iscte

**INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA**

Egyptian-Israeli Relations: Past, Present and Future in the Gaza Strip

João Pedro das Neves Silva de Oliveira Borralho

Master in, International Studies

Supervisor:
PhD Giulia Daniele, Invited Assistant Professor CEI - Center of International Studies
ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

September, 2020

Acknowledgements

Resumo

Num tema muitas vezes controverso como é o conflito Israelo-Palestiniano, esta dissertação procura desconstruir a percepção que existe em relação à Faixa de Gaza e aos seus habitantes. Nomeadamente, o discurso de que Israel age permanentemente em legítima defesa face aos ataques contínuos vindos deste território. Embora Israel tenha direito à sua defesa, esta dissertação questiona se o modo como esta defesa é exercida é proporcional aos ataques do qual é alvo. Da mesma forma, esta dissertação visa também perceber e analisar os acontecimentos da perspectiva de quem vive num território sitiado desde 2006/2007. Neste sentido, a última operação militar efectuada por Israel na Faixa de Gaza e o cerco terrestre, marítimo e aéreo a este território serão analisados de forma a compreender o dia-a-dia dos civis que aqui vivem. Por fim, e tendo em conta que este cerco é exercido em conjunto com o Egito, a política externa deste país é analisada de forma a perceber o que leva o 6º maior país muçulmano do mundo a concertar posições com o Estado de Israel. Em suma, esta dissertação visa a desconstrução da estrutura em que os processos que envolvem Israel, o Egito e a Faixa de Gaza se inserem sob uma perspectiva construtivista.

Palavras-Chave: conflito Israelo-Palestiniano, Faixa de Gaza, cerco, Egito, política externa, Israel

Abstract

On an often controversial subject such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this dissertation seeks to deconstruct the perception that exists in relation to the Gaza Strip and its inhabitants. In particular, the discourse that Israel acts permanently in self-defence in the face of continuous attacks from this territory. Although Israel is entitled to its defence, this dissertation questions whether the ways in which this defence is exercised are proportionate to the attacks from which it is targeted. Similarly, this dissertation also aims to perceive and analyse the events of those who live in a besieged territory since 2006/2007. In this sense, Israel's last military operation in the Gaza Strip and the land, sea and air siege of this territory will be examined in order to understand the day-to-day lives of the civilians living here. Finally, and given that this siege is exercised jointly with Egypt, Egypt's foreign policy is analysed in order to understand what leads the 6th largest Muslim country in the world to coordinate positions with the State of Israel. In short, this dissertation aims to deconstruct the structure in which Israel, Egypt and the Gaza Strip are placed and the processes and outcomes happening between them from a constructivist perspective.

Keywords: Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Gaza Strip, siege, Egypt, foreign policy, Israel

Table of Contents

Glossary of Acronyms

FDP – Freedom and Justice Party

HRW – Human Rights Watch

ICR – International Committee of the Red Cross

IDF – Israel Defence Forces

IDP – Internally Displace Person

MB – Muslim Brotherhood

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

OCHA – United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OCL – Operation Cast Lead

OPD – Operation Pillar of Defence

PCHR – Palestinian Center for Human Rights

PFLP – Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PLA – Palestinian Liberation Army

PLC – Palestinian Legislative Council

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organization

PNC – Palestinian National Council

QIZ – Qualified Industrial Zone

SCAF – Supreme Council of the Armed Forces

TAC – Tunnels Affairs Commission

UN – United Nations

Introduction

This dissertation will focus on the current political and socio-economic reality of the enclave between Egypt and Israel, also called Gaza Strip (Annex A). This territory has an area of 365 km², 45 km long and 5-12 km with. The United Nations Country Team's report (2017) estimates that 2.2 million people live in this enclave (6,197 people per km²), which makes this territory one of the most densely populated places on Earth. Of the 2.2 million living here, 1,348,536 are considered refugees (PASSIA, 2018). This Palestinian territory has been governed by Hamas since June 2007 after the war that opposed Hamas and Fatah against each other. Since then, the Gaza Strip and its citizens witnessed three major military confrontations/operations with Israel[1] and the implementation of a siege that has been materialized by Israel and Egypt.

While I grew up hearing and seeing images transmitted through the mainstream media on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, only as recently as 2014 have I began delving into what was happening in the Gaza Strip due to Operation Protective Edge. After this, and by looking into the asymmetry on the number of deaths during this Operation (2251 Palestinians and 73 Israelis) (OCHA, 2015), I started to problematize the right of self-defence narrative due to Israel's perception of being surrounded by 'enemy' States, by means of several questions: in order to defend itself, does Israel need to use such force leading to so many casualties? If Hamas is a terrorist organization, why did they win the 2006 elections Palestinians against the Palestinian Authority (PA)? Why was this electoral victory followed by a siege that condemns Gazans to ever-increasing hardships?

Since then, I attempt to detach myself from the narrative and perspective pushed in the West, and try instead to understand the processes happening in the Gaza Strip from within their specific political and social-economic context that invariably, defines their reality (Roy, 2011). Consequently, I should concede that before Operation Protective Edge I had an ahistorical approach to what was happening within this enclave. Hence, I have gradually increased my efforts to make sense of the past and of the present. In detail, my major goals will be to analyse the social-economic and political situation of the Gaza Strip by focusing on the Israel and Egypt relations, especially from 2006 onwards, to understand the extent to which Egypt is also responsible for the Gaza Strip situation.

1.1 – Research Questions and Methodology

To achieve the above aims, I have chosen to pursue my research dividing it by sections. Consequently, I segmented the relevant information about Egypt, Israel and the Gaza Strip separately to understand what happened and is happening inside these countries. Then, I took a more holistic approach and

---

[1] Operations Cast Lead, 2008-2009; Pillar of Defence, 2012; and Protective Edge, 2014

gathered the most relevant information that intertwined Egypt, Israel and Gaza Strip past and present history. This line of inquiry was followed because I do not only pursue to understand the structure and the processes taking place from a State-level analysis, but I wanted as well to be able to explore the role of the grassroots politics inside these countries. My belief is that if I had tried to write this dissertation through the lens of a realistic approach to international relations, the dissertation would not only be incomplete but would also lack the bottom-up perspective that has been so important in Middle Eastern studies. For this reason and theoretically speaking, I have followed a more constructivist approach. To be more precise, I have constantly analysed the information gathered with the goal of deconstructing the structure-agency dynamics in order to demonstrate the outcomes that have come from them.

Methodologically speaking, I have chosen four different recent events which I think have marked the relationship between Israel and Egypt and the current situation in the Gaza Strip. The first one is Israel and Egypt's siege of the Gaza Strip. The second one is the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) electoral victory in the first democratic elections in Egypt after the Arab Spring, which is related to the third event, namely Sisi Coup that led to Morsi's fall, followed by the rapprochement with Israel and Netanyahu's government. Finally, the last event is the Operation Protective Edge which took place in 2014. I argue that these four events have marked the pace on Egyptian-Israeli relations, giving them centripetal and centrifugal dynamics which have always helped or hindered conditions in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, by considering these four events, we can frame and analyse in a continuum the last three Egyptian Presidents – Mubarak, Morsi and Al-Sisi – and their policies towards Israel and Gaza.

Considering the research aims and the four events, three questions have emerged that have helped me in reaching a conclusion both on the Gaza Strip situation and the Israeli-Egyptian relations. The first one is: "What are the major consequences of the Israeli and Egyptian siege to the Gaza Strip and to the Palestinians living there?". The second research question is: "How has Egypt foreign policy towards Gaza evolved from 2006 to 2017?" and, finally, the last question is: "To what extent has the Egyptian-Israeli relation changed during these years?"

Lastly, and taking into consideration such research goals, I have chosen mainly to use a qualitative methods approach. In detail, the bulk of what has been read and analysed has come from secondary sources. In addition to this, it has also been complemented by quantitative data, especially when the goal was to analyse the de-development (Roy, 2011) of the Gaza Strip. I have based the quantitative data on reports elaborated by organizations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International, Humans Rights Watch (HRW), B'Tselem[2], Gisha[3] and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights[4].

---

[2] B'Tselem is an Israeli Human Rights Organization aiming to end Israel's occupation of the OPT. To achieve this goal, B'Tselem work looks into deconstructing the injustices, violence and dispossession of Palestinians. For more information: https://www.btselem.org/about_btselem

[3] Gisha is an Israeli organization, whose goal is to protect the freedom of movement of Palestinians, especially Gaza residents. For more information: https://gisha.org/about/about-gisha

[4] Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) is an independent Palestinian human rights organization based in Gaza City with three main goals: protect human rights and promote the rule of law; create and develop democratic institutions and an active civil society; support all the efforts aimed at enabling the Palestinian people

1.2 – Thesis Overview

After the introduction, I have divided this dissertation in three main chapters. The first one looks into the historical background of the Egyptian-Israeli and Palestinian relations as well as the political rise of Hamas. The first part of this chapter looks in outline the history from Nasser until Sadat and their vision about the Palestinian cause in general and Gaza Strip in particular. In the second part of this chapter, I will highlight the main facts about the social and political rise of Hamas, the first Intifada, the Oslo Accords, and the Palestinian elections. Adding to these topics, the siege has also been analysed by means of data from the UN report that provides an overview of the everyday hardships in which Gazans live. Since this chapter is not intended to analyse Hamas governance of the Gaza Strip, the data that was collected and analysed has been done through the challenges that the land, sea and air siege imposed to the civilian population.

The chapter III will analyse in a continuum the three last Egyptian Presidents. The aim is to deconstruct each one foreign policy towards Israel and the Gaza Strip. In the first part of the chapter, Mubarak's foreign policies will be comprehensively analysed to understand the existing relationship with Israel and if the same has evolved from 'cold peace' to 'strategic peace' (Aran and Ginat, 2014; 564). Still throughout Mubarak's regime, but now during the Arab Spring, I will consider if the Palestinian situation served as catalyst to the public demonstrations from the Egyptian society. Following the collapse of Mubarak's rule, I will briefly analyse the interregnum period between Mubarak's fall and President Morsi's electoral victory. After this, the focus will be on the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and the FJP rule and how Morsi has managed, or not, to be faithful to their core beliefs while maintaining relations with Israel.

Finally, the continuum will be closed after Sisi, with the help of the military apparatus, toppled Morsi's government and took his place as Egyptian President. With Sisi, Gazans saw their situation deteriorated very quickly and Israel embraced Sisi's rapprochement, especially on the security and economic levels.

The last chapter before reaching the conclusions will outline and re-focus this dissertation back to the Gaza Strip. In detail, this chapter will be divided throughout the analysis of the "on-going military occupation by Israel" of the Gaza Strip and how Hamas has been governing the enclave with so many economic and social problems. The conclusion will answer the three research questions by taking into account the analysis conducted throughout the previous chapters.

---

to exercise its inalienable rights in regard to self-determination in accordance with international Law and UN resolutions. For more information: https://www.pchrgaza.org/en/

II – Looking into the Past: Historical Background

To comprehend the contemporary situation in the Gaza Strip it is necessary first to understand the context that produced it. For this reason, I will give an historical perspective in this chapter, starting from the creation of the Israeli State in 1948, passing through the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty until the Palestinian elections and the siege.

2.1 – Egypt's Behaviour from 1948 to 1970

Israel declared the creation of their State on 14 May 1948 after the United Nations (UN) 181 Resolution[5] that recommended the partition of Palestine. Known by the Palestinians as the *Nakba* ("Catastrophe" in Arabic), this event led to the first war between Israel and the Arab states, including Egypt. Although successful in the beginning, Israel's counteroffensive ended the 1948 War with the Arab states' defeat and acceptance of the ceasefire proposed by the UN (Abadi, 2006). Known in Israel as the "War of Independence", this war led to the first big movement of Palestinian refugees to neighbouring countries and to the occupation of 78% of historic Palestine[6] (Pappé, 2006). To comply with the UN partition plan, Israel as a state should have 55.5 percent of territory (Annex B) (El-Abed, 2009). Additionally, this war led to "(…) over 25 per cent of the total refugee population of the 1948" to run for the Gaza Strip, which was 1.3 percent of historic Palestine (El-Abed, 2009: 16). This first big movement of refugees was also felt in Egypt where King Farouk set up refugee camps to deal with the influx of Palestinians.

The defeat against the newly created state of Israel would eventually lead to the 'Free Officers' 1952 coup against the Monarchy (Khani, 2013). In 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power and with him the desire of leading the Arab world (Abadi, 2006). This desire deteriorated the security dilemma that existed between Egypt and Israel and after some incidents involving both, the balance of powers started to change. This peaked with the Suez Campaign of October 1956, where a 'Triple Aggression' initiated by Great Britain, France and Israel attacked and occupied the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip and the Suez Canal. However, these countries were forced to end the occupation by the UN, which in turn, helped Nasser to be seen as the leader of the Arab Nation (Khani, 2013).

El-Abed (2009) sees the 'Triple Aggression' as the trigger that made Nasser change priorities from his domestic policies to a Pan-Arabism[7] perspective, in which the fight for Palestine was an important element. Simultaneously, Nasser initiated what is known as the 'Golden Era' for Gazans and the

---

[5] The 181 Resolution was put forward by the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) and voted favourably in November 1947 by the UN General Assembly. Besides proposing the partition of Palestine into independent Arab and Jewish states, this Resolution entailed the end of the British mandate until 1948 and the establishment of an international administration to the towns of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

[6] Of the territories that were not lost, the West Bank was held by Jordan and the Gaza Strip by Egypt.

[7] "A philosophical and political movement based on Arab nationalism that calls for the solidarity of Arab peoples and, sometimes more specifically, a union of Arab nations in the Middle East. Beginning with intellectual debate about the major unifying factor in the region — language, history, and ethnicity versus the role of Islam — Pan-Arabism next considered the appropriate response of Arab nations against increased Western imperial expansion" (Stockdale, 2008:802).

Palestinians refugees living in Egypt. For instance, Nasser opened Egyptian Universities for all Palestinian students from the Arab countries; allowed Gazans to look for jobs in Egypt; gave the same employment rights to Palestinians that Egyptians had; took the concept of "foreigner" to Palestinians living or working in Egypt, which in turn diminished the difficulties in moving from one territory to the other; gave Palestinians the same access to public services that Egyptians enjoyed (El-Abed, 2009).

In 1964, Nasser helped to establish the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) aiming to aggregate the Palestinian national movement and to control and avoid fedayins[8] attacks in Israel since he did not want to engage in another war that could jeopardize his heroic status (El-Abed, 2009; Khani, 2013). However, when Israel and Syria forces clashed in 1967, Nasser was in no position to decline Syria's request for help and threatened Israel (Filiu, 2014). On 5 June 1967, Israel launched a surprise attack by destroying Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian air forces. Following this, and during the six-day war that followed, Israel conquered and occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights (Annex C) (Khani, 2013, apud Oren 2002, p.89). Known as the "Six Day War" for Israel and the al-Naksa (setback) for Palestinians and the Arab countries involved, this war produced the "largest single wave of Palestinian immigration into Egypt"[9] (El-Abed, 2009: 23).

After the war and following occupation, the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel was abolished. According to Filiu (2014), Israel government expectation was that by having this 'open door' policy that provided jobs for Palestinians (and a supply of cheap labour to Israel) a prompt pacification would follow. Nevertheless, and seeing themselves again under Israel occupation, Gazans organized strikes that with time grew in importance and violence (Filiu, 2014). With the understanding that Egypt would not be able to re-conquer territories lost in the up-coming years, President Nasser changed his idea on the fedayins and encouraged them to attack Israel (Abadi, 2006). From this point forward, different groups such as Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) significantly increased their armed opposition against Israel (Filiu, 2014: 138). Nonetheless, and in spite of President Nasser's prestige, the downfall of his accomplishments and ideas began after the Six Day War. President Nasser died in 1970 of an unexpected heart attack and Anwar al-Sadat became the new President of Egypt.

---

[8] "Term used to refer to various (usually Arab) groups that have engaged in either armed struggle or guerrilla tactics against civilians and, sometimes, governments. The term 'fedayeen' is the plural of the Arabic word meaning "one who is ready to sacrifice his life" and has for centuries referred to Muslim fighters, including Egyptians who fought against the British in the Suez Canal Zone, Palestinians who waged attacks against Israelis in the 1950s and 1960s, Iranian guerrillas opposed to Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi's regime (…)" (Tucker, 2008:364).

[9] Many were already refugees living in the Gaza Strip since the events of 1948.

2.1.1 – 1979 Peace Treaty and the demise of Nasser's 'Golden Era'

Sinai Peninsula was now occupied and the "no war, no peace" status-quo pressured the President Sadat to take action (El-Abed, 2009). Therefore, in October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel with the goal of recovering territories lost during the 1967 war. In spite of the initial success, Israeli retaliation shattered the Egyptian and Syrian impetus and won the war. This result gave the pretext that Sadat needed to pursue diplomacy to recover the Sinai Peninsula and from that moment forward war stopped to be seen as a tool to achieve Egyptian national interests (El-Abed, 2009: 46). In November 1977, Sadat travelled to Jerusalem to address the Israeli Knesset where he announced the desire of achieving more than a disengagement agreement, the end of the occupation of the Arab territories and the self-determination of Palestinians (Khalifa, 2013).

In spite of Sadat's declaration on Palestinian self-determination, the events that followed demonstrated that he was prepared to suspend this aim in exchange for the Sinai. Egypt and Israel settled on having the US arbitration, but also to discuss and sign an agreement based on the UN Resolution 242[10]. With President Carter mediation the peace treaty was signed in Washington in 1979 and ratified in the same year, in Sinai. In order to address the Palestinians' self-determination, President Carter proposed a creation of an autonomous Palestinian administration of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that would be assessed five years after. Israel agreed[11].

The newly signed peace treaty was seen as a betrayal from several Arab countries and led to the expulsion of Egypt from the Arab League. Not only this, the pan-Arabism consensus that existed until then at the State-level was broken by, arguably, the most important Arab nation at the time. Even though several Arab countries rejected the peace process, this left the door open to future diplomatic (even if secret) relations between Arab countries and Israel and to the beginning of the weakening of the Palestinian cause. Proof of this was Jordan's peace treaty with Israel in 1994. This idea is supported also by other authors, such as Khalifa (2013) that argues that Sadat was seen by some of his own citizens as the person who destroyed the Arab unity against Israel and who abandoned the Palestinian cause. For Khani (2013), the peace treaty resulted in the loss of Egypt's leadership of the Arab world, especially as the country who most defended the Palestinian cause and turned Israel and Egypt in strategic allies. Stein argues that "(…) Sadat broke the uniform Arab consensus of isolating Israel" (Stein, 1997: 315).

---

[10] The Resolution called for Israel's right to live in peace within secure and recognized borders. In addition, requested the Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in the 1967 War. Known for the formula 'land-for-peace', the main idea was to exchange the territories occupied in the Six-Day War for Israel's peace and recognition. Yet, Israel's interpretation was different, because to them this Resolution did not call for the withdrawal of all the territories, but some. What is more, Israel was prepared to submit to the 'land-for-peace' framework, but they wanted to control what territories would be returned and over what period of time (Stein, 1997).

[11] In spite of the agreement, Israel not only kept the policy of restructuring the refugee camps in Gaza but also erected a security fence 85 kilometres long around the enclave. From this moment and for the following years only three points to enter or exit Gaza Strip were available: Erez, Rafah and Nahal Oz (Filiu, 2014, apud Haik 2006, p. 95).

At the same time, new policies with the slogan "Egypt First" were emanated by Sadat's government. The implementation of this new set of policies and actions were justified through "(…) references in the press to Egyptian sacrifices and Arab (especially Palestinian) ingratitude were stepped up, thus laying the ground for the vicious anti-Palestinian campaign that was soon to follow"(El-Abed, 2009, apud Dajani 1986, p. 31). What is more, the killing of an Egyptian Minister by the disavowed Palestinian Abu Nidal faction was used to vilify the Palestinians to the point that "(…) Egyptian Prime Minister declared, "No more Palestine after today." (El-Abed, 2009, apud Miller 1986, p. 64). This was the moment when Nasser's 'Golden Era' came to an end and the Palestinians living in Egypt started to become a target of arrests, surveillance and detentions (El-Abed, 2009). Furthermore, five years after the Yom Kippur War, Egypt found itself in a dire economic situation. These factors led to the creation of new laws that dismantled Nasser's legislation and passed the message that Egypt "(…) was no longer the patron of the Palestinians nor the primary Arab defender of their cause" (El-Abed, 2009: 49).

2.2 – The Political and Social Rise of Hamas

2.2.1 – The First Intifada

The First Intifada began on 9 December 1987. According to Filiu (2014), the killing of a fifteen-year-old boy named Hatem Sissi by Israeli soldiers in a funeral of four Palestinians that had been killed the day before, was what triggered the Intifada, the Arabic word for uprising. After this, the uprising spread through all the Gaza Strip and later to the West Bank. Israel responded to these demonstrations with unprecedented violence (Filiu, 2014).

Sara Roy (1987) associates the outbreak of the Intifada with the Israeli occupation and lack of economic developments. To be more precise, she argues that after two decades of Israeli occupation, the Gaza Strip economy was ruled by lack of development in spite of economic growth. In addition, economic development was never going to be achieved because Israel was deliberately precluding it from happening through what Roy coined 'de-development'[12]. Hence, Gaza was no more than an auxiliary to Israel's state and economy. Israel government(s) disputed this idea by arguing that their policies paved the way for interaction between both economies which led to GDP growth.

Did the GDP growth spill into creating better conditions inside the Gaza Strip? According to Roy (1987) the answer is negative. In fact, the integration of the Gaza Strip economy with Israel's economy only benefited the latter and amplified the vulnerabilities and dependency of the first, making possible "(…) economic prosperity without any real economic development" or even the "possibility of promoting independent economic activity" (Roy, 1987: 57-59).

---

[12] De-development is a "(…) process which undermines or weakens the ability of an economy to grow and expand by preventing it from accessing and utilizing critical inputs needed to promote internal growth beyond a specific structural level" (Roy, 1987: 56).

Alimi has also analysed the political and socio-psychological dimensions that led to the Intifada. To be more precise, Alimi (2007) argues that Palestinians were in an on-going clash with Israel's interest in maintaining order and stability and their own quest for dignity and self-determination. To achieve a system of order and stability over Palestinians aspirations, Israel imposed martial law that deprived Palestinians of their civic, political and human rights. If, for instance, Palestinians did not comply with the rules that had been imposed by Israel, they could expect measures such as deportation, administrative detention and/or demolition of their houses (Alimi, 2007). In addition, the denial of human rights and economic growth were even more at display by "(…) the presence of Israel's affluent society across the "green line"[13] (Alimi, 2007: 37) and the growing presence of the Jewish settlements[14] in the oPt. One year before the Intifada started, in the Gaza Strip, there were 18 settlements inhabited by 2,150 Israeli Jewish people and each one occupied 5,562 acres of land. This represented an average of 2.6 acres of land for each Israeli settler opposed to the 0.006 acre per Gazan refugee or 1,375 acres per each refugee camp (Roy, 1987: 82).

To sum up, the "(…) deprivation of Palestinians as individuals and as a collective encircled the entirety of their existence, where the living conditions enjoyed by other groups within Israeli society acted as a reference point against which their state of living was measured" (Alimi, 2007: 39). It was within this context that the first Intifada broke out.

The Intifada, known as the 'Revolt of the Stones', was a non-violent nationalist uprising. Involving all the Palestinians, this grassroots movement aimed to achieve four main goals: disengagement from Israel, greater self-reliance, an end to the occupation, and national independence (Roy, 1991). To achieve them, the Palestinians used tools such as: civil resistance materialized through demonstrations and strikes in the oPt; calls for boycotts to the occupation authorities; refuse to pay taxes; officials' resignation from their post; and workers abandonment of their jobs inside Israel (Filiu, 2014). Israeli authorities, with the aim of ending the uprising, took an 'iron fist' approach against the protesters but were unsuccessful[15]. It looked like that Israeli violence had a centripetal effect that increased popular participation instead of reducing it. Equally important, this violence would not be corresponded because Arafat declared that the PLO would "(…) not resort to armed action" (Filiu, 2014, apud Legrain 1991, p. 257).

---

[13] "The border of Israel prior to the June 1967 Six-Day War delineated as a result of the truce agreements that followed the 1948–1949 Israeli War of Independence. The Green Line, so-named because it was drawn with green markers on the maps at the time, designated the area under Jewish control in Palestine. The Green Line encompassed about 78 percent of Palestinian territory in 1947 before the Israeli War of Independence" (Tucker, 2008: 404).

[14] According to B'Tselem, settlement(s) is the construction of infrastructures and the establishment of Israeli civilians in the oPt. Likewise, the Fourth Geneva Convention (article 49) says that the establishment of these settlements violate international and humanitarian law since Israel as the occupying power is prohibited from transferring citizens from its territory to occupied territory. For more information: https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/200205_land_grab

[15] Measures such as curfews, use of live ammunition and deportation of prisoners without trials were used (Filiu, 2014).

The Intifada reached a climax when Arafat, in December 1988, declared Palestine as an independent state (Filiu, 2014). Later, when addressing the UN General Assembly, Arafat recognized Israel and called for an international peace conference that could address this conflict on the basis of the UNSC Resolution 242 and 338 (Filiu, 2014). However, time passed and with growing difficulties inside the oPt and Israeli on-going violence, the Palestinian collective approach to the Intifada started gradually to disintegrate at the same time that the aim of an independent Palestine was increasingly disappearing (Filiu, 2014: 209). In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and the PLO supported Saddam's Hussein decision hoping to unblock the stalemate that the Intifada was in (Filiu, 2014).

This support came at great cost. After Kuwait was free, more than 400,000 Palestinians were expelled from the Gulf Region and with them the remittances ended, aggravating the economic disaster[16] (Filiu, 2014). The momentum, progress and hopes that the Intifada had achieved during the first years were broken, and with that unity transformed itself in disunity and increased political factionalization (Roy, 1991). The agreement between the secular-nationalist groups and the Islamic groups switched over to inter-factional fighting, violence became an ever-increasing and ever-growing phenomenon inside the Gaza Strip and, finally, violence against Israel was perceived as the only option available to the Palestinians and their cause (Roy, 1991).

In October 1991, the USA and the USSR initiated in Madrid the Middle East Peace Conference that aimed to achieve peace between Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians. This Conference not only excluded the PLO from the negotiations but Hamas and the Islamic Jihad were trying to undermine it (Erakat, 2019). This was achieved when an Israeli policeman was executed by Hamas militants and Israel, as retribution and after arresting close to 2000 Palestinians, left 415 detainees in the middle of a night handcuffed and blindfolded near the Lebanese border (Erakat, 2019: 153). Ironically, this led the international community to condemn Israel, because the deportation was a breach of international law (Erakat, 2019). This was the event behind the Oslo negotiations.

2.2.2 - The Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords were the result of almost three years of negotiations between Israel and the PLO. These negotiations began secretly in Oslo, Norway, and resulted in the signing of two accords. The "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements" (DoP) in Washington on 13 September 1993 and, two years later, in the signing of the "Israeli–Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip", or Oslo II (Oxfam, 2019).

For Avi Shlaim (1994: 24), the DoP should be considered "(…) the mother of all breakthroughs". This is because Arafat confirmed the PLO's commitment to recognize Israel within the UN Resolution

---

[16] The economic results of tree years of the Intifada combined with the Gulf crisis resulted in: 30 percent decline in the GNP; Gaza Strip families lost 75 percent of their personal income; a doubling of child labour among Palestinian children between 8 and 14 years (75% from the Gaza Strip); a 200-percent increase in the number of children in UNRWA supplementary feeding programs (from 8,500 to 25,000); and an unprecedented increase of refugees and non-refugees in the Gaza Strip requiring emergency food relief (Roy, 1991; 44).

242 and 338, to relinquish the use of armed struggle and to update the Palestine National Charter. In addition, the Israeli Prime-Minister Rabin confirmed that Israel was ready to begin the peace negotiations and to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians. These actions from both sides marked the change from mutual denial and rejection to mutual recognition (Shlaim, 1994). This recognition meant that for the first time Israel and the PLO reached an historic compromise by accepting the principle of the partition of historic Palestine.

Pappé contends that the change and agreement in Palestine's partition came through Arafat's awareness that the PLO was incapable of establishing a secular Arab state in the whole of historic Palestine (2006: 240). This concession did not represent the renounce of Palestinians refugees' right of return, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as capital or the desire to end the Jewish settlements, however, "(…) these points were, for the first time in the PLO's history, negotiable rather than precepts of a national ideology" (Pappé, 2006: 240).

PLO main goals with Oslo were: ending the Israeli occupation and settlements over all the oPt plus the international recognition of Palestine. For the Israelis, the main goals were the Palestinian and the Arab countries' recognition of the Jewish state, as well as the improvement of their national security (Oxfam, 2019).

The Oslo Accords were conceived to be negotiated through a five-year period. If, during this time, both parties were capable of implementing the steps established, a final resolution in regards to the future of the Palestinian refugees, the Israeli settlements, the status of Jerusalem, security and borders issues was to be achieved in 1999[17] (Oxfam, 2019). During this five-year period, Israel conceded some autonomy to the PLO, and a Palestinian police force was created to maintain the internal security of the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank. On the other hand, Israel retained all the power on the external security and foreign affairs decisions. In spite of these negotiations, Israel and the PLO have never reached a final and permanent settlement once the five-year period was over.

In Oxfam's perception (2019: 3), the onus for the failing falls on Israel's shoulders because they undermined the five-year period by several means: Israeli settlements grew exponentially[18]; the de-development increased; walls that separate Israel from Palestine and Palestinian cities from each other were raised; and East Jerusalem was formally annexed. In addition, the ambiguity of the text, no third-parties to monitor the implementation of the Accords (and as a consequence, no accountability and no timelines), the missing recognition or even the mention of Palestinians right to self-determination and statehood and the absence of women in the negotiations are, for Oxfam, the main factors that explain the failure of the Oslo Accords (Oxfam, 2019: 18).

---

[17] Although a final resolution was agreed for the end of the five-year period, the DoP was "(…) completely silent on vital issues such as the right of return of the refugees, the borders of the Palestinian entity, the future of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and the status of Jerusalem" (Shlaim, 1994; 34).
[18] Israel settler population went from 115,600 in 1993 to more than 600,000 to this day (Oxfam, 2019: 3)

Pappé argues that the postponing of Jerusalem status, Palestinian refugees' and the Jewish settlements in the oPt to the end of the five-year period was the main reason for the failure of the Oslo accords. This concession linked "(…) the successful implementation of the interim period with negotiations on the final status of the territories and these three topics" (Pappé, 2006: 241). However, the successful implementation was laid down by Israel in accordance to their perceptions of security and to the satisfaction of their own expectations. Ultimately, Pappé (2006) argues that there are a pre-and a post-Oslo Accords where the reality in the oPt reduced the possibilities of achieving a final settlement between Israel and the PLO once the interim period was over.

To sum up, the Oslo Accords did not change the dynamics between occupier and occupied, instead reinforced them and unbalanced Palestinian-Israeli relations more than they already were. Furthermore, by removing the negotiations and the final result from the framework of international law and the Geneva Convention, the PLO unprotected Palestinians, empowered Israel and undermined to this day the application of international law inside Israel and the oPt. Additionally, the sense of community and collective purpose was replaced by a sense of individuality and personal survival (Roy, 2000). All of these elements were exacerbated by the Palestinian Authority (PA)[19], that was thought to be the tool that would reform the political order, but instead transformed the oPt in "(...) an authoritarian state and one-party system actively opposed to any manner of dissent" (Roy, 2000: 8). The PA and their regime have been identified with coercion, tyranny, corruption, disregard for the rule of law and collusion with the Israeli occupation and their policies (Roy, 2000).

After the Oslo Accords, Palestinians faced even more economic difficulties than before. Besides the continuation of structures and processes of de-development, Israel added what were commonly called as 'closures'[20]. These measures were now seen and justified as the price of peace instead of the reason for the conflict (Roy, 2000). Finally, under "(…) Oslo's terms, Israel retains full control over the Palestinian economy, which means authority over key factors of production (…) and complete control over external borders" (Roy, 2000: 17). This exacerbated the de-development of the Palestinian economy. It is within this economic-social and political context that Hamas flourished   .

2.2.3 – Hamas and the Palestinian Elections

Hamas came to existence as they are known today in December 1987. They are a product of the Political Bureau of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) that existed in Gaza since 1946. As their mother organization – the Egyptian MB – their biggest goal was the Islamization of the society (Hroub, 2006). With the outbreak of the Intifada, Palestinian MB changed from their non-violent approach to actively supporting and participating in direct confrontation with the Israeli occupier (Hroub, 2002). With that purpose,

---

[19] The Palestinian Authority, formally known as 'Palestinian Interim self-Government Authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip' is a self-governing entity authorized by the Oslo Accords to govern the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

[20] These closures consisted on the prohibition or restriction of movements of workers and goods from the oPt to Israel and from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank and vice versa (Roy, 2000).

Sheikh Yassin and Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi, among others, created the Islamic Resistance Movement, whose acronym in Arabic is Hamas.

In order to understand Hamas, it is important to comprehend their multidimensional approach to the conflict and struggle for Palestine. If in the beginning the Islamic discourse was predominant, in recent times, Hamas has taken a more pragmatic approach to the conflict. The struggle stopped to be seen only through the lens of Jihad, but instead and especially from the 1990's onwards, started to be seen as the fight against the "(…) usurpation of Palestinian land, and the basic question is how to end the occupation" (Hroub, 2002: 44). In other words, the concept and aim of liberating Palestine took precedence to the Islamic aspect. For this reason, we can separate Hamas's solution to the conflict in two different ways that demonstrates how pragmatic and realistic Hamas can be in order to achieve a resolution. The first is a long-term solution that aims at ending the conflict by reconquering historic Palestine (Hroub, 2002). The second is the interim solution, and looks to settle the Palestinian future state and sovereignty in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem (Hroub, 2002). In Hamas's perspective, the latter could be achieved through an armistice, also called hudna that is accepted in the Sharia law.

In 1988, after the Intifada had begun, Mahmoud al-Zahhar (a well-known Hamas member) presented to Shimon Peres the interim solution[21]; however, neither Israel nor the international community, replied to the offer (Hroub, 2002: 56). Nevertheless, the hudnas and the willing to achieve compromises if reciprocal set Hamas apart from the PLO and all the concessions made to Israel. According to Hroub (2002), these approaches, linked to the military one, rendered Hamas as one capable of pragmatic decisions but also one that was authentic to their principles. This not only shows their pragmatism but also explains why they participated and won the Palestinian elections in 2006.

On this, Roy argues that Hamas was the one who won the most with the first Intifada because they were seen as the only ones capable of countering the Israeli hegemonic force. Adding to this, Hamas was the organization who helped most Palestinians to cope with the economic crisis because they ran "(…) the best social service network in the Gaza Strip" (Roy, 1993: 29). This helped Hamas to be seen and trusted by Palestinians, especially the poorest, as capable of being committed to their original promises and by no means comparable to PLO's corruption, especially Fatah (Roy, 1993: 29).

This was reinforced during the second Intifada, also known, as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, that started in 2000 after Ariel Sharon, leader of the opposition Likud party, visited the Temple Mount on which the Al-Aqsa mosque[22] can be found. In addition to this provocative visit, the failed ending of the Oslo

---

[21] The plan proposed the Israeli withdrawal from the oPt, a Palestinian state under the UN auspices, and lastly, the right to name their representatives to the future peace talks. Finally, once both sides agreed, negotiations would take place to settle all the issues that set them apart (Hroub, 2002: 76). Hamas repeated this offer again, in 1993, with the condition that Israel withdrew from the oPt and no official recognition of the Jewish state would be needed (Hroub, 2002).

[22] "The al-Aqsa Mosque is both a building and a complex of religious buildings in Jerusalem (…). The whole area of the Noble Sanctuary is considered by Muslims to be the al-Aqsa Mosque, and the entire precinct is inviolable

Process after the 5-years period, led to this second eruption of Palestinian dissatisfaction (Roy, 2011). The Al-Aqsa Intifada was marked by Israel's re-occupation and building of the separation wall[23] in the West Bank and increased violence and assassinations of Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip (Roy, 2011). According to Roy, these assassinations, especially the one that led to the death of Hamas leader Sheikh Yassin, "(…) shifted the balance of power in their favor" (Roy, 2011: 40).

From another perspective, Salih Biçakci (2007) gives a more in depth analysis not only of the 2006 Palestinian elections, but also the ones that happened previously. In 1996 and 2005, Hamas declined to participate in the elections to the Presidency of the PA against Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas because they did not want to recognize Israel or the Oslo Accords (Biçakci, 2007). A different approach was taken by Hamas when, in December 2005, they participated and won in the municipal elections against the coalition formed by Fatah and the PFLP. Six weeks after, on 25 January 2006, the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) took place. Hamas participated for the first time under the 'Change and Reform' list with the slogan 'Building with one hand, battling with the other' and won 76 of the 132 seats (Biçakci, 2007: 72). This victory was especially significant when considering that the Palestinians were pressured not to vote for Hamas[24]. Following Hamas victory, Israel and US led an international political-economic boycott and sanctions against the new Palestinian government, which "(…) amounted to a form of collective punishment against the entire Palestinian population" (Roy, 2011: 41) that aimed at pressuring Palestinians to overthrow the democratically elected new government (Roy, 2011).

In spite of this backlash, Hamas was willing to be pragmatic and negotiate with Israel. In fact, Hamas was clear from the start that it was willing to govern without resorting to violence as long as there were no sanctions and Israeli attacks (Roy, 2011). Interestingly enough is that all the authors mentioned, tend to agree that Hamas was, at least, prepared to negotiate with Israel an agreement. For instance, Wagemakers (2010: 358) claims that Hamas had stepped away from their radicalism since 2005. His argument was that besides refraining themselves of using terrorism against Israel, Hamas' participation in the municipal and legislative elections showed pragmatism and flexibility in dealing with Israel and the PA that set them apart of the initial radicalism. Also, Hroub recalls Hamas' Prime Minister Haniyeh's words when he urged the international community to respect the electoral results

---

according to Islamic law (…) Dating from AD 690, it surrounds a large rock from which Islamic tradition believes that the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven". (Edwards, 2008: 70)

[23] According to Amnesty International (2004), Israel started to build up walls that run through the West Bank and Jerusalem since 2002. Close to 90% of the route of the wall is on Palestinian land. In addition, the walls "(…) encircles Palestinian lands and cut off communities and families from each other, separating farmers from their land and Palestinians from their places of work, education and health care facilities and other essential services". The wall is 712 kilometers long and has an average width of "(…) 60 to 80 meters, including barbed wire, ditches, large trace paths and tank patrol lanes on each sides of the fence/wall, as well as additional buffer zones/no-go areas of varying depths" (Amnesty International, 2004). For more information: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE15/016/2004/en/ and https://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier

[24] For instance, Israel Prime-Minister Ehud Olmert warned "(…) the Palestinian people that if Hamas did well in the elections, international donors, including the USA and the EU, will stop their aid" (Biçakci, 2007: 74).

and not to stop the aid that had always been given, and that he was willing to "(…) invite the donors to establish whatever monitoring mechanisms they considered necessary to guarantee the proper expenditure of their money" (Hroub, 2006; 147).

Nevertheless, Hamas was shunned and several policies were taken to force their government to renounce. With this, the closure policies were taken to an extreme, as Palestinians could not leave Gaza. As a consequence, poverty and unemployment increased at an alarming rate. In addition, violence and fighting between Hamas and Fatah for Gaza's resources increasingly got out of hand, and from April 2006 until June 2007, the conflict led to the death of seven hundred Palestinians (Roy, 2011, apud PCHR 2007). This is commonly known as the Gaza War, which was won by Hamas and that led to the expulsion of Fatah from Gaza. Following these events, on 13 June 2007, President Abbas dismissed Prime-Minister Haniyeh and declared a state of emergency (Roy, 2011). President Abbas then formed an emergency government in the West Bank and cancelled all previously decisions that Hamas had taken. Later, on June 17 a new government was sworn in leading to the end of the Israeli and international sanctions and political boycott in the West Bank (Roy, 2011). Hamas was finally isolated, and with them, the Palestinians trapped inside the Gaza Strip.

2.2.4 – The Gaza Strip Blockade

Designated by Chomsky and Pappé (2015) as an 'open-air prison', this territory was in 2012 declared soon to be 'unliveable' by 2020 (UN Report, 2017). To confirm this, the UN Country Team (2017) reviewed this prediction and concluded that, although Gazans have kept on coping with increasing poverty and imposed destitution, the Gaza Strip has not yet reached the breaking point. This part of the chapter highlights the most important aspects regarding the Israeli siege and its consequences for the Gaza Strip through data from the UN and B'Tselem. In addition, Ron J. Smith's analytical perspective and ethnographic experience in the Gaza Strip have also been analysed.

UN report (2017) starts by framing that, in spite of the 2005 Israeli unilateral-disengagement plan, Israel is still legally occupying the Gaza Strip because it has full control on movements of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip. This control is not only through land, but also through sea and air. Due to this fact, Israel is "(…) bound by human rights obligations towards the population of Gaza" (UN Report, 2017: 26). Regardless of this, the siege initiated by Israel has not ceased to exist and has resulted in 80% of the population to be dependent on aid, 44% is unemployed (among the youth and the women this number rises to 60% and 71.5% respectively), 40% is considered to be poor, and 47% is food insecure (UN Report, 2017:3; PASSIA, 2018:1; B'Tselem, 2017). Adding to this, 96.2% of water is not safe for consumption, 45% of essential medicines are unavailable and electricity outages an average 22 hours a day. By looking at the demographic factors such as rate of population growth (3.8%), population under fifteen (42.6%) and the median age (18.4 years) (PASSIA, 2018:1), it is visible how complex and dire the situation is. To sum up, the siege amounts to a collective punishment that penalizes the entire population of the Gaza Strip, and this goes against international law (UN Report, 2017). Furthermore,

the siege led to an economic downfall and turned Palestinians into dependents of international aid (B'Tselem, 2017).

UN (2017) divides the siege in three distinctive phases: the first one went from 2007 to 2010. During this time, which was the most severe, the Hamas government could only import 'basic humanitarian products' such as food (chocolates and toys for instance were forbidden), medical supplies and hygiene products. In addition, there was a complete ban on exports in the first two years, which led to the closure of 95% of Gaza industrial complex and the consequent loss of 120,000 jobs (UN Report, 2017: 8). Plus, the entering or exit from the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing was limited to 'humanitarian cases' and three of the other four crossings were closed (Annex D). At the same time, Egypt closed the Rafah crossing too, which deteriorated even more the situation (UN Report, 2017: 8). Simultaneously, the parallel economy through the Rafah tunnels flourished.

The next phase, from 2010 to 2014, led to an ease in some restrictions due to the Mavi Marmara incident[25] and consequent international pressure. Nevertheless, the concept of 'dual-use' items was created and all the imports that Israel thought that could be used by civilians or with military purposes faced severe restrictions[26]. So, while there was an ease from Israel, in fact the 'dual-use' items hindered any possibility of changes on the ground because they included hundreds of items that were necessary to restore Gaza's infrastructure and economy. Israel also maintained restrictions on exports, which kept the Gaza Strip isolated and on the course of de-development.

The last phase started in 2014 and still on-going, is one where additional relaxations to imports, exports and movement of people were put in place. However, what may look like progress is still far from the levels of imports, exports and movements before the siege started. To be more precise, the movement of people through the Erez crossing was restricted to "(…) medical patients and employees of international organizations" (UN Report, 2017: 8). The Palestinians who have authorization to exit are in specific situations, such as death of a familiar, illness or a wedding.

Economically speaking, Gaza's GDP declined 5.3% from 2006 to 2016, while in the West Bank it grew 48.5% (UN Report, 2017: 13). Another big difference that came with the Israeli blockade was the quality of water. According to the UN, access to safe drinking water through the public system fell 98.3% in 2000 to 10.5% in 2014 (UN Report, 2017: 20). The usage of very few water resources available and the systematic over-extraction of the same, rendered 96.2% of Gaza's water unfit to be drunk (UN Report, 2017: 20). In the health sector, the siege has also made things worse. From 2010 to 2016, the number of hospital beds, doctors and nurses per 1,000 inhabitants declined in all levels (UN Report,

---

[25] Mavi Marmara was one Turkish ship that together with other five tried to breach the blockade of the Gaza Strip to deliver humanitarian help (the ships were carrying 10,000 tonnes of goods, including school supplies, building materials and two large electricity generators). However, and still in international waters, Israel Commandos invaded the Mavi Marmara ship which led to the killing of 10 Turkish activists on board (BBC, 2016). For more information: https://www.bbc.com/news/10203726

[26] These 'dual-use' items included "(…) construction materials, raw material for the productive sectors, including wood and pesticides, medical equipment and water pumps necessary to deal with seasonal flooding" (UN Report, 2017: 9)

2017). The rate of cancer survival also declined from 59% in 2006 to 46% in 2014. From 2006 to 2016, Israel's approval rate of permits to sick people to exit the Gaza Strip for medical reasons declined from 90% to 62% (UN Report, 2017: 23). The education sector was maybe one of the less affected when talking about the literacy rate which increased from 94% to 97% (UN Report, 2017).

B'Tselem (2017) deepens their analysis of the quantitative data to shed some light on what this means to Gazans. To this end, they analyse the reduction of the fishing area and the lack of electricity. Regarding the first one, B'Tselem contends that in spite of 20 nautical miles agreed on the Oslo Accords for Palestinians, Israel has never allowed them to use more than 12 nautical miles (Annex D). As time passed, Israel gradually decreased the fishing zone and when Palestinians fishermen tried to fish beyond Israeli's stipulation, the military arrested them and confiscated their equipment. Measures such as these ones keep pushing thousands of Palestinians to poverty by impeding their ability to work and sell fish in the Gaza Strip markets and to provide for themselves and their families. Likewise, the lack of consistent power supply leads to several problems. For instance, without continuous electricity, medical equipment is often damaged, hospitals are forced to delay non-urgent surgeries or to release patients earlier than they should. In addition, the unreliable power supply hinders the routine operation of water pumps and affects the sewage system (B'Tselem, 2017). It is important to highlight that one of the main reasons for the lack of electricity was the 2006 Israel bombing of the only power station that existed in Gaza (B'Tselem, 2017). To conclude, B'Tselem argues that the humanitarian disaster that is happening in the Gaza Strip is entirely man-made and a direct result of Israeli policies and is getting worse (B'Tselem, 2017).

Ron J. Smith (2016) has named what Israel and Egypt are doing in the Gaza Strip as a siege instead of blockade (definition that I have adopted throughout my dissertation). The author contends that a siege is a violent process and a "subset of occupation practices" (Smith, 2016; 750). This in turn leads to the unusual Israel occupation of the Gaza Strip, where although they are not inside the enclave they are still able to impose their will and control the population.

Developing the concept of siege, the author contends that a siege is a "(…) geopolitical phenomenon that functions through the removal of societies from the global networks of trade and movement" (Smith, 2016; 750). Additionally, a siege is a measure which is put in place from the state level upon civilian populations who see their basic needs, liberties and freedom denied with the aim of leading to political change (Smith, 2016, apud Geldenhuys, 1990). Likewise, often believed as an alternative to war, the author argues that the on-going Israeli interventions in the Gaza Strip show that this is not the case, and that the siege victimizes the most vulnerable (Smith, 2016, apud Lopez, 1999). For this reason, Smith (2016) shares UN and B'Tselem argument that the Gaza Strip siege is a form of collective punishment. The goal then is the continuous de-development, or, in other words, "(…) the deliberate, systematic deconstruction of an indigenous economy by a dominant power" (Smith, 2016, apud Roy 1995, p. 4). The siege is also unique because it eliminated the people living inside the enclave as producers or

workers and kept them as consumers of humanitarian aid, thus turning them into subjects without agency in their lives.

Following this analytical perspective, Smith (2016) deepens his understanding by sharing the results of his ethnographic work inside the Gaza Strip through the lens of subaltern geopolitics[27] of the siege. He focused his fieldwork in one main subject: the youth and the growing loss of the sumoud. The youth is of the utmost importance for the Hamas government but also to the Israel as the occupier entity, because they can have a destabilizing effect in the society due to the extreme stagnation, which is the case of the Gaza Strip under Israeli and Egyptian siege (Smith, 2016: 756). For Smith, one of his results of the ethnographic work was the "unsettling of sumoud as an organizing principle among the youth" (Smith, 2016: 756). To be more precise, sumoud or steadfastness has a centripetal role among Palestinians because is a "(…) central organizing platform that permeates beyond overt political action but is manifest in various strategies that absolutely reject oppression as a long-term condition" (Smith, 2016, apud Khalili, 2004). In a nutshell, the author has discovered that once the central component of the Palestinian life, the sumoud is not as important as it was in the past among the youth (Smith, 2016) and the only reason for this is the top-down siege that has been imposed and is killing any realistic ambition of having a meaningful life.

To conclude, Smith (2016), argues that far from being an alternative to the suffering that war causes, the Israeli siege is purposefully targeting the most vulnerable, confirming that Israel is not only using the siege but also military incursions to thwart "(…) any individual or collective infrastructure through which Gazans might assert independent modes of production" (Smith, 2016: 767), turning the siege and war in one single measure that aims to prevent any recovery from the military invasions and the occupation.

Now that an historical perspective has been given, the next chapter will focus mainly on the policy of normalization between the last three Egyptian Presidents and the Israeli state.

---

[27] "(…) subaltern geopolitics examines global politics through the experiences of the most marginalized" (Smith, 2016: 754) and rejects the state as the main subject of analysis. Through this framework, the focus is the human impacts of the siege in the Gaza Strip.

III – Egyptian and Israeli Policies in the Gaza Strip

This chapter has two main goals: to analyse Egyptian foreign policy towards Israel and the Gaza Strip, and to understand if the Egyptian-Israeli relations should be comprehended through the 'cold peace'[28] perspective or not. Consequently, and to achieve this, some events will be analysed more extensively due to their historical importance[29].

All of these events are proof of the growing complexity in the relations between these three system units (Egypt, Israel and the Gaza Strip). Furthermore, it is not possible to achieve the chapter's goals without being mindful that there are, at least, two different levels of analysis that must be considered. The first one concerns the Egyptian government foreign policy decisions, by including the political, diplomatic and economic dimensions. The second level focuses on the Egyptian society. To be more precise, by asking if the Egyptian society has had the power to constrain the Egyptian Government(s) foreign policy or not, it could be possible to understand if the Egyptian state behaviour has also been the outcome of civil society agency. Thus, to deal with the task of deconstructing these two levels of analysis and the four events, it is important to bear in mind that Egyptian relations with Israel and the Gaza Strip are not rigid or static. They have evolved, deteriorated or stayed the same in accordance with some events.

3. 1 – Egypt's 'Cold Peace' with Israel

Taking into consideration the two levels of analysis previously introduced, I have divided Mubarak's foreign policy in three different stages: from 1981 to 1993, from 1993 to 2006, and from 2006 to 2011. Throughout these stages, Mubarak's foreign policy towards Israel progressed from 'cold peace' to 'strategic peace' (Aran and Ginat, 2014) at the expense of Gaza's Strip well-being. This is especially true after the Gaza War in 2007 that consolidated Hamas power.

The strategic peace, as seen in the introduction, has been developed and coined by Aran and Ginat as an intermediary stage between cold peace and stable peace. Strategic peace can be explained through four variables: impact of great powers, propensity to revert to war, the roles played by statecraft and the social context, with special reference to the economic and intellectual elites (Aran and Ginat, 2014: 557). Stable peace is described as one side of a continuum (with cold peace being on the opposite side) and comprehends different forms (Kupchan, 2010: 30). To the scope of this dissertation, rapprochement is of particular interest because it can only happen when the state of war and violence is terminated and no

---

[28] Cold peace is the type of peace which follows the period after the conclusion of war between two (or more) states and that is grounded on formal agreements and diplomatic relations (Aran and Ginat, 2014: 558). Additionally, cold peace entails the absence of: supportive institutions, cooperation on non-security issues and confidence-building measures

[29] As already mentioned on the introduction, these events are: Mubarak's government role in applying the blockade on their side of the border; Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) electoral victory after Mubarak's removal from power; Sisi Coup that led to Morsi's fall and growing relations with Israel; Operation Protective Edge.

longer an option between two former enemies. Thus, rapprochement entails: longevity and consolidation of peace; integration on the state-level apparatus but also on a societal and economic level; open channels of communication; flow of information; and resolution of conflicts or misunderstandings through non-violent foreign policy (Aran and Ginat, 2014). In short, the perception of the 'other' as a hostile entity transforms itself to one of common recognition, respect and predictability (Aran and Ginat, 2014, apud Kupchan 2010, p. 31). The development from cold peace to rapprochement happens if the former ones have stable regimes which, via measures such as accommodation and cooperation, are able to create a virtuous cycle capable of creating stability and common recognition in the quest of mutual interest.

Taking this into consideration, it is my understanding that from 1981 to 1993 Egyptian-Israeli relations were marked by cold peace. From 1993 to 2006, while still within the cold peace perspective, events such as the Oslo Accords have increased Egypt's relationship with Israel. In addition, economic relations between these countries increased significantly. Finally, from 2006 to 2011, Mubarak's regime increasingly became a strategic partner to Israel and its policies towards the Gaza Strip after the elections that brought Hamas to power.

While my understanding is that Egyptian-Israeli relations developed from cold to strategic peace, this is at odds with the overall idea of the authors mentioned. To be more precise, several authors argue that Mubarak's three decade rule was marked by the continuation of cold peace towards Israel. In detail, I share Aran and Ginat's perspective on the evolution of Egyptian-Israeli relations; however, their overall idea is missing several events which put into question parts of their interpretation related to Egyptian and Israeli common history and Egypt's foreign policy. On the other hand, different authors' arguments showed various events throughout these decades which are not present in Aran and Ginat's article, thus affecting their overall argument. Consequently, the other authors' perspectives were of significant importance because they helped filling in the gaps of Aran and Ginat's main argument and reach a conclusion.

3.1.1 – Mubarak's Foreign Policy towards Israel and the Gaza Strip

As Khaled Elgindy stated, although it was Sadat who signed the peace treaty, it was Mubarak "(…) who implemented it, preserved it, and made it a pillar of Egypt's strategic posture in the region" (2012: 173). The peace treaty is still to the present an issue that divides Egyptian citizens. This division constrained Mubarak's foreign policy since he needed to have some sort of accountability towards the Egyptian citizens and the other Arab countries. Thus, it is not possible to fully understand Egypt's foreign policy towards Israel and the Gaza Strip if the domestic (Egyptian civil society) and external (neighbouring Arab countries) constraints are not considered (Abadi, 2006: 161). It is also important to know Mubarak's foreign policy goals that were common throughout his rule: the improvement of Egypt's economy; the reposition as the leading nation of the Middle East; and the need to preserve US support for his regime which would only happen if the peace with Israel was kept (Kenneth Stein, 1997; Ewan Stein, 2011).

The importance of keeping US support was mainly related to the foreign aid that Egypt received each year since the Camp David Accords[30]. For this reason, Mubarak never questioned the relationship with Israel even though there were several events that could have meant the suspension or the end of the peace treaty. As examples, Stein points out the following ones: 1981 bombing of the Iraqi Osiraq nuclear reactor by Israel; invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the massacre of Palestinians in two refugee camps – Sabra and Shatila[31]; Israel's control of Jerusalem; Israel's non-withdrawal from South Lebanon; settlements expansion in the oPt; 1985 bombing of the PLO's headquarters in Tunis; Israel's administration of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; outbreak and consequent backlash against Palestinians during the first Intifada; Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel (1988-91); deportation of Hamas activists from Lebanon in 1992; the massacre of Palestinians in the Hebron mosque in 1993; the opening of the Western Wall tunnel in September 1996 (Stein, 1997: 306). It is important to highlight that Stein sees them only through the state-level perspective. If we add to these ones, events such as the Al-Aqsa Intifada and consequent violence against Palestinians, the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war, the Gaza Strip blockade and the 2009 Operation Cast Lead from the societal perspective, they increased the impatience of the Egyptian civil society and "(…) galvanized Egyptians and other Arabs like rarely before" (Elgindy, 2012: 172).

One of the main difficulties that Mubarak had to cope with was the difficult task of fostering, or at least, complying with the peace treaty at the same time that he worked to reposition his country as the leading nation of the Middle East. In fact, the Arab states showed from the beginning that Egypt's re-integration within the Arab sphere would not be possible if the policy of rapprochement with Israel was to be pursued (Aran and Ginat, 2014: 563). In this first stage, Israeli policies towards Palestinians and the other Arab nations, led Mubarak's government to take measures that aimed to reduce to a minimum the social integration of both countries[32]. Despite this, Mubarak was successful in keeping Egyptian-Israeli relations (and the peace treaty). And while eventually Egypt was accepted back among the other Arab nations, he was not capable of avoiding the centripetal dynamic inside Egyptian society against Israel that manifested itself with more expression when Israel bombed Iraq in 1981 and invaded Lebanon in 1982. Nevertheless, and due to US policies of supporting Mubarak's regime through security and

---

[30] The US gave $1 billion in civilian aid and 1.3 billion in military aid to Egypt (Aran and Ginat, 2014, apud Cook 2011, p. 219-220).

[31] These massacres happened from 16 to 18 September 1982 in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. Although there is no exact number of victims, it is estimated that between 350 and 3500 Palestinians were killed (including women, children and elderly). While the massacre was not perpetuated directly by Israel (it was done by an extreme-right Christian Lebanese militia), the incident occurred after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Additionally, the IDF occupied the area that included Sabra and Shatila and, in contact with the militia, gave them access to the camps. What is more, the IDF stopped civilians and residents from exiting the camps and escaping. Later, it was discovered that the militia had been invited to the camps by Israel (Pierpaolo and Zuhur, 2008: 879-881).

[32] This can be seen, for instance, by the law that forbidden Egyptian representatives to visit Israel or the economic barriers were approved to make economic exchanges with Israel almost impossible (Aran and Ginat, 2014).

economic incentives, Egyptian-Israeli bilateral relations had already reached a level in which each side believed that the other would not go to war (Stein, 1997: 304).

This does not mean that Mubarak was ready to foster better relations with Israel. In fact, this first stage (1981-1993) began with Mubarak recalling the Egyptian ambassador from Israel and to announce that he would not return unless Israel withdrew from Lebanon (Beinin, 1985: 6). This marked the beginning of a decade where Mubarak maintained a cold peace with Israel, where he felt the need to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinians and the Arab concerns and where the 'Camp David Consensus' took shape[33]. During this first stage, another event which led to the consolidation of the cold peace was the outbreak of the first Intifada and the violence that followed against the Palestinians. However, Mubarak took a different approach and instead of recalling the Egyptian ambassador as he did during the Lebanon invasion, he continued to meet with Israeli counterparts. It is possible to assert that the state-level approach was already changing and Mubarak emphasized this change even more by saying that "(…) if I cooperate strategically with Israel or anyone else, then it is because I have an interest" (Stein, 1997: 310).

To sum up the first stage (1981-1993), it is possible to conclude that several events hindered the Egyptian-Israeli relations on the state-level. These same events alienated the Egyptian civil society of any interest or understanding in any type of exchange with Israel. Moreover, the peace treaty did not bring better economic conditions to Egypt and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict deteriorated. While, there were diplomatic and political exchanges, especially when Israel's Labour Party was in power, Mubarak continued to link the Palestinian progress with the normalization of ties with Israel. Therefore, Mubarak's first decade in power should be seen as one in which cold peace with Israel was the normality.

Throughout the second stage (1993-2006), Egyptian-Israeli relations improved. One of the most important events that made it happen was US changing policies. During the 1980s, US policy towards Egypt was one of conflict reduction. However, after the first Gulf War (1990-1991), the US changed from conflict reduction to mutual strategic interests. Thus, Egypt became the sponsor of US-policy in the Middle East and, in turn, received increasingly economic and security support (Aran and Ginat, 2014: 565). Additionally, Mubarak's cooperation with the US in the fight against Saddam Hussein made Egypt an "(…) active peace mediator and legitimator of the political dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians" in the 1990s (Aran and Ginat, 2014: 566). Another key piece in this puzzle is Iran. Mubarak believed that Iran was providing economic assistance to Islamic groups that engaged in terrorist attacks in Egypt and that Iran's support of Hezbollah and Hamas represented a threat to Egyptian and US common approach to the region and to the peace treaty with Israel (Aran and Ginat, 2014, apud

---

[33] Ewan Stein describes the Camp David consensus as the process where "Egyptian intellectuals and political movements broadly accept that the Egyptian regime must deal constructively and "correctly" with Israel as a state, but insist that society has the right and responsibility to resist Zionism" (Stein, 2011:737).

Etheshami 2002, p. 300). This common interest in curtailing Iran's power in the region further built the Egyptian-Israeli relations[34].

Alongside these new developments, and in spite of the Egyptian society's opposition to normalization, there was also increasing relations in more fields besides the Government. For instance, in the late 1990s, Egyptian intellectuals and diplomats established the Cairo Peace Movement together with Israel counterparts. Likewise, Mubarak's government cancelled the laws that were still in place regarding Israel's imports and exports of goods along with the procedures that forced Egyptians to ask for authorization if they wanted to travel to Israel (Aran and Ginat, 2014, apud Sultan 2007, p. 103). In December 2004, Egypt and Israel signed the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) agreement that allowed Egypt to access the US market on a duty-free basis as long as the products made in Egypt contained at least 11.7 percent of Israeli components (Aran and Ginat, 2014). In 2005, the Egyptian Energy Consortium signed a commercial agreement with the Israel Electric Company in which it was agreed that Egypt would provide 25 billion cubic metres of gas over a 15 year period. In August 2009, the agreement was updated and the price that Israel was paying (the first agreement was expected to generate 2.5 billion of dollars) was increased in order to reflect the rise in global energy prices (Aran and Ginat, 2014: 578). This agreement ended when Mubarak was removed from power.

These growing economic relations are also explained by the need to improve Egypt's economic situation. Therefore, Mubarak kept the peace and increased relations in another areas[35]. However, constrained by the society, the coldness of the peace treaty was still present. In other words, in spite of the economic and political exchanges, the domestic constraints affected the extent to which Egypt could align itself with Israeli policies or interests, "(…) regardless of whether they correspond with Egyptian ones" (Stein, 2011: 739). Nevertheless, with the Oslo accords, Mubarak ascertained his role as mediator between the PLO and Israel and also between the other Arab nations and Israel. This not only helped him increase his soft-power with the Arab world, Israel and the US, but also made Mubarak's Egypt the "central axis for influencing Arab attitudes and the pace of Arab normalization with Israel" (Stein, 1997: 313). The Mubarak regime used this mediator role to legitimize his growing ties with Israel (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012: 10). Notwithstanding these improvements, it is here that we can find some of the gaps in Aran and Giant's rhetoric, since they frame Mubarak's foreign policy pointing out only on what was achieved but neglecting several other events which continued to hinder Egyptian-Israeli relations.

For instance, throughout the second stage, the Egyptian press was still authorized to express their anger and dissatisfaction in whatever form they thought better. In times of more violence or tension, like the second Intifada, strong attacks against Israel were made. Moreover, in 1994, Israel's request "(…) to establish a joint chamber of commerce was rejected by Egyptian officials" (Abadi, 2006: 173).

---

[34] An example of this is the 2005 signed agreement between Israel and Egypt, named Philadelphi Deal, where Israel authorized Egypt to send 750 members of its security forces to the Egyptian border with Gaza (Annex E), to prevent trafficking of weapons from the Sinai Peninsula to Gaza (Khani, 2013: 102).
[35] Such as trade, agriculture, tourism, gas, and oil (Stein, 2011: 379).

Netanyahu's election (Likud Party) in 1996 represented a blow for Egyptian-Israeli relations because Mubarak's regime saw Netanyahu as less forthcoming to any kind of settlement with the PLO. With the opening of the Western Wall tunnel in September 1996, Egypt accused Israel's new government of harming the peace process and instigating Palestinian-Israeli violence (Stein, 1997; Abadi, 2006). Likewise, and despite Mubarak's request to "(…) US and European Union countries for their technical, military, and security aid" (Khani, 2013: 104) to end the trafficking of weapons from Sinai to Gaza, Israel accused Egypt of not doing enough. Moreover, Egyptian civil society created organizations such as the Arab Committee in Support of the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon and Palestine or the Popular Movement for the Resistance and Boycott of Israel that had the goal of fighting any type of relation with Israel at the grassroots level (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012).

The situation got worse when, after the 11 September 2001 attacks, the US started the "war on terror" campaign and Israel used this as a pretext to attack the oPt under Operation Deterrent Shield. As a consequence, Mubarak froze its relation with Israel until they were ready to engage in conversations regarding the Palestinian issue (Khani, 2013: 103). Furthermore, Israel's suppression of the Al-Aqsa Intifada led Mubarak to recall his ambassador from Israel and to incite Egyptian civil society to show solidarity with the Palestinians[36] as long as they remained clear of any criticism against him or his government. This incitement boosted his domestic legitimacy and "(…) depoliticize the state's role in confronting Israel militarily" (Stein, 2011: 755). Civil society support for Mubarak was exclusively for these matters and in the 2005 parliamentary elections, his domestic opponents achieved results[37] that not only confirmed this but also started a new phase in the fight between Mubarak's regime and his opponents.

To sum up, this stage saw ups and downs in Egypt-Israeli relations. In addition, Mubarak's foreign policy decisions were sometimes paradoxical or incoherent because he was eager to keep his mediator role achieved with the Oslo Accords and to maintain US support for his regime at the same time that he needed to cope with domestic and external constraints pressuring him to end his relation with Israel and any type of normalization. Thus, while publicly Mubarak condemned and criticized Israel for their behaviour towards Palestinians, privately he gradually consolidated and expanded his relation with Israel to the point that Egypt emerged as Israel's 'strategic partner' in the last stage before the Arab Spring. Additionally, Mubarak embraced US policies in the Middle East by transforming Egypt into a key ally and supporter of two strategic pillars of American foreign policy in the region: counterterrorism efforts and the Arab-Israeli peace process. Mindful that Israel has historically been the key ally of the US in the

---

[36] As in the 1990s, Egyptian civil society created more organizations that aimed at hindering any kind of relation with Israel. For this reason, during the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the Egyptian Popular Committee in Solidarity with the Palestinian Intifada and the General Egyptian Committee for the Boycott of American and Zionist Goods and Companies were created (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012). As with the first organization, these ones were capable of amassing popular support from different political and religious groups.

[37] Despite the National Democratic Party (Mubarak's party) being able to form a government, the Muslim Brotherhood won 88 delegates and was considered the biggest winner of the election (Meital, 2010).

Middle East, and that Mubarak was not only unwilling to antagonize US decisions but embraced them, Egyptian-Israeli relations improved as a consequence of their common link to the US. After the 2006 Palestinian elections, Mubarak's foreign policies that could be perceived as paradoxical ended and paved the way to stronger relations with Israel.

3.1.2 – Egypt's Role on Gaza Strip's Fall Out

The third and last stage of Mubarak's rule in power is the one where the complexity of the domestic constraints coupled with events such as the 2006 Palestinian elections, the Gaza Strip siege and the 2009 Operation Cast Lead, increased the density of the Egyptian-Israeli relations. Additionally, demonstrations in favour of Palestine and against Israel not only increased but also served as a "(…) inspiration for proto-revolutionary groups like the Kifaya! (Enough!) Movement and the April 6 Youth Movement" (Elgindy, 2012: 173) that were vital to the "(…) galvanization of Egyptian "street politics" that culminated in January 2011" (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012: 11). These events, combined with Mubarak's growing proximity to Israel, exposed that support for Palestine and resentment towards Israel were profoundly embedded in Egyptian society. Additionally, the participation in the siege and complaisance with the Operation Cast Lead showed that Egypt's cold peace evolved to strategic peace.

However, and in order to understand Mubarak's decisions, it is important to underline that, after the 2005 elections results, Mubarak escalated his fight against his opponents. To this extent, the Egyptian regime depicted the MB as an illegal organization that exploited religion and the fragility of regular citizens to achieve their goals (Meital, 2010). This idea was also attached to Hamas, yet in Hamas' case was worse since Mubarak believed that they were a proxy of Iran, which meant that they were a threat to the status-quo. For this reason, after the 2006 Palestinian elections and Fatah's expulsion of Gaza, Egypt security coordination and intelligence sharing with Israel reached levels that were unthinkable a few years before. In fact, after Israel's implementation of the siege, Egypt closed the only external border – Rafah – that Palestinians had in the oPt, sealing off Gaza and its population. If this border was an already contentious space, this decision led to the fragmentation of the social space, mobility and well-being of Palestinians to new heights (Navone, 2016: 123).

From this point onwards, and in spite of the Oslo Accords that determined the continuous opening of the Rafah crossing, it was arbitrarily open only three or four days a month exclusively to the transit of people (Navone, 2016: 125). This affected in a greatly manner how the Palestinians could live their lives: many Palestinians were now denied the possibility of leaving Gaza; the ones who had authorization to leave were often unable to do it due to long queues in the border; and finally, several families were separated at the Rafah border (Rafah is closer to the Gaza Strip than it is to Cairo, which means that more than two different countries, people living in the two sides of the border identify themselves as one common group of people sharing one common culture).

This sense of gemeinschaft (Ferdinad Tönnies), shared by the people of Gaza and the Egyptians in Sinai, was abruptly ended by Mubarak's policies. In fact, these people were and still are trapped between

the inclusion/exclusion and inside/outside that the border produced (Navone, 2016: 130).This reinforced the exclusion and the alienation of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and, economically speaking Mubarak's decision aggravated an already dire situation and plunged the Gaza Strip into severe economic situation and deprivation[38]. As a countermeasure, Hamas government started to build tunnels on the border with Egypt to prevent the situation of getting worse. Nevertheless, the situation was aggravated by Israel's 2008-2009 Operation Cast Lead.

3.1.3 - Gaza Strip Tunnels and the Operation Cast Lead

The tunnels can be traced back to 1983 following the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. For years the tunnels had no expression besides some contraband between Bedouins (indigenous people of this area) and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (Pelham, 2012a: 7). However, after the implementation of the Egyptian and Israeli siege the tunnel industry really set off[39]. The Hamas government was completely aware of the consequences that the siege had on the civilian population and the pressure that this represented to their legitimacy. For this reason, Hamas expanded the tunnels to the extent that these led to a "(…) reconfiguration of Gaza's economy and enabled its rulers to circumvent the worst effects" the siege (Pelham 2012a: 8).

Attesting this, Mahmud Zahar (one of the foremost Hamas leaders) justified that the decision to pursue the expansion and consolidation of Gaza's economy through the tunnels was due to the fact that nothing came from outside (Pelham, 2012a: 9). For this reason, Hamas developed a complex system that regulated how these tunnels worked and draft contracts for cooperatives to build and operate commercial tunnels. It was also during this time that the tunnels which were once mainly used for the trafficking of weapons became the "lungs through which Gaza breathes" (Pelham, 2012a: 10). The growth, complexity and importance of the tunnels in the mitigation of the siege led the Hamas government to create the Tunnel Affairs Commission (TAC) as the regulatory authority for the commercial tunnels. The TAC was responsible, for instance, of creating a list of forbidden imports that included weapons, alcohol, and painkillers. In addition, the TAC also destroyed tunnels that were not operating to avoid having wanted criminals using them as channels to escape and charged value-added tax on all goods (Pelham, 2012a: 12).

The success that the tunnels represented in alleviating the imposed siege came to an halt when Israel began the Operation Cast Lead (OCL), in 2008, following a break-up in the cease-fire between Hamas

---

[38] To be more precise, imports and exports of goods from the Gaza Strip were banned and the 3 or 4 days that Rafah crossing was open, only civilians could pass (if authorized) (Khani, 2013; 108; Navone, 2016: 125).

[39] Even before the siege, the tunnels were already used and important after the Oslo Accords were signed, and later, with the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. This is because Israel intensified the closures and improved the already existing barriers around Gaza. Consequently, the tunnels were expanded and enhanced to be used as a way out of the shortages that people were enduring (Pelham, 2012a). Counter-measuring the tunnels, Israel created a space of one-hundred-meter-wide (Annex E) "(…) between Rafah and the border and reinforced it with a seven meter-high wall" during the unilateral disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip (Pelham, 2012a: 8).

and Israel[40]. Although Egypt tried to expand the cease-fire, each side accused the other of failing to respect what was agreed. Disenfranchised with Israel, Hamas launched 132 rockets into Israel on December 24 and 25 (RAND, 2017: 24). As a consequence, Israel launched the OCL from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009. This Operation was a wide-scale ground, naval, and air offensive that killed over 1400 and injured more than 5000 Palestinians, of which approximately 1600 were children and 860 were women (PCHR, 2009: 6; Amnesty International, 2009: 6). Of those killed, Amnesty claims that hundreds "(…) were unarmed civilians, including some 300 children, more than 115 women and some 85 men over the age of 50" (2009: 6). On the Israeli side, nine soldiers were killed (four by friendly fire) and 113 were wounded (B'Tselem, 2009: 3).

It is also important to highlight that Hamas fired rockets and mortar shells at Israel, resulting in the killing of three Israeli civilians, one soldier and 84 people wounded (B'Tselem, 2009: 3). However, inside the Gaza Strip, violence was devastating and the asymmetry in the numbers was significant as shown before. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) together with the Israeli government put in place a military strategy that was a consequence of the 2006 war with Lebanon named the Dahiya Doctrine. This was created to curb the growth of 'non-state' actors such as Hezbollah and Hamas through the application of disproportionate force and, at the same time, to reinforce Israel's deterrence capacities. According to General Gadi Eisenkot, "what happened in the Dahiya quarter of Beirut in 2006 will happen in every village from which Israel is fired on" and that Israel would apply "disproportionate force on it [the village] and cause great damage and destruction there. From our standpoint, these are not civilian villages, they are military bases" (Khalidi, 2010: 18). This approach is a clear violation of the Geneva Convention.

This strategy applied in Gaza led to the complete destruction of 2114 houses which directly affected 3,314 families (19,592 individuals); 3242 houses partially destroyed; 16000 houses that suffered moderate damage; 20000 homeless; 286 of the 390 economic establishments were either completely or partially destroyed (PCHR, 2009: 7); 15 of Gaza's Strip 27 hospitals were damaged, 43 of 110 Primary Health Care facilities were damaged or destroyed and 29 ambulances were damaged or destroyed (PCHR, 2009: 26). Additionally, large amounts of agricultural land were intentionally destroyed. Before the OCL, this sector employed 40000 Palestinians and provided food for 25% of the population. All of these led to Gaza's Strip economic losses of USD 309,089,188 (PCHR, 2009: 9).

According to Amnesty International, Israel's intensity and scale of the assault during the OCL were unprecedented. In fact, the destruction could not be justified on grounds of military needs, which means that Israel incurred in violation international humanitarian law. Besides the destruction of Gaza's infrastructures, the number of deaths shows that Israel did not comply with the "(…) prohibition on

---

[40] The cease-fire had been achieved in June 2008 after Hamas and Israel agreement in ending the launch of rockets from Gaza to Israel and the launch of Israeli air strikes in Gaza. In addition, Israel agreed to alleviate the siege. However, when Hamas saw that only 70 to 90 supply trucks from the 500 to 600 expected were being allowed to enter Gaza, they restarted the rocket fire (RAND, 2017: 24).

direct attacks on civilians and civilian objects (the principle of distinction), the prohibition on indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, and the prohibition on collective punishment" (Amnesty International, 2009: 1)[41]. Finally, it is important to highlight that throughout the OCL and several weeks before it started, the Israeli government denied entrance into Gaza to journalists, international human rights monitors and humanitarian workers. Additionally, they refused to co-operate or provide access to the UN's Team as well. Operation Cast Lead ended on 18 January 2009 when Israel declared a unilateral cease-fire, which was followed by Hamas on the day after. What was the Egyptian role during this attack? How did the Egyptian civil society react to it?

When Israel attacked the Gaza Strip, in December 2009, Egypt remained silent on the atrocities taking place, and when taking a public position, it was first and foremost to criticize the Hamas government for not having extended the ceasefire as Egypt wanted (Khani, 2013). To sum up, Mubarak positioned himself closer to Israel. However, this position was unsustainable due to the domestic pressure. Thus, while Egypt was closer to Israel than it was with Hamas government, it started to posture some amount of support for the Palestinians and served as mediator once the war was over by trying to extend the unilateral Israel and Hamas ceasefires.

Notwithstanding this, during and after the conflict, Egypt had the possibility to alleviate the plight that Palestinians were living in and chose not to do it through several measures that aggravated the situation. For instance: from January to November 2009, the Rafah crossing was open just 33 out of 301 days (PCHR, 2009); the closure of all Egypt's entrances to the Gaza Strip during the attack was enforced more vehemently; medical aid to Gaza was prohibited; the construction of walls on the border to curb the tunnel phenomenon increased[42]. When the war was over and ships were sent from different countries to help the people of Gaza, Mubarak prevented them from breaking the siege and entering into the Gaza Strip (Khani, 2013). Finally, Egypt tried (and was often successful) to preclude its citizens from protesting in favour of Palestine.

This, however, did not go unnoticed inside Egypt. If on the state, economic and elite level Egyptian-Israel relations were improving a great deal, on the other hand, Egyptian civil society was increasingly distressed with Mubarak's foreign and domestic decisions. Adding to this the brutality and violence against political opponents was increasing like never before. The MB took advantage of this, and through their system of social services (similar to Hamas in the Gaza Strip), expanded their influence among the lower middle classes.

To sum up, the third stage (2006-2011) Egyptian-Israeli relations were consolidated and enhanced to unprecedented levels. Mubarak's government turned Egypt into a strategic partner for Israel by taking the same stance towards the Gaza Strip, the Hamas government and, equally important, by never letting

---

[41] Hamas and other Palestinians armed groups have also been accused of violating the international humanitarian law either by firing rockets to Israel or by the repression inside the Gaza Strip (Amnesty International, 2009).

[42] Mubarak claimed to have incapacitated more or less six hundred tunnels by plugging entrances with solid waste, sand, or explosives, and flooding passages with sewage. Moreover, the Egyptian authorities started to raid the homes, farms and shops of the Egyptians that had businesses throughout the tunnels (Pelham, 2012a).

any domestic or external constraints put into question the peace treaty. Thus, the peace between Egypt and Israel was stable. In the domestic arena, however, Mubarak had been gradually losing its grip. Socio-economically speaking, Egypt was poor and divided. On the final years of Mubarak's rule, the only public demonstrations accepted by the authorities (in favour of Palestine), often ended with calls to end his regime and protests against "(…) the corrupt state elite's privatization of the public sector, resulting in falling wages, rising inflation, and unemployment, compounded by the slashing of public welfare, education, and health subsidies" (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012: 12). There was an increasingly compassion and identification from the Egyptian civil society with the Palestinian subjugation and struggle, with their own desire for freedom. Thus, the pro-Palestinian activism became the embodiment of the "(…) ever-widening divide between the ruler and the ruled" (Elgindy, 2012: 173). The instrumentalization of demonstrations in favour of Palestine to advance domestic opposition helped the Egyptian civil society to overcome their fears by helping them to galvanize the society and to organize themselves. In this way, Palestine's activism became an incubator for the protest movements that led in January 25, 2011, to the Egyptian uprising (Elgindy, 2012: 173; Abou-El-Fadl, 2012: 12).

To conclude, Mubarak's foreign policy towards the Gaza Strip and Israel increased Egypt's strategic partnership with Israel and the US. However, at the same time, Mubarak increasingly lost the ability to control the domestic constraints (Egyptian civil society) as he did in the past, in spite of growing violence against the regime's opponents. Moreover, if in the past Mubarak weighed the pros and cons of keeping increasing relations with Israel, and, sometimes was taken aback with some Israel actions against the Palestinians and other Arab nations, he had now forgotten the pressing and ever present need to balance the different necessities of his constituencies. The failing foreign policy, especially towards the Palestinians and the way Egypt was complicit with the siege of Gaza, plus the economic situation, the lack of liberties, democracy and prospects of a better future, led the civil society to the streets in late January 2011. The Arab Spring in Egypt had begun.

3.2 – A New Egyptian Hope

The title of this subchapter is indicative of the mood that led the Egyptian society to challenge Mubarak's rule and his thirty-year long regime in what has been named the Egyptian 'Arab Spring', These developments were of the utmost importance due to what Mubarak's regime represented in the Middle East for Israel and in the West, especially for the US. However, the importance and recognition that Egypt and Mubarak had in the international stage were not shared by the majority of the Egyptian population and, with Mubarak not addressing Egyptian's domestic and foreign demands a growing sentiment of injustice and frustration eventually led to the 25th January uprising. It is important to highlight that although the revolt was not propelled by Mubarak's foreign policy per se, it did have a big impact on the Egyptian society before and after the goal of having him removed was achieved. Yet, it must be recognized that several authors do see and explain the Egyptian 'Arab Spring' only through the domestic issues and devoid of any analysis of how Mubarak treated the Palestinians. Nevertheless, this

idea is a very narrow explanation of the events and lacks a deeper understanding of the processes happening in Tahrir Square and throughout Egypt.

To start, the reason why it is argued that the Palestinian cause and anti-normalization dynamics had an impact on the outbreak of the revolution is because the youth used former Palestinian networks that were already in place to organize themselves. Once the revolution started, and although the protesters' focus moved to domestic issues, Mubarak's unpopular foreign policy was not alienated from protesters concerns (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012; Elgindy, 2012). Proof of this is that, after the 11th February 2011, when Mubarak resigned and ceded his power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), Palestinian and anti-normalization demonstrations regained momentum.

This momentum is explained because Palestine was the common topic cherished by all spectrums of Egyptian society. This connection with Palestine is also verified by what a leader of the 6 April Youth Movement, Amr Ezz, said: "Palestine was the one issue that would gather us all, that would mobilize the largest demonstrations... We felt unity with our Palestinians siblings as an enslaved people, liberating itself" (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012: 11). Additionally to the cause of Palestine, the 'Camp David Consensus' was also put into question since the debate shifted from anti-normalization to question the peace treaty itself. This clearly shows how important Palestine has been for the Egyptian society.

3.2.1 – Transitional Period and the Freedom and Justice Party Election Victory

The transitional period after Mubarak's resignation until the first democratic elections in Egypt took eighteen months. This period was new for all the system units involved[43] and brought a new set of questions: What would these developments mean to Egyptian-Israeli relations? What could Hamas expect? Would the siege end? As it can be seen, now that the status-quo had been broken, all these questions were pressing issues in need of clarifications, especially because the prospect of free elections and its unknown outcomes were unsettling to some units. Adding to these questions, one of the outcomes of the revolution was the agency that the Egyptian civil society now enjoyed. Subsequently, the political actors were now bound to constraints from civil society that was almost non-existent in the past.

As part of the revolutionary process, the protesters ended the daily occupation strategy and started mass demonstrations every Friday (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012). These demonstrations are the perfect example of how Palestine, Israel and the US were part of the Egyptian 'Arab Spring', since in fact, these Friday demonstrations gathered sometimes millions of Egyptians "(…) abounded in explicitly pro-Palestinian chants and statements, including "To Jerusalem we're going; martyrs in our millions!" (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012: 13). Additionally, flags of other Middle East and North African (MENA) countries were seen, which shows that in spite of Sadat's and Mubarak's attempt in ending the pan-Arabism sentiment, Egyptian society still saw themselves as being part of a common identity and bound to show solidarity

---

[43] Egyptian civil society, political and military Egyptian elites, Israel, Palestinians and the US.

to one another. During the course of the following months, the demonstrations continued every Friday and the domestic and foreign policy issues were intertwined.

The SCAF, which assumed the role of guardian of the revolution, had also to cope with the domestic and external constraints and although the SCAF members were the ones who had the power, the representatives of the revolution nominated Essam Sharaf as the new Egyptian Prime-Minister and Nabil al-Arabi as the new Foreign-Minister. Nabil al-Arabi, started by brokering with Mubarak's policies towards the Gaza Strip and declared that the Gaza's siege was shameful and that the Rafah crossing would be open. He also welcomed a Hamas delegation in March where further discussions on the Rafah border and a possible reconciliation with Fatah happened (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012; Siddiqui, 2016a). However, these initiatives failed to materialize since the SCAF severely hampered the new government's ability to act by taking into their own hands the governance of post-revolution Egypt. To this end, Nabil al-Arabi was pushed aside to the position of Arab League Secretary General in June (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012, 22).

This was only a hint of what was yet to come since, after alienating Nabil al-Arabi and taking the transitional process into their own hands, they chose to maintain the core foreign policies of Mubarak's regime. This understanding is shared by more authors, such as Gamal M. Selim who argued that the SCAF "steer the revolution toward a path that (…) ultimately maintains the fundamental structure of power in Egypt" (2015; 179). In fact, once they took full control of the transition process, SCAF aimed to ensure continuity as much as possible in order to not lose its role and privileges achieved during the Mubarak regime (Awad, 2013). The best way of assuring this was to maintain US support, and for that, the peace treaty with Israel was to be preserved. Thus, they called for closer ties with Israel which eventually happened when the SCAF received Israel permission to deploy Egyptian troops on Zone C of the Sinai Peninsula that, in accordance to the Camp David agreement, was a demilitarized zone (Annex F)[44] (Siddiqui, 2016a: 4). This decision thinking was possible because the "(…) SCAF was well convinced that the uprising was internally driven, and hence it had no difficulty in continuation of Mubarak's era foreign policy" (Siddiqui, 2016a: 5). However, Egyptian civil society rapidly showed otherwise. The Friday demonstrations were still going and now thousands of Egyptians demonstrated their distaste and pressure towards the SCAF in front of the Israel Embassy. Here, one could hear protests chanting "Arm us, arm us, to Gaza, send us!", "The people want the liberation of Palestine!" and "Where is Israel? The Egyptian people are here!"[45] (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012: 16).

---

[44] A result of the Camp David Accords and Israel's withdrawal of the Peninsula, Sinai was divided in four Zones (A, B C and D) to safeguard Israel's security: Zone A is fully controlled by the Egyptian Army; Zone B is controlled by the Egyptian Army but cannot exceed 4000 Egyptian forces; Zone C is controlled by UN forces, more precisely, the Multinational Force and Observers; Zone D is controlled by a small number of Israeli Forces. For more information, please see: https://mfo.org/

[45] Another example of Palestinian support was when the Egyptian civil society created and gathered in new groups with names such as, "The Liberation of Jerusalem Begins with the Liberation of Cairo", "The Preparatory Committee for the Third Palestinian Intifada" and "Association of Supporters of the Palestinian Revolution" (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012:16).

Such demonstrations were received by the SCAF with growing apprehension and increasing violence that added to the lack of developments on the domestic issues led to a shift of the mass demonstrations (again) from the foreign to the domestic level (Abou-El-Fadl, 2012).

As a counter-measure, the SCAF tried to control the legislative and executive powers, to infiltrate in the youth movements as well as the civil society groups, to control the media and to suppress the revolutionary and labour movements (Selim, 2015: 184). This was done through the detaining and sentence by military courts of over 12000 civilian Egyptian citizens[46]. In sum, the SCAF was more than a transitional government or guardian of the revolution; they were counter-revolutionary forces aiming at preserving their own privileges and place in society. Consequently, the months of July, October, November and December 2011 and then in May 2012, saw several protesters being killed by the military government. Almost reaching a breaking point, the edge that drove the state of affairs between the protesters and the SCAF was the MB.

From the beginning of the Arab Spring, the way the MB decided to play their role was uncommon for a group that had been victim of Mubarak's regime. For instance, they did not partake when the revolution began on the 25th of January (they even banned its members from participating). Nevertheless, when they saw that the uprising was thriving and that the police had collapsed, they joined it. Contrary to the other protesters, once Mubarak was ousted, they entered into a deal with the SCAF, since both wanted to avoid the growth of democratic and progressive forces (Selim, 2015). SCAF's and the MB arrangement began to erode when the latter established the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) to participate in the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. By doing this, the MB claimed to have had a bigger and uncompromised role in the revolution than actually they had. Not only this, there was now the perception that either the SCAF either the MB were preparing themselves to gain Egypt's governance.

28th November 2011 marked FJP's first victory. Together with the Al-Nour party (another Islamist party) they won the majority of the seats on the first parliamentary elections after Mubarak's removal. One of the first things that the parliamentary did was to expel Israel's ambassador and to declare that "Revolutionary Egypt will never be a friend, partner, or ally of the Zionist entity, which we consider to be the number one enemy of Egypt and the Arab nation" (Elgindy, 2012: 174). This, however, had no influence on Egypt and Israel relations since the SCAF were the ones who really governed the country. Comfortable with SCAF's posture, Israel handled the post-revolutionary Egypt during the transitional period more comfortable than it would be expected[47], which gave strength to the idea that the SCAF was little more than counter-revolutionary forces.

---

[46] According to HRW in such a small period of time, there were more civilians facing military court under the SCAF than there were during the thirty years that Mubarak ruled Egypt. For more information: https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/10/egypt-retry-or-free-12000-after-unfair-military-trials

[47] For instance: following the invasion of their Embassy in Cairo, Israel preferred to focus on the explanation that led to the killing of the 5 Egyptian soldiers; Israel accepted Egyptian help in liaising with Hamas and reached an agreement for the release of the soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for the release of 1,000 Palestinian prisoners;

Then, between May and June 2012, the first democratic and free presidential elections occurred. Mohamed Morsi from the FJP won and became the first President belonging to an Islamist party ever to be elected in the Arab world. It is important to remember that, while this chapter's goal is not to run through each President's domestic policies, it is not possible to understand the foreign policy if the domestic processes and structures are not considered. Therefore, once Morsi was elected, his first goal was to cement his own party and increase their legitimacy in the eyes of the Egyptians and the international community. In this sense, it may be argued that the restructuring of Egypt's foreign policy was not one of Morsi's main goals.

Looking briefly to the domestic arena, Morsi coming to power overlapped with the turmoil of a country that was going through a revolutionary process. For this reason, Morsi had to secure as much support as possible. In two of his first speeches as President, he firstly addressed the Egyptian civil society by saying that he was President of all the Egyptians, those who elected him and those who did not. Additionally, he reinforced the rights inherent to their Egyptian citizenship and to democracy[48] (Morsi, 2012). On the following day, he addressed the military apparatus and praised their role for maintaining the security of Egypt and also for honouring the retreated to their duties after the transitional period[49] (Morsi, 2012). Finally, in the same speech, Morsi opened up about his foreign policy by confirming that he would comply with all the international treaties (including the peace treaty with Israel) but that he would also stand by the Palestinians: "(…) we affirm our respect for the commitments of the Egyptian state as per international treaties and conventions. I declare here that Egypt, its people and government and the presidential institution stand firmly with the Palestinian people until they regain all their legitimate rights" (Morsi, 2012).

Despite a promising start, Morsi failed to secure the military support and, eventually, also lost support from the Egyptian civil society. The first one, never truly supported Morsi's government but still gave them some space for manoeuvre. However, this changed when, following a massacre of 16 members of Egypt's police near Rafah by 35 assailants in August 2012, Morsi acted against the SCAF and removed the Minister of Defence Muhammad Tantawi and the three heads of the Armed Forces. In addition, the Constitution that the SCAF had announced a couple of months earlier was abandoned. Within the Egyptian civil society, it would be incorrect to pin Morsi's downfall on a single event. It would also be inaccurate to say that this loss of support was something common to the whole Egyptian civil society. Nevertheless, it is factual to say that Morsi's government was not capable of living to its promises. To be more precise, Morsi's government was not capable of turning the economy around

---

a similar deal was also reached between Egypt and Israel where a Israeli-American citizen accused of espionage was released in exchange for twenty-five Egyptians under Israeli detention and, finally, after the Egyptian government cancelled the agreements that made Egypt sell natural gas to Israel, Netanyahu said that this had nothing to do with the peace treaty and was only a business dispute (Agdemir, 2016: 227).

[48] For the full speech: https://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30153

[49] For the full speech: http://www.campusjournal.ug/index.php/politics/africa/527-egyptian-president-full-inaugural-speech

(Siddiqui, 2016b: 6). Moreover, on 22nd of November 2012, Morsi released a new Constitutional Declaration that granted him and his decisions immunity from the judicial system (Lakhal, 2014; Siddiqui, 2016b). These decisions led Morsi to be accused of continuing Mubarak's authoritarianism but with a new face. Likewise, the Egyptian civil society was increasingly drifting apart having to choose between the MB and FJP supporters and the revolutionaries of Tahrir square that, later on, returned to the streets in an "anti-Morsi campaign launched by a group called 'Tamarrod' (rebellion, mutiny) which spearheaded a shrill campaign against the rule of Morsi in the month of June 2013" (Siddiqui, 2016b: 6).

3.2.2 - Foreign Policy towards Israel and Gaza Strip during Morsi's Presidency

Once Morsi was confirmed as the new Egyptian President, Israel and Hamas reacted very differently. The first was worried and anxious of what an Islamic President that belonged to the MB would mean to the Egyptian-Israeli relations, but also to the regional status-quo; the second, was excited with the prospects of having someone that belonged to the same religious and ideological family. Israel's anxiety is understandable if the MB and the FJP discourse before the elections are taken into consideration. For instance, the MB still did not recognize Israel as a state and continued to fight against any type of relation with them. However, with the election victory, Morsi's foreign policy discourse changed and his decisions were highly pragmatic. With this in mind, it is inevitable to ponder questions such as the following ones: Was Morsi capable of changing Egypt's foreign policy towards Hamas and the Gaza Strip? How did Morsi and the MB manage the dichotomy between their religious and ideological beliefs with the necessity of having a foreign policy that did not make them lose external support? How did they liaise with Israel and the legacy left behind by Mubarak?

To answer these questions, it is important to understand that Morsi was aware of the importance that the Palestinian cause had for the Egyptian society and the need to guarantee US support for his regime. Moreover, Morsi was also aware that Mubarak's decision of keeping normalization with Israel led to public resentment and loss of support. For this reason, Morsi's approach was a combination between a populist internal discourse and external pragmatism.

Backtracking to the FJP victory, Morsi started by welcoming in two meetings, Khaled Meshaal (Hamas leader) and Ismail Haniya to discuss economic and political bilateral ties (Shaaban, 2012). This represented a big difference from what Mubarak and the SCAF had done because they never received Hamas to discuss such topics before. Yet, this does not mean that the Morsi government and Hamas saw eye-to-eye. For instance, Hamas' aim was to have the Rafah crossing continuously open both for the entering and exit of civilians and for commercial purposes. Ismail Haniya even proposed the closure of all the tunnels in exchange for the opening of the crossing. Yet, and in spite of how difficult this would be, any chance of happening was hindered by the attack perpetuated in August 2012 by a group of militants with links to the Gaza Strip that broke into an Egyptian base in North Sinai and killed 16 Egyptian soldiers. Morsi's government and Hamas' response to this attack sheds some light on the

differences that existed from the pre-revolution Egypt to the post-revolution. Morsi, with Israel's permission, sent the Egyptian Army to the border with Gaza and ordered the destruction of several tunnels (Shaaban, 2012). While this improved Egyptian-Israeli relations, it was Hamas' reaction that came as a surprise. Following the attack, Hamas ordered the suspension of all the tunnels, arrested 30 members of different radical groups and let three Hamas leaders accused of supporting the militants to be questioned by Egyptian officials (Rigas, 2015: 4).

This episode helps to understand, at least, three things: Morsi was prepared to disregard any kind of religious or ideological affinity with Hamas if his legitimacy was put into question by developments happening or linked to the Gaza Strip; he was ready to adopt a moderate foreign policy towards Israel and even reach security agreements that could benefit them both (this was also a sign for the international community); Hamas understood Morsi's fragile position and for that was willing to grant him time and hold up their requests until his government had achieved the level of legitimacy and support necessary. Hamas' consideration was soon rewarded and Morsi suspended the destruction of the tunnels, ordered the reopen of the Rafah crossing and extended its operating hours, increasing the number of "450 persons entering Egypt daily in 2011–2012" to 1000 (Shaaban, 2012: 2). Moreover, Morsi ended the one side approach that existed during Mubarak's rule in favour of the PA. He worked hard to achieve reconciliation between the two Palestinian governments since he believed that the Palestinian cause could only move forward if these two could achieve an everlasting peace.

Morsi also expected Hamas to help to stabilize Sinai and curb attacks against Egyptian and Israeli personnel due to their historical and common ties, but also due to their knowledge of local tribes and armed factions in exchange for better relations (Shaaban, 2012). In spite of this request, or expectation in a kind of quid pro quo, Hamas was already belligerent towards Islamic-Salafist fundamentalist groups inside Gaza and, to some extent, in Sinai's border with the enclave, mainly for two reasons. The first was the threat that these groups represented to Hamas power inside the enclave and the second was linked to Hamas image to the international community. The second reason is related to the fact that Hamas "(…) sought to promote itself as a credible governing authority, not just a militant group" (Shaaban, 2012: 2).

Besides the August attack, which I consider the second most important event during Morsi's time in power, there was another event that clearly showed the differences between Morsi and Mubarak. This event was the second (out of three) big Israeli operations against the Hamas government, and, therefore, against the Palestinians living inside the besieged Gaza Strip. This operation, which lasted from the 14th until the 21st of November 2012, was named "Operation Pillar of Defence" (OPD) by the IDF. Although there is no agreement on who started to escalate the violence, it is accepted that the trigger for this conflict was the Israeli shelling and killing of Ahmad al-Ja'bari (head of the military branch of Hamas) in the Gaza Strip (B'Tselem, 2013). During the eight days that this operation lasted, "(…) the Israeli military attacked approximately 1,500 targets, including underground rocket launchers, arms-smuggling tunnels and weapons storage facilities" (B'Tselem, 2013: 3), killed 167 Palestinians, including 87

civilians and 32 minors. On the other hand, Hamas launched 1,667 rockets from the Gaza Strip (from which 436 rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome air defence system) resulting in the killing of four Israeli civilians and two members of the security services (B'Tselem, 2013: 3). This operation, contrary to the Operation Cast Lead (OCL), was conducted from the air and no ground invasion happened.

As stated before, the OPD is the most important moment when studying the differences between Mubarak and Morsi's approaches to Israel and Hamas. This is because it showed how Morsi treated Hamas and Israel differently during the crisis. In addition, when comparing OCL to this one, it is important to recall the casualties suffered on the Palestinian side. What can explain such a difference? Evidently OPD lasted only eight days compared to the three weeks of OCL, which should be attributed to Morsi's decision to act quickly and decidedly to broker a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel (contrary to Mubarak, who had blamed Hamas for the eruption of the conflict). One of the first things that Morsi did, even before pro-Palestinian demonstrations erupted in Cairo, was to recall Egypt's ambassador from Israel (Rigas, 2015; Agdemir, 2016). Then, Morsi commenced diplomatic endeavours with Israel and Hamas. Here another difference can be found, because for the first time Hamas was not removed from the negotiations to achieve a ceasefire. In other words, Mubarak's approach of shoving Hamas aside and then presenting them with the final solution reached through bilateral discussions between Egypt and Israel, did not happen. Morsi, instead, called Khaled Meshaal to Cairo to understand Hamas perspective and to discuss "(…) the stance they should adopt while negotiating with the Americans and the Israelis" (Rigas, 2015: 6). These endeavours resulted in the shortest conflict with the less number of Palestinian and Israeli victims. Once the ceasefire was signed, Khaled Meshaal stated that "this time Egypt did not sell us out" (Rigas, 2015: 6).

Nonetheless, these are the highlights of a period that lasted, more or less, twelve months. However, if the focus is shifted to the day-to-day developments, Morsi's foreign policy towards Hamas and the Gaza Strip are not as revolutionary as one would think and did not help Palestinians as they needed. For instance, one of Hamas' goals after the FJP being elected was the opening of Rafah crossing without restrictions; yet, this never happened. Morsi did improve Egyptian relations and some gestures towards Hamas but the structural changes expected did not materialize. Instead, he chose to pursue a foreign policy that could consolidate international support for his presidency. This included an increase in security relations with Israel on the Sinai Peninsula and the conservation of several economic agreements that existed prior to the Revolution. It is a fact though that he did not pursue Mubarak's normalization, and even brought back some of the coldness that existed during Mubarak's first stage; yet, the pragmatism that Morsi demonstrated in abandoning the former rhetoric against Israel showed his accommodation and convergence through security arrangements.

To conclude, did Morsi fulfil Hamas and Palestinians' expectations? In regards to the intervention during the Operation Pillar of Defence, he exceeded them. In regards to the opening of the Rafah crossing, which would alleviate Gaza's dreadful situation, the answer is no. In the end, Morsi's relation with Hamas is very well summarized as follows: "unlike the men that preceded and succeeded him, he

made life for Hamas harder only when this made his life at home easier" (Rigas, 2015, apud Danahar 2013, p. 176). Most of all, Morsi's decisions were constrained and linked to his survival concerns. Ultimately, it is not easy to analyse Morsi's foreign policy because, one year after being democratically elected, on the 3rd of July 2013, Morsi was removed from power and sent to jail in a military coup perpetuated by Egyptian Defence Minister and Chief Army Commander, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

3.3 – Going-Back: the return of the Military Apparatus

Adly Mansour, the head of the Constitutional Court, was given the position of interim president whereas Sisi was named as deputy prime minister (while retaining the control over the Army and the Defence Minister) until being elected president on June 8, 2014 (Siddiqui, 2016a: 9). Additionally to the appointment of Mansour, Sisi suspended the Constitution and dissolved the parliament. The Egyptian revolution process ended with the Egyptian military apparatus again in power and with a "(…) reintroduction of Mubarakism in the realm of foreign policy" (Siddiqui, 2016a: 2).

After Morsi's ouster and with violent on-going clashes between the army and Morsi's supporters[50], plus Sinai's instability spilling over to the Egyptian metropolises, the Egyptian civil society priorities shifted from democracy to security demands (Siddiqui, 2016b). To increase this sentiment, Sisi fostered the idea of 'us' versus the 'other', being the MB and political Islam, and curbed on the few achievements that the Egyptian 'Arab Spring' had accomplished in favour of law, order and stability (Siddiqui, 2016b: 8). The new military regime named the MB the enemy of the 2011 Revolution, and later, on 23 September 2013, designated them as a terrorist organization[51] (Watanabe, 2014). Sisi also saw Hamas as a terrorist organization and an enemy not only to Egypt's security but also to the stability of the Arab world (Monier and Ranko, 2013: 112).

Thus, Sisi capitalized on what he perceived as the struggle against political Islam, to be more precise, in the fight against the MB and Hamas, both inside and outside of Egypt to gather support for his regime and his foreign policy[52]. Internally, Sisi used the pressing need to improve Egypt's economic and security situation as an excuse to not pursue democratic advances. The opposition groups and protesters were repressed and the few dissented voices that resisted were met with violence, imprisonment or worse. Altogether, Sisi was capable of transcending the revolutionaries of January 2011 and June 2013 to create a society submissive to the state narrative.

3.3.1 – Al-Sisi Coup: Growing Relations with Israel and Gaza Strip's Alienation

Once elected, Sisi quickly promoted closer ties with Israel based on his three main foreign and regional policies: Islamic ideology; geostrategic concerns; and economic developments (Siddiqui, 2016a: 10).

---

[50] Resulting in, at least, 600 hundred protesters killed and 4000 injured (Siddiqui, 2016b, apud Ali 2013).
[51] In March and April 2014, more than 1000 Morsi supporters were sentenced to death (Watanabe, 2014: 4).
[52] Saudi Arabia and the UAE, for instance, showed their support by injecting between 25 and 41.5 billion dollars during Sisi's first year in power (Piazza, 2019: 405)

Netanyahu's government first replied by backing Morsi's ouster and drumming up diplomatic support for the new regime (Siddiqui, 2016a).

These three factors are all interconnected. In addition, Netanyahu's government shared the same geostrategic and economic concerns besides perceiving political Islam also as a threat that needed to be addressed, especially in Sinai and in Gaza. This helps to explain both countries rapprochement at such a prompt and alarming pace. Examples of this are, for instance, the first visit in a decade of the Egyptian Foreign-Minister, Sameh Shoukry to Israel. This meeting, which was the first to take place in Jerusalem rather than Tel Aviv, discussed Israel's and Egypt's common ties in the fight against terrorism and the sharing of intelligence not only on their border but especially on the Egyptian-Palestinian border (Siddiqui, 2016a). Siddiqui also highlights the presence of Sameh Shoukry in the Jerusalem 2016 Euro finals with his Israeli counterpart as being interpreted in Israel as the recognition of the "(…) Jewishness of Jerusalem at the cost of Al-Quds" (2016a:13). This demonstrates how the growing relations since Sisi came to power specifically aimed to withdraw importance from the Palestinian cause and, to some extent, boost the Israel narrative over the Palestinian one. There are other instances that show that the normalization efforts were being carried out by both sides, such as when Sisi organized a summit in Sharm el-Sheikh with the main goal of attracting foreign investment, but specifically declared that Israel together with Turkey, Iran and Syria were unwelcome. While Israel media protested against this decision, the Israeli leaders showed understanding, as they knew that this decision was diplomatic and motivated by financial constraints rather than by animosity or disrespect (Zecchinelli, 2015). In addition, this proximity was consolidated by common steps such as the opening of Israel's embassy in Cairo in September 2015; Egypt voted in favour of Israel joining the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space Affairs in November 2015 for the first time in history; and in 2016 a new Egyptian ambassador was sent to Israel after three years of vacancy (Agdemir, 2016).

In spite of these events and Sisi rapprochement to Israeli leaders, he did not relinquish Egypt's role as mediator between Israel and Palestine. In fact, he returned to Mubarak's same approach of alienating Hamas and dealing only with the PA when it suited. Another centripetal topic between Sisi and Netanyahu was the Sinai Peninsula instability. Likewise, it is very important to bear in mind what Cherif Bassiouni said: "(…) What happens in Egypt's Sinai will be affected by what happens in Gaza, and what happens in Gaza will be affected by what Egypt does in Sinai" (2014: 14).

Following the 1979 peace treaty, Sinai became a buffer zone between Egypt and Israel. Moreover, during the majority of Mubarak's three decade rule, Sinai was completely set aside from the government's concerns. Consequently, a difficult relationship between the Sinai population[53] and the central Egyptian administration grew (Herman, 2016: 95). Worsening the situation, Mubarak's policies of mistreatment, lack of economic investment and political alienation towards the indigenous population, were accompanied by strong investments to develop the Sinai's South tourism (Herman,

---

[53] Demographically, 70 percent of the Sinai population is Bedouin and is divided in between 15 to 20 tribes. The majority of this population share family and historical ties with the Gaza Strip population (Herman, 2016).

2016: 97). Ultimately, the imposed alienation together with the harsh security measures that Mubarak imposed in Sinai, the coming of Salafi migrants from the Arabian Peninsula as well as more fundamentalist Egyptians running from Mubarak's regime, created a favourable environment to the growth of radical and jihadi sentiment among the Bedouins.

This sentiment and environment eventually led to the first terrorist attacks where a "(…) total of 130 people were killed in car bombings between 2004 and 2006 on Sinai's Red Sea" (Pelham, 2012b: 4). In response to the attack, Egyptian authorities arrested over 3000 suspects, and applied the same punishments to jihadi activists and innocent Bedouins. This decision led to the merger of the Islamic militancy with Bedouin opposition to the central government (Pelham, 2012b; Herman, 2016). In other words, the top-down measures applied helped both groups that were disenfranchised by Mubarak's government, to get closer to each other.

When Mubarak recalled the police from Sinai to Cairo (and other cities) to control the uprising, Bedouins and Salafi-Jihadi groups enjoyed freedom that they did not experienced for decades. Hamas capitalized on this by increasing and projecting their soft power in Sinai due to the importance that the informal trade through the tunnels had to the Bedouins tribes. Arguably for this reason, Hamas was accused several times of providing a safe house to Jihadis' and Bedouins; however by considering that Hamas first interest was to maintain order and their hegemonic authority inside the enclave, this should not be taken as a common policy from the Hamas government.

This, however, does not mean that there were no incidents or terrorist attacks perpetrated by Bedouins or jihadists from the Gaza Strip in Sinai (or vice versa). Since this topic will be comprehensively developed later, only Sinai's own Salafi-Jihadi groups are worth to mention in this section. They are: the Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, Tawhid wal-Jihad and Takfr wal-Hijra. The first one, for example, pledged allegiance in November 2014 to the Islamic State and, after being accepted to be part of the 'Caliphate', changed name to Wilayat Sinai (the State of Sinai). The group's target is the Egyptian state, its infrastructures and their revenue sources. Additionally, they do target Israel but, paradoxically, they have never revealed a significant interest in the Palestinian cause (Herman, 2016). On the contrary, the second group (Tawhid wal-Jihad) aims at supporting the Palestinian cause and do it through the only way they consider possible (armed resistance).

To sum up, these Salafi-jihadi groups are a disruptive force to the Egyptian governments, to Israel, and to some extent, Hamas. In fact, they did often go against Hamas because they did not recognize their legitimacy, either because they were expelled from Gaza to Sinai or because they are against Islamist groups' participation in politics. Another important fact is that, during Morsi's time in office, and even though he took some measures to curb the growing violence, these and other jihadi groups started to increase their attacks against Israel (Herman, 2016). When Sisi ousted Morsi from the Presidency, and designated the MB as a terrorist organization, these groups turned their focus from Israel to Egypt. Sisi instrumentalized the threat that these groups represented to amend Morsi's approach towards Israel from cold peace to growing and warmer relations. Netanyahu not only recognized this change but by sharing

Sisi's perception of the threat that these groups represented due to their capabilities of infiltrating into the Gaza Strip and Israel, he allowed Egypt to deploy more troops in Sinai. These deployments showed how Israel changed from seeing the Egyptian military as a threat to see them as an asset in the fight against Jihadist and Bedouins groups' disruption.

Additionally, the fact that Sisi was also against the Hamas government helped to gain Israel's support and cooperation. To be more precise, Sisi took measures against Hamas that had never been taken by former Egyptian Presidents and, with that, immeasurably increased Gazans' hardships. For instance, Sisi decided to start the implementation of a 5 kilometres buffer-zone between the Sinai and Gaza that the Israeli leaders had asked for more than 15 years (Zecchinelli, 2015). This was done with the goal of suffocating the enclave to the point that Hamas would be overthrown, which would directly improve their ties to Israel and (they argued) increase security throughout this region. This decision resulted in two major consequences: the first towards thousands of inhabitants of the bordering cities with the Gaza Strip, especially Rafah, that were not only evicted from their lands on a day notice but have also seen their homes being destroyed. This was accompanied with military operations in north Sinai that, according to HRW, caused several kinds of human right violations[54]. The second consequence was the increased brutality of the siege of the Gaza Strip. One of the more problematic dimensions of this was the damage done to the tunnels industry. In a nutshell, Sisi pursued the destruction of Hamas for their ideological links with the MB, and for this reason, did everything possible to destroy them, even at the expense of the Palestinian population. Otherwise, measures such as the cut in the numbers of Palestinians permitted to enter Egypt or the destruction of tunnels during and after the construction of the buffer-zone would not have happened. Besides the ideological links with the MB and the soft power that Hamas had in the Bedouins population, Sisi feared that they could "(…) arouse undesirable unrest in the Egyptian street by fanning the flames of the conflict with Israel" (Winter, 2015: 15). When this conflict materialized, between 8th of July and 26th of August 2014, Sisi stood beside Israel against Hamas.

3.3.2 – Operation Protective Edge

There is little consensus regarding the lead-up to this conflict[55]. Despite this, it is important to highlight the main event that anticipated the third and biggest military assault in a period of less than six years: Gaza was under Israeli and Egyptian siege for seven years straight. However, this fact was non-existent in the mainstream media. In fact, the discourse perpetuated was that Hamas was launching rockets indiscriminately towards Israeli cities and killing Israeli teenagers in the occupied West Bank. It was

---

[54] Ever since Sisi rose to power "(…) 1347 people suffered a coldblooded murder without any evidence of their involvement in the act of terror, 11906 people were arrested unwarrantedly, 2883 people were taken under pre-emptive arrest, 1883 huts of Bedouins were set on fire, 1967 motor vehicles set on fire, 2577 houses were demolished, 26000 people were forced to flee the houses" (Siddiqui, 2016b: 11).

[55] There are authors which argue that Hamas launching indiscriminate rocket attacks to Israeli territory was the trigger. There are others who defend that the trigger was the kidnapping and killing of three Israeli youngsters by three Palestinians supposedly affiliated to Hamas in the West Bank (Shkolnik, 2017; Joronen, 2016; RAND, 2017).

also practically omitted the killing of a 15-year-old Palestinian boy that was burned to death in the occupied East Jerusalem. These events are of the utmost importance because this military operation perpetuated by Israel needs to be put into context and not only be perceived or explained as Israel's retaliation for a certain event that took place, detaching all the situations that are lived inside the Gaza Strip. In other words, nothing that is done by Hamas happens in a void, but rather in a structure where Hamas is not alone. In fact, part of this structure is constituted by Israel, Egypt, the PA and their respective political actors. The processes are an outcome of all these system units behave, not only from Hamas. So, if the political decisions do not change on the structural level, Hamas will most likely not be able to change for the sake of not losing legitimacy and power.

In addition to the above, another aspect that should be taken into consideration was Netanyahu's efforts to hinder the Hamas and PA rapprochement. Notwithstanding his desire, Hamas and the PA did reach a deal to form a unity government in 2014. However, the deal quickly ended. According to Max Blumenthal (2014), the Operation Brother's Keeper, initiated on the 17th of June, was the first step to end Hamas and PA's unity government. This operation, claimed the IDF, was meant to target "(…) the organization it held collectively responsible" (Blumenthal, 2014: 16) for the killing of the three young Israelis. During the course of this operation, which counted with PA cooperation, the IDF sent thousands of troops to the occupied West Bank where they raided towns, rounded and arrested hundreds of Hamas members without charges. Despite this, Hamas did not launch rockets from the Gaza Strip hoping to uphold the unity government. Pressuring Hamas even more, Sisi's buffer-zone and destruction of hundreds of tunnels, weakened and isolated Hamas to the point that they were not able to "(…) pay the $25 million needed each month for the salaries of its approximately 63,000 employees" (Chorev and Shumacher, 2014: 12). Yet, when Netanyahu, on the 29th of June, authorized airstrikes on the Gaza Strip that killed eight Hamas militants, they retaliated and launched rockets towards Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (Blumenthal, 2014). Consequently, not only did the unity government collapse, but Operation Protective Edge was initiated on the 8th of July 2014.

During the fifty days that this military operation took place, 2251 Palestinians (including 1462 civilians) were killed; of the Palestinian fatalities, 551 were children and 299 women; 11,231 Palestinians were injured including 3,436 children and 3,540 women, 10 percent of whom suffer permanent disability; more than 1,500 Palestinian children were orphaned; 18,000 housing units were destroyed in whole or part; 28 percent of Gaza's population at certain point was considered an internally displaced people (IDP). On the Israeli side, six civilians and 67 soldiers were killed; 1,600 Israelis were injured, including 270 children; Israeli civilian property damage amounted to almost $25 million. These data retrieved from the "Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict" provided by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) shows clearly the asymmetry that existed in this attack. In addition to this, is also relevant to know that this operation has left approximately 108,000 Palestinians homeless, it is estimated to have caused damage worth four or five times the of $1.6 billion that Operation Cast Lead cost (Filiu, 2014: 58), and "A total of 277 United

Nations (UN) and government schools, 17 hospitals and clinics, and all 6 of Gaza's universities were damaged, as were over 40,000 other buildings" (Khalidi, 2014: 6) including the only power plant in Gaza (consequently closing down water and sewage treatment), one-third of Gaza Strip mosques and 360 factories (Joronen, 2016).

Israel's military operation ended on 26th of August when, mediated by the US and EU, a truce was finally reached. Neither Israel nor Hamas achieved their goals once the military operation ended. Israel wanted to end Hamas continued defiance and create a kind of Ramallah-based government, but in the Gaza Strip. Hamas wanted to end the Israeli and Egyptian siege. Nonetheless, under the terms of the ceasefire, Israel alleviated the pressure on the crossing-points into the Gaza Strip at Erez and Karni and restored the six-nautical-mile fishing zone (Filiu, 2014: 58). Hamas relinquished the control of the crossing points to Israel and Egypt back to the PA. They also asked for the reconstruction of the Gaza airport, the release of prisoners and an operational port but all were declined (Filiu, 2014).

It is important to understand that in spite of Israeli concessions, Gaza continued under siege and its inhabitants were now facing an even more difficult situation. How can this asymmetry in the number of deaths and infrastructures destroyed be explained? To reach a conclusion, it is important to remember the Dahiya doctrine[56]. It is legitimate, however, to wonder if these words were only to deter Hamas from attacking Israel. Yet, what happened on the ground clearly shows that this plan indeed occurred with complete disregard for the civilians'. For instance, Israel air force launched 6,000 airstrikes in Gaza, many of which hit residential structures and Israel's military fired 14,500 tank shells and around 35,000 artillery shells (OCHA, 2015). During the airstrikes, bombs that created "(…) a crater 15 meters wide by 11 meters deep and propelled lethal fragments to a radius of 365 meters" or projectiles fired from tanks that have a 50-meters radius kill zone were used (Khalidi, 2014: 5). Additionally, starting from the 19th-20th July, Israel fired over seven thousand shells into a single district of Gaza City[57]. This, evidently, caused tremendously heavy civilian deaths and massive, indiscriminate damage to Gaza Strip's already dire infrastructure. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that, under siege, Palestinian civilians living in this enclave were trapped with little to none recourses to escape. Then, besides General Eisenkot's words, and by looking into what the IDF did inside Gaza, it is fairly easy to reach the conclusion that the destruction was premeditated.

This does not mean that Hamas was immune to the possibility of having committed war crimes like Israel. For instance, Hamas and other Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip launched 4881 rockets and 1753 mortars towards Israel. However, Israel's Iron Dome counter-missile defence system was capable of intercepting more than "(…) 90 percent of incoming Hamas rockets and prevented them from being a significant factor in the operation" (Chorev and Shumacher, 2014: 20). The fact that the majority were

---

[56] As seen before, in Israeli General Gadi Eisenkot's words, Israel applies "disproportionate force (…) and causes great damage and destruction (…). This is a plan. And it has already been approved" (Khalidi, 2010; 18).

[57] To have an understanding of the violence and disproportionality of this single attack, the seven thousand shells fired correspond to eleven bombs per minute (Khalidi, 2014)

intercepted does not excuse the indiscriminate launch of rockets. Yet, it is important to establish the disproportionality and asymmetry in the numbers but also the military capabilities in play. To be more precise, although Hamas rockets were deadly, they did not have the size or "(…) lethality of even one of the forty-nine thousand tank and artillery shells fired by Israel" (Khalidi, 2014: 8). Israel instrumentalized Hamas's rockets to justify the atrocities perpetrated inside Gaza.

In addition to this, Israel has also justified their actions by saying that the deaths of civilians were "collateral damage" and that they did everything possible to avoid high casualties. However, and once again, the numbers are a demonstration of how disproportionate these attacks were irrespective of any possible Hamas provocation. Moreover, Israel argued that the military operation was ethical and according to law, also because before launching airstrikes they used preventive warning techniques[58]. One of the most used was the 'roof knocking' in which the IDF warned Gaza inhabitants of "(…) forthcoming shelling through the dropping of light explosives or shooting of warning missiles onto the rooftops of the targeted buildings (…)" (Joronen, 2016: 337). With this, Israel's argument was that, since Palestinian civilians had been earlier warned, it was their choice to stay on the areas where airstrikes would take place. If people died, it was their own responsibility because they chose not to get out of the way. In practical terms, Israel government was framing and justifying the high number of causalities by shifting the responsibility of the death, to the victim. Thus, "(…) Gaza population are hence not considered as passive victims, merely subjected to the killing power of calculative thanatopolitics[59], but as an inversion of biopolitical subjects who, instead of improving their own individual capabilities, are made accountable for their own deaths" (Joronen, 2016: 336). This theoretical perspective is of great value because, if one understands Israel's approach to Gaza Strip with this in mind, it becomes clear how unethical Israel's decisions were and how they were able to find justification to the killing of so many innocent civilians and the destruction inflicted on a besieged territory, by moving the accountability for death from the IDF and their own decisions to the innocent civilians in the targeted areas.

Finally, Israel has also tried to vilify, dehumanize and portray Palestinians and Hamas as irrational actors that posed an existential threat. This discourse was perpetuated by the Israeli government and unquestioned by the mainstream media which helped to legitimize the Dahiya doctrine and the atrocities committed. This was done in spite of human rights organizations, such as the HRW, having classified this doctrine used by Israel as a "serious violation of international law", "indiscriminate, disproportionate, and otherwise unjustified" (Buttu, 2014, apud HRW 2007, p. 13). Nevertheless, Israel's third strategy consisted precisely on transforming Gaza's Strip population into "(…) enemies—faceless, nameless, irrational beings whose deaths were celebrated by their own or who were deliberately killed to harm Israel's image" (Buttu, 2014: 92). This strategy, that by design left out the imposed siege,

---

[58] Preventive warning techniques include cautionary phone calls, text messages and air-dropped flyers.
[59] Thanatopolitics deals with the management and ethical explanation of violence and killing, or, in other words the 'politics of death' (Joronen, 2016: 340; Murray, 2018; 1)

commenced by, initially, singling out Hamas as an irrational actor who initiated the attacks without any reason plus the repeated discourse that compared Hamas to Islamic fundamentalist groups (Buttu, 2014: 93). Paradoxically, this assessment is incorrect because if we compare Hamas with Daesh or Al-Qaeda, Hamas has never perpetuated an attack outside historic Palestine (nor do they defend that), which on the other hand Daesh did and encouraged, and they have also been condemned by Al-Qaeda numerous times. Moreover, both Daesh and Al-Qaeda are in itself transnational jihadi organisations and Hamas is a national Islamic party or organization that fights for self-determination. However, and in spite of being incorrect, these comparisons and the framing of hostilities within the 'war on terror' discourse gave Israel the moral consent from the West to act with such violence[60].

To sum up, this operation pushed an already dire situation to new levels. And, with Sisi's coming to power, the situation has only worsened the Gaza Strip crisis. In this sense, who occupies the Egyptian Presidency is in the position of commencing a virtuous dynamic that could help the Palestinians in Gaza, or, on the other hand, can continue the vicious cycle of deteriorating the situation. And while, with Sisi as President, the situation for Hamas and the Palestinians tremendously worsened, with Israel, Sisi foreign policy and relationship reached the level of rapprochement.

3.4 – From Cold War to Shared Goals: How Egyptian and Israel Relations Changed

Egyptian-Israeli relations from 1981 to 2017 changed; more precisely, from a state of cold war to one of shared goals. These changes, however, must be understood through the perspective of a continuum in the sense that they did not improve as time passed by, rather they continuously went from times of friction to times of harmony, from times of disagreement to times of agreement, and from times of non-cooperation to times of cooperation. In other words, their relationship should be seen as a pendulum which goes from one side to the other. With this in mind, Egyptian-Israeli continuum has on one side the years from 1981 until 2006, and on the other, from 2006 until 2017.

Is this sufficient to understand the two major trends in their relations? Indeed, there are two major trends yet, inside these two trends there is also a pendulum creating centripetal and centrifugal dynamics. From 1981 to 2006, when these countries had a colder relationship, there were events that drove them closer. Such cases were, for instance, the closer economic ties and Mubarak's role as mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab relations from the Oslo Accords onwards. On the other hand, this period also had events which increased the coldness between them.

On the same token, from 2006 to 2017, there were also ups and downs in their relations. The biggest downfall was the FJP democratically victory. However, in this period, and besides the one-year hiatus with Morsi, there was a general trend of closer relations to the point when, with Sisi in power, the rapprochement finally materialized. I must reckon that this might be questioned, since among other

---

[60] Netanyahu's interview to the CNN where he claimed that "(…) Palestinians enjoyed a "culture of martyrdom" and hence did not care whether civilians were killed, provided that they had the effect of harming Israel's image" (Buttu, 2014: 94) is another example how Palestinians tend to be framed.

things, rapprochement entails a change on the societal level from a culture of war or animosity to a culture of peaceful coexistence. Has this happened within the Egyptian society? We can clearly say that during Mubarak's, SCAF's and Morsi's time in power, Egyptian civil society was not only against normalization but in times of tension, also against the peace treaty. Yet, if we consider the Egyptian society after Sisi's coup, it is logical to problematize how alienated the Egyptian society was from the Palestinian cause. In fact, public demonstrations in favour of Palestine and against Israel are no longer a reality. Of course this is mainly due to the military authoritarian regime that Sisi has implemented. However, Mubarak was also a dictator and the Egyptian society had enough power to constrain his foreign policy to a certain degree. At least, publicly, Mubarak's regime was reticent in embracing Israel. The only outlier that defied this perspective happened during the Operation Protective Edge when the MB, called for Arab military support for Hamas and some political parties issued a joint statement condemning Israel and asked Sisi to reopen Rafah[61]. On the other hand, on the state and elite levels, Sisi has ticked all the boxes in what rapprochement entails. It is, therefore, my conclusion that the Egyptian-Israeli relations have changed from cold peace to rapprochement.

To conclude, when comparing these three Presidents and how they approached the military operations that Israel perpetuated against the Gaza Strip, it is possible to see that Mubarak and Sisi were much more closer to Israel than Morsi could ever be. This is verified by looking into the number of deaths and the duration of each operation. With Morsi, Israel's Pillar of Defence was the shortest and where less Palestinians died. To conclude, if Morsi did not pursue to undermine Hamas, Mubarak and Sisi did it hand in hand with Israel.

---

[61] For more information: http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/106117/Egypt/Politics-/Political-parties-urge-Egypts-ElSisi-to-open-Rafah.aspx

IV – Gaza Strip: Increasingly Uninhabitable and Forgotten

4.1 – On-going Military Occupation

"If there is no occupation power, then why is there a siege on Gaza?"[62]

The above question reflects an on-going debate between Israel and pro-Israelis versus the Palestinian, pro-Palestinian and non-governmental organizations such as HRW, Amnesty International or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)[63]. The main difference between the two sides is that, on the one hand, there is the claim that Gaza stopped to be an occupied territory in 2005, when Israel, through their unilateral disengagement plan, left the enclave and forced every settler and military personnel to exit Gaza. On the other hand, and although it is a fact that there is no continuous Israeli presence inside the Gaza Strip anymore, they still have full control of the territory's waters, airspace and borders (being Rafah the only exception). Consequently, while there is no longer an Israeli military presence or government, Israel is still enforcing their own measures and decisions upon the Palestinians by means of border controls. This debate is of the utmost importance because it helps to understand the de-development of the Gaza Strip and to assess accountability between Israel and Hamas. For this reason, this chapter is focussed on two main issues with the aim of refocusing the debate back to the Gaza Strip and how the events explained during this dissertation impacted it until 2017. To start, it is important to ponder these questions: Is Gaza still occupied or not? How has Hamas been governing the enclave? If the first is more straightforward and has been clarified by resorting to NGO and UN data, the second question is more difficult because it is an on-going exercise of detaching ourselves from the good versus evil dichotomies, in order to be able to reach a conclusion based on the reality on the ground and not on a western perception and designation of what should be considered good and acceptable.

Starting with the first question, for authors such as Avi Bell and Dov Shefi the answer is negative. According to them, the decision of withdrawing from Gaza the settlers and military administration plus the abandonment of the 'Philadelphi Corridor' from the 12nd of September 2005 onwards ended the Israeli occupation. Bell and Shefi (2010) underpin their overall argument with the interpretation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Fourth Hague Convention laws. They claim that "occupations begin with the consolidation of 'effective control' by the occupier and end when occupying forces no longer maintain 'effective control' over the territory" (Bell and Shefi, 2010, apud Benvenisti 1993, p. 4). Likewise, the laws of occupation entail the following four points: "(…) if a local government is able to exercise its authority independent of the putative occupier, there is no state of occupation"; "(…) the territorial scope of occupied territory is determined by the areas under actual control of occupying forces,

---

[62] Question made by Raji Sourani (a human rights lawyer for the PCHR in Gaza) in an interview for the Washington Post. Full interview accessible on the following link: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/07/02/does-israel-actually-occupy-the-gaza-strip/

[63] The UN also considers Gaza to be occupied by Israel as per previously explained in section 2.2.4 of this dissertation.

and not by the territorial boundaries of the state whose territory is occupied"; "(…) the touchstone of occupation is 'effective control' by occupying forces" and "(…) an occupation ends when an occupying state exits the territory (…) meaning that it no longer exercises the functions of government in place of the local state or where there is an alternative independent local civil government" (Bell and Shefi, 2010: 272-273). If one applies these laws of occupation to the Gaza Strip, the authors argue that Israel is no longer the occupier because it has no troops, police or military government in Gaza, it is not able to appoint or dismiss governing officials, it does not administer public services (such as the health or judiciary system) and it does not impose taxes (Bell and Shefi, 2010). Tamar Meisels also claims that Israel is no longer occupying the Gaza Strip. Yet, while the argument is similar to the previous, namely the use of the Hague Regulations, she does not seem to be as certain as Bell and Shefi are. To be more precise, she considered the argument that downplays the lack of physical presence on the ground, and weighs in the fact that Israel is still capable of influencing to a great extent Gaza's daily life because Israel continues to control many of Gaza's surroundings by air, land and sea (Meisels, 2011: 97).

Notwithstanding Meisels' concession when compared with Bell and Shefi, she downgrades Israel's siege of the Gaza Strip, calling it instead economic sanctions. In fact, Meisels argument is that Israel's economic sanctions are not inflicting an humanitarian crisis because "(…) civilians are not starving, malnourished, or lacking in basic clothing, footwear and the like" (2011: 98). Additionally, this author claims that as long as Israel does not starve the civilian population or destructs vital civilian infrastructure, there is no violation of international law if Israel keeps Gaza under siege, blockade or under economic sanctions (Meisels, 2011: 98). Paradoxically, the author accepts that even though Israel's restrictions directed to Gaza were justified when Hamas won the elections in order to halt a terrorist organization, Israel should have stopped them once they showed to be ineffective in the pursuit of this goal and caused unnecessary and excessive harm to the civilian population (Meisels, 2011: 94). Moreover, the author's argument that Israel is not violating international law because it is not targeting civilian infrastructure is ultimately, and even if unaware, recognizing Israel's war crimes. By recalling the destruction caused during the three Israeli military incursions into Gaza, her argument is easily dismissed.

Focusing again in the occupation debate, HRW and ICRC have tried to deconstruct the reasons that help to perpetuate the idea that Gaza is no longer under Israeli occupation. For instance, HRW recognizes that the unilateral disengagement changed the status-quo inside Gaza. Yet, the control of movement into and out of the enclave, of Gaza's territorial waters and airspace (not letting Palestinians operate an airport or seaport)[64] makes the Palestinians dependent on Israel's borders (or the Egyptian one) to travel abroad (HRW, 2017: 37). Adding to this, Israel controls the Palestinian population registry, the taxes that collect on behalf of the PA and the 'no-go' zones inside Gaza that constitute "(…)17 percent of the territory of

---

[64] In 2000 and 2001, Israel bombed first the construction of what would have been Gaza's only commercial seaport and, second, Yasser Arafat International Airport. This destroyed Palestine's gateway to the international community (Alimahomed-Wilson and Potiker, 2017).

Gaza and a third of its arable land, as well as significant parts of Gaza's infrastructure" (HRW, 2017, apud Gisha 2011). These facts are used by HRW to justify Gaza's current occupation status and also Israel's obligations toward the Palestinians under the law of occupation[65]. HRW does concede that for security reasons Israel can restrict the freedom of movement yet, any kind of restrictions must be proportional and they cannot "(…) impair the essence of the right; the relation between right and restriction, between norm and exception, must not be reversed" (HRW, 2017: 40). As the Israeli (and Egyptian) siege of Gaza has condemned almost 2.2 million Palestinians living in this enclave to be unable to leave, it shows how Israel's restrictions are not proportional and do impair the right of freedom. The existence of the siege makes the task of governing the Gaza Strip almost impossible, consequently damaging the proper function of civil society.

ICRCs' perspective is similar to HRW but, theoretically speaking, they have introduced a new concept named "functional approach" (2015: 38). This approach is used in situations where it is difficult to point out clearly if a territory is still under occupation or not since ICRC considers that "(…) despite the lack of the physical presence of foreign forces in the territory concerned, the retained authority may amount to effective control for the purposes of the law of occupation and entail the continued application of the relevant provisions of this body of norms'" (2015: 12). In other words, this means that more than physical presence on the ground, one should consider how the occupier is capable of exerting his power to keep imposing his will into the occupied territory and people.

To sum up, although the unilateral disengagement plan led to the exit from Gaza, Israel should still be considered as the occupier. This is not to say that Israel should bear all the responsibility for the well-being of its inhabitants, since Hamas is still the governing force inside the enclave; however, Israel's power and ability to hinder or help Gaza is still relevant. Another Israeli human rights organization, Gisha, also reinforces the humanitarian obligation that Israel has with the Gaza inhabitants. To be more precise, Gisha gives several examples of how Israel still controls the lives of Gaza's residents and is able to implement his own will. For instance, to this day, Israel prevents the rebuilding of an airport and seaport; determines throughout the 'Gaza Reconstruction Mechanisms' (GRM)[66] which development projects can be implemented; decides who can pray in Palestinians holy sites; controls Gaza's formal economy by deciding what products can be produced and sold outside of the enclave; controls what products can enter into Gaza Strip from the Israeli side; controls the decision of who can or cannot leave Gaza; restricts the fishing zone and controls the postal services, since before reaching Gaza, they first go to Israel (Gisha, 2017).

---

[65] These obligations entail the right of freedom of movement between Gaza, the West Bank and outside Palestine, the right to education and to work, plus the duty to facilitate the appropriate functioning of Gaza's civil society.

[66] The GRM was agreed by Israel and the PA under the auspices of the UN supervision after the destruction that the Operation Protective Edge caused. Therefore, under the GRM, Israel can monitor how construction materials entering Gaza are being used and stored by Gaza contractors and, most importantly, gives Israel the right to approve or decline the products entering the Gaza Strip.

4.2 – Hamas Governance in the Gaza Strip

Taking into consideration the above and the siege that, together with Egypt, Israel has imposed on the Gaza Strip and its inhabitants, it is inevitable to question how Hamas has been governing the enclave. Or in other words, have they been governing Gaza through democratic means? How do they organize Gaza's society, its inhabitants and the distribution of public services? Are there more constraints besides the ones imposed from outside?

In answering these issues, it is important to highlight that although Hamas has already been introduced in this dissertation, this section goes into much more detail, especially after the 2006 Palestinian elections. Nevertheless, there is a need to go back in Hamas' history to understand their own internal constraints. To this end, the Hamas Charter, named 'Mithaq', is of the utmost importance. This document calls for the destruction of Israel (Preamble of the Charter)[67], disavows PLO's agreements with Israel (Article 13) and "(…) defines Palestine as an Islamic waqf, and therefore a land which cannot be subject to the disposal of men, but rather an Islamic land entrusted to the Muslim generations until the Judgement Day" (Caridi, 2010: 54) in Article 11. This means that Palestinians can never relinquish any part of historic Palestine to any other nation. For this reason, Hamas' perception was that peace with Israel could not be reached unless their faith was compromised. However, and as seen with Hroub (2002), this Islamic discourse that was present in Hamas throughout their first years has been gradually replaced by a more pragmatic approach. Yet, the Charter has been working against Hamas interests and aims because it is often used by Israel and other system units in the international system to reject Hamas attempts of reaching an agreement (Caridi, 2010).

The way the Charter has undermined Hamas can also be seen through the understanding that both scholars and Hamas leaders have about it. For instance, Caridi (2010: 54) argues that the Charter "(…) simply echoes what had already been said in a nationalist vein in the Palestinian National Charter, (…) according to which: "The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national duty […] and aims to the elimination of Zionism in Palestine". Yet, this phrase did not hinder Israel and PLO's negotiations that led to the Oslo Accords. The same perspective has been shared by Hamas leaders and Islamists to defend that either Israel or Western countries use their Charter to sidestep them from the decision process. Such examples are, for instance: Nasser al-Din al-Sha'er interview with Caridi, where he stated that "Palestine cannot be considered a waqf" (Caridi, 2010: 55); Abu Marzouq (Number 2 of Hamas' political Office) comment on the Los Angeles Times, in July 2007, where he underlined that the Charter was written in a time that caused it to be "(…) an essentially revolutionary document, born of the intolerable conditions under occupation more than twenty years ago" (Caridi, 2010, apud Marzouq 2007)[68]. He goes on to say that this document emulates other revolutionary movements such as the American Declaration of Independence that did not consider the status of the 700,000 African slaves at

---

[67] For the full Charter: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp
[68] Interview available at: http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-marzook10jul10,0,777568.story?coll=la-newscomment-opinions.

that time or "(…) the basic law on the basis of which Israel "declares itself explicitly to be a state for the Jews, conferring privileged status based on faith in a land where millions of occupants are Arabs, Muslims and Christians" (Caridi, 2010, apud Marzouq 2007). Additionally, Muhammad Ghazzal, from the Al-Najah University, has also conceded that although "we consider all Palestinian territories the property of the Palestinians, but now we are talking about the reality, about a political solution. Reality is something different" (Caridi, 2010: 57). Finally, Aziz Dweik (Speaker of the Palestinian Assembly) stated that "Hamas will not allow itself to be held hostage by rhetorical slogans of the past such as the one on the 'destruction of Israel" (Caridi, 2010: 57).

Does this mean that Hamas is ready to change the Charter? The answer is negative, because to change or to renounce it, it would mean the recognition of Israel without achieving a mutual recognition for Palestinians as a people and as a nation. Yet, they have taken two different options to overcome this problem. The first was to declare that the Charter has been overpassed by other most important and recent documents (such as the Change and Reform electoral program) where the destruction of Israel does not exist anymore. The second, which is on-going, is the internal discussion about the Charter and, especially, the 11th Article (Caridi, 2010). If this Article was changed, Hamas would be in position of talking about peace with Israel instead of hudnas (cease-fires). Nevertheless, due to the different motivations, ideological commitments and religious interpretations inside Hamas, this has proved quite challenging to achieve. Hamas has instead offered Israel not only cease-fires but also the possibility of reaching a longer armistice agreement as long as Israel abandons the territories occupied in 1967 (Caridi, 2010). This again shows clearly how Hamas has changed from their idealist aim of re-conquering historic Palestine to establish Palestine in the 1967 territories lost to Israel.

Notwithstanding the general agreement in Hamas regarding the hudnas, there are factions inside and outside the organization that are against any type of compromise with Israel and de-radicalization of the movement. These factions have been able to gradually increase their power and, after Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections, they became progressively an issue to Hamas legitimacy and governance. Besides these factions, Hamas was faced with the withdrawal of international aid, the withholding of tax revenue by Israel, the Israeli and Egyptian siege plus the international boycott of their government after the electoral victory (Jefferis, 2016: 104). Still, Hamas had to "(…) project an image of possessing political authority in Gaza to restore a degree of normality to life" (Kear, 2019, apud Berti 2015, p. 16), and for that, their government legitimacy was (and still is) tied to their ability to govern successfully. As the new elected government, Hamas had also to do more besides the provision of social services to Palestinians, and they were aware of it. They have been judged by their ability to suppress Gaza's problems and to achieve the aims promised throughout the election campaign. To list a few, they had to: restore the rule of law and order while respecting public liberties and individual rights; reform the legal system; end corruption; curb down on the more radical and militant Salafi-Jihadist movements plus the militias and clans disputes; reach 'soft-Islamization' of Gaza and the implementation of the

previous goals under an Islamic Democracy (Kear, 2019; Filiu, 2014; Caridi, 2010; Jefferis, 2016; Brenner, 2017).

From the above goals, the first and most pressing one that Hamas worked on was restoring order by ending the lack of security, the lawlessness of the militias and clan vendettas (Filiu, 2014). These militias had grown to the point where they created "(…) an indigenous 'mafia' system" (Filiu, 2014: 330). To this end, during the first two years of their rule, Hamas took a more violent approach. By intervening in territories controlled by militias, Hamas was capable of removing them from the streets of Gaza and regained the monopoly over the use of force (Filiu, 2014; Kear, 2019). Hamas also suppressed demonstrations in favour of Fatah, closed the media perceived as loyal to them and arrested several of their supporters[69] (they were released a few days later) (Filiu, 2014; Jefferis, 2016). Due to the Israeli embargo on paper, Hamas was able to "(…) monopolise the print media in Gaza, since their own presses were supplied with paper via the tunnels they controlled" (Filiu, 2014: 333). As it will be seen throughout this chapter, Hamas did not try to overthrow the established political system and instead tried to reform it from within. In this sense and hoping to pass a message to the international community that democracy was being respected, Hamas reopened the Palestinian Legislative Council; began reforming the PA with the aim of ending the endemic corruption; and respected the electoral results of the 2004-2005 municipality elections[70]. All of this was done through an incremental 'soft- Islamisation' (Kear, 2019: 156) of Gaza civil society that intended to enhance the role of Islam at the same time that neutralised the Salafi-Jihadists' and appeased the more conservative Muslims. Although Hamas was able to regain some sort of normalcy in the streets of Gaza, soon they understood that neither appeasement nor violent approaches would bring results with Salafi-Jihadi groups.

4.2.1 – Salafi-Jihadi Groups: Hamas as a counter-weight to Islamic Fundamentalism

In the past, these groups were accepted by Hamas because they were useful in the on-going resistance against Israel (Brenner, 2017: 178); however, after the 2006 elections, their continuous growth became a threat to the government. From the beginning, these groups were against Hamas participation in politics and saw Hamas decision as a betrayal because participation in a "(…) secularised government undermined Hamas's religious purity of purpose and enervated its ability to fight Israeli occupation" (Kear, 2019, apud Roy 2011, p. 222). In spite of this criticism, Hamas was still able to instrumentalize the situation by highlighting to the international community the religious and ideological differences that existed between them. On one side, Hamas was the moderate Islamist movement struggling against occupation, on the other, there were the radical Salafi-Jihadist groups who fought Israel through Jihad. Still, the critics of Hamas resonated among several groups inside Gaza that struggled to understand the decision of participating and increasing relations with Israel, if for their entire existence they had

---

[69] While Hamas was doing this, Fatah was doing the same in the West Bank (Filiu, 2014: 332).
[70] To be more precise, Hamas did not expel or overthrow Fatah from the seventeen municipalities (out of twenty-five) that they had won (Kear, 2019: 166).

denounced Fatah and the PLO for doing the same (Kear, 2019: 151). As a consequence, these groups were increasingly alienated from Hamas orbit in favour of these Salafi-Jihadi movements.

Combined with the increasing difficulties caused by the siege and the international boycott of the Hamas government, these groups' started challenging Hamas' authority through rhetoric but rapidly escalated their tactics to more forms of dissent. In addition, to the same extent that the socio-economic difficulties increased,   the Salafi-Jihadi groups increased their support base. They became a "threat to the maintenance of Hamas's political authority in Gaza in two main areas" (Kear, 2019: 152). First, they did not respect the cease-fires agreements between Hamas and Israel and have kept attempting to kidnap and assassinating either Israel or foreigners. Second, through their anti-Western ideas, jihadi discourses similar to Al Qaeda and continuing attacks against Israel they have settled themselves as an ideological and religious threat to Hamas hegemony and Islamist narrative (Kear, 2019, apud Milton-Edwards 2014, p. 268–269). Quoting Milton-Edwards, Kear highlights why distressed Palestinians have been prone to fall for their ideas: "(…) Salafi -jihadist message ... has found appeal in the Gaza Strip amongst the many hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who sit poor and dispossessed by Israeli occupation, and the apparent indifference or double standards of the Western world" (Kear, 2019, apud Milton-Edwards 2014, p. 263).

The first group that showed to be a risk to Hamas was the Jaysh al-Islam that controlled parts of Gaza City and had thousands of affiliates. Led by the Dughmush clan, their known opposition to Hamas based on clan disputes and religious interpretations, helped them to gather support from former Fatah and Qassam members (Brenner, 2017). After Hamas killed some Dughmush fighters in their pursuit to restore order and security, a prompt violent response followed. Not only they claimed that the killing was unprovoked but also that the Hamas members who killed them belonged to another clan, named Deira. A spiral of killings between these two clans begun and in defiance of Hamas' calls to stop, the Jaysh al-Islam kidnapped three foreigners and students of the Gaza City's University. Among the foreigners, there was a BBC correspondent named Alan Johnston that brought international attention to what was happening. After giving an ultimatum to release them, which was declined, Hamas besieged the clan's entire neighbourhood. Jaysh al-Islam agreed to a cease-fire in exchange of letting them retain some arms to "(…) resistance purposes against Israel' (Brenner, 2017: 87). Hamas successfully released them and passed on the message that they were ready to be violent against groups who did not respect the rule of law but were also able to negotiate (Brenner, 2017). Upon the release of Johnston, Mousa Abu Marzook stated: "We did not deliver up Alan Johnston as some obsequious boon to Western Powers. It was done as part of our effort to secure Gaza from the lawlessness of militias and violence, no matter what the source. Gaza will be calm under the rule of law." (Jefferis, 2016, apud Mukhimer 2008, p. 129-130). For the near future, Hamas was capable of restoring order also in regards to Salafi-Jihadi groups. However, contrary to the militias (that were eradicated), these groups were intrinsically linked to Hamas' concessions to Israel and the increased difficulties lived in Gaza. In this sense, although

Hamas was capable of drastically reducing the number of kidnaps and internal violence (Brenner, 2017: 88), the cease-fire agreement after the Operation Cast Lead gave them a new boost.

The second Salafi-Jihadi group worth to mention is the Jund Ansar Allah. This group was created by a Qassam commander named Khaled Banat together with a Shaykh from Rafah, named Mousa. These two did not accept Hamas truce with Israel and worked to jeopardize the cease-fire besides publicly censuring Hamas (Brenner, 2017). Like with Jaysh al-Islam, Hamas tried to reach common ground. However, after declaring an Islamic emirate of Palestine, Hamas killed Banat and Mousa and several militants (Brenner, 2017: 90). This shows another Hamas approach to Salafi-Jihadi groups. If the first conflict with Jaysh al-Islam was resolved through negotiations, this was resolved through force. By looking into these first examples, it is possible to conclude that Hamas was not prepared to let these groups question or threat their authority. In spite of Hamas retaliation against these groups[71], they understood that none of the approaches taken so far (mediation or confrontation) was being successful.

For this reason, Hamas took a multi-dimensional approach. First, the Ministry of Religious Affairs decided to monopolize the control of the religious infrastructures in an attempt to curb the influence that the Salafi-Jihadi groups had throughout Gaza's mosques (Kear, 2019). After achieving the de facto control of the mosques, Hamas replaced Salafi-Jihadi imams by imams of their confidence. With this, they ensured the hegemony of what was preached to Palestinians. In addition, by controlling all the mosques, Hamas also increased their control over aid distribution by collecting, administrating and distributing the zakat[72] which increased Hamas soft-power in Gaza (Kear, 2019, apud Sayigh 2010, p. 68-69). Another step of Hamas approach was divided between the Palestinians who were within the spectrum of Salafi-Jihadis and those who were not. In both cases, Hamas set up a commission of religious scholars and psychologists with the mission of understanding the roots of the Salafi-Jihadi phenomenon and decide how should be dealt with. In essence, Hamas developed a "(…) long-term approach to deradicalising and rehabilitating individual militants as an alternative to constantly opposing them" (Brenner, 2017: 96).

The commission concluded that the presence of Salafi-Jihadis was linked to political factions. To be more precise, "The majority of Salafi-Jihadis were found to be young and present (or former) members of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Fatah, who were seeking alternative ways of channelling their despair and lack of hope in the future" (Brenner, 2017: 99). With this knowledge, and while the mediation or confrontational approach was not completely relinquished, Hamas worked on the de-radicalization process. Starting throughout their own ranks, the Qassam Brigades[73] was the first in

---

[71] There are more groups that have not been mentioned. For instance, the Tawhid wal-Jihad that came to the spotlight when they kidnapped and killed the Italian human rights activist and journalist, Vittorio Arrigoni, after Hamas detained the leader of the group, Shaykh Hisham al-Saidani for having ordered attacks against Israel after the cease-fire agreement with Israel (Brenner, 2017: 92).

[72] Zakat is the "term used for a tax of fixed proportion of income and capital (usually 2.5 per cent), which must be paid by all Muslims each year to assist the poor" (Armstrong, 2000: 174)

[73] Qassam Brigades are the armed wing of Hamas.

searching among its members for supporters of Salafi-Jihadis movements. These types of operations were not new, and in the past, resulted in the banishment of those being found in breach, which in Gaza was equivalent to exclusion from the social fabric. However, this was changed and, if in the first instance, supporters of Salafi-Jihadis movements were still banished, after they went through re-education and if deemed to be accepted again in the movement, they would have been re-employed (Brenner, 2017). Outside their movement, Hamas started by arresting the group's leaders and militants, plus their weapons (which preclude them from fighting). Once in prison, the inmates had three main curricular themes of de-radicalization. The first, given in jail, consisted in a series of counselling sessions given by respected religious scholars where MB's understanding of Islam was taught[74]. The second part, still in jail, consisted in political lectures given by Hamas where they explained why the relationship between Islam and politics is acceptable and, consequently, why their choice of participating was obedient with Islam. Finally, the third and last stage, entailed regular home visits by Gaza's public officers and the pledge by the former prisoners to not break any cease-fire agreements or to jeopardize Gaza's security and order (Brenner, 2017).

The counter-radicalization consisted first and foremost on the already explained hegemony of the religious infrastructures and teachings. Hamas' main goal is not only ensure that Salafi-Jihadi groups have no platform to publicly share their message, but also to make sure that Gaza's younger generation are being educated throughout their conception of what Islam is. The necessity to guarantee that the youth, but also the civil society, teaching was done throughout moderate Islam has been so pressing that Hamas reviewed all the education materials used to enhance the "(…) importance of tolerance as a fundamental value of true Islam, encourage dialogue and discourage literalist interpretations of scripture" (Brenner, 2017: 114). Most important, Hamas taught that imposition of the Sharia on the people should be rejected. Although it is acceptable to interpret this with a grain of salt, if Hamas' decision in 2009 of implementing gender separation, obligatory hijab for female university students and lawyers in the courts, and a ban on women smoking shisha in public places has been considered, it is also true that after public demonstrations against these decisions, the government retracted (Brenner, 2017: 98).

Hamas has given the same importance to securing Islamic infrastructures of any interference by Salafi-Jihadists that they gave to secure a good education system. Most important because the education system is where any government is most likely to ensure a successful state-building and to achieve long term stability. Interestingly enough, and in spite of the push for the 'soft-Islamisation', Hamas restructuring of the educational system was not only made to be secular but also towards the reduction of class sizes, the opening of more schools and the improvement of the existing facilities (Kear, 2019,

---

[74] To be more precise, Muslim Brotherhood conception of contemporary Islam is that Muslims should interpret the Holy Book "(…) in the light of the contemporary and local context in which believers find themselves" (Brenner, 2017: 108)

apud Tamimi 2009, p. 301-302). Adding to this, Hamas and Fatah kept cooperating to ensure that the educational system would not be harmed by their mutual antagonism (Kear, 2019; Brenner, 2017).

4.2.2 – Rule of Law and Security Apparatus

Hamas, as the new government, encountered in the Gaza Strip a legal system that was chaotic and dysfunctional (Kear, 2019: 158) as well as undermined the rule of law. Thus, Hamas set themselves to reform the system. Yet, they were undercut by Fatah that, from the West Bank, ordered the public workers not to comply with Hamas decisions and denied the handover of the security apparatus (Brenner, 2017). For this reason, two challenges arose: reforming the legal system and creating a public security force capable of enforcing and maintaining order. It is important, however, to highlight that Hamas conception of law and order could only be achieved by first and foremost reviving Islamic values. Thus, Hamas charged Gaza's civil society with the bearing of safeguarding the social order at the expense of their individual rights. Brenner develops this idea, and argues that "In Hamas's Gaza, justice for the individual was subordinated to peace within the collective. While respect for the rights and freedoms of the individual was not completely ignored by Hamas, they were considered to be an effect, rather than a prerequisite, of the 'correct' ordering of society" (2017: 181).

If the reviving of Islamic values would take longer, the reforming of the security apparatus would be easier to achieve. Gaza's security sector was constituted by the civilian police, internal security agencies and border guards (Kear, 2019). As part of their policies, Hamas established a clear chain of command, introduced frequent training of the security forces and deployed civilian oversight. Kear argues that this enabled them to create a security force far superior than the existing in the West Bank with the hopes to regain Gaza inhabitants' faith and confidence in the "(…) independence and professionalism of the security services" (2019: 167).

With this settled, Hamas started working on the legal system that, as a consequence of Fatah orders, was collapsing. The secular system was kept the same without any relevant changes. Yet, aware of the dire situation and pressing necessity of ensuring the rule of law, Hamas combined the secular system with an informal system based on the Sharia (Kear, 2019). The informal system entailed 36 conciliation committees headed by "(…) religious scholar experienced in Islamic and customary law" (Kear, 2019: 159) that worked for two main purposes: to address the need that Gazans had to settle disputes and to ensure the 'soft-Islamization' of Gaza that Hamas had promised (Kear, 2019; Brenner, 2017). Nevertheless, Hamas separated the formal system from the informal. In fact, the Palestinians could always use the formal instead of the informal if they wanted, and the latter worked as a helping hand to ease "(…) some of the government's financial and administrative burden" (Kear, 2019: 160). Once the constraints were overcome, namely from 2012 onwards, the formal system took precedence over the informal and the conciliation committees' role in the Gaza Strip society started gradually to decrease. To sum up, and even if with some issues, Hamas was successful in reforming the legal system and in restoring the rule of law inside Gaza.

4.3 – Beyond Ideology and Promises: Has Hamas established an Islamic Democracy?

It is now the time to reflect upon Hamas' decisions since their electoral victory. It seems fairly established that Hamas was capable of establishing order, law, security and maintaining the Gaza humanitarian situation floating. It is difficult to designate a place where 80% of the population is dependent on aid as "floating". Yet, the reality on the ground seems to confirm this. And, it is with this reality that Hamas has been governing. It may seem that I am absolving Hamas of their own faults. I am not. Indeed, to this day, they are still choosing to fight against Israel occupation and apartheid through violent means. Internally, they have also been accused of disrespecting individual liberties and political rights, especially to the ones who may oppose their decisions.

About this, Kear argues that Hamas' rule can be characterized as being a 'soft authoritarianism', meaning that Hamas gives some space for opposition to express their discontent as long as they do not show any "unacceptable political and social behaviour" (2019: 164). However, this soft-authoritarianism develops to full authoritarianism when such displays are made by Fatah members (Kear, 2019). In contrast, after Israel's ease of the siege in regards to some materials, the press hegemony that Hamas had ended and they did not oppose it. In fact, Kear (2019) argues that a reasonably free press, internet and media access exist in Gaza. Moreover, by taking into consideration the results of the survey made by Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in December 2016, it is fair to conclude that Ismail Haniyah's governance is accessed as being positive, because in the chance that Presidential elections would have happened, Haniyah was predicted to beat Abbas with 49% of the Palestinians votes[75].

Following Brenner's analysis, there are four possibilities in relation to Hamas governance: Islamic-Theocratic; Demo-Islamic; Secular-Authoritarian; Secular-Democratic (Brenner, 2017: 14). The main goal of having these four choices is not to pick only one, as they are not mutually exclusive, but rather analysing the outcome of Hamas governance and picking accordingly. Thus, it is important to remember Hamas desire of implementing an Islamic Democracy where the civil society was to be governed by strong Islamic values, yet there would be no imposition (as seen before, Hamas reverted back the decision on the hijab after public dissatisfaction). And here, it is related to the democratic values, in the sense that these values were to be implemented only if accepted. This is also proof of Hamas pragmatism in dealing with its constituencies. Yet, Brenner highlights that although several Hamas decisions were "(…) coated with a democratic varnish but with little liberal democratic substance beneath the surface" (2017: 187). This is because, in Brenner's perspective, decisions such as the ones taken with Salafi-Jihadi groups or with the reforming of the legal system were made with complete disregard to the individual rights of the Palestinians. To be more precise, in the first case, although they were included in the programs of de-radicalization, Brenner (2017) argues that they were still implemented with repressive methods that lacked any consideration for human rights. In the second case, the fact that an informal system was created based on the negotiated settlements taken by personnel linked to Islamic

---

[75] For the complete survey results: https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/676

sphere and not to the judicial system, led to the failure of justice for the individuals. In other words, the informal system "(…) weakened the rule of law and turned justice into a relative concept in Gaza" (Brenner, 2017: 188). However, it is important to highlight (as Brenner does) that Hamas' perspective of democracy is not the same that a Western country has. Meaning, the liberal democracy, if applied to judge Hamas governance and outcome of their decisions, will always lead to the conclusion that Hamas never achieved the form of democracy that they promised.

It is here that we loop back to the beginning, detaching our own (Western) conceptions of what is good and what is bad should be put into practice. Indeed, Hamas has followed a path where the individual does not have the same value that the collective has. In this sense, the individual was taken care of but always as being part of the whole. If, individually, their rights needed to be taken to achieve something that favoured the majority, Hamas would do it. Additionally, Hamas' pragmatism is ever present, as the rationale behind their decisions was always centred on the perspective of power consolidation. In other words, ideological motives were pushed back if that meant Hamas could satisfy Palestinians and solidify their power. To conclude and to reply if Hamas governance was democratic or authoritarian, it is possible to say that sometimes it was more democratic, sometimes more authoritarian. We should see Hamas' governance in a continuum between Islamic-Theocratic and Demo-Islamic styles. I reckon that the lack of a straightforward answer might cause some dissatisfaction, yet, like Hamas as an organization, their governance is constrained by several factors, such as the internal fights between the most radicals and the most willing to reach a mutual compromise with Fatah and Israel. As a final note, it should be considered that governing the Gaza Strip under siege, subjugation, continuing violence and boycott of their government would make the task of governing successful almost impossible to any political party.

V – The Question of Gaza - Conclusion

By concluding, I would like to answer the three research questions presented previously. Therefore, I would start by the first one: "What are the major consequences of the Israeli and Egyptian economic blockade to the Gaza Strip and to the Palestinians living there?"

This question is, perhaps, the most difficult one, due to the complexity of the consequences that the siege has had for Hamas and the Palestinians. While some are possible to measure in quantitative data (as done previously), others are not so easy to quantify. To start, the following ones are still leading to never–ending consequences that tend only to get worse as time passes by. For instance, from 2007 until now, Gaza has been increasingly isolated from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which means that the gap between the Palestinians from one territory to the others is widening. It can be argued that this gap should not be seen as Israel's and Egyptian's fault and rather Hamas and Fatah's fault due to their schism. Yet, this is not true for the fact that even before the siege had been imposed, Palestinians from Gaza and from the West Bank were already forbidden to travel freely from one place to the other (going against what was agreed in the Oslo Accords). This isolation has been causing a great damage to the Palestinian national movement. Additionally, this can also be felt in relation to the neighbouring countries and the international community. In this sense, Israel and Egypt as the defenders of international system values have been perceived as the up holders of peace and stability. The structural socio-economic and human violence inflicted upon Gazans has been either disregarded or, sometimes, even justified as ethic within the 'war on terror' perspective when, indeed, what is happening is the enforced isolation of the bulwark that Gaza represents in the Palestinian liberation movement.

This leads me to think of Gaza through what Giorgio Agamben has described as the 'camp', meaning a physical space where "(…) its inhabitants were stripped of every political status and wholly reduced to bare life" (1995: 168). Once reduced to bare life, Gazans are devoid of their own rights, namely to a dignified, peaceful and meaningful life. Proofs of these are the three major military incursions that Israel perpetuated against a defenceless civilian population that caused so much destruction and death without really being held accountable. To this end, by quoting Agamben again, it is impossible not to wonder how such violence has been continuously unpunished and often unquestioned by the international community: "The correct question to pose concerning the horrors committed in the camps is, therefore, not the hypocritical one of how crimes of such atrocity could be committed against human beings. It would be more honest and, above all, more useful to investigate carefully the juridical procedures and deployments of power by which human beings could be so completely deprived of their rights and prerogatives that no act committed against them could appear any longer as a crime" (Agamben, 1995: 168).

The siege has also increased the hopelessness of Gaza's inhabitants. Although there is no conclusive and reliable quantitative data, there has been an increase on suicide rates among Gazans, especially, among the younger generation. The lack of reliable data is linked to the taboo that suicide has within

Muslim societies (it is believed that he or she who commits suicide is bound to go to hell). Yet, since 2016 the awareness and concern of this new phenomenon in Gaza's civil society is increasing, also in news media[76]. By remembering that 60% of Gaza's youth is unemployed, 40% is considered poor (UN Report, 2017:3; PASSIA, 2018:1; B'Tselem, 2017) and that in one of the most densely populated places on earth people are forbidden from exiting without Israeli or Egyptian authorization, it is easily understood that Gazans youth are succumbing to the hardships of living in a place that has been considered by the UN as 'unlivable' by 2020 (UN Report, 2017). Therefore, it is my belief that besides the consequences of the siege already introduced, one of the main and most discouraged problems is the hopelessness that the absence of a future and the loosing of the steadfastness that once characterized Gaza's civil society is having, especially among the younger generations. In the long term, the hopelessness and loosing of steadfastness has even more consequences than the widening gap between Hamas and Fatah.

The second question to be answered is: "How has Egypt foreign policy towards Gaza evolved from 2006 to 2017?". At a first glance, Egypt's foreign policy towards Gaza during this period remained similar with all the three Presidents. Yet, this is why it is so important to look 'inside the box', meaning Egypt's own grassroots politics, and not let a realistic perspective of international relations to shape the way an understanding of the world is constructed. The reason for this is because if one looks at inside the box, meaning, looking into Egypt's civil society movements, it can be seen that there is a difference between the last three Egyptian Presidents and their foreign policy. To this end, it is possible to put Mubarak and Sisi on one side, opposed to Morsi. The first worked hand in hand with Israel after the Palestinian elections to pressure Hamas government to fall. Although there was some more flexibility with Mubarak if compared with Sisi, it is unquestionable that Mubarak's decision of isolating Gaza through the siege ended up causing substantial harm, making him in history as the President that initiate, with Israel, a collective punishment of an innocent society that was being chastised for having voted in free democratic elections. Sisi, whom I sided with Mubarak, took the punishment of Hamas without any concern for Gazan's well-being (or even his own citizens from Sinai). In this sense, the violence and impetus that emerged with Sisi towards Gaza, powered by his own fight against political Islam, MB and similar Islamic groups or organizations, led him to increase the pressure and measures that Mubarak had done before the Arab Spring. An example of this is how both Presidents behaved during the Israeli military incursions inside the enclave. The main difference between Sisi and Mubarak lies with the inflexibility that the first treated Rafah and the tunnels. Finally, on the opposite side, there is Morsi. The

---

[76] For more information, please access:
https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-in-gaza-suicides-are-a-political-message-1.9005406;
https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/may/18/a-suicide-in-gaza;
https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170920-unliveable-gazas-rising-suicide-rates/;
https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/gaza-s-young-people-turn-to-suicide-amid-growing-desperation-1.1045005;
https://wearenotnumbers.org/home/Story/Suicides_on_the_rise_in_Gaza:_When_death_seems_the_only_escape;

fact that I have chosen to place Morsi on the opposite side is mainly because he was instrumental in avoiding the same kind of pain and destruction during the second Israeli operation – Operation Pillar of Defence. In addition, Morsi was undeniably more open to talk and reach common ground in the hope of alleviating some of Gaza's hardships, at least, by turning a blind eye to the tunnels that maintained Gaza from sinking. Not only this, but also the fact that since the beginning Morsi defended that any chance that Palestinians could ever have in order to achieve self-determination and a strong national liberation movement would have always needed to pass first by the reunification between Hamas and Fatah, in other words, between the two major Palestinian political forces. On the other hand, it is still true that Morsi did not fulfil Gazans and Hamas high expectations. Rafah remained closed the majority of the time and he also attacked the tunnels when there was violent attacks from Salafi-Jihadi groups that could be linked to Gaza in some way. In other words, the siege was kept and the hope that it would be ended was never fulfilled. To sum up, Egypt's foreign policy towards Gaza from 2006 to 2017 should be seen as constant in the sense that the siege never seized to exist, yet Morsi's policy when compared with Mubarak and Sisi can be perceived as an outlier if we are referring to his diplomatic efforts to approach Hamas and Fatah and also to end Israel's assault.

The third and last question is: "To what extent has the Egyptian-Israeli relation changed during these years?". In this sense, and while I argue that Egyptian-Israeli relations should be put in a continuum because there were events that hindered or enhanced both countries' relationship, it can be established that from 1981 until 2017 there was a growing trend of common ties and goals between them. Looking into Mubarak's three-decade rule, after the first stage (1981-1993) where the cold peace perspective should be applied to understand their relations, Mubarak's foreign decisions made him to become a strategic partner of Israel. While these growing relations were never validated or accepted by the majority of the Egyptian civil society, Mubarak's common goals with Israel made him increasingly disconnected from the internal constraints that his constituencies represented. This gap between Mubarak and Egyptian society increased due to several events, yet the participation in the siege of Gaza and the complacency with Israel's Operation Cast Lead turned the gap irreversible. Eventually, the dissatisfaction of how Egypt was being ruled domestically, allied with a foreign policy that did not represent the desires of the civil society, created the proper environment to expand the 'Arab Spring' to Egypt. Following Mubarak's fall, Morsi was elected in the first free and democratically elections in Egyptian history. Morsi, who came from the FJP (which in turn was MB's political party) was, initially, seen by Israel as a risk to both countries' common history and established ties. Not only due to ideological reasons, but especially knowing that Hamas was an offspring of MB, it was expected that he would be friendlier with Hamas and the Palestinians. In addition, Israel also feared that something similar to the 1979 Iran's revolution would also happen in Egypt. Yet, as time passed by, Morsi's government showed no ambition in rewriting Egyptian-Israeli relations. The channels of communication remained open, the siege remained in place and the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty were fully respected. However, in spite of his predecessor and the one who followed him at the office, Morsi indeed

did not follow Israel's steps without questioning or thinking. In other words, Morsi's approach to Israel was more independent than the one followed by Mubarak, and was seen not only with his measures of trying to end Hamas-Fatah strife so the Palestinian national movement could regain its long lost momentum, but he also worked hard to end Operation Pillar of Defence with genuine interest for Gaza's and the Palestinians' welfare. To a certain extent, Morsi revived the cold peace throughout his one year in office.

Finally, and on the complete opposite side, there is Sisi. Like Mubarak, Sisi closed ranks with Israel and turned their relations into even deeper and more significant ones than Mubarak had done. This happened mainly for four reasons: Sisi crushed the internal constraints that hindered Mubarak space of manoeuvre; made war against political Islam (especially against MB and Salafi-Jihadi groups in the Sinai); tightened the siege of Gaza on his side of the border; and, improved the economic relations, especially through hydrocarbons deals. In working actively to create and expand centripetal dynamics between the two countries, Sisi was capable of reaching the rapprochement never achieved by Mubarak and ending the cold peace between the two countries. As a final note, it is important to highlight that, if on the one hand, I argue that Egyptian and Israeli relations gradually increased (even considering Morsi's reintroduction of a kind of cold peace), at the societal level the distrust and hostility continued to be a constant, even if not publicly demonstrated.

In this dissertation, I aimed to understand what has happened and is still happening in the Gaza Strip and how the two countries, which border this enclave, Egypt and Israel, have contributed to this fall out. In my opinion, it is through this understanding that the voiceless Palestinian civilians from Gaza can hope to be heard and recognized as human beings who are under a collective punishment. Worsening this disaster, there is no near-future hope or hints that the current status-quo will be changed because, as long as the international community and agencies do not uphold the same universal perspective of human rights and democratic values that is shared and advertised around the world into the Gaza Strip, Egypt and Israel will remain the main actors of this disaster, without being called out. Only by correcting this, a virtuous cycle can eventually be reached between the Palestinian national movement and Israel. Until then, the future of the Gaza Strip and its inhabitants will continue dire and bound to get worse.

Bibliography

Abadi, Jacob (2006), "Egypt's Policy Towards Israel: The Impact of Foreign and Domestic Constraints", *Israel Affairs*, (Online), 12 (1)

Abou-El-Fadl, Reem (2012), "The Road to Jerusalem through Tahrir Square: Anti-Zionism and Palestine in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (Online), 41 (2)

Agamben, Giorgio (1995), *Homo Sacer - Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Giulio Einaudi Editore

Agdemir, A. Murat (2016), "The Arab Spring and Israel's Relations with Egypt: A View from Turkey", *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, (Online), 10 (2)

Ali, Rozina (2013), "Democracy versus Security" (Online), checked on 15/10/2020. Available https://www.thecairoreview.com/tahrir-forum/democracy-versus-security/

Alimahomed-Wilson, Jake and Spencer Louis Potiker (2017), "The Logistics of Occupation: Israel's Colonial Suppression of Palestine's Goods Movement Infrastructure", *Journal of Labor and Society*, (Online), 20 (4)

Alimi, Eitan Y. (2007), "Israeli Politics and the First Palestinian Intifada", *Routledge*, (Online)

Amnesty International (2009), "Israel/Gaza Operation 'Cast Lead': 22 Days of Death and Destruction", London

Aran, Amnon and Rami Ginat (2014), "Revisiting Egyptian Foreign Policy towards Israel under Mubarak: From Cold Peace to Strategic Peace", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, (Online), 37 (4)

Armstrong, Karen (2000), *Islam*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson

Awad, Ibrahim (2013), "Breaking out of Authoritarianism: 18 Months of Political Transition in Egypt", *John Wiley & Sons*, (Online), 20 (2)

B'Tselem (2009), "Guidelines for Israel's Investigation into Operation Cast Lead", Jerusalem

B'Tselem (2013), "Human Rights Violations during Operation Pillar of Defense", Jerusalem

B'Tselem (2017), "The Gaza Strip" (Online), checked on 15/10/2020. Available at: https://www.btselem.org/gaza_strip

Bassiouni, Cherif M. (2014), "Egypt in Transition: The Third Republic", *Institute for National Strategic Security*, (Online), 4 (4)

Beinin, Joel (1985), "The Cold Peace", Middle East Research and Information Project, (Online), 129

Bell, Avi and Dov Shefi (2010), "The mythical post-2005 Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip", *Israel Affairs*, (Online), 16 (2)

Benvenisti, Eyal (1993), *The International Law of Occupation*, Princeton, Princeton University Press

Berti, B. (2015), "Non-State Actors as Providers of Governance: The Hamas Government in Gaza between Effective Sovereignty, Centralized Control, and Resistance", *Middle East Journal*, (Online) 69 (1)

Blumenthal, Max (2014), "Politicide in Gaza: How Israel's Far Right Won the War", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (Online), 44 (1)

Biçakci, Salih (2007), "The Palestinian parliamentary legislative elections 25 January 2006", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, (Online), 9 (1)

Brenner, Björn (2017), *Gaza Under Hamas*, London, I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd

Buttu, Diana (2014), "Blaming the Victims", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (Online), 44 (1)

Caridi, Paola (2010), *Hamas From Resistance to Government?*, Feltrinelli, PASSIA

Chomsky, Noam and Ilan Pappé (2015), *On Palestine*, Chicago, Haymarket Books

Chorev, Harel and Yvette Shumacher (2014), "The Road to Operation Protective Edge: Gaps in Strategic Perception", *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, (Online), 8 (3)

Cohen, Raphael S. *et.al* (2017) (RAND) From Cast Lead to Protective Edge: Lessons from Israel's Wars in Gaza, California, RAND Corporation

Cook, Steven A., (2011), *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square*, New York, Oxford University Press

Dajani, Maha (1986), *The institutionalization of Palestinian identity in Egypt*, Cairo, American University in Cairo Press

Danahar, Paul (2013), *The New Middle East: The World after the Arab Spring*, New York, Bloomsbury

Edwards, Richard (2008), The Encyclopaedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict – A Political, Social, and Military History, I, pp 70-71, California, ABC- CLIO, Inc. (First Edition)

El-Abed, Oroub (2009), *Unprotected*, Washington, Institute for Palestine Studies

Elgindy, Khaled (2012), "Egypt, Israel, Palestine: Prospects for Peace After the Arab Spring", *Cairo Review*, (Online), 6

Etheshami, Anoushiravan (2002), "'The Foreign Policy of Iran', in Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Etheshami, The Foreign Policy of Middle Eastern States, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers (2nd Edition)

Erakat, Noura (2019), *Justice For Some*, California, Stanford University Press

Filiu, Jean-Pierre (2014), *Gaza*, New York, Oxford University Press

Geldenhuys, Deon (1990), *Isolated States: A Comparative Analysis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Gisha (2011), "Scale of Control: Israel's Continued Responsibility in the Gaza Strip" (Online), checked on 15/10/2020. Available at: https://gisha.org/publication/1660

Gisha (2017), "50 Shades of Control" (Online), checked on 15/10/2020. Available at: https://gisha.org/publication/7599

Haik, Daniel (2006), *Sharon*, Paris, Éditions de l'Archipel

Herman, Lyndall (2016), "Sisi, the Sinai and Salafis: Instability in a Power Vacuum", *Middle East Policy*, (Online), 23 (2)

Hroub, Khaled (2002), *Political Thought and Practice*, Washington, Institute for Palestine Studies

Hroub, Khaled (2006), *Hamas*, London, Pluto Press

Human Rights Council (2015), "Report of the detailed findings of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1" (Online), checked on 15.10.2020. Available at: https://www.ochaopt.org/content/key-figures-2014-hostilities

Human Rights Watch (2017), "Unwilling or Unable - Israeli Restrictions on Access to and from Gaza for Human Rights Workers", United States of America

Human Rights Watch (2007), "Why They Died: Civilian Casualties in Lebanon during the 2006 War", (Online), 19 (5)

International Committee of the Red Cross (2015), "International humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts" (Online), checked on 15.10.2020. Available at: https://www.justsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-ICRC-ReportIHL-and-Challenges-of-Armed-Conflicts.pdf

Jefferis, Jennifer (2016), *Hamas*, California, Praeger Security Internation

Joronen, Mikko (2016), "'Death comes knocking on the roof': Thanatopolitics of Ethical Killing During Operation Protective Edge in Gaza", *Antipode*, (Online), 48 (2)

Kear, Martin (2019), *Hamas and Palestine*, Oxon, Routledge

Khalidi, Muhammad Ali (2010), ""The Most Moral Army in the World": The New "Ethical Code" of the Israeli Military and The War on Gaza", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (Online), 39 (3)

Khalidi, Rashid I. (2014), "The Dahiya Doctrine, Proportionality, and War Crimes", *Institute of Palestine Studies*, (Online), 44 (1)

Khalifa, Dareen (2013), "Saving peace: The case for amending the Egypt-Israel peace treaty", *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence*, (Online)

Khalili, Laleh (2004), "Grass-roots commemorations: Remembering the land in the camps of Lebanon", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Online) 34 (6)

Khani, Arash Beidollah (2013), "Egyptian–Israeli Relations, History, Progress, Challenges and Prospects in the Middle East", *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, (Online), 7 (3)

Kupchan, Charles A. (2010), *How Enemies Become Friends*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press

Lakhal, Salem Y. (2014), "Morsi's Failure in Egypt: The Impact of Energy-Supply Chains", *Middle East Policy*, (Online), 21 (3)

Legrain, Jean-François (1991), Les voix du soulèvement palestinien, 1987-1988, sine loco, CEDEJ

Lopez, George (1999), "More ethical than not: Sanctions as surgical tools", *Ethics and International Affairs*, (Online) 13

Meisels, Tamar (2011), "Economic Warfare – The Case of Gaza", *Journal of Military Ethics*, (Online), 10 (2)

Meital, Yoram (2010), "Approaching the End of the Mubarak Era: Egypt's Achievements and Challenges", *Institute for National Security Studies*, (Online)

Milton-Edwards, Beverley (2014), "Islamist Versus Islamist: Rising Challenge in Gaza", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (Online), 26 (2)

Miller, Aaron David (1986), *The Arab States and the Palestine Question: Between Ideology and Self-Interest*, Washington DC, Georgetown University

Monier, Elizabeth Iskander and Annette Ranko (2013), "The Fall of the Muslim Brotherhood: Implications for Egypt", *Middle East Policy*, (Online), 20 (4)

Mukhimer, Tariq (2008), "Hamas Rule in Gaza: Human Rights under Constraint", New York, Palgrave Macmillan

Murray, Stuart (2018), "Thanatopolitics", *Bloomsbury Handbook to Literary and Cultural Theory*, (Online), 718 (19)

Navone, Lorenzo (2016), "The Field before the Battle. Palestinian Mobilities and the Gaza-Israel-Egypt triangular Border before (and after) the 2011 Egyptian Uprising", in "Guests and Aliens": Re-Configuring New Mobilities in the Eastern Mediterranean After 2011 - with a special focus on Syrian refugees, Istanbul, Institut français d'études anatoliennes

Oren, Michael (2002), *Six days of war*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Oxfam (2019), From Failed to Fair - Learning from the Oslo Accords to foster a new rights-based approach to peace for Palestinians and Israelis, Oxford, Oxfam GB

PASSIA (2018), Understanding Gaza, Jerusalem, Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs

Pappé, Ilan (2006), *A History of Modern Palestine*, New York, Cambridge University Press

Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (2007), "'Black Days in the Absence of Justice: Report on Bloody Fighting in the Gaza Strip from 7 to 14 June 2007'", Gaza Strip

Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (2009), "23 Days of War, 928 Days of Closure: Life One Year after Israel's Latest Offensive on the Gaza Strip, 27 December 2008 – 18 January 2009", Gaza Strip

Pelham, Nicolas (2012a), "Gaza's Tunnel Phenomenon: The Unintended Dynamics of Israel's Siege", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (Online), 41 (4)

Pelham, Nicolas (2012b), "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes", *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, (Online)

Piazza, Bárbara Azaola (2019), "The foreign policy of post-Mubarak Egypt and the strengthening of relations with Saudi Arabia: balancing between economic vulnerability and regional and regime security", *The Journal of North African Studies*, (Online), 24 (3)

Pierpaoli, Paul and Sherifa Zuhur (2008), The Encyclopaedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict – A Political, Social, and Military History, I, pp 879-881, California, ABC- CLIO, Inc. (First Edition)

Rigas, Georgios (2015) Hamas-Egypt Relations during Morsi's Presidency, Brais Conference

Roy, Sara (1987), "The Gaza Strip: A Case of Economic De-Development", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (Online), 17 (1)

Roy, Sara (1991), "The Political Economy of Despair: Changing Political and Economic Realities in the Gaza Strip", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (Online), 20 (3)

Roy, Sara (1993), "Gaza: New Dynamics of Civic Disintegration", *Institute for Palestine Studies*, (Online), 22 (4)

Roy, Sara (1995), *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development*, Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies

Roy, Sara (2000), "The crisis within: The struggle for Palestinian society", *Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East*, (Online), 5 (30)

Roy, Sara (2007), *Failing Peace*, London, Pluto Press

Roy, Sara (2011), *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press

Sayigh, Yezid (2010), "Hamas Rule in Gaza: Three Years On", *Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, (Online), 41

Selim, Gamal (2015), "Egypt Under SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood: The Triangle of Counter Revolution", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, (Online), 37 (2)

Siddiqui, Fazzur (2016a), "Changing Contours of Egypt's Foreign Policy in the Aftermath of Uprising", *Indian Council of World Affairs*, (Online)

Siddiqui, Fazzur (2016b), "Five Years of Uprising: Egypt has Come Full Circle", *Indian Council of World Affairs*, (Online)

Smith, Ron J. (2016), "Isolation Through Humanitarianism: Subaltern Geopolitics of the Siege on Gaza", *Antipode*, (Online), 48 (3)

Shaaban, Omar (2012), "Hamas and Morsi: Not So Easy Between Brothers", *Carnegie Middle East Center*, (Online)

Shkolnik, Michael (2017), "'Mowing the Grass' and Operation Protective Edge: Israel's strategy for protracted asymmetric conflict with Hamas", *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, (Online), 23 (2)

Shlaim, Avi (1994), "The Oslo Accord", *Institute of Palestine Studies*, (Online), 23 (3)

Stein, Ewan (2011), "The "Camp David Consensus": Ideas, Intellectuals, and the Division of Labor in Egypt's Foreign Policy toward Israel", *The International Studies Association*, (Online), 55 (3)

Stein, Kenneth W. (1997), "Continuity and change in Egyptian-Israeli relations, 1973–97", *Israel Affairs*, (Online), 3:3 (4)

Stockdale, Nancy (2008), The Encyclopaedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict – A Political, Social, and Military History, I, pp 802-805, California, ABC- CLIO, Inc. (First Edition)

Sultan, David (2007), *Between Cairo and Jerusalem*, Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University

Tamimi, Azzam (2009), *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters*, London, Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.

Tucker, Spencer C. and Priscilla Roberts (2008), The Encyclopaedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict – A Political, Social, and Military History, I, pp 364, 404-405, California, ABC- CLIO, Inc. (First Edition)

United Nations Country Team (2012), "Gaza in 2020 – A liveable place?" (Online), checked 15.10.2020. Available at: https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-195081/

United Nations Country Team (2017), "Gaza Ten Years Later" (Online), checked 15.10.2020. Available at: https://www.un.org/unispal/document/gaza-ten-years-later-un-country-team-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-report/

Watanabe, Lisa (2014), "Egypt One Year after Morsi's Ouster", *CSS Analysis*, (online), 158

Wagemakers, Joas (2010), "Legitimizing Pragmatism: Hamas' Framing Efforts From Militancy to Moderation and Back?", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (Online), 22 (3)

Winter, Yves (2015), "The Siege of Gaza: Spatial Violence, Humanitarian Strategies, and the Biopolitics of Punishment Winter", *John Wiley & Sons Ltd*, (Online), 23 (2)

Zecchinelli, Cecilia (2015), "Egypt and the Middle East. A 'New' Regional Protagonist?", in Stefano M. Torelli (ISPI), Milano, Edizioni Epoké (1st Edition)
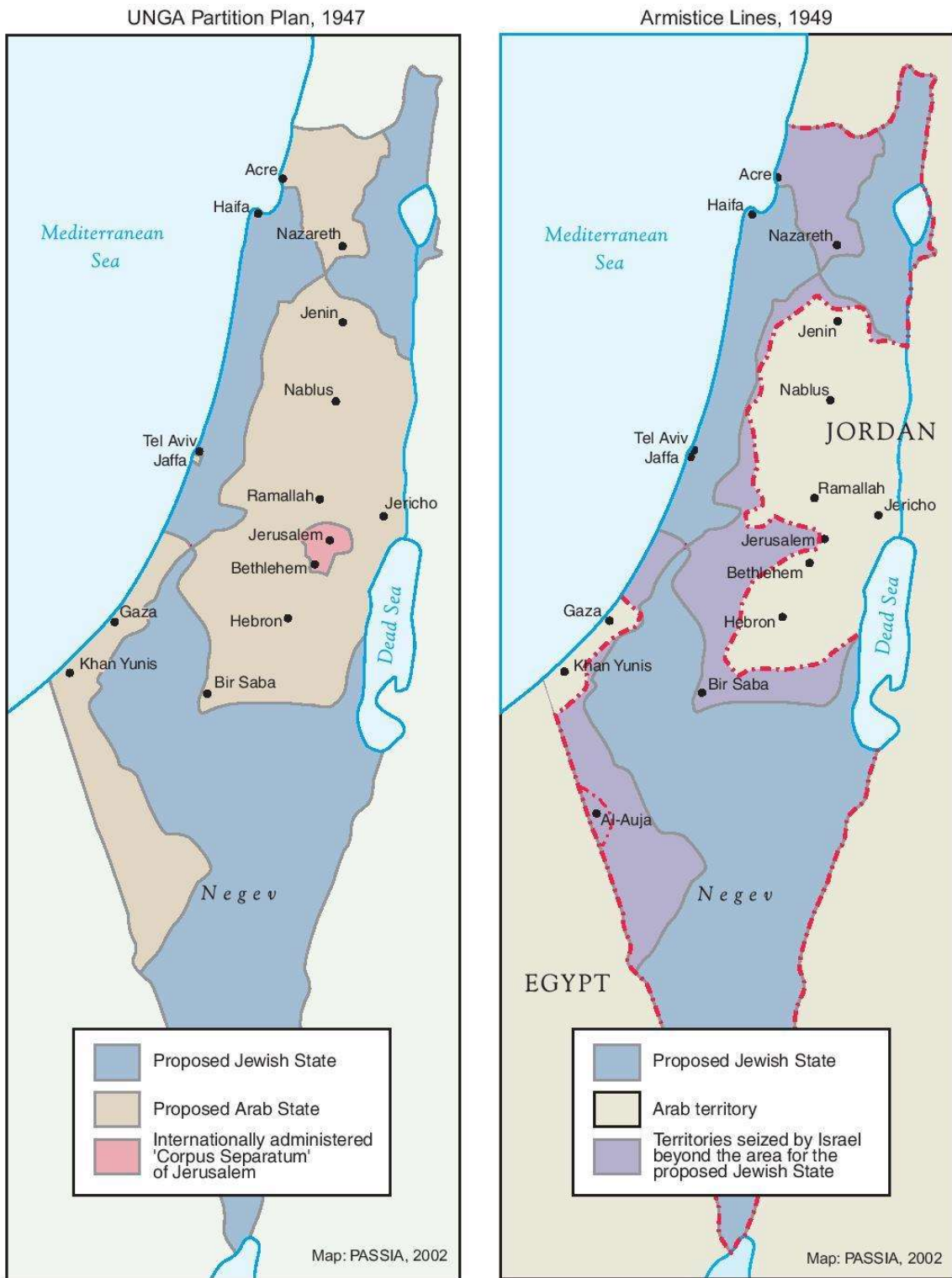
Annexes

Annex A – Map of Gaza Strip

Source: U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Annex B – United Nations Partition Plan versus Consequences of the First Israel-Arab War

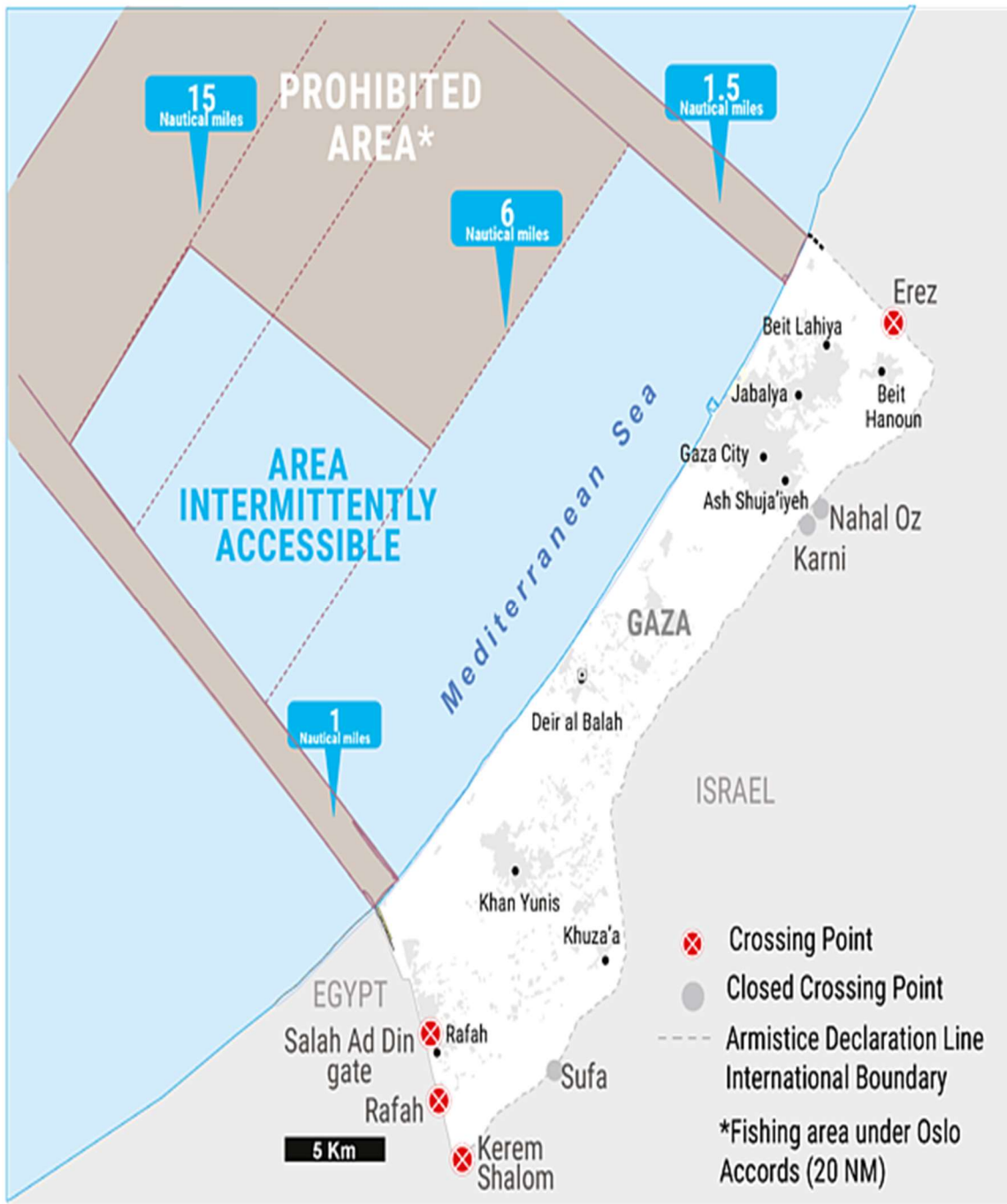Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

Annex C – Territories occupied by Israel after the Six-Day War

Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

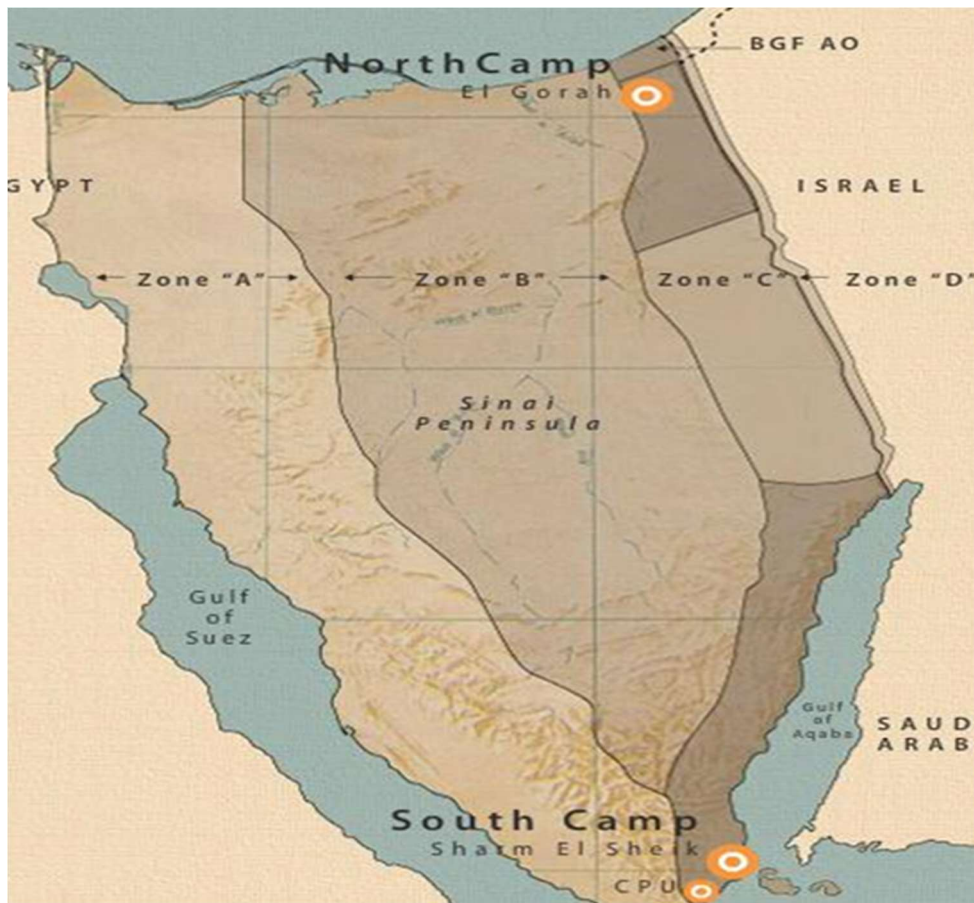Annex D – Gaza Strip Crossing Points

Source: U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Source: Fanack

Annex F – Sinai Peninsula Division

Source: Multinational Force & Observers