

**FRAMING ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK AS A TOOL OF
DEMOGRAPHIC ENGINEERING**

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON ISRAELI, PALESTINIAN AND INTERNATIONAL
CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS' REPORTS AFTER THE SECOND
INTIFADA**

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the discursive framing of Israeli, Palestinian, and international civil society organizations on the issue of Israeli settlements in the West Bank in terms of demographic engineering after the Second Intifada (September 2000). The Second Intifada, marked by intensified violence and increasing demographic engineering methods in response, serves as a significant period for analyzing the civil society organizations' framing of settlement policies in the West Bank. The study aims to show differing narratives of these organizations on identifying the settlement issue as a demographic engineering method with the purpose of creating a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the complex and multilayered Israeli – Palestinian conflict by including diverse narratives. Given the role of civil society organizations that can either promote dialogue between communities or fuel the conflict more through a nationalist narrative, civil society organizations were chosen as the focal actor that is to be studied. Discourse analysis was applied to the written sources published by civil society organizations with this aim. The findings of the study provide cross-organization and cross-time analysis to find parallels and variances among organizations and historical periods with the aim of finding common points for a just peace. The results reveal that while pro-Israeli narratives are more tend to securitize the issue, the counter-narrative is more focused on unearthing political imbalances and underlying power dynamics between communities. It is also revealed that some narratives have changed depending on the priorities brought by the current events. With an emphasis on suffering for citizens of both Israel and Palestine, some common grounds between these communities are identified as a result of this comparative research with the purpose of providing shared solutions for a more peaceful and prosperous future for all parties involved.

KEYWORDS: *Israel, Palestine, conflict, civil society, demographic engineering, securitization, settlements, discursive framing*

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Preface

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father, who was not only a devoted parent but also a dedicated teacher. Growing up, I was fortunate to have a father who read to me every night, instilling in me the love of reading. As I grew older, I began to share his passion for history, poring over his extensive library and devouring every book I could get my hands on.

My father was my greatest supporter throughout my academic journey. He always encouraged me to pursue my interests and ambitions, and was always there to offer guidance and advice, especially while I was pursuing my degree in political science. He was also thrilled when I decided to pursue a Master's degree in history.

Unfortunately, my father passed away shortly after I began my Master's studies, and his absence has been deeply felt. But in many ways, his memory has only grown stronger, serving as a constant reminder of his unwavering dedication to education and his passion for history. I completed this thesis, inspired by my father's life and legacy, and I am grateful for the opportunity to honor him in this way.

As I move forward in my academic and professional pursuits, I am grateful by the knowledge that I am following in my father's footsteps, and that my success is a reflection of his guidance and support. Thank you, Dad, for everything. You will be forever in my memories.

List of Abbreviations

AI:	Amnesty International
AIPAC:	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
H CJ:	High Court of Justice
HRW:	Human Rights Watch
ICC:	International Criminal Court
ICJ:	Israel Court of Justice
IDF:	Israeli Defense Forces
IOF:	Israeli Occupation Forces
JNF:	Jewish National Fund
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NIF:	New Israel Fund
PA:	Palestinian Authority
PCHR:	Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
OPT:	Occupied Palestinian Territory
UN:	United Nations
UNSCOP:	The Special Committee for Palestine
WZO:	World Zionist Organization
ZOA:	Zionist Organization of America

1. Introduction

*“Everybody has to move, run and grab as many (Palestinian) hilltops as they can to enlarge the (Jewish) settlements because everything we take now will stay ours...Everything we don't grab will go to them.”*¹ Ariel Sharon in 1998, Former Prime Minister of State of Israel

*“In order to obtain the goal of returning to Palestine, all of us sometimes have to grit our teeth.”*² Yasser Arafat in 1994, Former Leader of Palestine Liberation Organization

The Israeli – Palestinian conflict is almost a century-old today. It encompasses a range of interconnected aspects, including territorial disputes, security concerns, political status, refugees and displacement, human rights and international law, and the clash of national narratives. All these dimensions collectively contribute to the complexity of the conflict. Various scholars attribute the reasons for the conflict to differing aspects, but as Gelvin (2011) asserts, “the dispute is, simply put, a real estate dispute.” In this context, this research aims to delve into the complexities of the conflict with a focus on its territorial and demographic dynamics.

The demographics have been at the very center of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict since the beginning of it. Competing claims and narratives over the region’s land, resources, and political power have played a key role in the conflict in terms of demographics. While Israel is viewed by Israelis as a homeland for Jews all over the world because of the historical and religious ties that Jews have to the country, Palestinians contend that they are the original inhabitants of the region and that Israeli occupation and settlement policies have violated their rights. Whereas Israelis contend that in order to preserve the Jewish identity of the state, there must be a Jewish majority, Palestinians see the creation of a Jewish state as a form of discrimination and colonialism. In the end, both Palestinians and Israelis have both cited demographic evidence to bolster their claims.

¹ In quotes: Ariel Sharon, BBC, 11 January 2014, accessed on 13-5-2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11576714>

² Michael D. Evans, *Jerusalem Betrayed: Ancient Prophecy and Modern Conspiracy Collide in the Holy City*, 1997, Thomas Nelson

Referring to intentional manipulation of a population's demographic composition for political, economic or cultural purposes, demographic engineering entails elevating chosen cultural or racial groups over the others. There are many methods of implementing demographic engineering in a state or region, including pronatalist policies, encouraging or discouraging immigration, assimilation, redrawing boundaries, and forced population transfers through ethnic dilution, ethnic consolidation, or ethnic cleansing.³ The establishment of settlements, which involves the transfer of a population into a particular area, can also be seen as a method of demographic engineering.

In the context of Israeli – Palestinian conflict, aside from present ones, the construction of new settlements is one of the methods of Israeli settlement expansion, together with government incentive schemes, land expropriations, establishment of outposts, sales of housing units, infrastructure development, military presence, restrictive policies on movement, strict residency and citizenship laws and many more. The issue of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem has been at the heart of the problem since the beginning of the conflict.

When the British Mandate in Palestine came to an end, the Special Committee for Palestine, UNSCOP, recommended dividing Palestine into two states and suggested that the City of Jerusalem be designated as a *corpus separatum* under a global government run by the UN, although Palestine was still largely an Arab nation despite Britain's pro-Zionist policies and the existence of a growing Jewish minority. The decision adopted in 1947 completely disregarded the ethnic makeup of the nation's population, according to Gelvin (2011). If the UN had determined that the area the Jews had settled in Palestine should correspond with the size of their future state, they would not have been granted more than 10% of the land.⁴

Studying demographic engineering becomes crucial because it sheds light on power dynamics, social impacts, human rights violations, economic considerations, conflict and security implications. It helps us understand how governments use demographic manipulation to consolidate power, the effects on social cohesion and marginalized groups, the ethical concerns and human rights violations involved, the economic consequences, the links to conflicts and security issues, and the lessons we can learn from past instances.

³ Milica Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power: The Political Economy of Demographic Engineering in the Modern World*, Department of Economics, St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia, 2013

⁴ James Gelvin, *Modern Middle East: A History*, 2005, Oxford University Press

In the conflict, civil society organizations can have diverse roles, including promoting dialogue, challenging dominant discourses, but also fueling the conflict with nationalist discourse surrounding the issue of demographics. Therefore, it is crucial to approach civil society organizations with a critical lens. Recognizing the complexity of their involvement, both national and international civil society organizations remain central to the conflict. This thesis aims to address the research question “How national and international civil society organizations discursively frame the Israeli settlements in the West Bank after the Second Intifada.” By analyzing the language, narratives, and metaphors used by different stakeholders, the thesis seeks to uncover the underlying implications of these discourses.

2. Context and Methodology

This chapter will first provide background information about Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the controversy surrounding them. Then, the discourse analysis process will be explained as the research tool of this thesis and the sources used will shortly be evaluated.

2.1. Context

For many years, there has been a controversy surrounding Israeli settlements in the West Bank. In order to remove the Palestinian ‘demographic burden’ after the Six-Day War, Israel decided to pursue an even more multifaceted strategy that combined economic, institutional, demographic, military, psychological, and legal pressures.⁵ Land confiscation and the development of Jewish-only settlements have been the cornerstones of Israel’s demographic engineering methods since 1967. Israeli settlements receive significant state funding, as well as frequent backing from pro-settlement non-governmental organizations. The successive left- and right-leaning governments in Israel have taken positions on settlements, as Dana and Jarbawi (2017) show.

According to Dana and Jarbawi (2017), apartheid became the primary characteristic of Israel’s colonial order in the post-Oslo reality with the institutionalization of physical, territorial, and demographic fragmentation, restrictions on the movement of people and goods, and the imposition of new modes of dispossession and collective punishment. Effective control mechanisms and the splintering of Palestinian communities were brought about by the post-Oslo reality, particularly due to the West Bank’s rapid Judaization, especially in key locations like Jerusalem, the old city of Hebron, the Nablus periphery, and the mushrooming settlement blocs.⁶

The Israeli government, with an aim to preserve a Jewish majority in the region, views many settlements as strategically significant. The Israeli government supports Jewish habitation in these areas by providing infrastructure, financial incentives, and security. These settlements, in the eyes of many Palestinians, are against international law. Israel disagrees with this assessment and sees the settlements as legal settlements on its land. However, the international community considers these settlements to be against international law and a

⁵ Tariq Dana & Ali Jarbawi, *A Century of Settler Colonialism in Palestine: Zionism’s Entangled Project*, 2017

⁶ *Ibid.*

significant roadblock to Israeli – Palestinian peace talks.

This thesis aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the discourses at play in the conflict through an examination of written materials such as organization reports. The thesis aspires to contribute to a more inclusive conversation on this crucial topic by offering light on the discursive strategies used by diverse players, especially those civil society organizations that may feed the conflict with nationalist ideology. It acknowledges the necessity for a critical assessment and a thorough grasp of civil society groups' capacity to either foster peace and reconciliation or worsen the conflicts.

2.2. Methodology

The methodology of this study involves discourse analysis to investigate how civil society organizations contribute to the construction of meaning, the challenging of dominant discourses, and the promotion of dialogue regarding Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The research primarily examines the narratives presented in reports produced by these organizations. The main objectives are to identify the discursive strategies employed by these organizations in framing the issue of demographic engineering and to analyze the implications and consequences of these framing efforts on the potential for a fair and lasting peace between the two communities.

The research method focuses on discursive framing, which will be applied when analyzing primary sources, such as reports and publications from civil society organizations. The use of discourse analysis allows for an in-depth examination of the language, narratives, and rhetorical techniques employed by these organizations in shaping public understanding and perception of the Israeli settlements issue. By studying the discursive strategies, this research aims to uncover the underlying power dynamics, ideologies, and values that are conveyed through these narratives.

With this aim, civil society organizations' reports were used as primary sources to be studied. Two reports published by two international, Israeli, and Palestinian civil society organizations, twelve reports in total, were examined for this purpose. The selected reports cover a 20-year time span to capture the historical background and show potential shifts in narratives. One report from the early 2000s, which reflected the events that followed the Second Intifada and its aftermath, was chosen for each group. Another study from the 2020s was picked to show a more recent viewpoint on the subject. This study aims to discover possible changes in the discursive tactics used by civil society groups and investigate how

their narratives have changed over time by comparing reports from various historical periods.

The mentioned time period analyzed in this paper was chosen as the beginning of the Second Intifada because it represents a turning point in the conflict and settlement strategies, for the fact that this period is characterized by intensified violence which is marked by suicide bombings and other attacks by Palestinian militants and military operations by Israeli forces. The building of a separation barrier and the expansion of settlements in the West Bank as part of the Israeli government's response to the Second Intifada drew international condemnation and criticism from civil society organizations. In order to understand the evolution of these narratives and the effect of the conflict on civil society organizations' advocacy strategies, it is useful to examine how civil society organizations in the West Bank have framed settlement policies discursively since the Second Intifada.

For Israeli civil society organizations, Peace Now and Regavim were selected to represent different perspectives on settlements, with Peace Now supporting the opposition to settlements and Regavim taking a more supportive stance. The inclusion of these two organizations provides a more nuanced understanding of the discourse surrounding settlement policies in the Israeli context and enables a more balanced analysis of the issue. For Palestinian civil society organizations, Al-Haq and Palestinian Centre for Human Rights were chosen due to their prominence and active involvement in advocating for Palestinian rights and challenging the legality of settlement policies. Lastly, for the international civil society organizations, Amnesty International (AI) and Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) reports were chosen to represent various viewpoints on settlements, with AI opposing them and ZOA having a much more sympathetic attitude. The inclusion of these two groups permits a more objective examination of the topic and offers a more comprehensive understanding of the discourse around settlement policy in the Israeli context. Together, the selected reports provide a rich corpus of data that enables a detailed analysis of the discursive strategies and linguistic means used by civil society organizations to frame and communicate their positions on the issue of settlement policies in the West Bank.

I discovered that the UN database for reports from civil society organizations was extremely helpful for my study. The database made available a plethora of data from different civil society groups active in the area. This gave me the chance to learn from many groups, including those that were concerned with promoting human rights, fostering peace, and resolving conflicts. My analysis was strengthened by including information from these

groups because they gave me a more complete grasp of the settlement issue and how it affects the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. The UN database was a useful tool that complemented the other sources and added to the examination of the subject from all angles.

During my research, I encountered several limitations that affected the balance and depth of information I could gather. Firstly, in an effort to present a neutral standpoint, I aimed to include sources with contrasting perspectives. However, I faced difficulty in finding Palestinian civil society organizations that support settlements, resulting in a lack of diverse viewpoints from Palestinian organizations. The majority of Palestinian civil society organizations I studied shared a similar mindset on the settlement issue. Secondly, a challenge arose from the fact that some civil society organizations were established after the early 2000s. This limited the availability of sources specifically related to that time period, affecting the comprehensiveness of my analysis. Additionally, I found that when I looked at the reports of Israeli civil society organizations, they frequently tended to fight against accusations of violence against the Israeli state rather than directly addressing the problem of settlements and demographic engineering. As a result, it was difficult to find detailed information about their viewpoints on this particular component of the conflict. Despite these limitations, I was able to provide a comprehensive analysis that advances comprehension of the complicated problem at hand by taking into account the available data.

3. Historiography

This section is composed of the historiography of two concepts which are demographic engineering and civil society organization, for the fact that this thesis will study demographic engineering through the lens of civil society organizations. How different scholars have studied the concept of demographic engineering and the role of civil society organizations in Israeli – Palestinian conflict will be explained in this section.

3.1. Demographic Engineering

Demographic engineering is the policies designed to affect the size, composition, distribution, and growth rate of a population, which is undertaken by governments, political parties, and a variety of interest groups that believe that the demographic changes they support will further their interests.⁷ In other words, demographic engineering is the intentional alteration of an area's racial makeup, particularly when done to produce ethnically homogeneous populations.⁸ It can be used to achieve a particular demographic balance, such as maintaining a majority population or preventing the growth of a minority population, where political or ideological objectives may be the driving force.⁹ The concept is a controversial term in terms of its definition, ethical implications, and effectiveness, and it has been studied and debated by scholars for many years.

Early research on demographic engineering concentrated on particular historical occurrences, such as population transfers, forced migrations, or genocides. These studies sought to comprehend the motivations, strategies, and effects of population engineering in certain situations. The Holocaust during World War II, the population exchange between Greece and Turkey at the turn of the 20th century, and the partition of India in 1947 are a few examples. In more recent years, academics have broadened their research interests to consider demographic engineering in the context of larger theories of power, politics, and ideology. They examine the connections between demographic engineering, colonialism, nationalism, state-building, and disputes over land and resources. This strategy emphasizes that population engineering is frequently deeply ingrained in larger historical processes rather than being restricted to singular instances.

⁷ Michael Teitelbaum, *A Research Agenda for Political Demography*, 2021

⁸ Uğur Ümit Üngör. *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913–1950*. Oxford University Press. 2011

⁹ John McGarry, "Demographic engineering": the state-directed movement of ethnic groups as a technique of conflict regulation'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 21 (4):1998. 613–638.

The historiography on demographic engineering in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict is also a contested field of research, shaped by diverse viewpoints, interpretations, and arguments. Over the years, scholars and researchers have approached the conflict from various angles, leading to a range of interpretations and debates. They contend that the motivation behind these measures has been to prevent the Palestinian people from expanding and developing while preserving a Jewish majority and control over the region.¹⁰ Those scholars argue that Palestinian communities have been uprooted and displaced as a result of settlement construction on Palestinian land.¹¹ On the other hand, proponents of Israeli policy support that security concerns, religious and historical ties to the region, as well as the preservation of Jewish identity and self-determination, are the driving forces behind demographic concerns. They contend that settlements have been instrumental in the creation of Israel as a state because they are seen as a natural and legitimate extension of Jewish history and culture.¹²

Early scholarly works on the conflict often presented a narrative that focused primarily on the political aspects, examining the key events in the conflict. These works sought to understand the origins and development of the conflict within the context of competing national aspirations and territorial claims. For instance, Efraim Karsh stated his viewpoint that the 1948 Palestinian exodus was “exclusively of their own making”. According to Karsh (2011), a large number of Palestinians were forced to leave their homes as a result of pressure from local Arab leaders “and/or the Arab Liberation Army that had entered Palestine prior to the end of the Mandate, whether out of military considerations or in order to prevent them from becoming citizens of the prospective Jewish state.” He claimed that there is an “overwhelming and incontrovertible body of evidence” in his favor, including “intelligence briefs, captured Arab documents, press reports, personal testimonies and memoirs...”¹³

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the “new historians’ approach” emerged in Israel, which sought to challenge traditional narratives of Israeli history. These scholars explored the historical and social context of the conflict, delving into the experiences of Palestinian

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 2006, Oneworld Publications

¹² Jonathan Fox, and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing religion into international relations*, 2004, Palgrave Macmillan

¹³ Efraim Karsh, Reclaiming a Historical Truth, 2011, Haaretz, accessed on 1-07-2023,

<https://www.haaretz.com/2011-06-10/ty-article/reclaiming-a-historical-truth/0000017f-dbff-db22-a17f-fff2b5d0000>

refugees and the dispossession of Palestinian land and identity. For instance, the events of 1948, including the 1947-1948 civil war in Palestine and the subsequent Arab-Israeli War, constituted a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing by Jewish paramilitary groups and later the Israeli government, according to Pappé (2006). He alleges that in order to guarantee a Jewish majority in the newly created state, Israeli soldiers repeatedly drove Palestinians from their homes and leveled Palestinian communities.¹⁴

Similarly, the critique of Israel by Edward Said covers numerous important issues in addition to the dehumanization of Palestinians. First, he criticizes the policies and actions of the Israeli government, including the founding and growth of settlements in the occupied areas, which he sees as a breach of international law and a barrier to peace. Additionally, Said condemns the Israeli military's use of force and its exaggerated response to Palestinian resistance, contending that these actions feed a cycle of bloodshed and worsen regional tensions. He also criticizes Israel's narrative, which paints itself as the only victim and ignores the historical background of Palestinian eviction and relocation. According to Said (2012), this one-sided narrative makes it difficult to comprehend the dispute fairly and creates obstacles in the way of a just settlement.¹⁵

Recently, through examining social and human rights concerns, the function of international law, and the effects of settler colonialism on the Palestinian population, fields like legal studies and sociology have also contributed to the historiography. For instance, Oren Yiftachel's research focuses on Israel – Palestine's political and social geography, with a focus on issues relating to urban planning, land rights, and ethnic and national identity. According to Yiftachel (2006), Israel is not a democracy but rather an "ethnocracy," where the state's policies and practices are intended to uphold the dominance of Jewish Israelis over Palestinian Arabs. Israel's settlement policies are a crucial component of this ethnocratic system because they enable Israel to exert control over and expand its territory while restricting the resources available to Palestinian communities.¹⁶

Moreover, Elia Zureik states that Israeli domestic and foreign policies have been shaped by the desire to uphold Jewish dominance in historic Palestine. According to him, the

¹⁴ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 2006, Oneworld Publications

¹⁵ Edward Said, Chapter 11: Afterword: The consequences of 1948 in *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, ed. by Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, 2012, Cambridge University Press

¹⁶ Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine*, 2006, University of Pennsylvania Press

constant pursuit of land and the expulsion of the native Palestinian population is still top on the Zionist nation's agenda.¹⁷ Zureik has also focused on researching security and surveillance procedures in relation to Israeli occupation. His research clarifies how the Israeli government uses surveillance tools and methods to manage and keep an eye on the Palestinian people. Security, absorption capacity, religion, and the preservation of its culture, are as significant as demography, as he suggests. He also asserts that not only in the occupied territories, the target of transfer and expulsion includes Palestinian citizens of Israel. This situation could potentially be perceived as resembling modern-day apartheid, as the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza are denied full citizenship.

3.2. Civil Society Organizations

The Israeli – Palestinian conflict has also been shaped by civil society organizations. These organizations have sprung up on both sides of the conflict with a variety of goals in mind, from fostering amity and understanding to advancing human rights and national self-determination. These organizations can have a certain stance on the conflict. Their actions have a significant influence on political discussions, public opinion, and the peace process itself. The role and influence of civil society organizations in the conflict are subject to differing opinions among researchers and analysts.

According to Jamal (2018), there is a growing conflict between conservative nationalist civil society organizations and liberal civil society organizations in Israel. He suggests that conservative nationalist civil society organizations, supported by influential politicians in the Israeli government, are leading aggressive campaigns against liberal civil society organizations defending Palestinian rights and they delegitimize liberal civil society organizations through naming and shaming tactics, silence them by shaming institutions that invite them to speak and cut off their funding through lobbying activities in donor countries, which has resulted in a rise in conservative nationalist power and a decline in the influence of liberal civil society organizations¹⁸.

According to some, Israeli right-wing governments and their civil society organization allies have taken concerted and coordinated steps to weaken and delegitimize

¹⁷ Elia Zureik, 'Demography and transfer: Israel's road to nowhere', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (2003), pp. 619 – 630

¹⁸ Amal Jamal, 'The Rise of "Bad Civil Society" in Israel: Nationalist Civil Society Organizations and the Politics of Delegitimization', *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, SWP Comment 2, January 2018

left-wing civil society actors, as well as their supporters and donors through legislation. Katz and Gidron (2011) argue that they have attempted to stop international funding for human rights organizations and have treated civil society organizations differently depending on their political stance, under the pretext of “protecting national security and Jewish character of the state.”¹⁹ As Katz and Gidron (2011) argue, there have been attempts to restrict press freedom, pass legislation that goes against democratic principles, silence critics of the government and its policies, and delegitimize political opponents, human rights organizations, minorities, and the judiciary by branding them as anti-Zionists and traitors in recent years.

New Israel Fund (NIF), for instance, has experienced such limitations and oppression according to them. Non-profit organizations like New Israel Fund advocate peace and the defense of Palestinian civil rights. Such organizations do not receive funding from the government and have come to rely more on funding from liberal Jewish donors and European governments.²⁰ The Israeli Prime Minister said that NIF is an international organization that receives funding from governments abroad and from anti-Israel organizations like the George Soros Foundation, and described the Fund as a major “enemy of the state.”²¹ As Katz and Gidron (2011) argue, the attack is motivated by NIF’s support of groups like B’Tselem and Breaking the Silence, who exposes Israeli violations of Palestinians’ human rights. Such organizations and those who support them have been the targets of delegitimizing rhetoric and discourse with the use of rightist populist language.

On the other hand, some researchers like Gerald Steinberg and Anne Herzberg have a history of decrying foreign funding for civil society organizations, especially when it comes from groups that oppose Israeli policies or actions.²² Steinberg, for instance, argues that the funding for these organizations is almost entirely non-transparent and he emphasizes the general absence of transparency, especially when it comes to decision-making, hiring practices, and agenda-setting.²³ Steinberg adds that these organizations lack democratic accountability and they are acting in opposition to the values of Israeli state sovereignty and

¹⁹ Hagai Katz and Benjamin Gidron, ‘Encroachment and Reaction of Civil Society in Non-liberal Democracies: The Case of Israel and the New Israel Fund’, *Nonprofit Policy Forum* 2022; 13(3): 229–250

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Gerald M Steinberg and Anne Herzberg, Ngo Fact-Finding for IHL Enforcement: In Search Of A New Model, *Israel Law Review*, 2018, 51(2)

²³ Gerald Steinberg, ‘Value Cash: Civil Society, Foreign Funding, and National Sovereignty’, *Global Governance*, 2018, 24(1):1-10

national independence.

Steinberg also emphasizes that the “halo effect,” which means cognitive bias that boosts credibility and the appearance of altruism, has protected them. According to him, such organizations are shielded from scrutiny by the image of their morality.²⁴ This “halo effect” compensates not only for the lack of accountability but also for the lack of expertise in the military and diplomatic spheres in which many civil society organizations are active. He argues that the consumers of civil society organization reports frequently fail to notice or take into account the lack of reliable fact-finding techniques and expertise. Civil society organizations in particular frequently lack military expertise or a grasp of how the armies function and it is virtually impossible to analyze armed conflict with any level of credibility without this knowledge.²⁵

Moreover, Steinberg argues that civil society organizations’ roles, influence, and attention to Israel have grown significantly since the end of the Cold War, and there is now an extensive collaboration between civil society organizations claiming to support human rights and international law and the anti-Israel agendas of many UN frameworks. One of the examples of such anti-Israel agendas is the Durban NGO Forum which adopted a final statement that primarily “demonized” Israel. The conference turned into a symbol of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, despite its stated goal of becoming “a landmark in the struggle to eradicate all forms of racism.”²⁶

The civil society organization network has frequently condemned Israel in the ten years since the Durban conference on the basis of fabricated or unprovable claims of human rights violations and “war crimes,” as he states.²⁷ From Israeli military operation in Jenin in 2002 through the UNHRC’s Goldstone Report on the Gaza war, civil society organizations campaigns spearheaded by international organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have played a crucial role in this process, as Steinberg argues.²⁸

²⁴ Gerald Steinberg, ‘The Politics of NGOs, Human Rights and the Arab-Israel Conflict’, *Israel Studies*, 2011, 16(2): 24-54

²⁵ Gerald Steinberg, ‘Counter-terror and soft power: NGO claims to military and legal expertise and Israeli responses’, *Israel Affairs*, 2018, 24(4):1-21

²⁶ World Jewish Congress, Countering anti-Israel bias at the Durban Conference, accessed on 13-5-2023, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/durban-conference?item=t4izTL3hYeaTf0PCpfHQm>

²⁷ Gerald Steinberg, ‘The Politics of NGOs, Human Rights and the Arab-Israel Conflict’, *Israel Studies*, 2011, 16(2): 24-54

²⁸ Gerald Steinberg, ‘From Durban to the Goldstone Report: the centrality of human rights NGOs in the political dimension of the Arab–Israeli conflict’, *Israel Affairs*, 2012, 18(3): 372-388

As for the place of this study on the existing scholarship, the debated nature of demographic engineering and the part played by civil society groups in the conflict are acknowledged. However, while demographic engineering is typically studied as a policy pursued by governments or interest groups, this research highlights the role of civil society organizations. Moreover, although both concepts have been independently examined in other research, the focus on overlapping dynamics brings a fresh perspective to the existing research as it seeks to show the framing of demographic engineering through the lenses of civil society organizations. Finally, carrying out a comparative discourse analysis among diverse organizations in Israeli – Palestinian conflict is another unique aspect of this research.

4. Theoretical Framework

This thesis aims to investigate how civil society organizations discursively framed Israeli settlement policies in the West Bank, therefore, the theoretical framework that focuses on the framing is used to accomplish this goal. It is aimed to shed light on the underlying power relations, ideological presumptions, and discursive strategies that shape the public discourse on Israeli settlement policies through the frames employed by civil society organizations.

4.1. Framing

The social construction theory holds that people are not born with predefined sets of beliefs. Instead, the information we learn via verbal and nonverbal forms of communication is what most heavily influences how we perceive the world. We use our prior knowledge to understand recent happenings. Language, communication techniques, and socialization all influence how we see situations. In this process, the way facts are presented may influence opinions, and the ability to convey data in a certain way can aid various players in producing the intended results.²⁹

In this context, discursive framing refers to a tool of research that aims to describe the ways in which language is employed to influence how people perceive and comprehend specific problems or events. The term “frame” refers to a specific form of interpretation and it involves choosing specific words, phrases, and narratives that influence how people view and react to certain problems or events. Frames serve as “resources for ongoing meaning construction”, as Werner and Cornelissen assert.³⁰ Discursive framing assumes that social actors use a variety of figurative language techniques, such as metaphors and similes, to sway audiences’ perceptions, assessments, and choices, according to Waller and Conaway.³¹

The idea of framing is created by sociologist Erving Goffman and is based on the notion that events and problems have socially constructed meanings. According to Goffman (1974), social frameworks “provide a background of understanding for events that

²⁹ Elena Pokalova, *Shifting Faces of Terror After 9/11: Framing the Terrorist Threat*, PhD diss., Kent State University, 2011

³⁰ Mirjam Werner, and Joep Cornelissen. ‘Framing the change: switching and blending frames and their role in instigating institutional change’, *Organization Studies*, 2014, 35(10): 1449-1472

³¹ Randall Waller, and Roger Conaway. ‘Framing and counterframing the issue of corporate social responsibility: the communication strategies of Nikebiz.com’, *The Journal of Business Communication* (2011), 48(1): 83-106.

incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence.” Goffman described frames as social instruments for comprehending and organizing experience. He made an effort to comprehend how perspectives work since he thought frames shaped social experience. Goffman asserts that people “locate, perceive, identify, and label” the events and acts in their lives using “frameworks or schemata of interpretation”; as a result, frames can serve to organize experience and subsequently direct behavior.³²

One of the fundamental assumptions of framing theory, according to Chong and Druckman (2007) is that “an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations.” In light of this, framing refers to the procedure “by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue”. Framing may be used to build specific conceptualizations as well as function as a road map for creating reality.³³

Entman (1993) claims that “frames call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions.” In order to advocate a certain problem description, causal interpretation, moral assessment, and/or treatment prescription for the item presented, one must choose some characteristics of a seen reality and make them more salient in a communication text. Frames carry out the tasks of issue definition, cause analysis, moral assessment, and remedy suggestion.³⁴

In today’s global media world, framing theory has grown in significance for a number of industries. For the design of media campaigns in the advertising, public relations, and political sectors, the understanding of framing theory is essential. For instance, framing theory is used to customize a political topic in election campaigns for a certain audience. However, media analysis in journalism and political communication is also a significant field of framing theory. Media analysts find framing theory useful to understand the inequalities and underlying power structures that mediate political issues since media continue to serve as the fourth estate in democratic democracies.³⁵

In order to promote a particular interpretation of the situation, it entails choosing a

³² Yilmin Koo, *Framing the Dream Act: An Analysis of Congressional Speeches*, PhD diss., University of North Texas, 2018

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Elena Pokalova, *Shifting Faces of Terror After 9/11: Framing the Terrorist Threat*, PhD diss., Kent State University, 2011

³⁵ Ingrid Volkmer, *Framing Theory* in *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, ed. by Stephen W. Littlejohn & Karen A. Foss, 2009 SAGE Publications, Inc.

particular aspect of social reality and highlighting it while obscuring other aspects, as Entman (1993) suggests.³⁶ That is to say, discursive framing has a big impact on how people understand and react to different issues and events, emphasizing the significance of scrutinizing the language and rhetoric employed in political and media discourse. Frames are instruments that political players may use to define and portray political problems in a certain way.

Elites utilize frames to influence public opinion in addition to presenting topics from a certain perspective. This is the psychological approach to framing (Kahneman and Tversky 1984), which examines framing as alterations in societal perception brought on by the characterization of an issue (Iyengar and Simon 1993). In this approach, frames emphasize some facts while leaving out others, which influences how individuals view pertinent topics.³⁷

According to Entman (1993), a “frame in a news text is really the imprint of power - it registers the identity of actors or interests that competed to dominate the text.” To get the necessary amount of policy support, political elites employ frames. Elites use framing to “manipulate popular preferences to serve their own interests” by emphasizing some aspects of programs while downplaying others. According to Edelman (1993), governments can only “win public support for [their] actions by creating and spreading beliefs about those who are deserving and threats and about which policies will bring desirable results and which will be painful, unfair, or disastrous.”³⁸

In conclusion, the theoretical framework of framing offers a useful prism through which to examine the discursive techniques used by national and international civil society organizations to frame Israeli settlement practices in the West Bank. The idea of framing admits that many viewpoints may be created, and organizations can affect how people view and react to complicated topics by carefully choosing their words, phrases, and narratives. It is vital to analyze the language and framing strategies used in political and media discourse since frames are resources for the formation of meaning. By examining the framing process, we can learn more about how civil society groups participate in the continuing discussion

³⁶ Robert Entman. ‘Framing: toward clarification of a fractured paradigm’, *Journal of Communication*, 1993, 43(4):51-58.

³⁷ Elena Pokalova, *Shifting Faces of Terror After 9/11: Framing the Terrorist Threat*, PhD diss., Kent State University, 2011

³⁸ *Ibid.*

over Israeli settlement policy, eventually illuminating the intricate dynamics at play in this divisive topic.

5. Historical Background

There have been many phases in the history of Jewish settlement in Palestinian territory but the emergence of the Zionist movement in the late 19th century and the British mandate following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century can be accepted as the starting point of today's Israeli – Palestinian conflict. The Jewish national revival movement, namely Zionism, first appeared in central and eastern Europe in the late 1880s as a result of the increasing pressure on Jews living there to either completely assimilate or face further persecution.³⁹ Upon this, the First Zionist Congress was put on by Theodor Herzl in Switzerland, in 1897 when the Basel Program was published, which outlined the strategy to be used in order to establish a “Jewish home” in Palestine. The Zionist movement did not really succeed until 1917 when the British issued the Balfour Declaration.⁴⁰ Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, opened the door to the never-ending conflict that would soon engulf the nation and its people when he promised the Zionist movement in 1917 to establish a national home for Jews in Palestine, according to Pappé (2006).

With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the Empire dissolved and the Palestinian lands were put under British Mandate by the League of Nations in 1920. Jewish immigration increased during the British mandate era. In the 1920s, the majority of the population, between 80% and 90%, was made up of Palestinians.⁴¹ This native Palestinian population opposed the Zionist settlement policies. This opposition manifested itself in a variety of ways, including land occupations, violence against settlers, and property destruction.⁴²

By the end of the Mandate, Palestine was still largely an Arab nation despite Britain's pro-Zionist policies and the existence of a growing Jewish minority.⁴³ The Special Committee for Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended dividing Palestine into two states and suggested that the City of Jerusalem be run under a global government run by the UN. This was adopted as General Assembly Resolution 181 in 1947. The Zionist movement received a state that covered more than half of the nation.⁴⁴ The resolution was rejected by the Palestinian leadership and heightened tensions which led to a civil war between Jews and

³⁹ Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 2006, Oneworld Publications

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² James Gelvin, *Modern Middle East: A History*, 2005, Oxford University Press

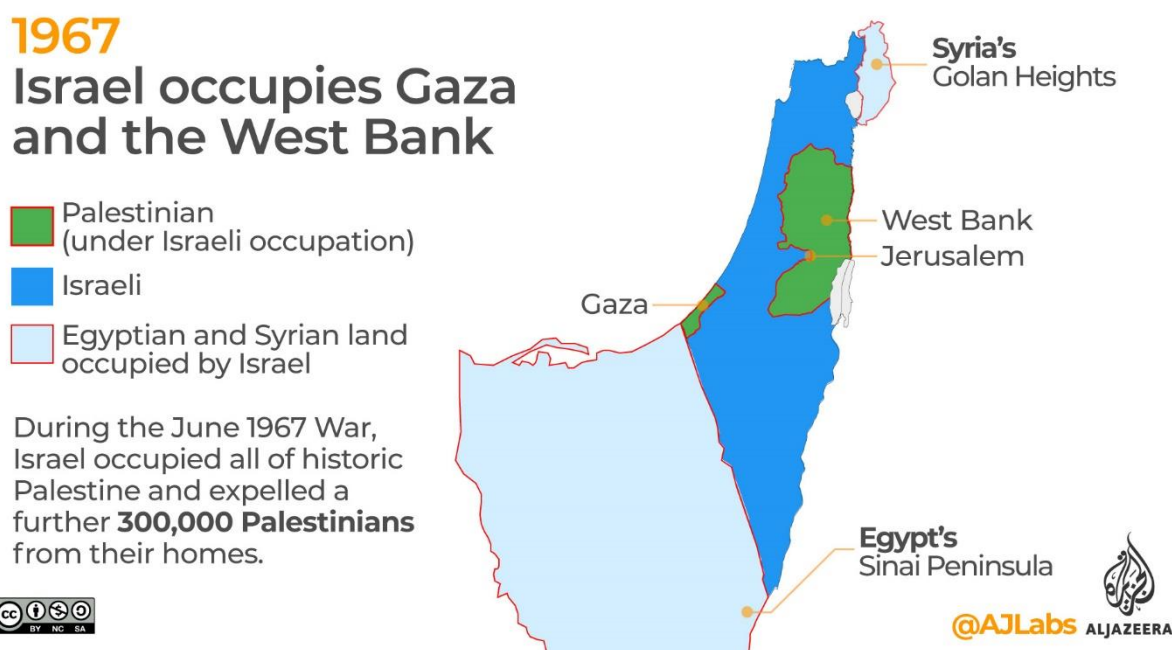
⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Palestinian Arabs.

Following the civil war, neighboring Arab countries intervened on behalf of the Palestinians in 1948. Both communities in the conflict experienced dramatic effects from the conflict for Palestine, also known as the War of Independence in Israel and the *Nakba* (catastrophe in Arabic) in Palestine. The conflict resulted in the establishment of the State of Israel and an estimated 700,000 Palestinian Arabs were displaced and forced to flee or were expelled from their homes and land, seeking refuge in neighboring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, or becoming internally displaced within Israel.

In 1967, Israel launched a war against its Arab neighbors when it occupied the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights and expanded its rule over the rest of Palestine. Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank including East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. 300,000 people left the territories occupied in 1967, leaving over 1.5 million Palestinians in direct conflict with the Israeli occupation.



Map 1: The Palestinian territory after Israeli occupation⁴⁵

In 1987, a widespread uprising by Palestinians erupted against Israeli occupation after twenty years of occupation. A number of political, social, and economic grievances,

⁴⁵ Mohammed Haddad, Palestine and Israel: Mapping an annexation, 2020, Al Jazeera, accessed on 13-5-2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/6/26/palestine-and-israel-mapping-an-annexation>

such as discontent with the Israeli occupation, restrictions on the Palestinian movement, economic hardships, and the stagnation of the peace process, served as the catalyst for the First Intifada. The uprising included large-scale demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience, and acts of resistance against Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank's Palestinian territories. Although there were some violent incidents, such as clashes with Israeli forces and attacks on Israeli settlers, the uprising was largely characterized by non-violent forms of resistance, such as boycotting and striking.

The First Intifada came to an end in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo Accords but for many scholars, the “peace process” proved to be an illusion because the Accords did not fully resolve the core issues at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as borders, Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements. Despite the Oslo Accords calling for a freeze on Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israeli settlement expansion continued during and after the peace process, leading to increased Israeli presence and control over Palestinian territories.

In 2000, a series of talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders were initiated at Camp David in the United States. The Summit represented a significant effort to establish a Palestinian state but was marked by intense and difficult negotiations on core issues such as borders, refugees, Jerusalem, and security arrangements. However, the failure of the Camp David summit and continued settlements were followed by a period of heightened violence in the region, known as the Second Intifada, which began in 2000. The uprising brought about one of the bloodiest chapters in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict.⁴⁶ While Palestinians carried out suicide bombings, gunfire, stone-throwing, and rocket attacks, Israeli forces engaged in targeted killings, tank, and aerial attacks. Palestinian suicide bombings, which primarily targeted Israeli civilians, were a prominent aspect of the fighting.

Since the start of the Second Intifada, 2002 saw the greatest number of terrorist-related deaths in Israel, when the government began Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank in response to the deaths of 100 Israeli civilians and 26 military personnel.⁴⁷ Decision of building the “Separation/Security Barrier” to separate Israel from the West Bank was adopted by the National Security Cabinet in 2002.⁴⁸ A system of fences, an anti-vehicle

⁴⁶ Ronnie Olesker, ‘National identity and Securitization in Israel’, *Ethnicities*, 2014, Vol. 14(3) 371–391

⁴⁷ David Kretzmer & Yaël Ronen, Chapter 12: The Separation Barrier in *The Occupation of Justice: The Supreme Court of Israel and the Occupied Territories* (2nd ed), Oxford University Press, 2021

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

component, patrol roads, trace paths, and warning and surveillance systems make up the Barrier.

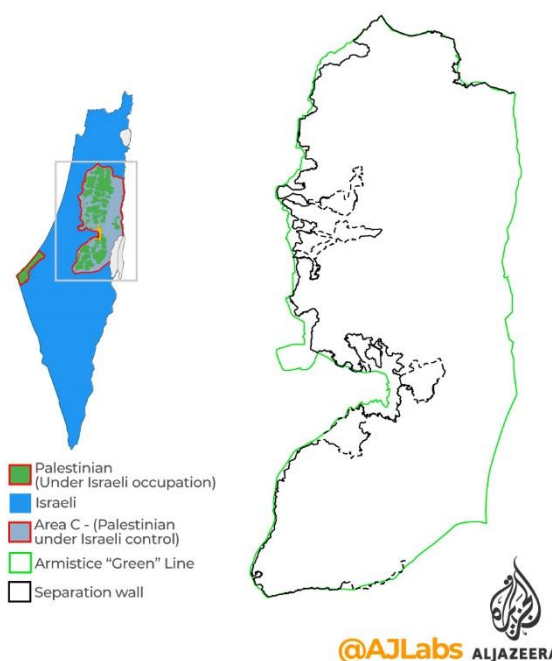
The West Bank's entire Palestinian population is negatively impacted by the Barrier. Residents and landowners whose property it was built on were impacted right away by its construction, significant portions of land had to be taken in order to build the barrier, and water wells and olive groves suffered damage. The Barrier also severs ties between communities and divides contiguous Palestinian urban and rural blocs. The Barrier frequently makes it difficult for Palestinians to access facilities like work, schools, healthcare, and other necessities.

2020 Separation wall

Up to **8m**  **700km**

Since 2002, Israel has been constructing a wall that stretches for **more than 700 kilometres**.

85 percent of the wall falls within the West Bank rather than running along the internationally-recognised 1967 boundary, known as the Green Line.



Source: B'Tselem (2019)

Map 2: The Separation Wall⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the settlements in the West Bank, particularly in East Jerusalem, have kept expanding still today, despite the UN condemnation of illegal Israeli settlements in Palestine. In this context, historic sites in West Bank have continued to be conflict areas as settlers and government entities seized land or took control under the guise of conducting archaeological research or developing historic sites for the benefit of the general public, as a report published by Emek Shaveh shows.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Mohammed Haddad, Palestine and Israel: Mapping an annexation, 2020, Al Jazeera, accessed on 13-5-2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/6/26/palestine-and-israel-mapping-an-annexation>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

6. Framing of Settlement Policy by Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations engage in discursive framing to shape public opinion on various issues to raise awareness by framing it in a way that captures public attention and generates empathy or to create pressure on policymakers to adopt their preferred policies. Therefore, discursive framing is a potent tool that civil society organizations can use to mobilize support for their causes, influence public opinion, and influence policy. In this section, the reports relating to settlement issue in the West Bank published by Israeli, Palestinian, and international civil society actors will be comparatively examined.

6.1. Framing of Settlement Policy by Israeli Civil Society Organizations

The reports to be examined first in this section were published by Peace Now. In 2007, the organization published a short report titled “Construction and Development of Settlements Beyond the Official Limits of Jurisdiction” that examines Israeli settlements in the West Bank and how they differ from established territorial boundaries. The expropriation of privately owned Palestinian land within settlement areas is covered in the paper. It draws attention to the differences in how Palestinians and settlers are treated by the law enforcement community, with more Palestinian structures being demolished. Questions about land expropriation and its effects on Palestinian rights are raised by the report.⁵¹

Here is a paragraph from the report:

“The State of Israel, therefore, clearly makes political usage of the definition of areas of jurisdiction of the settlements in order to seize extensive areas and prevent any possibility that the Palestinian residents of the West Bank might be able to make any use of it. What is even more serious, if not many times worse, is the fact that in order to realize this political program, the State of Israel in the past did not prevent the expulsion of the Palestinian population when it was residing in areas which Israel planned to annex to the settlements. A case in point is the situation of the Bedouins, members of the Jahalin tribe, who were expelled in 1999 from land upon which they had lived for many years in order to expand Ma’ale Adumim eastward and to permit the construction of Site.^{07>52}

⁵¹ Peace Now, Construction and development of settlements beyond the official limits of jurisdiction, 2007

⁵² Ibid.

This paragraph has a number of linguistic components that support organization's critical viewpoint. For instance, the term "political usage" implies that the State of Israel manipulates the boundaries of settlement jurisdiction in order to further its political objectives. It suggests that the goal is to further a political agenda rather than just practical or administrative considerations. The word "seize" denotes the unauthorized and violent taking of an extensive area. It suggests that Israel is occupying these territories without having legal authority or permission to do so. Similarly, the term "expelled/expulsion" reinforces the notion of eviction and displacement by force. It alludes to an action taken by outside forces without the knowledge or consent of the people it will affect. The usage of "prevent any possibility" imply a conscious effort to obstruct and hinder Palestinians from using or benefiting from the land. It suggests that Israel's government wants to obstruct Palestinians from entering or otherwise using these territories. The report also introduces examples to bolster the author's claim. It implies that the aforementioned instances serve as an illustration of the larger topic under discussion.

Another paragraph from the report is as follows:

"A glance at the map of areas of jurisdiction of the settlements shows that in many cases, there is no physical contiguity with the settlement itself. Enclaves of areas which have been declared within the jurisdiction of the settlement are scattered over large areas and at great distances from the settlement itself. The existence of distant enclaves that cannot be used integrally by the settlement strongly testify to the patent political character of the declaration of these areas of jurisdiction. This phenomenon is, of course, related to a desire to control as large an area as possible on the one hand, and the existence of areas that are privately-owned Palestinian lands, which, from a legal standpoint, cannot be annexed to the settlement, on the other."⁵³

The report emphasizes the political nature of the declaration of settlement areas in this passage by using linguistic devices. The emphasis on the lack of a physical connection between the areas designated as being under the jurisdiction and the actual settlements is highlighted by the use of the word "no" physical contiguity in the phrase. It draws attention to the territories' fragmented or disjointed nature. "Enclaves" and "scattered" conjure up images of remote and dispersed regions. They give the impression that the declared areas are

⁵³ Ibid.

dispersed over a wide area rather than concentrated or close to the settlements. This linguistic choice implies that a court's determination of jurisdiction might be influenced by things besides proximity or practical necessity. The usage of "desire to control as large an area as possible" denotes a conscious decision to exercise dominance or authority over a sizable area of land. It implies that extending the scope of control or influence is the driving force behind the declaration of jurisdiction. Finally, the phrase "privately-owned Palestinian lands" highlights the fact that Palestinians have ownership rights over the territories. It implies that these privately owned lands are encroached upon or infringed upon by the declaration of jurisdiction, raising ethical and legal questions.

Another paragraph is as follows:

"There is another type of violation – that of appropriating land by fencing or by working the land, or even by constructing "unregularized" structures outside of the area of jurisdiction. The most obvious and famous example of this type of violation is the establishment of outposts, most of which are situated completely or in part outside of the area of jurisdiction of the settlement, and most of which have received one kind of support or another from the authorities. Attorney Talia Sasson already dealt with this matter in the report she submitted about the outposts and she pointed to the extent of the violation perpetrated in establishing the outposts beyond the areas of jurisdiction."⁵⁴

The word choices emphasize the illegal appropriation of land and the construction of outposts outside of established areas of jurisdiction. The claim that these actions constitute violations and transgressions is strengthened by the mention of official backing and the allusion to a prior report by Attorney Talia Sasson. This paragraph's language also conveys a critical viewpoint on these practices. The phrase "appropriating land" refers to the act of taking possession of land without the proper authority or legal basis. It suggests a transgression of property rights and national boundaries. The author discusses a number of techniques such as "fencing," "working the land," or "constructing 'unregularized' structures." These actions are described as being unapproved and possibly unlawful. The language emphasizes the idea of violation and wrongdoing in establishing these outposts outside the specified areas of jurisdiction. "Violation perpetrated in establishing the outposts beyond the areas of jurisdiction" implies that establishing outposts outside of permitted

⁵⁴ Ibid.

boundaries is regarded as a serious transgression. The most important, the phrase “support from the authorities” suggests that the establishment of these outposts is not only unlawful but also has some backing or assistance from the appropriate authorities. It implies that the authorities have been complicit or tolerant of the violation, further implicating them.

In 2020, the organization published a short report titled “Settlement Under the Guise of Tourism: The El’ad Settler Organization in Silwan” that details the actions of the El’ad Foundation, in East Jerusalem. According to the report, the settler organization is engaged in settling Palestinian neighborhoods, developing tourism and archaeology, and strengthening the Jewish connection to Jerusalem. The report explains how El’ad has acquired properties in Silwan, a Palestinian neighborhood, including the use of the Absentee Property Law. El’ad’s actions are unfair and unjust, and the report concludes that they are hurting the Palestinian families residing in Silwan.⁵⁵

Here is a paragraph from the report:

“(…) If the family perseveres through the long, expensive legal battle and succeeds in proving that they did not sell the property, and El’ad only bought part of it from one of the owners, El’ad would file another lawsuit to split up the property and claim its share (and sometimes also make sure that the custodian of absentee property will join the case to take the part of the heirs who happen to live in Arab countries in order to later buy the custodian’s share). Throughout this process, the Palestinian family must hire lawyers, acquire experts, and spend hundreds of thousands of shekels in court over the course of several years in an attempt to fight against a foundation that is willing to do whatever it takes - from appealing decisions to making endless requests – to get what they want.”⁵⁶

In the paragraph, the situation in which El’ad uses a plan to purchase homes in Silwan is described. The text’s language seems to be objective and descriptive, but it also contains a few nuanced assessments. For instance, the report notes that the legal process takes “a number of years” and is “long, expensive,” suggesting that El’ad’s strategies are not only unethical but also costly to the Palestinian families involved. The phrase “over the course of several years” is emphasized several times to highlight the amount of time and

⁵⁵ Peace Now, Settlement Under the Guise of Tourism: The El’ad Settler Organization in Silwan, October 2020, accessed on 13-5-2023, <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlement-under-the-guise-of-tourism-the-el-ad-settler-organization-in-silwan>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

resources needed by the Palestinian families to defend their ownership rights. Additionally, the text makes use of a number of rhetorical strategies to highlight the disparity in power between El'ad and the Palestinian families. For instance, saying "whatever it takes" implies a readiness on El'ad's part to use drastic measures to further its objectives. The language analysis, taken as a whole, reveals a focus on factual information and technical terminology, as well as the use of rhetorical devices to highlight the power disparity in the struggle between El'ad and the Palestinian families.

Another paragraph from the report is as follows:

"The Ministry of Housing budget includes a section called "East Jerusalem Security" which is intended to fund private security companies for protecting settlers' complexes in East Jerusalem Palestinian neighborhoods. In recent years, the yearly budget for East Jerusalem Security has been c. NIS 100 million (this amount is equivalent to spending NIS 3,000 each month on every individual settler in these complexes). El'ad benefits from part of this budget, enjoying security guards at the expense of the state. These guards man permanent stations in settlers' houses and accompany children from their houses to transportation."⁵⁷

The statement describes that the Ministry of Housing used public funds to support private security firms to protect settler complexes in East Jerusalem's Palestinian neighborhoods. It is noteworthy that the phrase "East Jerusalem Security" is used because it implies that security is being prioritized over settlement growth or occupation in those neighborhoods and the use of the phrase can be seen as a framing device. The distribution of resources and the order of government spending are called into question by the use of public funds to support private security firms. The funding provided, which equates to paying NIS 3,000 per month for each and every settler living in these complexes, indicates a sizeable investment in settler security. The text also implies that El'ad profits from this expenditure because it retains security guard services at state expense, which raises concerns about the state's neutrality and impartiality by using terms like "enjoying security guards at the expense of the state" and "permanent stations in settlers' houses," which can be interpreted as El'ad being favored or having an advantageous position. Moreover, the text includes numerical information, such as the NIS 100 million annual budget and the equivalent NIS 3,000 monthly expenditure for each settler in these complexes. This use of data offers

⁵⁷ Ibid.

specific and quantifiable information that backs up the report.

Here is another paragraph from the report:

“Tourism and archaeology have become central to El’ad’s operations and they in fact constitute another type of settlement. In addition to the legitimacy that the tourism enterprise provides El’ad, it also allows El’ad to change the facts on the ground, making Silwan much more “Israeli.” Through tourism, El’ad is able to bring hundreds of thousands of Israelis as visitors to Silwan and tell the story of the area as they see it.”⁵⁸

Although being a short paragraph, it provides valuable insights into the settlement activities of the El’ad Foundation. The tone of this text suggests that El’ad’s use of Silwan’s tourism and archaeology is being critiqued and disapproved of. Instead of serving to protect the local cultural heritage, the text contends that these operations are being used to advance Israeli settlement in the area. The phrase “central to El’ad’s operations” implies that archaeology and tourism are important facets of El’ad’s plan for settling the region. It is implied by the use of the phrase “another type of settlement” that the tourism and archaeology businesses are being used to establish a long-term Israeli presence in Silwan. The text implies that El’ad uses the tourism industry to legitimize its operations, implying that El’ad is using the industry to support its presence in the region. “Change the facts on the ground” implies that El’ad is using archaeology and tourism to change the region’s physical landscape in order to make it more “Israeli.” Most importantly, the phrase “tell story of area as they see it” implies that El’ad is presenting a biased and one-sided perspective on the history and culture of Silwan, which is critical of the language used to describe the tourism operation. The word “Israeli” is used, which suggests that the tourism operation is being used to promote Israeli identity in the region rather than honoring the region’s rich cultural heritage. Therefore, it can be said that the report’s language points to a critical and disapproving tone toward El’ad’s use of Silwan’s tourism and archaeology, with a focus on how these operations are being used to advance Israeli settlement in the region.

The reports from another aspect to be studied were published by Regavim. In 2014, the organization published a report titled “Israeli Settlement in Judea and Samaria Through the Prism of International Law”, in which Regavim asserts that the disregard for Jewish and

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Israeli property rights in the area on the part of the international community results from acceptance of the Palestinian narrative. The report makes the case that future sovereign arrangements can coexist with individual property rights, which are recognized by international law. It comes to the conclusion that these rights ought to be upheld and should not be used to excuse prejudice against Jewish or Israeli ownership in Judea and Samaria.⁵⁹

Here is a paragraph from the report under the section of “On the applicability of the Laws of Occupation to Judea and Samaria”:

“In this context, the State of Israel has often argued, in a variety of forums and on any number of occasions, that it does not accept the argument that international laws of occupation, including the Geneva Conventions, are to be applied to all situations in which sovereignty over territory is unclear or in dispute (including Judea and Samaria). At the same time, Israel has chosen to self-impose, de facto, the humanitarian chapters of the Geneva Conventions in Judea and Samaria.⁸ To support its position in the specific case of Judea and Samaria, the Israeli government has based its arguments on the historical facts outlined above, among other things.

In a nutshell, the State of Israel contends that because Judea and Samaria were never a legitimate part of any Arab state, including the Kingdom of Jordan, and in light of the historical, legal, and physical connection of Jewish People to Judea and Samaria,⁹ it is not possible to consider Israel an “occupying power” in the commonly accepted legal sense.”⁶⁰

Most importantly, it is significant that “Judea and Samaria” rather than “West Bank” is used, as this term is more frequently used by those who support Israeli settlements in the region for the fact that Judea and Samaria are the biblical and historical names for the West Bank, that were referred in the Hebrew Bible. This phrase’s use can be interpreted as biased in favor of Israel’s narrative of the conflict. As for the legal justifications for Israel’s own position, Israel self-imposes the humanitarian provisions of the Geneva Conventions in the West Bank, according to the text, suggesting a partial application of the rule of law. Additionally, the report claims that historical facts serve as the foundation for Israel’s arguments by saying “based its arguments on the historical facts”. This analysis clarifies how history is used to create and support arguments. Finally, the use of the phrase “not

⁵⁹ Regavim, *Israeli Settlement in Judea and Samaria Through the Prism of International Law*, 2014

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

possible to consider” emphasizes how firmly Israel is taking its position and implies a categorical denial of the idea that Israel is an “occupying power” by the standards of generally accepted legal definitions.

Here is a paragraph from the report under the subtitle “Regarding individual property rights and sovereignty”:

“With these principles in mind, we would argue that, despite the disregard of the international community for the individual rights of Jews and Israelis, these rights may be relevant to the question of the legality of Israeli settlement in Judea and Samaria. Precisely because individual ownership has no bearing on the status of territory in future political negotiations, recognition of the individual property rights of Jews and Israelis according to customary international law should not necessarily influence the future sovereignty over a particular territory. These rights, therefore, should be upheld rather than ignored.”⁶¹

According to this paragraph, the rights of Jews and Israelis as individuals are disregarded by the international community. The author contends that in upcoming political negotiations, the recognition of individual property rights under customary international law should not necessarily determine future sovereignty over a particular territory. The analysis of this paragraph reveals an argumentative discourse that seeks to refute the established wisdom and promote the recognition of private property rights. The author uses a variety of linguistic techniques to clearly communicate their point and encourage the reader to reconsider the significance of these rights in light of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. For instance, to grab the reader’s interest and get them to think about how important private property rights are, the author uses rhetorical questions. These inquiries are meant to cast doubt on the dominant story and challenge the reader to think critically about the subject. The author also uses formal language and legal jargon, such as “customary international law” and “sovereignty,” to create a sense of credibility. This choice contributes to the argument’s persuasive tone. The author emphasizes the significance of individual property rights by using words and phrases like “disregard” and “ignored” to elicit an emotional response from the reader. By appealing to the reader’s sense of justice and fairness, this linguistic technique gives the argument a persuasive quality.

⁶¹ Ibid.

In 2018, the organization published a 28-page-long report titled “The Roots of Evil”, in which Regavim asserts that The Palestinian Authority (PA) is occupying Area C under the guise of “agricultural assistance,” with the aid of significant financial support from Europe and in violation of the law.⁶² The report outlines the Palestinian Authority’s long-term plan to seize control of key locations in Judea and Samaria’s Area C, which, in accordance with the Oslo Accords, is entirely under Israeli control. As part of a larger plan to unilaterally establish a Palestinian state, the Palestinian Authority (PA) wants to annex these areas and take control of them. Since 2009, the plan has been carried out, primarily through extensive, large-scale agricultural activity, which allows the PA to quickly seize control of large areas of land without any apparent resistance from the Israeli government or the Israeli security apparatus.

The sentence following the paragraph that suggests the Fayyad Plan, which was unilaterally proposed by former Prime Minister of the PA, Salam Fayyad, aimed to establish an independent and fully autonomous Arab state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on all territories as per the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital, is as follows:

“A central element of the Fayyad Plan is the attempt to deepen the PA’s official administrative presence specifically in Area C and to establish de facto annexation of the territory, based on the underlying assumption that Areas A and B have already been “taken care of” by the Oslo Accords.”⁶³

This statement offers a critical viewpoint on the Fayyad Plan by framing it as an effort to increase the administrative presence of the PA in Area C and establish de facto annexation of the territory, showing it by using the word “attempt”, which implies some skepticism regarding the viability of the strategy. The assumption that Areas A and B have already been “taken care of” by the Oslo Accords is also specifically stated in the sentence, which can be viewed as a controversial claim. It implies a partial understanding of the Oslo Accords, which were meant to be a compromise between Israel and the Palestinians rather than a solution that favors just one side. The use of the word “taken care of” may also be construed as oversimplifying a complex problem and as potentially diminishing the

⁶² Regavim, The Roots of Evil, November 2018, accessed on 13-5-2023, <https://www.regavim.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Roots-of-Evil-final.pdf>

⁶³ Ibid.

significance of addressing ongoing issues in Areas A and B.

Another paragraph from the report is as follows:

“The PA has enjoyed the diplomatic support of European countries for decades. Although the European Union was an active participant in the formulation of the Oslo Accords and its representatives participated in the signing ceremony, in recent years the EU has actively funded many of the PA’s illegal activities in Area C3, contributing to the very projects that undermine those accords by taking unilateral steps to create a Palestinian state encompassing all of Judea and Samaria.”⁶⁴

According to the language used in this passage, the European Union’s contribution to funding PA activities in Area C is seen negatively. According to the passage, the EU’s support for these initiatives is unlawful and aids the PA’s efforts to impose an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank. Terms like “actively funded” and “illegal activities” are used in a way that suggests a bias against the PA and the EU’s operations. The phrase “unilateral steps” is also used in this passage to refer to the PA’s actions, suggesting that they are not in accordance with any conventions or laws of the world. The word “enjoyed” in the first sentence implies that the PA may have received assistance for which it may not have been eligible. It is also noteworthy that the activities of PA and the EU’s support for them are securitized through discursive framing.

The following paragraph is read as follows:

“Palestinian “civil society” organizations and the PA itself have received massive practical and economic support from European governments and organizations. European funding, as well as diplomatic support and other forms of active participation, have been channeled directly to Fayyad Plan projects.”⁶⁵

The relationship between Palestinian civil society organizations and the PA with governments and organizations in Europe is presented in a critical light by the statement. “Massive practical and economic support” suggests an excessive or disproportionate amount of assistance. The word “directly” in the sentence “have been channeled directly to Fayyad Plan projects” implies that there is a purposeful and explicit link between the European funding and the Fayyad Plan’s implementation. Also, the phrase “other forms of active

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

participation” is ambiguous and open to various interpretations. The fact that the statement lacks a clear source or reference to back up the claim may harm the report’s objectivity and accountability. More importantly, the term “civil society” may be questioned or disagreed with by placing it in quotation marks. In this situation, it might imply that the author doubts whether these groups truly represent the wide range of interests and viewpoints found in Palestinian society. It might also mean that the author is doubting the reliability of these organizations or the sources of their funding. To summarize, the statement’s language hints at a strong bias against European institutions and institutions’ support for Palestinian initiatives.

The following paragraph is read as follows:

“One of the methods employed by the European Union is to block the development of infrastructure and expansion of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria through Palestinian construction and agriculture. Over the last several years, the EU has built more than 2000 structures in Area C for the Palestinian population, creating or supporting dozens of illegal settlement clusters, without requesting or receiving construction permits or coordinating these projects with the relevant Israeli authorities⁴. These construction projects, like the agricultural projects that will be examined in this report, establish territorial contiguity for the Palestinian Authority presence, in an attempt to preclude the possibility of annexation or development of these areas by Israel in the future.”⁶⁶

The excerpt emphasizes how the EU has helped Palestinians build and cultivate land in Area C, which is currently under Israeli control, in order to create a border for the PA’s presence. The excerpt’s language seems to be critical of the EU’s actions, as it is said to be “blocking Jewish settlement growth” and “supporting illegal settlement clusters that operate independently of Israeli authorities and without permits”. The term “agricultural project” is also important in the aspect that the author may be implying that this “project” is part of a larger argument or campaign. However, the language used in the excerpt suggests a degree of bias toward the Israeli viewpoint and a disparaging portrayal of EU actions, similar to the previous paragraph, again showing the securitization of the activities of PA and the EU.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

6.2. Framing of Settlement Policy by Palestinian Civil Society Organizations

The reports to be examined first in this section were published by Al-Haq. In 2005, the organization published a report titled “Waiting for Justice: 25 Years Defending Human Rights (1979-2004)” in which the Disengagement Plan for Gaza, the International Court of Justice’s advisory opinion on Israel’s construction of the Wall in the West Bank, and the necessity of international action to hold Israel accountable are all covered. The report highlights the persistent injustices experienced by Palestinians and calls on the international community to uphold international law and defend Palestinian rights.⁶⁷

A paragraph from the report is as follows:

“New settler homes were announced in several waves. On 2 August 2004, the Israeli Defence Ministry announced the approval of 600 new housing units in the Ma’ale Adumim settlement, previously approved by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz. On 17 August 2004 the Israeli Ministry of Housing published tenders to build approximately 1,000 new houses in the West Bank settlements of Betar Ilit, Ma’ale Adumim, Ariel and Karne Shomron. Soon thereafter on 23 August, an additional 532 new settler homes were announced. This was only the tip of the iceberg, since not all new housing constructions were announced so publicly. Ariel Sharon attempted to suppress reports of a new settlement being planned between Ma’ale Adumim and Jerusalem with the purpose of linking the two and further encircling Jerusalem.¹¹ According to the Israeli newspaper Ha’aretz, between January 2004 and the end of September 2004, approximately 2,200 dunums were confiscated and declared to be “state lands” in the West Bank, for the purpose of expanding settlements.¹²”⁶⁸

Details about the announcement and development of new settler homes in the West Bank in 2004 are provided in this paragraph. The usages like “600 new housing units,” “1,000 new houses,” and “additional 532 new settler homes” give precise quantitative information and emphasize the scope of settlement growth. Nouns like “Ma’ale Adumim settlement,” “Israeli Defence Ministry,” “Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon,” and “Israeli Ministry of Housing” aid in pinpointing the pertinent parties and sites involved in settlement

⁶⁷ Al-Haq, *Waiting for Justice: 25 Years Defending Human Rights (1979-2004)*, 2005

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

announcements and construction. The expression “the tip of the iceberg” alludes to the fact that the newly announced housing units are merely a small portion of a larger construction project. This judgmental language suggests covert activities and emphasizes the potentially important scope of settlement expansion. Moreover, the Israeli newspaper Ha’aretz is cited as the source for information on seized land and growing settlements which gives the author more credibility because of the use of a specific source and attribution. Finally, the use of declared to be “state lands” in quotation marks implies a sense of implicit doubt or skepticism which suggests that there is a disagreement over whether these lands should be considered “state lands” or not. The term is highlighted and made clear that it is open to debate or misunderstanding by the quotation mark.

Here is another paragraph from the same section:

““Outposts” continued to spring up throughout 2004. According to the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), 27 new outposts in the West Bank appeared between January and August 2004, especially in the Ramallah area.¹³ Since these new settlements cannot even be justified as “natural growth” of pre-existing ones, the Israeli government has ostensibly been engaged in an effort to dismantle them, grabbing many headlines and much attention. However, outposts spring up again nearly as fast as they are dismantled and usually contain few, if any, permanent inhabitants. Moreover, Israeli efforts to dismantle them have been half-hearted at best. The United States has criticised Israel for not doing enough to dismantle them and not providing comprehensive lists of all such outposts. In the meantime, the debate over the outposts deflects international attention from the constant, and illegal, expansion of other more established Israeli settlements in the OPT.”⁶⁹

This paragraph develops on the outposts phenomenon that occurred in the West Bank in 2004 and examines its ramifications. The language in this passage is critical, using phrases like “cannot even be justified,” “ostensibly engaged in an effort to dismantle them,” and “half-hearted at best.” These evaluation statements express a critical point of view and imply that the Israeli government’s treatment of the outposts is not consistent or sincere. To add context and nuance to the analysis, words like “many,” “much,” and “usually” are used. They provide information about the occurrence, scope, or defining traits of the phenomenon

⁶⁹ Ibid.

under discussion. Moreover, discursive arguments are present when phrases like “deflects international attention” or “debate over the outposts” are used, which also shows that the subject is being discussed in a larger context. Finally, the term “natural growth” is also used in quotation mark suggests disagreement with the idea as it relates to the growth of settlements. Israeli authorities frequently use the justification of “natural growth” to support the growth of existing settlements, claiming that doing so is required to meet the needs of the settlers or the growing population. The paragraph suggests that the idea of expansion as “natural growth” is not widely accepted or regarded as a legitimate justification which implies that there are other interpretations of this justification for settlement growth.

Here is another paragraph from the “Destruction and Occupation of Property” section:

“And early in the morning on Tuesday, 17 August 2004, we were surprised by another fire on land directly adjacent to the settlement and to the land that was previously burned. The fire was to the east of the barbed wire of the settlement and north of Shofa village. The fire stretched over 20 dunums planted with olive and almond trees. The citizens of Shofa village, with the assistance of a Toulkarem municipality fire truck, extinguished the fire without any help from the Israeli army. As a result, we became suspicious of these consecutive fires starting from a forbidden area that no Palestinian citizen can reach and we started to accuse the settlers and the Israeli army. It seems that there is an Israeli plan for the confiscation of further lands surrounding the Avni Heivetz settlement for the purpose of settlement extension, something that we never expected or realized until now.

Extracts from Al-Haq Affidavit No. 1952/2004

Given by: ‘Aref Ahmad ‘Aref Ya’qoub, (Resident of Shofa, Toulkarem Governorate, West Bank).”⁷⁰

This section offers a first-person account from an affidavit made by a local of Shofa village in the West Bank’s Toulkarem Governorate. Personal viewpoint adds a subjective element to the story by reflecting the speaker’s ideas, emotions, and life experiences. Readers can empathize with the emotions and realities of the person in the story thanks to the subjectivity that gives the account depth and richness. That way, a narrative can be made

⁷⁰ Ibid.

more nuanced, relatable, and authentic by including personal viewpoints and enables a deeper comprehension of the experiences and effects on the people involved. The passage also cites an affidavit as the information's source, providing the document's number and the associated organization (Al-Haq). This attribution strengthens the story's credibility and identifies the information's source. In terms of linguistic devices, "early in the morning on Tuesday, August 17, 2004" specifies the time period that establishes the timeline and gives the story a sense of chronology. The uses phrases like "nearby the settlement," "north of Shofa village," and "to the east of the barbed wire" to describe its location which gives the reader a clear sense of direction and the physical locations and their relationships.

In 2021, the organization published a short paper titled "Special Focus on Sebastia for World Tourism Day: Palestinian Tourism Remains a Major Target of Israel's Colonial Strategy" in which the policies and practices of Israel, including the erasure of Palestinian memory and presence by the Zionist narrative that continue to have an impact on Palestinian tourism and are intended to solidify Israel's settler-colonial and apartheid regime over the Palestinian people and their lands is discussed over the example of the village of Sebastia. The paper emphasizes that Israel's border controls, travel bans, and monopolization of the tourism discourse have severely harmed the social and economic standing of the Palestinian tourism sector despite having the potential to promote economic, social, and cultural development.⁷¹

A paragraph from the report is as follows:

"Amit Halevi's statement of intent combines multiple pillars of Israel's strategy to entrench colonization over the West Bank, including cultural appropriation, compounded by development claims to preserve cultural heritage at the expense of the local population, reinforcing the security apparatus to maintain domination over them. The archeological site of Sebastia provides a clear example of how cultural heritage is used to entrench colonization and apartheid."⁷²

The language used in the paragraph draws attention to the various tactics Israel has

⁷¹ Al-Haq, Special Focus on Sebastia for World Tourism Day: Palestinian Tourism Remains a Major Target of Israel's Colonial Strategy, 27 September 2021, accessed on 13-5-2023, https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/2021/09/27/world-tourism-day-casestudy-ag-1632765728.pdf

⁷² Ibid.

employed to accomplish its goals. The term “cultural appropriation” is used in a way that implies that Israel is erasing or marginalizing Palestinian culture by using aspects of Palestinian culture to further its own objectives. According to this language, Israel’s actions at the site are not only intended to preserve cultural heritage but are also assisting in the region’s entrenchment of colonialism and apartheid. Moreover, the use of the phrase “reinforcing the security apparatus to maintain domination over them” implies that Israel uses security measures to keep the Palestinian population in the West Bank under its control. This language implies that Israel is violating the human rights of the Palestinian people by using its security forces to repress or maintain control over them. It implies that Israel’s security measures are aiding in the entrenchment of colonialism and apartheid, at the expense of the local population, and casts doubt on Israel’s policies in the West Bank. Therefore, we can say that the language in this paragraph reflects a specific viewpoint on the West Bank situation and has a critical tone.

Another paragraph is as follows, subsequent to the paragraph suggesting that the settlers frequently attack Palestinian private land by uprooting trees, fencing off land, and contaminating agricultural land with sewage water in the village of Sebastia, where Palestinians are frequently subjected to physical harassment and abuse:

“Throughout the planting process, Nizar Ahmed Fares Kayed was subjected to a campaign of harassment by the security guard from Shavei Shomron, supported by the IOF, who asked the workers to leave the lands and cease cultivation under the pretext of requiring prior security coordination. In April 2020, colonial settlers from Shavei Shomron destroyed sections of the fence and stole iron corners, and uprooted some 400 apricot saplings. Accompanied by the Palestinian Civil Liaison, Nizar Ahmed Fares Kayed submitted a complaint before the Israeli military liaison headquarters, Hawara, south of Nablus. He was told by the Israeli officer that his land was subject to military rule and that his complaint will therefore be submitted to the Beit El headquarters, Ramallah.”⁷³

The language of the paper describes how the security guard and Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), who demanded that the workers leave the land and cease cultivation under the pretext of needing prior security coordination, engaged in a campaign of harassment against

⁷³ Ibid.

Kayed. The term “harassment” implies that the security guard and IOF’s actions were abusive. The passage also describes how colonial settlers from Shavei Shomron uprooted apricot saplings and destroyed portions of the fence. The term “colonial settlers” implies that the settlers are taking over the land in an unlawful manner. The discourse analysis employed in this paragraph clearly shows the power imbalance between the Israeli army and settlers who want to take over the land, having a significant advantage, and the Palestinian farmer. Moreover, the paragraph does give specific information about the situation in question and is descriptive and detailed. The security guard and settlers’ actions are vividly described in language that evokes the harm done to Palestinian farmers. For instance, the language used to describe the apricot sapling destruction and the theft of iron corners is precise, giving a clear picture of the harm caused. Furthermore, the paragraph is taken from an interview with the Palestinian farmer, Nizar Ahmed Fares Kayed, making it a primary source of information.

Here is a paragraph under the “Conclusion and Recommendations” section:

“Israel’s takeover of the touristic sites in the OPT is a fundamental aspect of its strategy to entrench an apartheid-colonial regime over Palestinian lands, as per Article II of the 1973 Apartheid Convention that defines the crime of apartheid as “policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination [that] shall apply to [...] inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other [...] and systematically oppressing them.”³⁶ It further results in a grave infringement on the Palestinian people’s right to cultural self-determination. Article 15(1)(a) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights prescribes that everyone has the right to take part in cultural life.³⁷ By thwarting the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination through apartheid practices involving the taking over of the tourism industry in occupied Palestine, Israel intentionally seeks to annihilate any potential growth for the tourism sector in Palestine, and for the Palestinian society more generally.”⁷⁴

The paragraph has a critical discourse while examining Israel’s occupation of OPT tourist attractions. In the OPT, Israel’s policies and practices have detrimental effects, which are highlighted by the language used. In order to support the claim that Israel is violating the

⁷⁴ Ibid.

rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to cultural expression and self-determination, the paragraph also makes reference to international law and human rights frameworks. The paragraph aims to prove that Israel's actions are against international law and a denial of the rights to self-determination and cultural expression of the Palestinian people by citing these legal frameworks. This use of legal and human rights references helps to support the thesis and establishes a foundation for the criticism leveled at Israel's actions. Terms like "takeover," "apartheid-colonial regime," and "systematically oppressing" imply condemnation and judgment. Expressions like "grave infringement" and "intentionally seeks to annihilate" are used in the language to emphasize how serious the situation is. To sum up, the paragraph uses highly critical language by showing the unfavorable effects of Israel's actions in the tourism sector.

The reports to be examined secondly in this section were published by Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR). In 2004, the Centre published a briefing paper titled "Intervention by Raji Sourani, Director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights to the European Parliament" that focuses on the human rights abuses committed by the IOF as it discusses the conflict's state four years after the Intifada began. It draws attention to the actions of the IOF, which include arbitrary detention, torture, travel restrictions, property destruction, unlawful killings, and other transgressions of international humanitarian law. The report expresses concern over how the international community has not taken any action to hold Israel responsible for these violations. In the report, it is demanded that the Israeli occupation ends, that international humanitarian law be fully implemented and that the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood be recognized.⁷⁵

Here is a paragraph from the "Introduction" section:

"The policy by the IOF which continues to seek to alter the "facts on the ground" through the accelerated development of settlements, the continued policy of razing large areas of agricultural land and demolishing houses, as well as the continued construction of the Annexation Wall in the West Bank aims to render life unbearable for Palestinian civilians. I want to draw your attention, in particular, to the continuation of practices of arbitrary detention and arrest, torture and inhuman treatment, restrictions on the right to free movement; destruction of civilian property

⁷⁵ Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Intervention by Raji Sourani, Director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights to the European Parliament, 2004

and civil infrastructure; the demolition of Palestinian homes; unlawful killings and injuries, including extrajudicial executions and political assassinations; arbitrary arrest and detention; closures and curfews; unlawful transfer of civilians; unlawful confiscation of land and property; use of human shields; large scale military attacks in civilians areas. These practices, characterized by excessive use of force and violence are in breach of the Convention which remains the primary legal document governing the operations of the Israeli military in the oPt.”⁷⁶

The language in the paragraph is evaluative in order to convey a critical viewpoint. Phrases like “render life unbearable,” “arbitrary detention and arrest,” “unlawful killings,” and “excessive use of force” convey an unfavorable opinion of the IOF’s conducts. Words like “torture,” “inhuman treatment,” “destruction,” and “violence” carry strong emotional connotations and amplify criticism of the IOF’s methods. Moreover, the use of “altering the facts on the ground” implies the growth of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which is viewed as an effort to alter the territorial and demographic realities and make it more difficult to establish a future Palestinian state. The words “continues to seek,” “continued policy,” “continued construction,” and “continuation of practices” are used throughout the paragraph to emphasize how certain IOF actions or policies are ongoing. These words imply that these actions have been ongoing for a while and are still being done. With the help of these phrases, the paragraph emphasizes how consistent and long-lasting these actions are, portraying them as part of a pattern rather than singular incidents. To conclude, the paragraph uses evaluative and emotive language, and specific word choices to convey a critical viewpoint on the policies and actions of the IOF in the OPT.

Here is a paragraph from the “The West Bank Annexation Wall” section:

“The Israeli strategy in Gaza is being used as the model for the construction of the West Bank Wall. The Israeli authorities have stated that the success of the electronic fence which runs around the Gaza Strip provides the “security” justification for the building of the Wall. The West Bank wall will annex 58% of Palestinian land and portion the West Bank into three distinct Bantustans.¹ Occupied East Jerusalem will be completely excluded from the rest of the West Bank and civilians will be unable to travel freely between these areas or to the Gaza Strip.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

In the paragraph, the author draws attention to the Israeli government's claim that the construction of the West Bank Wall is justified by the success of the electronic fence in Gaza. Linguistically, the term "security" is used by quotation marks suggesting skepticism or doubt regarding the veracity of the stated justification. This demonstrates the author's skepticism regarding the electronic fence's actual security advantages and its applicability to the West Bank Wall. Moreover, the use of the term "Bantustans" which refers to the historically segregated areas created in South Africa during the apartheid era implies a comparison between the situation in the West Bank and the apartheid system. The language selection aims to emphasize the detrimental effects of such divisions on Palestinian mobility, autonomy, and self-determination.

Another paragraph from the same section is as follows:

"I believe that the Israeli claims for "security" justification carry little weight. If the Gaza security model has been so effective in limiting attacks against Israel, I must ask you why it is that the number of ground incursions, attacks against civilians and their properties and extra-judicial executions have increased since the building of the electronic fence? The Israeli occupation forces have continued daily incursions into every area of the Gaza Strip, as for example now in the northern Gaza Strip. No part of Gaza has been excluded from attacks or incursions."⁷⁸

The effectiveness of the Gaza security model is questioned by the author in the paragraph. The phrase "so effective" conveys a tone of skepticism, indicating that the author has doubts about the security model's purported success. This inquiry casts doubt on the commonly held association between the construction of the electronic fence. The phrase "I must ask you" appeals to the reader's logic and asks for a justification or refutation. The question "why is it that" piques the reader's interest and leads them to speculate about the causes of the observed rise in incidents. The author's argument is supported by the enumeration of specific negative events, such as "ground incursions," "attacks against civilians and their properties," and "extrajudicial executions," which emphasize how serious the situation is. The author uses language to imply skepticism, pose questions, and provide evidence to back up their claims in each of these statements. These decisions support the paragraph's argumentative and critical tone.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

In 2021, the organization published an annual report in which the Centre tries to portray a clear and comprehensive picture of the human rights situation in the OPT in 2021 and offers recommendations to the relevant bodies, especially the international community and PA. The report emphasizes the requirement for international intervention to safeguard Palestinian civilians, bring war crime suspects to justice, and address persistent human rights abuses in the area.⁷⁹

A paragraph from the annual report under “Settlement Expansion Activities and Attacks by Settlers” section is as follows:

“In occupied East Jerusalem in particular, Israeli authorities continued to implement its plans, aiming at creating Jewish majority in the city and forcing demographic changes in it by imposing tight measures and policies on Palestinian that force them to leave the city. Thus, Israel would control the city.”⁸⁰

The phrase “creating Jewish majority in the city” suggests a conscious manipulation of demographics in favor of the Jewish population. The word “creating” implies a proactive and deliberate effort to alter Jerusalem’s population distribution, through laws or other regulations that encourage Jewish settlement and discourage Palestinian presence. The phrase “forcing demographic changes” implies that the Israeli government is using coercion to change East Jerusalem’s population composition. The use of the word “forcing” implies a disregard for the Palestinian residents’ rights and free will and that they are being subjected to policies that compel them to leave. Moreover, “force them to leave the city” implies a coercive element, implying that Israeli authorities’ actions and policies are meant to make life for Palestinians difficult or intolerable, resulting in their displacement or voluntary departure from the city. Finally, the claim that “Israel would control the city” makes it clear that the Israeli government’s ultimate objective is to have complete control over Jerusalem. The language selection establishes Israel as the city’s governing power and suggests a struggle for dominance. To conclude, this paragraph’s discourse paints a picture of Israeli policies and actions in East Jerusalem as being directed at changing the city’s demographics and establishing control over it. The language suggests a power disparity between the Israeli government and the Palestinian residents by emphasizing concepts of coercion, force, and demographic manipulation.

⁷⁹ Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Annual Report 2021, 2021

⁸⁰ Ibid.

The following is a paragraph from the report:

“Israeli authorities continued house demolition policy in the Palestinian neighborhoods in occupied East Jerusalem, under various pretexts; most notable was construction without license. It should be noted that Palestinians in Jerusalem submit requests to license their houses, but the Israeli municipality mostly refuse their applications. The Palestinians are forced to build above their house because of the small area of the house, but the Israeli authorities demolish them.”⁸¹

The paragraph draws attention to the Israeli government’s ongoing practice of demolishing homes in Palestinian neighborhoods in occupied East Jerusalem. This framing highlights the consistency and methodical nature of the policy, implying an ongoing demolition pattern. The most notable of the many justifications given for house demolitions in the paragraph is construction without a permit. The word “pretext” has been chosen to imply a lack of sincerity or a lack of justification for the demolitions. By concentrating on building without a permit, the passage implies that Palestinians are being unfairly singled out for violations that could arise from their inability to obtain permits from the Israeli municipality. According to the paragraph, Palestinians in Jerusalem apply for licenses for their homes, but the Israeli municipality typically rejects their requests. The Israeli municipality is portrayed in this language as the entity with the authority to grant or deny licenses, positioning them as a gatekeeper that prevents the legal construction and development of Palestinian homes. The discourse in the paragraph paints the Israeli government as the main culprit behind the destruction of Palestinian homes. Focusing on the denial of license requests and the destruction of buildings placed above residences reinforces the oppressive and unfair narrative that Palestinians are subject to. To conclude, the discourse analysis reveals a narrative that depicts the Israeli government as enforcing a policy of house demolitions that singles out Palestinian neighborhoods in occupied East Jerusalem. The terminology emphasizes the alleged injustice, focusing on license denial, coercion, and demolitions.

Another paragraph is as follows:

“The Israeli authorities classified the majority of these areas into classifications that prohibit the Palestinians from benefiting from them in any way, aiming to effectively

⁸¹ Ibid.

control of these areas. In an attempt to impose de facto control over Area C in favor of settlements, the Israeli authorities classified the majority of these areas in a way that prohibits the Palestinians from benefiting from them in any way, whether in agriculture, construction, or any other development plans, such as: state-owned lands, nature reserves, military areas, and others. Even in the areas remaining for Palestinians, Israeli authorities impose tight restrictions on them and prevent them from enjoying their natural rights to construction, agriculture, and infrastructure. Also, Israeli authorities almost entirely refuse to grant construction licenses for Palestinians and they demolish hundreds of houses, under the pretext of non-licensing.”⁸²

The paragraph emphasizes a disparity in power between Palestinians and Israeli authorities. It suggests a position of dominance by showing the Israeli government as having the power to categorize and regulate the areas. Palestinians perceive Israeli restrictions as restricting their access to resources and growth opportunities, which strengthens this power dynamic. Specific lexical choices used in the paragraph help to portray control and restriction. Words like “prohibit Palestinians from benefiting,” “impose de facto control,” “tight restrictions,” and “prevent them from enjoying their natural rights” all emphasize the idea that Palestinians are subject to restrictions and are unable to exercise agency in various facets of their lives. The paragraph frames the actions of the Israeli government as unfair and biased and portrays Israeli authorities as the oppressor while positioning Palestinians as victims of these actions. To conclude, the Israeli government is depicted as enforcing a thorough system of restrictions on Palestinian access to resources, development, and fundamental rights in the report. The linguistic choices support a narrative that highlights the injustices experienced by Palestinians.

6.3. Framing of Settlement Policy by International Civil Society Organizations

The first report to be examined in this section was published by Amnesty International. In 2003, the organization released a report titled “Israel and the Occupied Territories Surviving under siege: The impact of movement restrictions on the right to work” which emphasizes the negative effects of Israel’s restrictions on Palestinians’ freedom of movement in the OPT. These limitations have had a significant negative impact on the Palestinian economy, employment prospects, educational opportunities, and general standard

⁸² Ibid.

of living. Closures and curfews have continued despite a ceasefire, which has resulted in high unemployment rates, increased poverty, and disruptions in the educational system.⁸³

A paragraph from the report is as follows:

“Areas A and B were fragmented into isolated enclaves surrounded by Israeli settlements and roads in Area C. Main roads linking towns and villages in Areas A and B remained in Area C. Israel’s control of Area C therefore allowed it to control many aspects of the lives of Palestinians living in Areas A and B. In the years following the signing of the 1993 Declaration of Principles, Israel seized extensive tracts of land from Palestinians to build a network of bypass roads connecting Israeli settlements throughout the Occupied Territories to each other and to Israel. Thousands of dunums of land (a dunum is one tenth of a hectare) were seized on grounds of military necessity, usually for temporary, specified periods, but were often used for permanent features, such as “bypass” roads and settlements. In May 2002, the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ), estimated that some 350 kilometres of bypass roads had been built on land confiscated by the IDF through such “temporary” seizure orders. In the same period Israel stepped up the pace of construction of settlements in the Occupied Territories to an unprecedented level. The number of Israeli settlers increased from 240,000 in 1993 to 380,000 by the end of 2000.”⁸⁴

In the paragraph, descriptive and technical language is used. Words like “fragmented,” “isolated enclaves,” “bypass roads,” and “network of road” paint a clear picture of the territories’ physical and geographical characteristics to depict the situation going on there. The paragraph provides quantitative information to describe the extent of Israeli control and settlement growth. Specific measurements to demonstrate the scope of the developments include “350 kilometers of bypass roads,” “thousands of dunums of land,” and “the increase in Israeli settlers from 240,000 to 380,000.” Adjectives such as “unprecedented level” and “extensive tracts of land” aid in setting the scene and emphasizing the importance of the actions that are being described. Moreover, the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) is cited in the paragraph as a reliable source of estimation which gives more

⁸³ Amnesty International, *Israel and the Occupied Territories Surviving under siege: The impact of movement restrictions on the right to work*, 2003

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

credibility to the report by the inclusion of expert opinion. In summary, the language used is factual to deliver information in an impartial manner. It focuses on providing relevant facts, figures, and historical events so that readers can form their own conclusions.

Here is another paragraph from another section:

“On 14 June 2002, the Israeli government announced that work would begin immediately on the construction of a wall/fence (usually referred to as the “separation barrier”) along the perimeter of the West Bank, and north and south of Jerusalem (known as “the Jerusalem envelope”). The stated aim of the project is to prevent Palestinians crossing clandestinely from the West Bank into Israel, so as to prevent suicide bombings and other attacks. However, the barrier is not being constructed on the Green Line separating Israel from the West Bank. Most of it is being constructed on Palestinian land inside the West Bank - in some areas up to six or seven kilometres east of Green Line - in order to include some 10 Israeli settlements which are nearest to the Green Line. Construction of the first phase of the barrier (some 150 kilometres), in the northern West Bank governorates of Jenin, Tulkarem and Qalqilya and around parts of Jerusalem began in the summer of 2002 and was due for completion by July 2003, but is still ongoing. The course of the barrier has been altered even further eastwards in some locations so as to include more Israeli settlements.”⁸⁵

Building the wall/fence was supposed to be a precaution meant to stop Palestinians from sneaking into Israel and to increase security by thwarting suicide bombings and other types of attacks but the report raises concerns about the barrier’s actual location, which is deep within Palestinian territory and includes Israeli settlements even though it is not on the Green Line. This framing draws attention to the discrepancy between the project’s stated goal and its actual implementation. It also calls into question the measure’s effectiveness and proportionality, casting doubt on whether the barrier’s placement and size are necessary to achieve its stated objectives. The terms such as “not being constructed on the Green Line” and “altered even further eastwards” underscore the divergence from initial intentions. The impact of the barrier on Palestinian communities and land is also highlighted in the paragraph. It draws attention to the fact that the construction is occurring on Palestinian land

⁸⁵ Ibid.

in the West Bank, resulting in the inclusion of Israeli settlements and the modification of the barrier's course to include more settlements. This portrayal calls attention to the possible repercussions for the territorial integrity, resource access, and mobility of the Palestinian people. The paragraph also includes numerical information, such as "some 150 kilometers" and "six or seven kilometers east of the Green Line," to describe the size and location of the barrier. These specifics add to the overall account of the barrier's size and encroachment on Palestinian territory.

Another paragraph from another section is as follows:

"Throughout the 1990s, Palestinian hopes that the peace process would lead to an independent Palestinian state were dashed by the spread and growth of settlements and infrastructure, which were built on their land and used their water and other resources. Palestinians' frustrations grew as more and more of their land was seized, in theory "temporarily" and for "security" needs, to build a network of roads to bypass Palestinian villages and connect the settlements to each other and to Israel."⁸⁶

The paragraph emphasizes that the expansion and development of settlements and infrastructure on Palestinian territory dashed Palestinians' hopes of a creation of an independent Palestinian state. Metaphors like "dashed hopes" and "spread and growth" elicit strong feelings and highlight the seriousness of the situation. The paragraph also focuses on how infrastructure and settlements affect Palestinian resources, particularly water and land. It implies that the settlements took advantage of these resources, which frustrated Palestinians. The terms like "which were built on their land" and "used their water and other resources" show a causal link between settlements and infrastructure and the exploitation of Palestinian resources. This linguistic choice alludes to a sense of unfairness and imbalance between Israelis and Palestinians. The term "bypass roads" is used to show how building a system of roads cuts through Palestinian villages and links settlements to Israel and one another. It implies that these roads were constructed on Palestinian territory and had the unintended consequence of further isolating and splintering Palestinian communities. When referring to Palestinian lands and resources, the paragraph uses possessive pronouns such as "their land," "their water," and "their resources". This linguistic decision highlights the perceived violation of Palestinian rights by reinforcing a sense of ownership and rightful belonging. Finally, words like "temporarily" and "for security needs" are used with

⁸⁶ Ibid.

quotation marks which shows that the author is critical of the justifications given for the land seizures. It implies that the motivations behind these deeds are being questioned.

The organization published a 280-page-long report in 2022 named “Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians: A Cruel System of Domination and A Crime Against Humanity” stating that Israel enforces a system of apartheid against Palestinians, which amounts to a crime against humanity under international law. The report describes how Israel established its hegemony throughout Israel and the OPT, made the most of resources at the expense of Palestinians to benefit its Jewish population, and used laws, policies, and practices to restrict, oppress, and segregate Palestinians in various regions. Israel imposes restrictions to limit Palestinian presence and access to land in Israel and the OPT because it views them as a demographic threat.⁸⁷

A paragraph from “West Bank” in “Israel’s Oppression and Domination of Palestinians” section of the report is as follows:

“In April 2020, Israel’s coalition government formed by then prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his political rival Benny Gantz agreed to start the domestic process of annexing, in violation of international law, parts of the occupied West Bank that include Israeli settlements and the area known as the Jordan Valley.²⁶⁰ On 13 August 2020, following a deal with the United Arab Emirates, brokered by the USA, Israel declared in a joint statement by the three countries that it “will suspend declaring sovereignty” in the West Bank and instead “focus its efforts now on expanding ties with other countries in the Arab and Muslim world.”²⁶¹ Although the annexation plan has been suspended, it offered further evidence of Israel’s intent to maintain control over Palestinians in the West Bank.”⁸⁸

This statement draws attention to the illegal actions taken by the Israeli government in annexing areas of the occupied West Bank, including Israeli settlements and the Jordan Valley. The report’s language appears to be factual and objective, with a focus on offering evidence to back up its assertions. In order to show Israel’s intention to uphold control over Palestinians in the West Bank and assert Jewish supremacy in the nation, the report makes

⁸⁷ Israel’s apartheid against Palestinians: a cruel system of domination and a crime against humanity, Amnesty International, February 1, 2022, accessed on 13-5-2023,

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/02/israels-apartheid-against-palestinians-a-cruel-system-of-domination-and-a-crime-against-humanity/>

⁸⁸ Ibid.

use of direct quotes and statements from Israeli officials as well as references to specific laws and policies. Additionally, the report makes use of language that emphasizes Israel's violations of international law, such as the use of the term "occupied" to describe the West Bank and the annexation plan's contravention of international law. The use of the phrase "further evidence" also suggests that the annexation plan is just one of many patterns of Israeli policies and actions that aim to exert control over Palestinians. In sum, the report's language has been carefully chosen to convey the facts and evidence that back up its assertions while also making use of expressions that are widely used in discussions of international human rights.

A paragraph from the "Land Allocation for Continued Illegal Settlement Expansion in OPT" in "Israel's Oppression and Domination of Palestinians" section of the report is as follows:

"All Israeli settlements in the OPT are illegal under international law, regardless of their status under Israeli law.⁶⁶⁵ As already mentioned, there are currently more than 441,600 Jewish settlers in the West Bank excluding East Jerusalem.⁶⁶⁶ Their presence is illegal under international humanitarian law. They live in 132 settlements that have been officially established by the Israeli government, as well as 140 unauthorized outposts that have been established since the 1990s without government approval and are considered illegal even under Israeli law.⁶⁶⁷ In practice, the outposts are backed by senior officials and military officers, and Israeli authorities often immediately connect them to services such as water and electricity, to be authorized retroactively.⁶⁶⁸ In February 2017, the Knesset adopted the Law for the Regularization of Settlement in Judea and Samaria to allow Israeli authorities to expropriate privately owned Palestinian land and retroactively "regularize" settlements and outposts built on such land.⁶⁶⁹ The law was suspended shortly after, and the Supreme Court of Israel ruled in June 2020 that the law was unconstitutional.^{670,89}

The statement explains how Israeli authorities frequently "regularize" these outposts after the fact and how the Knesset passed a law in 2017 to seize privately owned Palestinian land and retroactively "regularize" settlements and outposts constructed on it. The paragraph provides a factual and descriptive account of the situation with regard to Israeli settlements

⁸⁹ Ibid.

in OPT. In order to give readers a quantitative understanding of the size of Jewish settlements in the West Bank as well as the number of settlements and outposts, the paragraph includes numerical data. The use of phrases like “connected to services such as water and electricity” and “backed by senior officials and military officers” suggests a sense of institutional support and coordination for the establishment of the illegal outposts, further emphasizing the contentious and divisive nature of the settlements. The phrase “regularize” which minimizes the violation of international law and the rights of Palestinians is used to describe the Israeli government’s efforts to retroactively legitimize the settlements. In addition to highlighting the ideological gap and power imbalance between the Israeli government and the Palestinians, this use of language also illustrates how language can be employed to conceal or defend specific actions.

The reports from another perspective to be studied were published by the Zionist Organization of America. The Spring edition of the Annual Report of the organization which was published in 2007 discusses a variety of subjects, including criticism of Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority, highlights from the ZOA National Convention, the ZOA’s response to criticism of the pro-Israel lobby, and condemnation of Jimmy Carter’s actions on the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. The report covers the threats to Israel, the threat of terrorism by radical Islamists, and the instigation of anti-Semitism in Palestinian society. The report highlights the ZOA’s initiatives to highlight the extremism of the Palestinian leadership and raise public awareness of Israel’s difficulties.⁹⁰

Here is a paragraph that includes a quotation from ZOA president Morton A. Klein:

“I’m sick and tired of people talking about land for peace, more concession for peace, more funding for peace. It’s high time to tell the simple truth – the Arab world doesn’t want peace and never wanted peace with Israel. They want its destruction. The Palestinian Arabs were offered statehood in 1937, 1948 and 2000 and turned it down every time.”⁹¹

Using expressions like “sick and tired” makes the author’s frustration clear and stirs up feelings in the listeners. This verbal strategy aims to shape the attitudes of the audience and bring them into line with the author’s viewpoint. To make his point, the author uses polarizing language that is direct. He portrays a dichotomous relationship between Israel and

⁹⁰ Zionist Organization of America, Spring 2007 Report, 2007

⁹¹ Ibid.

the Arab world by asserting that the Arab world “wants its destruction” and “doesn’t want peace,” by also making a generalization about Arabs, ignoring the variety of viewpoints and interests found within Arab societies, and reinforcing an “us versus them” narrative. Here, the author oversimplifies a complex issue. The author also employs assertive language by using words like “the simple truth” which highlights how confident the author is in their viewpoint and argument. Moreover, the author suggests that the Palestinian Arabs had numerous opportunities for statehood, which they allegedly rejected each time, by mentioning specific years such as 1937, 1948, and 2000, by making historical references while aiming to strengthen the argument and provide a sense of historical continuity.

Here is another paragraph from the report:

“Additionally, not only did the PA make no counter-offer, but it launched the terrorist war in September 2000 that has killed almost 2,000 Israelis and wounded and maimed 15,000 more. Since 2000, successive polls have shown consistently high Palestinian support for the use of terrorism against Israeli civilians, even if a Palestinian state with a capital in east Jerusalem were to be created. For Palestinian Arabs, destroying Israel trumps statehood.”⁹²

The author of the text intentionally uses emotive language to elicit strong reactions and alter reader perception. There is a sense of victimhood and condemnation when words like “terrorist war,” “killed,” “wounded and maimed,” and “high Palestinian support for terrorism” are used. Repeating certain phrases, such as “destroying Israel statehood,” makes important points clearer and helps to convey the main idea. It produces a catchy phrase that summarizes the argument being made and is reminiscent of a slogan. Moreover, the argument gains a quantitative component due to the use of statistics and poll findings, such as the number of deaths and the proportion of Palestinians who support terrorism. These figures provide evidence. However, broad generalizations are also made about the Palestinian population in the text, which claims that numerous polls consistently reveal significant levels of Palestinian support for terrorism. Without taking into account possible differences in opinion within the population, this language suggests that Palestinians feel a certain way collectively. Furthermore, the paragraph clearly distinguishes between the desired outcome and the Palestinian Authority’s actions. The PA is portrayed as supporting

⁹² Ibid.

terrorism and refusing to engage in peace talks, despite the fact that peace with Israel is what is desired. This duality of opposites supports a particular narrative that supports Israel and despises the PA. Most importantly, the PA is presented as a security threat, the scope of the violence is highlighted, Palestinian support for terrorism is highlighted, and the destruction of Israel is presented as a top priority in the paragraph, all of which are securitization techniques. These components aid in creating a securitized narrative that supports extraordinary measures to counter the feared threat. To conclude, the report highlights the PA's role in inciting violence, the extent of Palestinian support for terrorism, and the preference for the destruction of Israel over the creation of a Palestinian state.

The Fall edition of the Annual Report of the organization which was published in 2021 discusses the rising tide of anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment in the United States, ZOA's efforts to combat anti-Semitism on college campuses as well as its fight against false narratives, policies endangering Israel, and anti-Semitism. The report also mentions ZOA's initiatives to deal with Iran's nuclear program as well as their cooperation with other pro-Israel groups, regional directors, experts in foreign policy, and media outlets to spread awareness of their advocacy concerns.⁹³

The paragraph from the section that is to "dispel the lies" about "wrongly condemned Israel" is as follows:

"Jerusalem: Jerusalem is mentioned 700 times in the Jewish holy books. It is never mentioned in the Muslim Koran. The majority of people living in Jerusalem since the mid-1800's have been Jews. Jerusalem has never been the capital of any country except Israel. The only Arab to have visited Jerusalem when the Arabs controlled it from 1948-67 was King Hussein of Jordan. Jerusalem is not that holy to Muslims."⁹⁴

First of all, the report highlights the comparison of how often Jerusalem is mentioned in Jewish holy texts and how rarely it is in the Quran. Although this claim emphasizes the linguistic variations in textual references to Jerusalem, it does not necessarily offer a thorough understanding of the city's significance in various religious traditions. Secondly, Jews have been the majority ethnic group in Jerusalem since the mid-1800s, according to the paragraph. This assertion focuses on demographic data but ignores population changes over time or the complexity of Jerusalem's history and demography. Thirdly, the word "never"

⁹³ Zionist Organization of America, Fall 2021 Report, 2021

⁹⁴ Ibid.

and the language of exclusion (“except Israel”) in the assertion about Jerusalem’s status as the capital of Israel emphasize a specific point of view. It ignores the political and historical complexities involved because Jerusalem has been regarded as the capital by numerous organizations over the course of history. Moreover, the paragraph emphasizes exclusivity and a specific time period with words like “the only” and “when the Arabs controlled it”. Even though the claim emphasizes the rarity of Arab visits to Jerusalem during a specific time, it ignores the viewpoints and experiences of other people and groups at that time. Finally, the claim asserting the Muslim perspective on the holiness of Jerusalem minimizes its religious significance by using words like “not that holy.” This assertion ignores the various viewpoints on Jerusalem’s sanctity held by Muslims in their daily lives. A more thorough understanding of the subject can be obtained by looking at various viewpoints, taking historical contexts into account, and acknowledging the complexity of Jerusalem’s significance to various religious and cultural communities.

A paragraph from the same section is as follows:

“Communities in Judea and Samaria: Jews are not settlers or interlopers in Judea and Samaria – the heartland of Israel and the Jewish people – and the communities there are not settlements. There has not been a single new Jewish community built in Judea and Samaria since Oslo began in 1993.”⁹⁵

Initially, the use of “Judea and Samaria” rather than “West Bank” is significant because this term is more frequently used by those who support Israeli settlements in the area and because Judea and Samaria are biblical and historical names for the West Bank that were referred to in the Hebrew Bible. The use of this phrase can be seen as biased in favor of Israel’s version of the conflict. The use of phrase like “the heartland of Israel and the Jewish people” conveys a sense of profound emotional attachment and cultural significance. This language plays on the readers’ sentimental attachment to the area. This construction of identity and representation is aimed at strengthening the legitimacy of Jewish communities in the region. The paragraph also implies a challenge to the dominant discourse that categorizes Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria as “interlopers” and “settlers”. This asserts different viewpoints and contests the narrative that portrays Jewish communities negatively. By portraying Jews in Judea and Samaria as legitimate residents and refuting the

⁹⁵ Ibid.

idea that they are settlers, the report reflects a specific power dynamic. This stance can be interpreted as an effort to defend their rights and provide justification for their presence in the area. Secondly, the report creates a narrative that contests the idea of Jewish settlements by claiming that no new settlements have been created since the Oslo Accords. This claim implies that Jewish growth and presence in the area shouldn't be interpreted as the creation of new settlements. By portraying the Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria as ongoing rather than expanding, this story seeks to redefine readers' conception of it.

Another paragraph from a different section is as follows:

“There is no greater danger to Israel than the establishment of a Palestinian Arab terror state in Gaza and Judea and Samaria. All the advantages of good relations with Israel's neighbors can be undone by sustained terrorism from such an entity. To begin with, ZOA believes that the territory of Judea and Samaria belongs to the Jewish people. Even if this were not so, there is little doubt that despite promises of “demilitarization,” the new state would quickly be densely populated with missiles, terrorist cells, and Iranian influence. ZOA is the only pro-Israel organization that will not compromise on this point. Any mention of establishing a Palestinian Arab state makes legislation completely unacceptable.”⁹⁶

First and foremost, the paragraph employs strong language to create an atmosphere of urgency and danger. Aiming to sway the readers' opinion, words and phrases like “danger,” “terror state,” and “unacceptable” are used in the paragraph to evoke strong feelings. By highlighting the potential drawbacks of a Palestinian Arab state, such as its high population of missiles, terrorist cells, and Iranian influence, the statement makes persuasive appeals. These arguments emphasize the perceived risks associated with the establishment of such a state in an effort to incite fear. In order to emphasize the urgency and demand for quick action, this binary framing leaves little room for compromise or alternative viewpoints. The framing of the Palestinian state as the “greatest danger” to Israel shows an example of securitization technique employed in this paragraph, by positioning it as a security threat, amplifying its importance, and justifying strong measures to address it. Additionally, the use of quotation marks in “demilitarization” may suggest skepticism or lack of belief in its viability or likelihood. It implies that the author might not be confident in

⁹⁶ Ibid.

the guarantees or claims of demilitarization made by the adversarial party. Finally, the paragraph implies a binary viewpoint that excludes any chance of compromise or alternative solutions and suggests that any mention of creating a Palestinian Arab state renders legislation completely unacceptable. This division supports a rigid, unyielding position.

7. Findings and Discussion

This section first provides cross-organization and cross-time findings to investigate the differing narratives on Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The research tries to find parallels and variances among organizations by examining reports from various viewpoints and historical periods with the aim of finding common points for a just peace. The study examines convergence and divergence, shifts in focus, and the impact of outside influences on reporting. The findings will be followed by a short discussion where common points are discussed.

7.1. Cross-Organization Findings

First of all, compare and contrast analysis is applied to the reports of two Israeli civil society organizations, which are Peace Now and Regavim. These organizations hold different opinions about settlement policy in the West Bank. The discourse analysis carried out for the 2020 report of Peace Now, for instance, focuses on the overt power disparity between El'ad Foundation and Palestinian families in the Silwan neighborhood. The analysis looks at how the El'ad Foundation is portrayed in the report by the organization, as well as how the Palestinian families are described. While Palestinian families are not provided with any such protection, the El'ad Foundation is given a sizable budget to support private security companies, as the report shows. The fact that the El'ad Foundation is granted access to resources that Palestinian families are not allowed to access is a blatant illustration of a power imbalance. Moreover, El'ad has been charged with maintaining close ties to both the Israeli government and the Jerusalem municipality. Compared to Palestinian families, who do not have the same level of access to government figures or decision-makers, they have a significant political advantage. This emphasizes the unequal distribution of power between the two groups. On the other hand, according to the report published by Regavim, the PA is conducting extensive illegal in Area C without coordination or authorization from Israeli authorities, which is against Israeli sovereignty over this territory and against international law. The report also implies that the PA is trying to establish de facto annexation of the territory by increasing its administrative presence in Area C, which is not under its civil and security jurisdiction. The discourse analysis of the report reveals that the organization turns the focus from the issue of the activities of Israeli settlements in the West Bank to the allegedly illegal activities of Palestinians there.

Secondly, when comparing and contrasting the reports published by Palestinian civil society organizations which are Al-Haq and PCHR, it can be said that there are great similarities in these texts. First and foremost, the harm done to Palestinian communities is highlighted in their critical analysis of Israel's policies and practices. Both texts recognize the enduring nature of the conflict, in which each side asserts a claim to the land. The humanitarian impact of the conflict, with civilians on both sides suffering greatly, is also acknowledged. Both organizations express concerns about an apartheid-like system in their reports and emphasize various aspects of Israeli government actions, including the role of the Israeli Occupation Forces and the policies of the Israeli municipality. The reports' language is factual, and descriptive, painting a precise picture of the situation. It can be seen that both texts attempt to adopt a neutral tone by including references from statistics, legal documents, and official statements from both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities and other reliable sources. Especially the use of personal accounts in both reports, Al-Haq provides firsthand perspectives on the experiences of Palestinians living in proximity to settlements and sheds light on the human rights violations they face on a daily basis.

Thirdly, it becomes evident that there are numerous competing perspectives within these organizations when comparing and contrasting the reports of Amnesty International and the Zionist Organization of America, with differing opinions on settlement policy in the West Bank. According to AI's reports, Israeli actions, notably the establishment of settlements in the West Bank, violate international and humanitarian law. AI also draws attention to how Palestinian communities have been divided and isolated by bypass routes and settlements. Aside from the physical fragmentation of the Palestinian community, the organization also mentions the disproportionate allocation of resources among Palestinians and Israelis. AI urges the international community to take responsibility for the situation and take measures to advance a peaceful conclusion based on adherence to international law and human rights. On the other hand, the ZOA reports have a pro-Israel viewpoint that upholds Israel's legal authority to control historically Jewish territory and rejects the establishment of a Palestinian state for security reasons. The group highlights the fanaticism of the Palestinian leadership while exposing the dangers of terrorism and anti-Semitism. Therefore, settlements are portrayed as a component of Israel's security measures. It does not specifically address Palestinian issues. Moreover, we see selective narrative is employed in ZOA reports when describing the settlement issue. As for the language, AI is factual and descriptive, offering data and a wider historical context. The objective tone aims to offer information so that readers may draw their own judgments. On the other hand, ZOA uses

expressive words to express annoyance and influence the readers' opinions. Israel and the Arab world are shown as having a conflicted relationship in the reports' aggressive and divisive tone.

The cross-organizational research highlights the various narrative stances and approaches that various civil society groups have taken in addressing the problem of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. While pro-Israeli narratives are more tend to securitize the issue, the counter-narrative is more focused on unearthing political imbalances and underlying power dynamics between communities. The reports utilize a variety of language and tones; some organizations take a factual and descriptive approach, while others use emotive language to sway readers' beliefs. Overall, this research emphasizes the significance of identifying and comprehending the many viewpoints and strategies used by various parties involved in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict.

7.2. Cross-Time Findings

Initially, when the reports of Peace Now are analyzed which date back to the late 2000s and early 2020s, we can see that the narrative changes as time changes and new events occur. While the 2007 report focuses more on settlements and home demolitions from a legal perspective, the 2020 report studies the same issue from cultural and tourism aspects, emphasizing cultural appropriation. Such focus shift in emphasis may be attributed to the evolving priorities, for the fact that as new difficulties and changes materialize throughout time, an organization's priorities and objectives may change. Early in the new millennium, there was a strong emphasis on the humanitarian and legal ramifications of settlements, notably their violations of international law and the displacement of Palestinians. Organizations may have broadened their focus as the situation has developed to address additional issues and new perspectives including cultural appropriation and tourism, which have substantial effects on the Palestinian people and their cultural legacy, as the organization has done deeper research in a more inclusive manner. We see a similar pattern in the context of Al-Haq, PCHR, and Amnesty International.

Secondly, when the reports of Regavim are analyzed which date back to the early 2010s and late 2010s, we can see a shift from a defensive argumentation to an offensive one, while explaining the conflict. Whereas the 2014 report tries to justify Israeli settlements in the West Bank on historical and religious bases, the 2018 report includes a smear campaign against civil society organizations that oppose Israeli settlements and the European countries

that fund such organizations. In Israeli – Palestinian context, civil society organizations have a crucial role in monitoring and reporting on issues relating to human rights. That might be the reason for smear operations against organizations to cast doubt on their reliability or the veracity of their findings, diverting attention from the important issues at hand.

Thirdly, the ZOA has constantly maintained a narrative that lays a lot of attention on issues relating to terrorism and security reasons in both 2007 and 2021 reports. Securitization and framing of protection of the security of Israel are primarily in their reports throughout this time. Over time, it can be seen that the organization frequently uses strong language and manipulative strategies involving selective narratives. Another point that does not change through time, just like Regavim, is justifications on religious grounds, especially while using “Judea and Samaria” instead of the West Bank, which shows a rigid pro-Israeli stance of these organizations.

When looking at the cross-time findings, we can see that some narratives have changed and some remained consistent throughout time. From legal viewpoints on settlements and home demolitions to include cultural appropriation and tourism, switching from using historical and religious arguments as a last resort to using aggressive strategies and defamation campaigns against civil society organizations, or frequently emphasizing security and terrorist issues while using aggressive rhetoric and deceptive tactics show how these organizations’ goals, approaches, and beliefs have changed in the Israeli – Palestinian environment, with some retaining a staunchly pro-Israeli posture and others supporting the rights of impacted people and human rights.

7.3. Discussion

The Israeli – Palestinian conflict is a multifaceted issue involving politics and power relations. It is characterized by a long-standing power disparity between Israelis and Palestinians, which has had a significant impact on the dynamics of the conflict. The establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank have consistently been denounced by the international community as a breach of international law and a significant barrier to a two-state solution, and seen as exacerbating the power imbalance by further marginalizing Palestinian communities and limiting their self-determination. The Israeli government’s policies and actions, particularly in relation to settlements, land control, and security measures, have had a significant impact on the power dynamics between Israelis and Palestinians.

The unequal distribution of power and political advantages has a direct impact on negotiations, attempts at conflict resolution, and efforts to address grievances. It creates challenges in achieving a just and sustainable peace, as it affects the ability of Palestinians to effectively advocate for their rights and aspirations. Not only resulted in the forced eviction of Palestinian families and the destruction of their homes, but the conflict also causes great suffering for the citizens of both communities. The conflict is significantly influenced by concerns about security. Both Israelis and Palestinians have been subjected to acts of violence, terrorism, and military operations that have influenced how they see and handle security. Checkpoints, walls, and military presence are examples of security measures that both Israelis and Palestinians have to live with on a daily basis in the area.

However, some common grounds between these communities are identified, as a result of this comparative research that shows both commonalities and divergences. One common ground is safety and security and there are various aspects of it. Personal safety, for instance, is one factor. Violence and assaults have been experienced by both Israelis and Palestinians, raising questions about the safety of their respective communities. Another consideration is national security, which refers to Israel and PA's safety and security as well as its capacity to repel external threats. While some Palestinians see Israel's presence in the area as a threat to their own national security, some Israelis contend that maintaining control over the West Bank is essential for Israel's security. Since the conflict has significantly impacted the West Bank's economy, economic security is another concern for both communities and a potential common ground. Both Israelis and Palestinians are concerned about the effects of a protracted conflict. Last but not least, infrastructure security deals with the protection of vital structures damaged by conflict and violence, such as buildings, bridges, and roads. The security and efficiency of the region's infrastructure worry both communities.

Moreover, cultural safety in the conflict is another point of common ground. It entails fostering an atmosphere that respects and values both Israeli and Palestinian cultures by encouraging intercultural communication and understanding. A more inclusive and equitable society that values diversity and encourages cultural exchange could also be achieved by acknowledging and addressing the historical and cultural factors that have contributed to the conflict. The destruction or looting of archaeological sites and artifacts, for example, results in the loss of important historical and cultural heritage, which is why archaeology may be an important aspect of maintaining cultural safety during the conflict. There are many ancient archaeological sites in the West Bank that are important to both Israeli and Palestinian history

and culture. A point of agreement between the two sides might be the preservation and protection of these sites. A step towards fostering mutual respect and understanding of each other's cultural heritage could be taken by adopting a more thorough and inclusive approach to archaeology that considers both Israeli and Palestinian narratives.

Lastly but also equally importantly, environmental security is another point of common ground, as well. Natural resources, such as water and land, are crucial factors in the conflict. Numerous environmental issues, such as pollution, desertification, and a lack of water, affect the area. The scarcity of water resources in the region has created tensions between Israel and Palestine, as Israel has established control over the majority of water resources, leaving Palestinians with limited access. The land is also a major point of contention, with Israel's continued expansion of settlements on Palestinian land causing conflict and hindering the possibility of a two-state solution. The equitable distribution of natural resources would be essential for building sustainable peace in the region. Due to their shared ecosystem and reliance on the same water resources, Israelis and Palestinians can have an interest in finding solutions to these problems.

8. Conclusion

“The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord, your God,” as the Bible goes (Leviticus 19:34). For those who believe, this commandment was given to the Israelites by God. The verse reminds the Israelites that they were once foreigners in Egypt and commands them to treat foreigners who live among them with love and respect, just as they would treat their own people. Despite the commandment’s emphasis on treating strangers with love and respect, the region has been characterized by a long history of tensions and hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians.

Competing claims and narratives over the region’s land, resources, and political power have played a key role in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. In this context, the demographics have long been at the very center of the disagreement between two communities. Particularly, the settlement issue, which is also the focal point of this thesis, has been contentious because Israel has been expanding its settlements in the West Bank in order to establish a Jewish majority there, which the Palestinians and some of the civil society organizations view as an infringement on human rights. According to the reports that have been studied in this research, power relations within the conflict are highly imbalanced. Israel, as a state, possesses significantly more political, military, and economic power compared to the Palestinians. This power disparity is reflected in various aspects, including control over land, access to resources, mobility restrictions, and the ability to influence decision-making processes, as Palestinians and some civil society organizations suggest.

On the other hand, Israeli state and pro-Israeli civil society organizations have justified the use of force and other control measures by framing the conflict as a security issue in order to defend Israeli citizens from terrorism and violence, claiming that Israeli citizens’ safety and wellbeing are in danger due to the actions of Palestinian militants and other groups. In order to counter this threat, Israel has implemented a variety of security measures, policies, and discourse, which pro-Israeli civil society organizations support. This has included erecting a wall of separation, installing checkpoints, and conducting military operations in the West Bank. The utilization of such measures increased especially after the violent Second Intifada which began in 2000. By using discourse and physical measures, the conflict has been securitized by the Israeli state and pro-Israeli groups.

In this context, Israeli settlements in the West Bank have long been the subject of study that looks at how civil society organizations create meaning, challenge prevailing viewpoints, and encourage discussion about demographic engineering. This study attempts to uncover discursive tactics used to frame the problem and examine the consequences for a just and long-lasting peace between the two groups through narratives offered in reports from these organizations. The study's findings illustrate the various narrative viewpoints and strategies used by various civil society organizations to confront the issue of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. While pro-Israeli narratives frequently securitize the situation, counternarratives concentrate on political asymmetries and underlying power dynamics. In order to sway readers' opinions, the reports use a variety of linguistic nuances, from factual and descriptive to emotional.

This study stresses how crucial it is to comprehend the varied perspectives and tactics used by various parties in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. The study tracks shifts in narratives, as well as consistency in narratives across time. According to the research, groups in the Israeli – Palestinian context have a range of objectives and strategies, with some maintaining a vehemently pro-Israeli posture and others fighting for the rights of affected individuals and human rights. The study also finds areas where Israelis and Palestinians have something in common. These include providing safety based on some security concerns, from economic to personal safety, or cultural to environmental security, which affects two communities both. Acknowledging and building upon these commonalities can provide a basis for finding shared solutions and moving towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for all parties involved.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the existing scholarship on the conflict by shedding light on the dynamics of demographic engineering and the pivotal role played by civil society organizations at the same time. The study offers a novel viewpoint by studying the framing of population engineering via the lens of civil society organizations, whereas prior research has generally focused on demography engineering as a policy undertaken by governments or interest groups. Moreover, this research reveals the discursive tactics used by these groups by examining the narratives included in their reports, enhancing our knowledge of how various players construct and impact the conflict narrative. The intersectional approach sheds important light on the complexity of the conflict and opens the door to further investigation of the function of civil society groups in fostering

communication and seeking meaningful and sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

However, it should be acknowledged that the limitations encountered during the research process can affect the result of the findings. The study's conclusions are based on a narrow sample of reports from civil society groups, which might not fully capture the range of viewpoints and tactics that exist in the Israeli – Palestinian context. The generalizability of the results may be constrained by sample size and the selection method, which may create possible biases. Additionally, the judgments may affect the data analysis in discourse analysis, which may introduce some subjectivity. By adding more and varied samples, mixed-method techniques, or direct testimonies and experiences of impacted persons, future research may overcome these shortcomings.

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