalized discourse that is based on enhancing the individual as a way to improve the situation of the whole community. Youth capability within the new model is based on the skills they have that allow them to be socially and economically successful as individuals. This contrasts with the former definition that focused on their position within a liberation process based on the collective and challenges to social, political and economical structures.

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[2] Bayan Al-Hut (1981) shows that Palestinian youth participating in the resistance to Israeli colonization joined the Arab higher national committee only when they proved themselves as a great mobilization group, in which they presented new models for mobilization of the Palestinian society during that period. This is similar to the struggle that the youth mobilization groups went through in the PLO political factions.
[3] The youth struggle for a place among actors and the established structures is not a new trend. The same thing was seen during the mobilization that took place before the Nakba in the year 1948. To learn more about the role of Palestinian youth in the national resistance before 1948 please see Bayan Al-Hut (1981).

This definition of youth changed in the post-Oslo period in which the Palestinian society moved from an active generation to an age group with special characteristics and needs. The focus on youth shifted from describing them as an active collective to individuals who are in need of support and empowerment. Youth became another population group targeted by development efforts. The youth are no longer part of building a political structure or state. The Palestinian Authority (PA) as one of the main actors established at this phase targeted youth through a holistic approach, in which the PA established the Ministry of Youth and Sports to direct interventions for working with youth. Youth as a development sector became depoliticized and the focus of interventions was on civic participation and building individual leadership. The focus of working with youth shifted from political and national engagement into civic engagement. This approach for working with youth was also used by NGOs and donor organizations which enhanced a new culture for working with youth that is considered to be "professional," following the international models for working with youth, not associated with political parties, and which focuses on the individual instead of the collective. Lisa Taraki (2014) when describing the formation of the middle-class culture in the oPt notices the focus of interventions on individual success, entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

It is important to note the current existence of two discourses about youth, one based on their role in resistance to occupation and the other more related to the development approach. Yet the dominance of each is changing with regard to the changes in the political context.

Currently there are many youth initiatives emerging. These emerging groups are trying to redefine the role of youth and their status in the political field. Youth initiatives started to appear in 2010. They defined themselves as independent of political factions and affiliation with developmental organizations. These youth groups or "Mobadarat" are mainly formed from middle-class young people, who are educated, and who are between 20-30 years old. The Mobadarat are informal, and often short-lived. They are often formed for a specific objective or during a cycle of contention, and then dissolve and their members go on to form other groups at later stages. These groups are known as high mobility structures and are connected with similar youth groups in 1948 areas[4] (Musleh 2015a). These groups showed an increase in their ability to connect and mobilize, yet they have been unable to reach larger groups, and they are still not recognized as representative of youth. Hence, the youth in the Mobadarat chose to join confrontation with the colonizer while resisting other forms of control in the Palestinian society. At their inception, the Mobadarat tried to mimic the forms of engagement presented by the Arab spring by holding sit-ins at squares similar to the Tahrir Square sit-in. But this approach made them vulnerable and targets for surveillance powers (Asad 2015). These groups were also afraid to be co-opted by NGOs and political factions, which limited their ability to reach out to larger groups of youth, especially those with political affiliations. At the present moment the Mobadarat are showing a clearer identity and have been more successful in reaching out to other youth groups and working jointly with them.

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[4] 1948 areas are areas of historical Palestine that were occupied during 1948, and where Palestinians hold Israeli citizenship.

In the next section, I will present a historical perspective about the recent sociopolitical changes in the Palestinian context, in which we find the change of framing going in parallel to changes in the sociopolitical context.

Figure 1 | Time line for youth engagement vs. Palestinian context: Sociopolitical context and youth
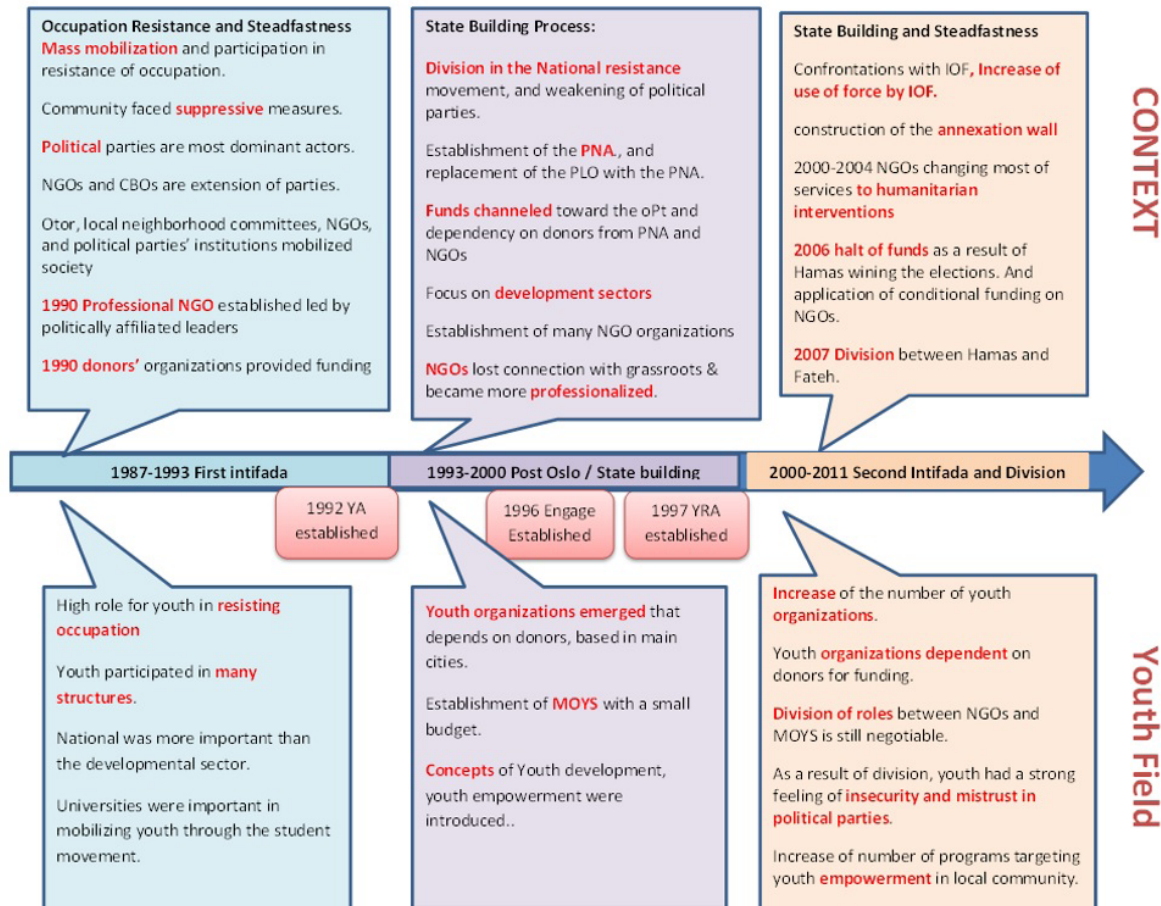
Source: Musleh (2015a:289).

Figure 1 shows the changes in the sociopolitical context of Palestinian society and the field of youth during three historical periods: First Intifada (1987-1993), the Post-Oslo Period (1993-2000) and the Second Intifada and Division Period (2000-2011). In the year 1993 the Palestinian Authority was established as a result of signing the Oslo Accord and the division of the national movement. Various ministries were established as part of the state-building process that started with the signing of the Accord. One of these was the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS). The signing of the Oslo Accord and the establishment of the PA was a turning point for Palestinian society and changed approaches to work. Before Oslo, during the First Intifada the Palestinian society had a high level of mobilization and participation of all population groups. It developed a model of economic self-help and social steadfastness (Craissati 2005). Youth were part of a larger community working towards one objective: liberation and steadfastness. After the signing of the Oslo Accord, Palestinian leadership and organizations turned their attention to state building and development perspectives. Population groups were recognized as different development groups that were in need of

empowerment and development, and youth was identified as one of these groups.

The post-Oslo period (1993-present) introduced a new actor, the PA, and strengthened donor organizations as they controlled financial resources. The weakening of the political parties and the separation of NGOs from their grassroots movements (Hammami 2000) weakened their position as actors in the institutional field. During this phase Palestinian society in the oPt moved toward the development track instead of community building that aims to build resilience and self-help (Jarrar 2005). This was reflected in the youth field with the rise of new donor-dependent youth organizations based in the main cities (Rahal 2006), the establishment of the MOYS and the introduction of new concepts such as empowerment and development for youth interventions. As such, Palestinian society shifted from a collective self-help approach to a development approach that is mostly based on enhancing individual capacity versus that of the collective.

That being said, the Israeli colonization remained a dominant actor with policies that affected young peoples' living conditions, and the capacity of other actors to implement their policies and programmes. The Israeli colonization through direct and indirect measures impacted life, framing, programmes and policies towards the Palestinians. These affected all levels of society comprising individuals, groups and organizations. Israeli collective punishment measures included arresting people, restricting their mobility and applying pressure on the PA. Additionally, in a study about donors' support to the PA, Ann Le More (2008) pointed out that most of the invested funds were to maintain the status quo resulting from the signing of the Oslo Accord, and not related to creating real ground-based development.

The youth sector in Palestine is highly impacted by the sociopolitical context changes. This was particularly clear during the Second Intifada (2000-2004) and the Division Era (2007-present), Both the PA and NGOs were weakened by their dependency on external funding and as a result of the direct actions of the Israeli occupation (Johnson and Kuttab 2001). During this period, Palestinian society faced extreme measures of collective punishment from the Israeli occupation that were not limited to invasions, curfews, arrests and the destruction of governmental and nongovernmental organizations. This resulted in a shift of organizational interventions towards humanitarian aid (Johnson and Kuttab 2001). Yet in the youth field there was an increase in the number of organizations established, and a programme focus on youth empowerment (Al-Malki and Ladadweh 2011). By this phase a feeling of insecurity and mistrust among Palestinian youth directed towards the political parties and NGO sector could be noted (Rahal 2006). This was followed by change in funding conditions to the oPt, and accordingly the opportunity to mobilize financial resources and sustain the organizations. The division period between Fatah and Hamas presented a great challenge for organizations in terms of internal politics, funding and type of programmes and issues they could tackle, deterioration of civic rights, and restrictions on civil society organizations (Musleh 2015a).

2. MACRO-LEVEL STRUCTURES AFFECTING YOUTH POLICIES

Palestinian society inside historical Palestine has lived in a state of fragmentation since the Nakba in the year 1948. This fragmentation impacted the unity of institutions on the macro and meso levels. The Palestinian people live under colonization, with two governments, one

in Gaza Strip and the second in the West Bank; the city of Jerusalem lives under direct rule of colonization; and the Palestinians in 1948 hold Israeli citizenship without the equal rights of citizens. This is reflected in the multi legal system that functions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip areas. The multi legal system is a result of being under many political systems after the Nakba in which Gaza came under Egyptian rule, the West Bank under Jordanian rule, and the areas of 1948 were under the Israeli law. As a result when the PA was established one of its objectives was to unify the legal system in areas of 1967. Yet not all laws were changed. Some laws such as the family law, penal law and age of marriage are still functioning under different jurisdictions. In Jerusalem, the challenge is that the Israeli colonization is applying a lot of rules to ensure a change in the demographics of Jerusalem with subordination and control over the Palestinian population. This institutional structure became complicated with the division between Fateh and Hamas as now the oPt has two governments.

On the macro level there are two major ministries that work directly with young people, MOYS and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE). The Ministry of Youth became the higher council for youth and sports in 2012. As for MOEHE its focus is on traditional educational attainment, which limits the ability of young graduates to meet the needs of the market when they graduate. The work of the ministries is totally separate and limited cooperation takes place between the two. This is a major constraint for work at the sector level, and impacts knowledge exchange across actors. (Fawadla 2014) The higher interest in the youth sector has not been reflected in financial or human resources commitment. The MOYS budget has never exceeded 1.5 percent of the PA budget over the years (Musleh 2015a), and has lacked the human resources needed to allow it to play an active role. Further, on many occasions MOYS was not assigned a minister. All of this downplayed the position of MOYS as a major actor in the field and its ability to play a strong role in pushing an agenda that is in the interests of youth.

This does not limit the impact of other ministries and laws on youth. For example, over the last 10 years there was an increase in the involvement of the Ministry of Local Government (MOLG) in youth through either the development of youth shadow councils or child-friendly cities. Yet as the MOLG does not provide a budget to municipalities to support these shadow councils, its impact remains limited in terms of its ability to institutionalize the youth councils into the municipalities' structures (Musleh 2015a).

This shift in the way youth were perceived took place in conjunction with the emergence of a large number of organizations working with youth. According to Rabah (2009:13-14), 74 percent of organizations working with youth in the oPt were established after the year 2000, with two peaks, one in the year 2000 and the other in 2004. Still, this increase in the number of organizations did not lead to an increase in youth participation in local governance and political parties, nor did it empower youth to hold decision-making positions. On the contrary, youth participation levels were at an all-time low (Rahal 2007, 2010a, 2010b).

Despite all of the interventions by different youth organizations and developmental organizations, youth continue to face major challenges such as access to decision-making positions in governmental organizations, NGOs and political parties. Their economic situation is also considerably less favoured than that of other population groups. The unemployment rate averages 37.3 percent for youth between the ages of 25 and 34, with 30 percent for

males and 54.3 for females, while the unemployment rate among people in the age range 35-44 is 12.8 percent for males and 10.7 for females (PCBS 2015:122). Articles 18 and 45 of the local electoral law limit young peoples' opportunities to reach decision-making positions whether at the local level or on the legislative council (Palestinian Parliament). Although both laws recognize that youth can vote at age 18, they limit their right to nominate themselves to local and legislative councils. Youth must be 25 years old to be nominated to the local councils and 28 to be nominated to legislative councils (Palestinian Authority 2005:5, 2007:17). Also youth engagement in organizations and political parties does not exceed 16 percent of the youth population. Youth participation in political parties remains minimal and they are not in decision-making positions in any of the parties (Zamarah and Abu Kamesh 2010).

This paradoxical status of youth in Palestinian society raises concerns in regard to the extent to which they are involved in the democratic nation-building process. Youth play an essential role in developing their societies. In the Palestinian context, where the society struggles to sustain itself and to progress under occupation, the role of youth, who form 27 percent of the population, is even more critical.

3. METHODOLOGY

For this report a desk review was conducted with existing data about the youth sector and policies in the oPt. Furthermore, qualitative data that was collected between the years 2010-12 with key actors and decision-makers in the youth sector was utilized. The qualitative data was collected by the author of this report as part of research for a doctoral dissertation. Content analysis was conducted on MOYS, donor and NGO policy documents and reports. Research carried out by various organizations about the youth sector in the oPt was also reviewed.

Although there is an increase in attention to youth as a sector in research in the oPt reports, data provided about Palestinian youth remains limited. Starting in 2010 sociology scholars interested in youth mobilization efforts, youth perspective and challenges facing youth mobilization structures produced more research. Youth activists also became an important source of knowledge, and research centres interviewed them to document and analyse their experience of mobilization.

Hence, literature about young people can be divided into the following categories: general statistical and status reports produced by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, (PCBS) and NGOs affiliated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); programme reports and white papers prepared by NGOs, donor community and the PA; and finally papers provided by academia which analyse the concept of youth, and their status. Many of the reports are descriptive of the status of youth and youth organizations, yet they do not draw on the larger picture for dealing with youth.

Research conducted about the youth field in the oPt is limited to descriptions of the status of youth (Bailey and Murray 2009, Fasheh 2011 and 2013), the status of organizations (Rahal 2006) or the challenges facing youth participation in the various types of organizational structures such as NGOs and political parties (Rahal 2006, Zamarah and Abu Kamesh 2010),

or to reports about programmes and workshops of different organizations. Patriarchal structures, types of programmes, location of organizations and donor dependency are all factors that challenge youth inclusion in organizations and in decision-making. The studies reviewed did not present clear definitions of key concepts such as youth, youth development, youth empowerment, youth organization (working exclusively with youth or as a development organization with youth as one of many target groups) and youth engagement (political and civic).[5]

Furthermore, the role of youth in developing the studies about them is limited. Youth are consulted about issues that concern them in specific cases, but with the exception of youth policy which was set in a participatory approach with various actors including youth, most of the reports and policy documents are developed by organizations. Additionally, most of the documents study youth as individuals and not as a collective, and this can be seen in the approach used for targeting youth economic empowerment, and leadership and citizen programmes implemented by larger organizations. The literature provided does not analyse the structural barriers resulting from systems of hegemony and control. It may indicate that youth face challenges to reach high decision-making positions in organizations, yet it does not look at how access, control and ownership are all part of the system of dominance.

Youth were defined as an age group by most actors, however there was no agreement on the parameters of this age group. The age of youth varied between the PA, PCBS, across international organizations, and across NGOs. For example, the UNDP considered the age of youth to be between 18-30 years old, while UNICEF set its age parameters between 15-25 years. As for the PCBS the definition was not clear. When talking about employed youth they use the ages of 15-29, whereas if talking about other factors, youth are considered to be 18-29, which is the same age range utilized by the MOYS. As for NGOs the age of youth varied across organizations; some organizations defined youth to be between 15-25 and others 18-29. The age definition utilized by organizations working with youth is totally disconnected from the international definition of youth that is based on factors of employment, formation of a family and education. It is also separate from the discourse that defines youth based on their confrontation with the colonizing force. This difference is also a result of the impact of donor organizations and the various perceptions they have (Musleh 2015a).

Organizations are mostly interested in what succeeded or failed in the programmes conducted (Musleh 2015a). The socialization process in organizations is related to becoming part of the organization's culture, or model of work. It is not about how the transition takes place. According to Musleh (2015a), an organization's socialization process is mainly focused on how it conducts work, and the values it reinforces. The transition from childhood to youth is not part of the socialization process discussed. Further, organizations in their reports tend to distinguish between the impact of actors and structures and their role in the socialization of youth, youth empowerment and cultural development.

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[5] For example youth political participation was limited to joining political parties and voting, yet there was no mention of how exactly to measure it, while political socialization, youth voice and forms of engagement were not mentioned. The concept was never operationalized.

4. POLICY AREAS

In this section I will look at four policy areas that are implemented in the oPt: migration policy, employment policy, family policy and spatial policy. These policy areas are implemented in both the West Bank and Gaza. Most policies reviewed in this paper can be considered youth blind, except for specific components of the spatial planning policy, which showed a more sensitized perspective towards youth with regard to community participation. Most of the policies within the scope of this paper targeted youth with an approach that focused on empowering individual youth and not the collective. Further, there is a total disconnection between the policies, even though coordinated efforts would be more effective to achieve a better status for young people.

4.1 Migration Policy

Interest in studying migration in the oPt is recent. Youth migration studies do not highlight factors that push youth to emigrate, and instead research focuses on perceptions of the quality and direction of life. Migration has not until now been understood to have an impact on youth. The questions directed towards youth focus on whether young people think of leaving the country. Yet, migration has an impact on social networks, family structures and accordingly the status of youth in society. Further, internal migration also impacts social and economic structures of cities. In the oPt migration is a result of the restrictions imposed by the colonial force, such as what happened in Jerusalem city with the construction of the wall, and policies to withdraw IDs from Jerusalem residents. External migration is also a result of deteriorating living conditions; in the case of young engineers we notice that the labour market is what pushes young people towards working in the Arab Gulf areas.

There is no clear policy to deal with either internal or external migration issues in the oPt. The first survey to tackle migration was carried out by the PCBS in 2010. It tried to cover the internal and external migration trends in the oPt, characteristics of migrants and perceptions of emigration. According the PCBS (2010:15-17), more than 32,000 Palestinians emigrated from the oPt between 2005-2009, and 6.7 percent of Palestinian households have at least one member who has emigrated. Youth (15-29 years) represent 33 percent of all emigrants. Further, 13.3 percent of persons aged 15-59 desire to emigrate in order to improve their living conditions, to search for job opportunities or for education.

Migration is not a new phenomenon in Palestinian society. Palestinian society's first major waves of external migration began in the early 1900s and 1950s and continued after 1967. These first waves of migration were towards North and South America. Yet after 1967 most of the migration was towards Jordan and the Arab Gulf countries. Palestinian society experienced a forced displacement as a result of the colonization and the occupation of Palestine in 1948 and 1967. At the moment about 70 percent of Palestinian people worldwide are refugees. Between displacement and migration, the structure of Palestinian economy and family types underwent fundamental changes (al-Malki and Shalabi 1993).

As for internal migration and movement of Palestinians within the oPt, the geographical separation between West Bank and Gaza makes mobility impossible, as Israelis do not permit mobility between the two areas.[6] Another restriction of mobility is applied between Jerusalem and the rest of the oPt area. The mobility that does take place occurs mainly within a governorate and to nearby ones.[7] According to the PCBS survey (2010:17, 27), there is a noticeable movement towards and within a number of governorates specifically: Jerusalem, Ramallah and Al-Bireh, and Nablus. Among those who changed their place of residence, 36.4 percent did so for marriage purposes. Of the population migrating internally 30 percent are between the ages of 15-29. Research shows an increase in the number of emigrants after the year 2005, reaching 28.4 percent compared to 15.9 percent for the years between 2000 and 2004. Although reasons for this change are not mentioned in the PCBS survey, it is important to note that Palestinian society was living with the impact of the Israeli invasion and the Second Intifada in the oPt.

During the Second Intifada the Israeli colonization increased restrictions on movement through checkpoints, curfews, invasions, the construction of the wall, restrictions of residency rights especially in Jerusalem, and the Israeli permit policy. These factors impacted the ability of the Palestinian society to function. A lot of organizations had to find new arrangements for their staff, especially with mobility restrictions. For example, the MOE allowed its staff to work from locations closer to their residence instead of their original work stations. These restrictions had an important impact on families, especially women. According to research conducted by the Birzeit University Center for Development Studies, households suffering from residency problems in Jerusalem "face huge challenges such as dispersion or living under illegal circumstances. This problem affects the daily details of every member's life of these families including deprivation of rights granted by citizenship for individuals in their societies in addition to the tension resulting from restrictions on movement, non-clarity of family and residency status and feelings of insecurity" (Majeed and Fasheh 2010:8).

Families living under such conditions face many difficulties; this is especially true for women, who suffer increased interference of the extended family in their affairs. Not having the proper documents deprives individuals of their economic, social and political rights (Majeed and Fasheh 2010:9). With the increase of Israeli restrictions on Palestinians of Jerusalem, if they wanted to keep their Jerusalem ID status, Palestinians could only live in the Jerusalem area. That meant that a lot of families needed to move from their original places of residence to a place that is considered within the Jerusalem governorate boundaries according to the Israeli government. Families who had one of their members holding an Israeli or Jerusalem ID were not allowed to obtain family unification for their spouse, which also restricted the places where they could live (Majeed and Fasheh 2010:28-31).

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[6] The separation between Gaza Strip and the West Bank is leading to an increasing fragmentation between the Palestinian people living in the two areas, and different trends of development as well as grievances resulting from the political division and the economic differences. The inability to connect between the two geographical entities is limiting communication between the Palestinian people on social and cultural levels, in addition to economic.
[7] In the second youth national conference that took place in Ramallah in the year 2012, many young people remarked that it was the first time they had left their governorates, and the first time they had met youth from other governorates. This isolation leads to a total separation in the cultural life of youth, a smaller social network, more focus on self and stronger connections with family social ties.

Although these studies do not tackle the issues of youth per se, youth are highly impacted by such conditions, whether it is the current living situation of their immediate family, or considering the consequence when they think of forming their own family. Further, as a coping mechanism for such situations 31 percent of the sample considered emigration a reasonable solution if the family failed to obtain a unification of residency, and 37 percent considered internal migration and changing their of place of living. Additionally, youth workers report that youth moving into the city of Jerusalem, especially the old city, face many challenges in adapting to new cultural norms which affect their education and economic status (Naser El-Din 2015).[8]

The Palestine economic policy research institute MAS, in a study conducted in 2008 about internal labour migration towards Ramallah and Bireh, found an increase in internal migration towards the governorate. This migration took place for reasons that include finding a job, joining a school, and finally, avoiding the Israeli colonization violations. The impact of migration on immigrants was through change of labour force status and change in income. The source regions of immigrants lost their human capital to the new regions to which migrants moved. Meanwhile, the governorate of Ramallah and Bireh had to deal with the increase in cost of living, crowded classes and change in its social fabric, and extend its services to meet the needs of the newcomers. One main challenge for hosting governorates such as Ramallah and Al-Bireh is that the new residents maintain their connection to their source region, which limits the amount of taxes that they invest in the new location, while they are utilizing all the services provided. In a study conducted by Rula Abu Duhou and others (2010) it is noticed that the social fabric of certain neighbourhoods in the city of Ramallah is not strong, especially newly established neighbourhoods. The residents live in one area while they join community organizations in other parts of the city or even in their city of origin. This is an alarming trend because it transforms social ties and structures. As for youth, this has an impact on the social capital they can develop, and what type of relationship they have with their environment.

To understand internal and external migration trends and effects, it is necessary to analyse the impact on the family structure and how it changes the units of production within the economy. Research about migration does not address how it is impacting traditional family structures and societal ties. Further, we note that most of the people who emigrate have some level of education, and this has a brain drain effect on the country and its economy. In previous studies about migration, Majdi Malki and Khamis Shalabi (1993) showed that the migration from Ramallah villages changed the unit of production and accordingly the mode of production and the economic power of members, as well as impacting gender roles and power structures. Further, these emigrants create new resources for their villages that increase resiliency in face of changes in the environment, through the financial resources that they send back home.

[8] In an interview with Rami Nader El-Din, he emphasized the difficulty for a young person who was not raised in the old city of Jerusalem to live in it. The culture of the old city is considered tougher than other places and accordingly the youth have to show more strength in their actions, which on some occasions means being aggressive. In the last 7 years the population of the old city of Jerusalem has doubled, thereby increasing the pressure on the services provided.

4.2 Family Policies

To understand family policies and what they provide we must understand first the intersectionality of dominant systems and second the complexity of the legal system in the oPt. Family policies are an important medium for negotiating the power of domination between the various actors concerned with the building of the state. The relation between what is domestic and what is public becomes the space of bargaining between the various powers (Kandiyoti 2007). A review of family policies and laws demonstrates that policy dropped youth from its understanding, and family was built on the traditional perspective of family with patriarchal dominance. Amendments of family policies – whether family law, penal law or inheritance law – were all led by feminist and human rights organizations. These laws were seen mainly to affect the position of women within society. Children were seen in relation to the mother and as part of the patriarchal system that puts children into another marginalized group within the domestic sphere. For example in the case of domestic violence and family protection law, subjects of protection are both women and children. Youth are absent from this category, although they may be exposed to domestic violence as well. If they need protection it will not be provided unless they are women or are under the age of 18.

The intersection of customary, civil and religious laws is key to understanding family policies in the oPt and the access to rights in Palestinian society. Although the Palestinian Authority was established in 1993, it inherited a legal system that has multiple sources including Egyptian, Jordanian, Israeli and Islamic law (Sharia) as well as British Mandate law. The Palestinian Basic Law, which was ratified in 2002, acts as a temporary constitution before the establishment of a Palestinian state. Personal status laws that regulate matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance are all based on Sharia law. The system also utilizes Jordan's and Egypt's laws that date back to 1976. The unification of the laws cannot take place without the establishment of the Palestinian state in which the Palestinian Legislative Council agrees on the new set of laws. This fragmentation in the laws is a reflection of the fragmentation of the Palestinian people after the Nakba. Human rights organizations and the feminist movement worked to unify laws, yet their efforts were halted with the division between Fatah and Hamas and the establishment of both the Gaza and West Bank governments under occupation. The division between Fatah and Hamas has resulted in an inactive Palestinian Legislative Council which halted the process of unification of laws. Although some laws were unified during the post-Oslo period and before the division, family laws were yet not unified. As both Gaza and West Bank are controlled by the two parties of the division. Any decision that is issued in the West Bank is not implemented in Gaza. Hence, even presidential decisions coming from the PA (in West Bank) are invalid in Gaza.

Family laws are based on input from Christian, Muslim and Jewish (sumara) religious laws. Feminist and human rights efforts to amend family law were led by the feminist movement and human rights organizations. A major effort was made to have one single civil family law representative of all religions. However, it failed and the issue lost importance, as national unity became the central issue for various political actors in the PA. National unity and ending the division in the political system became more important than subgroups' rights and issues. The division between Fatah and Hamas had a severe impact on Palestinian society in general and on Palestinian organizations in particular. Civil society organizations were faced with restrictions implemented by the two authorities; some of the organizations closed in both

the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and the situation of civil rights has deteriorated since the division in 2007. The changes in the Palestinian political system made political unity the number one priority. Women's rights have also been renegotiated with both competing authorities and decision-makers. West Bank authorities tried to show themselves as more religious than those of the Gaza Strip. And unless there was an extreme violent act such as "femicide" the Authority in the West Bank would not act in support of women's rights. The existence of two governments made human rights and women's organizations face twice the amount of pressure and restrictions from the divided governments. For the time being decisions regarding the protection of women from violence are made via a presidential decree, which doesn't have the same legitimacy as a law voted for in the Legislative Council. All of these laws need to be ratified in the Legislative Council, where they run the risk of being rejected.

The status of family and penal laws is even more complicated in Jerusalem, given the existence of the competing Israeli law. Also the Israeli colonization police enforces State surveillance. In Jerusalem, asking for legal protection means providing the Israeli colonization forces with an opportunity to violate Palestinian family life. More pressure and violence can be applied via the enforcement of Israeli laws. In such cases it is not unusual for at least one family member to be imprisoned. The family member reporting violence to the Israeli colonizing police is considered to be collaborating with the enemy. Accordingly victims of violence must look to other structures for protection, such as political parties and extended family.

According to the PCBS (2016:97), 40.8 percent of women between the ages of 15-29 marry and 1.1 percent of divorce cases are found in the same age group. These numbers drop for young males with 15.6 percent between the ages of 15-29 who marry and 0.1 percent of divorce cases for the same age group. Additionally, the age of the first marriage increased for both males and females between 1997-2013. For males it increased from 23 to 25.4 years and for females it increased from 18 to 21.1 years (PCBS 2016:95). Fertility rates for Palestinian women dropped from 6.1 in 1994 to 4.1 in 2013. Eighteen cases of "femicide" were reported for 2015, compared to 11 cases for 2014 and 28 cases for 2013 (Amnesty International 2015 and 2016, UN Women 2013). However, the number of cases is most likely underreported (UN Women 2013). Studies about Palestinian families and about youth show that exposure to political violence leads to more challenges within families when dealing with children and youth. There are no studies connecting divorce rates with sociopolitical contexts and/or economic factors. Nevertheless studies demonstrate an increase in challenges to families with the escalation of exposure to political violence. Family and individual resiliency is being correlated to education, economic status and level of participation (Giacaman et al. 2007). Although the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) is concerned by the increase of divorces, the issue has not been tackled by various organizations working with youth or with women. For feminist organizations the issue of divorce and women's rights to divorce and custody is central to providing women with more equal citizenship. Forming a family has been one of the defining factors for youth internationally. Yet the issue of divorce is not a concern for youth organizations – which raises the question about how the transition from youth to adulthood is made.

Family issues are rarely dealt with by the judicial system. Instead they are handled within the customary system (UN Women 2014:14), which leaves a lot of young women in vulnerable positions. Women within the customary system are in a weaker position especially with regard to divorce, child custody and inheritance. Younger women will have to deal with the customary system as a result of the intersectionality of age and gender. Both the penal law and family law are based on the Sharia as a major source of legislation. Civil marriage is not legal in the oPt, and accordingly all family challenges are dealt with within the religious system. The religious system does not offer women and men equal rights especially with regard to divorce and child custody. It also forces restrictions on inter-religion marriages. Palestinian law does not allow for inheritance across religions nor does it allow for custody of children across religions. So in case of inter-religion marriages, in order for inheritance to occur either the husband or the wife will have had to change their religion. Furthermore, the mother will need to be the same religion as her children if she wishes for custody of the children in the case of divorce or the death of her husband. Although the religious system may show flexibility with granting women some rights, the customary system may contradict and restrict those rights. For example, according to the Sharia women can claim their right to divorce on the day of signing the religious marriage, yet the customary law contradicts and forbids this practice. Given the pressure of the women's movement the PA has tried to amend the current customary laws, especially with the increase of "femicides." Unfortunately, with the current political division these laws are not adhered to in the Gaza Strip.

Recently there has been pressure on the two Palestinian governments in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip to present changes in laws or policies to protect women. Taking into consideration that the Legislative Council is inactive, the president can introduce a decision that is considered a law until the first meeting of the Legislative Council where it has to be voted upon. Accordingly, in May of 2014 the president of the PA issued a presidential decree that amended articles of the penal code by removing provisions for leniency with regard to murder in the name of so-called family honour. The Palestinian Cabinet, in the West Bank, approved a national referral system for women victims of violence, and the pending Family Protection from Violence Law is still under discussion. In Gaza a decision that provides women with rights to nurture their children in the case of divorce has been introduced.

Family laws and policies in the oPt are discussed and framed as part of women's rights. The principal advocates for change include members of the women's rights movements and human rights organizations. Even family planning is considered a women's health issue. Reports prepared by youth organizations focused on the perception of young people about their health and knowledge of STDs. Women's rights issues, family laws, penal laws, inheritance, and legal age of marriage are not issues that are usually discussed with youth unless they are part of a programme that advocates for women's rights. Issues that may be tackled from a health perspective are only addressed as part of the reproductive health of women instead of a comprehensive health approach that provides service for all youth. Reproductive health and knowledge of STDs are still limited within the Palestinian context. These questions are generally treated as components of other programmes.

In general, family policies in the oPt do not consider youth as a special population group that needs to be dealt with. Nevertheless family polices and laws affect young women's roles and rights in society. This can be seen clearly within family law and penal law. Major challenges

with these laws are that they are highly connected with the religious court, and that there is more than one law ruling in the oPt as a result of the Nakba, and Palestine's history of being under the rule of Israelis, Jordanians and Egyptians.

4.3 Employment Policy

Employment in general and youth employment in particular have been a matter of interest for the PA, NGOs and international agencies since the year 2004. After the Arab spring there was an increase in such interest. The revolutions made it clear that one major challenge facing Arab youth is employment and economic development. Youth are perceived within a deficit model and when out of the labour market they are considered a threat to society's stability and development. The PA considers employment as part of its strategic plan yet there is no clear policy to work with youth to increase the level of their employment. NGOs, the PA and donor organizations work on youth employment, yet all interventions are related to soft skills and starting of SMEs (Youth Association 2007, 2009). There have been no interventions with regard to the structural barriers that hinder youth participation in the labour market.

Employment is one of four major areas of the strategic plan for the PA. The national strategic plan for 2014-2016 considers enhancing youth and women's economic participation, employment and entrepreneurship as one of its main objectives (Palestinian Ministry of Planning 2014, 2015). Yet young people's ability to compete is limited. According to a study conducted by MAS (Abdullah and Hattawi 2014) about small and medium enterprises, both women and young people face major challenges in sustaining their initiatives and managing their SME because of the lack of access to and control over financial resources, mobility and knowledge.

Regarding youth unemployment rates, the PCBS considers youth to be between 15-29 years old. Yet most organizations working with youth and economic interventions target young people between the ages of 18-29. The unemployment rates for youth in both the formal and informal sectors in the oPt reached 30.2 percent (25 percent for males, 60.4 percent for females), which is higher than the unemployment rate of the Palestinian people overall, which reached 26.6 percent (PCBS 2016:73). These numbers show an increase from previous years; in 2005 youth unemployment stood at 37.4 percent. This is possibly a result of the increase in the number of graduates and the lack of job opportunities. According to the latest statistics (PCBS 2015:122), the highest rate of unemployment is among young people, especially in the Gaza Strip.

Youth employability varies based on education levels. There is a clear correlation between increased levels of education and higher unemployment rates, which indicates that Palestinian education does not match labour market needs. The education system is flooding the market with larger number of graduates than it can absorb. Fifty-two percent of youth graduates are unemployed. The employment rate based on specialty also varies. Youth working in services had a higher employment rate for the year 2014, 59 percent. Yet the highest unemployment rate was among the personal services sector (tailors, beauticians, etc.) with 62.1 percent. Young people with law degrees had the lowest unemployment rate at 9.9 percent. In general the percentage of unemployment is higher among females compared to males. Despite the difference in the average wage provided for males and females, females' wage dropped 12

percent between the years 2003-2011 in comparison to only 5 percent for males, which is expected as young women have a more vulnerable position in the labour market. These numbers are alarming and indicate the failure of the educational system to prepare young people for the labour market, an issue discussed by many scholars and NGOs over time. Over the last 10 years there has been an increase in the debate among youth organizations, the Ministry of Education and donor education specialists about the need to enhance vocational education and specializations required by the market, and to develop existing programmes so as to provide graduates with skills that they can use in the market. Yet this work does not take into consideration the impact of colonization on the Palestinian economy. Development under colonization is an act of steadfastness and does not adhere to the regular definition of development. The inability of the Palestinian government to create job opportunities for the Palestinians is not only related to the complexities of the Palestinian system with the division between Fatah and Hamas, it is related to the possibility to create new opportunities for work in the reality of the market. The very nature of the Palestinian economy must be questioned as it is based on services, tourism and weak industrial or agricultural sectors.

The Second Intifada began economic development and employment projects for youth in 2004. The work was oriented towards economic development with SME and entrepreneurship programmes. NGOs developed food-for-labour projects and food-for-skills (training) that targeted the unemployed including young people (Youth Association 2007). Others prepared young candidates for the labour market, providing them with skills on handling interviews, writing CVs, and finding internships in organizations. Nevertheless the impact of these programmes remains limited as they are totally donor dependent and the moment the funding is over they cease to exist. Also these programmes work only on individual empowerment versus collective, which limits the potential for youth as a sector to develop and sustain itself (Youth Association 2009). Collective empowerment focuses on building a joint interest of a group, developing methods of sustaining success for all of them, and accordingly the impact is for the whole and not for an individual. Further, focusing on collective empowerment makes it possible to utilize models that are closer to the self-help models characteristic of a previous stage in the Palestinian context, which build from the assets that all of the participants bring to the table.

The major programmes developed to support youth employment and entrepreneurship in the oPt include: the Youth Employment Service Programme (YES), the Sharek youth programme Step Forward, and the youth entrepreneurship development programme run by the international youth foundation USAID. YES is run by the Welfare Association and aims at providing youth with opportunities for paid internships in the labour market. This provides them with an opportunity to gain experience, develop their skills and promote themselves on the job market. The Sharek youth programme prepared youth for job interviews and taught them to write their CVs, etc. The programme had difficulties in securing funding, although in the last year it turned to a semi-independent centre to provide these services for youth. USAID is a major donor providing funding for such activities. Yet these programmes are limited in the amount of service they can provide and the number of youth they can reach. The role of international organizations and NGOs is major in shaping the type of interventions working on youth employment. Yet, donor organizations have the upper hand in deciding the types of programmes as they own and control the financial resources. Consequently youth organizations resemble other development organizations and are stuck in a process of "NGO-

ization" (Musleh 2015a, Nakhleh 2012).

As with other programmes directed towards youth in the oPt, the economic empowerment of young people ignores a main actor hindering economic development: Israeli colonization. Challenges faced by Palestinian youth such as structural factors, culture, hegemony and control over resources cannot be separated from the Israeli impact, which reinforces the structures that hinder development. Israelis control resources, imports, exports and movement of goods within the oPt. The millions spent by donors in the oPt have not led to development, nor have they dealt with the occupation, which is a major constraint. The majority of interventions that have been implemented have kept the status quo (Le More 2008).

Possibilities to provide opportunities for work and improve the labour market remain limited in the Palestinian context. Palestine is economically dependent on Israel, and the PA and NGOs are both donor dependent. Securing monthly salaries for all PA employees is a challenge for the Palestinian economy. It puts pressure on Palestinian society and impinges on the PNA's ability to secure progress and development. The PA is supposed to receive Palestinian taxes from the Israeli authorities. Yet Israelis do not transfer the Palestinian taxes. This heightens the vulnerability and insecurity of both families and youth. The Palestinian economy, based mainly on SMEs (as more than 90 percent of the establishments have less than 5 employees), has limited industrial development. This combined with an agricultural sector in decline (GDP contribution is less than 5 percent) leaves the main economic opportunities in the service, trade and IT sectors.

Abdullah and Hattawi (2014) suggest that the main obstacles for youth and SMEs are political, educational, financial and local. Political obstacles include restriction of movement, attacks by settlers and competition with cheap Israeli products. Educational challenges manifest as lack of necessary mentors, support and entrepreneurial skills. Evidence of regulation and funding or financial challenges are apparent in banking, and donor procedures limit access to funding for young people. Locality is an essential factor. Many young people emigrate to the Gulf countries or the US for employment and brain drain is another major issue to consider. The Engineering Association indicates that 30 percent of engineers graduating over the period of 2008-2011 are presently unemployed, while of those who are employed 33 percent are employed outside the country.

4.4. Spatial Planning

Planning at the local level encompasses two kinds of planning: one is the Strategic Development Investment Plan (SDIP) and the other is the physical planning. Physical planning is long term, and identifies zoning in a locality. Certain localities are not allowed to change given the high sensitivity of the area in terms of agriculture, environment or archaeology. However municipalities can change the zoning of other areas within their jurisdiction by annexing additional land to the municipal or village council land. The SDIP and the physical planning are linked. The SDIP identifies required changes to achieve strategic objectives. At times the long-term nature of physical planning becomes a constraint on what strategic planning can or cannot do.

Integrating youth into local governance is a new practice promoted by donor organizations as a way to enhance "good governance;" municipalities see youth participation through shadow councils as a good opportunity to access financial resources, yet they resist integrating youth into the structure of the municipality. Today's youth participation at local levels is different than their participation during the First Intifada, when they played a vital role in providing local-level service (Musleh 2015a). This section will look into three aspects of urban planning: shadow councils and SDIPs, housing, and public spaces.

Municipal work on spatial planning often represents isolated efforts which rarely reach a national level. Municipalities only coordinate their work as regards solid waste management. Meanwhile, they struggle to provide regular services such as water, electricity and roads. The belief that municipalities should engage in social and cultural development is relatively recent in the oPt.

Within the last 10 years, much effort has gone into expanding local councils' and municipalities' physical plans and strategic planning. One of the major challenges of the strategic planning process has been securing the representation of all sectors in the planning process in order to ensure that all needs are represented. Urban planning and deciding how to develop the interests of villages and cities is new approach to this type of work that was not implemented in earlier times. Twenty-one youth shadow councils established with the support of local NGOs were invited to engage youth with local governance planning, yet the establishment of the shadow councils was insufficient to integrate youth in the cycle and culture of municipalities. The active engagement of youth was expected in the SDIP process. Yet youth participation remains limited, and municipal councils still do not see the assets that young people bring into the process. As a result, youth interests have been neglected in the planning process.

The existence of youth shadow councils, and the insistence of donors and the Municipal Development and Loaning Fund[9] that various population groups be engaged, has ensured that youth are not completely dropped from the process. However the participation of young people in decision-making is still not culturally accepted. In one village where a youth shadow council was formed as part of the strategic planning process for the municipality, the process failed to engage youth. One of the challenges for youth was the lack of transportation to go from their village to the university. They had commute an extra hour because transportation was unavailable in the direction of the university. The youth needs were dropped from the municipal council plan in favour of other groups' interests.

Another aspect of urban planning is housing. One of the goals of the national plan for 2014-2016 is to ensure affordable and good quality housing for all. The national plan takes into consideration the needs of municipalities and local councils to expand their physical plans, and to include more participatory approaches to planning to be more inclusive of all population groups (Palestinian Ministry of Planning 2014). Yet, creation of housing is in general carried out by the private sector and not by government. Municipalities can set standards of living, grant the permission for building and work on providing new housing places with infrastructure when needed. Currently with the increase of internal migration the cost of housing is very

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[9] MDLF is an institution that works on providing technical support for municipalities, and acts as a coordinating body between donor organizations and MOLG to better serve municipalities

high and increasing. According to a study conducted by Omar Razeq (2015), the affordability of housing will drop, resulting in lack of ability of an average Palestinian family in the future to buy a 140 square meter apartment except in low-value neighbourhoods. Given that young people's rates of unemployment and poverty are higher than the rest of the population, their ability to afford housing will be limited. In some cases families will support their son's investment in building an apartment above their house. Eventually the family home will be a multi-floor extended family unit. Although it provides affordable housing this encourages increased interference of the extended family in the young couple's life. Further, a high number of couples are taking mortgages on the houses they buy. Although this facilitates access to financial resources for housing, it gets them into debt for at least 20 years.

Many municipalities with space at their disposal aspire to build public areas and gardens. However these spaces are not always adjusted to the needs of young people. Most villages and towns have youth clubs, as well as women's committee centres where young women can conduct activities. The youth clubs and women's committees are potential places for young people to meet, yet these centres are gender segregated (clubs are male dominant and women's committees are only females). Youth club activities are limited to sports, they lack both financial and human resources, and most are politically affiliated (Musleh 2015a). These centres are not necessarily sensitized towards youth needs, interests and culture.

Furthermore, mobility and transportation for young people between rural areas and the cities is limited, and this is especially true for young women. It is easier to reach the major cities than to go from one neighbouring village to the next. Transportation is not regularly available and is time consuming, which limits mobility and accordingly limits young people's ability to utilize social and human capital and public spaces in nearby local communities. Yet this is not considered a priority in the planning processes. Unless young people manage to align their interests with those of other groups, it becomes difficult for them to get their interests and needs on the local governance agenda.

CONCLUSION

A review of the four policy areas demonstrates that youth are perceived as a cross-cutting group, and their issues are not necessarily integrated into all policies. They are directly mentioned only in the youth cross-sectorial policy and within economy and entrepreneurship, while in terms of social development they are classified as a group in need of social protection. Youth as a group are absent in family policies and laws. This is alarming, since in order to improve young people's position in society interventions must take place on three levels: micro, meso and macro. For improvement to happen communities must also change, and that will not take place unless youth are recognized as an integral group of various sectors, and not only as economic actors. Although reports and policies discuss the benefits of youth engagement, and their value to the building of the state, they are more often than not perceived according to a deficit model. They are mainly acknowledged in issues of employment and as a major economic challenge that needs to be dealt with. The focus on youth economic status may have received higher attention by donors as a result of the Arab spring, yet the practices on the Palestinian level did not change much.

Youth capabilities are impacted by various factors such as gender, education, socioeconomic status, religion, location, etc. These need to be better addressed in the analysis of youth. All literature reviewed talks about youth as one group with the same needs and interests. It is important to look at the intersectionality of various factors in creating the different sub-groups of youth and to look into interventions and policies that meet the interests and needs emerging from this intersectionality. Most of the literature only looks at gender as a defining factor, but more factors need to be included.

Youth are not defined as a clear category by age or life cycle, although much of the literature leans towards the years between 18 and 29. To have a definition for youth based on their characteristics, with a clear vision about what their needs are, is essential for any future intervention. The term youth has a cultural value, and is not only a life-cycle issue. This will be important to take into consideration when framing a definition of youth. The term youth during the First Intifada was positive and described an active group, while now it is reduced to an age group.

The institutional legal setting is one aspect that needs to be tackled when discussing youth inclusion and exclusion. To bridge the gap between youth and other groups, for example with regard to employment, one approach would be positive discrimination to hire young people who have no experience. To introduce a system that is sensitized towards youth will mean that interventions should be directed towards changing the culture and regulations of how these institutions work. For example, a bank may give a young entrepreneur lower interest on loans.

Furthermore, for young people's status to improve, the development debate needs to go back to liberation discourse, in which youth are recognized as an important actor and not only a group that needs to be mobilized. The liberation discourse is important especially in that it provides a better reading for the actors on the ground; coalitions between actors will be different in light of this recognition.

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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.