Re-Constructing the Zeal of Hamas:
‘Armchair Philosophy’ for Approaching Sainthood

Presented by:
Muhab Medhat Wahby
ABSTRACT

The paper researches the viable options for Hamas as a case study in the development of a peace paradigm through answering the question of ‘What should Hamas do, while under siege, to act responsibly in favor of the interests of its constituency?’ By comparing the logics of social constructivist and realist theories as methods of analysis in addressing the formulation, operationalization and social utility generated from ideologies, and specifically, Islamism, and the various forms it has taken shape in a post-9/11-postmodern world. While addressing the historical aspect and sources of ideological power that constitute our social reality through meanings, morals and rituals, derivations are made from the harsh conditions of an environment confined to conflict that transpired into Hamas’ structural foundation. Furthermore, social constructivist theory is tested in the envisioning of imperative re-imaginings of society to consequently improve relations of Hamas with their political rivals, Fatah and Israel and most importantly the people of Gaza, by adhering to a moral 'ought' rather than the reactionary events manifest in the 'is' making social reality a construct for a ‘transcendental is’. The paper also proposes that ‘real’ peace stems from the cultural interpretation of human social imagination/consciousness of rival groupings in protracted conflicts, and as such advocates for communicative engagement (equality) rather than strategic engagement (carrot/stick thematic) and power dynamics (zero-sum games), to achieve reconciliation between rivaling populations based on just and shared norms within social, political and cultural interpretations instead of the dominant views of the culture of political realism and notions of compromise and the state.

Keywords and Terms:
Hamas; Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Political Islam; Islamism; Peace and Conflict Studies; Realism; Social Constructivism; Terrorism; International Relations.
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Chronology of Arguments:

Chapter one describes the methodology used to qualitatively explore the research question of What should Hamas do, while under siege, to act responsibly for the people of Gaza? And resolving, for the Palestinian people the protracted conflict. The chapter provides a theoretical framework that briefly introduces the foundations and main concepts of analysis of the conflict, Realism and Social Constructivism within IR theory, while the remainder of the chapter focuses on the in-depth framing of the application of both theories in the peace and conflict resolution discourse.

Chapter two starts off by introducing the three constituents of a constructivist ‘social reality’ as sources for ideological power, namely, Meaning, Morals and Ritual. Then continues to account for the historical aspects behind the formulation of Hamas and their structure to better represent the ideological and contextual background for the three aforementioned elements. The Structuring of Hamas and its leadership are then reviewed to reflect on the harsh conditions deemed necessary for the legitimacy and expansion of their ideological project and cultural belonging to the tradition of Political Islam, which in turn is cross-examined with other Islamist movements to see whether the ideology is homogenous world-wide and compatible with democracy or whether Hamas proposes a different view to fundamentalist claims in a post- 9/11- ‘modern’ world.

Chapter three questions what is Hamas supplying in terms of ideology and political culture to its people and how this can be seen as beneficial for their people in their circumstance by exploring gaps between the ‘is’ when compared to the ‘ought’ and inquiring the roots of Hamas as an organization that practices consultation and pragmatism, to see to what extent do they hold and adhere to the ideal principles of morality.

Chapter four looks closely at relations between Hamas and the State of Israel, questioning the validity of choices made to engage in a war, by negotiating the
difference between the culture of political realism in formulating dichotomous strategic perspectives aimed at deterrence, in contrast to the constructivist agenda of communicative engagement to try and define what ‘real’ peace could essentially mean through the practicalities of both theories amongst the moral dilemmas of their ideologies.

Chapter five calibrates the role of ideologies with identity formations to conclude with a descriptive analysis of interactive relations between Hamas with Gazans and Fatah in the domestic political arena to investigate the answers of whether Hamas acts favorably as a governing body and what reform, if necessary would be advantageous for the social utility of their ideology to overcome internal and external conflicts.
Chapter One: The Conflation of Rigorous Social Sciences in Humanities

Methodology:

A primary challenge faced in Hamas as a case study was to describe the relations of the political organization with regards to their responsibilities towards the people in Gaza, the fundamental topic of discussion, without touching upon its relations with Israel and the locomotion of studies on the Middle East conflict; an overly-exhausted topic. Yet, to explore the relations through either realist or constructivist analysis, it is imperative that two sets of relations be examined; that with the State of Israeli and with the Gaza population simultaneously, with Hamas at a pivotal core. By doing so, the research in attempting to answer the question ‘What should Hamas do under beleaguered conditions to act responsibly for its constituency?’ will not include the set of exogenous factors such as the Israeli state policies and Palestinian civil society and policies of rival political factions such as Fatah, in formulating answers. However, their respective positions will be addressed from the point of view of Hamas and the policies it shapes around these circumstantial interactions; Policies that are dictated by the inherent ideology, political and cultural identities therein.

For the sake of this study, the main classifications have been identified by how key agents/organizations and specifically Hamas interpret the conflict and a ‘double hermeneutic’ is required to investigate further what these interpretations mean and what action precedes and proceeds from them based on a series of interviews that are documented by Middle East Policy Council (MEPC). The study will carry a form of phenomenological interpretation with noesis at its essence allowing the focus to shift to the subjective pole of experiences and what it constitutes of streaming consciousness into the world that can be derived from the primary data (Bullington, 1984:52). As author of the document the so-called ‘objectivity’ of the study lies in the situated knowledge or habitus accumulated from having roots from the region and a prevailing global identity through a history of western education and exposure. The impartiality towards beliefs in both the Muslim world and the rest of the world creates
a sense of self-respect and respect of others based on a short yet conditioned experience that invokes a radical constructivist look at the conflict in which reflexivity is based on a hermeneutic relationship with reality (Delanty, 2000:112). That is not to say that by utilizing such theory that reductionism is to be presupposed as an adequate criteria for the critical analysis, but to wisely follow Feyerabend’s teachings in Chalmers (2004:156), an anarchist theory is but most relevant to encompass all logic when critically viewing the shortcomings of the aforementioned strata’s conflict based on the diverse issues of global politics, cultural translation and interpretation. Any typologies attributed to certain groups studied are merely in order for classification and do not represent the common naïve stereotypes they predominantly signify. The study will try to avoid binary structures reenacted by notions of good or bad, right or wrong, but address the immediate humanitarian concerns and pressing issues deluded by notions of strong and weak, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic instead, so as not to indulge in any tangible religious debates that would fragment the vital concepts of the study.

All primary data used in the study to present normative and empirical evidence that support arguments for the research question, are based on literature review and a discourse analysis on the case study. To correlate and test the findings a series of interviews were to be conducted with people from Gaza. Interviews were to be carried out as supplements for the analysis to allow interpretations to be standardized and answer the research question more personally. Due to the difficulty of travel to war-stricken zones, the further exasperation of the situation in the recent months in Gaza as preludes to this research project, the interviews were to be done on an online medium. The targeted sample for interviewing consisted of any person from Gaza that was well educated, and was not politically affiliated to any political parties. Reasoning for this sampling process is the abundance of interviews with Hamas officials and their interpretation of the conflict as well as the dominant descriptions of popular opinion in Gaza. By refining the sample, the target group for interviewing became the extreme opposite on the spectrum to provide a holistic image of both majority and minorities in Gaza, as such, Christians were asked to be interviewed from the region, whom presumably would be a lot more critical towards the views of Hamas, indicative of feelings of exclusion by an Islamic organization. Of the eleven people contacted through email, only two interviewees showed willingness to be
interviewed, a Christian female from Gaza and a well-established Christian male journalist, both of which were in their thirties, however to date they were unable to provide time for this endeavour and their views could be incorporated at a later date.

The focus of the interview questions was more on feelings and preferences, ultimately in a semi-structured format (Flick 2006, 150). The questions start with a more open ended nature, so as to understand the interviewee’s views of Hamas and its relations to Israel and their constituency broadly, then more hypotheses directed questions were presented, and finally confronting the interviewee’s opinion with counter arguments to see if their opinion still holds. The questioning followed the ‘funnel’ approach, as open-ended questions were followed by more specific question to clarify and verify positions. This form of interviewing ‘semi-standardized’ was chosen for its explorative element of ‘subjective theories’, since the study assumes that there is a difference in peoples’ opinions when trying to define Hamas, either as a legitimate political entity or a terrorist organization or both (Flick 2006, 152-154).

To compensate for the shortcomings and lack of interview data presented, some simple reflections were extracted through online polling of SOLIYA facilitators. Soliya, is an online program created to discuss the dialectics of East-West relations and especially the clash between the Western world and the Arab/Muslim world with regards to culture, politics and religion. This peace and conflict resolution medium entails groups of eight to nine students from universities worldwide, half of which constitute one of the differing worlds in an online discussion. Some of the opinions of the facilitators were incorporated in the study as results for testing certain hypotheses in a focus group format, by posting two poll questions addressed to all facilitating members of the community, who had undergone a 5 week training on conflict resolution tools for mediation, to derive some indications on world-wide support for Hamas, by asking if they thought that Hamas was acting responsibly towards the people of Gaza? And secondly a question directed to three nationalities the British, French and Germans, asking them to state which of the two other nationalities do they have a positive cultural attitude towards. The reason for the second poll being, to test whether war and events shape peaceful relations or rather it is the socialization of cultures that pertains to the notion of ‘real’ peace.
Theoretical Framework and Background:

The qualitative study revolves around the juxtaposition of the two classic rivaling theories in modern social science, Realism and Social Constructivism. While most of the analysis of events will be described through the broadly construed, realist lens, and dominant realist peace models will be scrutinized to measure their success within the context of the Hamas-Israeli-Gaza relations. Analysis of peace building initiatives and establishment of ‘real’ peace will be socially constructed as well as providing a normative discussion on possible constructivist practices that Hamas should partake if it is to adhere to the best practices in governance with a special interest in the protection of the Gaza population and why they should do so.

Thies (2002:149-155) presents the foundation on which the theoretical framework for the paper is driven by depicting the shortcomings of the realist tradition in conflict resolution and theory. The first analytical assumption co-opted by realist conflict theory is in accepting that the in-groups create stories about the out-group to establish some form of solidarity, these stories may or may not be fiction, but their influence in identity politics is fundamental to their ideology. This notion although partially true does not holistically explain the demise or apathy towards both (in and out) groups when gazed upon from an outsider or mediator’s view. A relevant example would be the Israeli-Arab conflict, if we were to believe what Marx propagates that ideologies gain power through false consciousness with his more than stellar quote on religion being ‘the opiate of the masses…’ then the whole world would have been able to accommodate the rivaling ideologies diffused from the region and clear cut alliances would have emerged from the crisis and a further spread of the ideologies would have undergone.

In Snyder’s account of Michael Mann’s conception on the anatomy of power, they refute such allegations and present this illusory form of creating a self fulfilling prophecy to provoke enemies, consequently creating a new and plausible role of defense as one of four centre pieces to the puzzle of why do followers follow? And in the elaborate arts of ‘demand and supply for ideology’, but suggest that it is an unlikely form of ideology to spread, since in their constructivist beliefs’ effective
ideology transcends both truth and falsity in existence and cannot be tested or fully experienced and ‘therein lies its distinctive power’ (Snyder, 2002:308). Before dismissing such ideals on the basis of abstraction or reduction try to retain from history or current events, as realists, an ideology that was premised on uni-lateral aggression that has gained any popularity beyond its cultural boundaries? The Serbs are a recent example of such incidence and so was the war in Iraq, maintaining that the falsity in promises of ideologies cannot be prolonged, which could be another explanation for why ideologies are constantly shifting. Regardless, in the short term such incidents have proven successful and can be attributed to many separatists that reverted to violence in order to achieve independence such as East Timor. But then the question becomes whether they were able to achieve a stable peace or not? But before we enter the diabolical debate between the rival theories and tangent questioning to their relevance in our case study, a more conclusive illustration of the respective logic should be transcribed.

The Wizard of ‘Was’: Realism

Realism has for a long time shaped the analytic tradition on interwar literature by focusing more on capabilities and events through structures to provide a reactionary set of policies to stop wars. Theoretically, their boundaries of addressing such conflicts lays within the power of the state, even their most pragmatic idealists that ascribe to an a-historical form of analysis similar to that of constructivism, have the same tendency. Yet still their proposition lies within the norms of power, with their idealist agenda of producing a world federation, quintessentially embodied by organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and its agencies which remains a territorially bound division but with a higher global authority as a solution (Thies, 155). Their reasoning for such derives from their preference to structure and capabilities as a more reliable function than normative intentions of morality (Lynch, 2002: 207). From these foundations come the Neo-Realists in our post-modern times, Brysk (2002) shows that their approach to IR is taking the attention away from most social or normative meanings towards the material, anomalies are treated in the same manner as they are explained in terms of ‘objective’ economic and security interests.
So how does this explain what Brysk calls the post-imperial families that despite the economic and strategic decline of their relation an overwhelming sense of obligation remains intact? France and Haiti is a very good example of such anomalies that realists fail to explain fully.

The outdated yet highly appreciated theories concerning post-colonialism and post-imperialism demonstrate that realism is confined to laws governing our realities based on events, where conflict of interest becomes stagnant and independent from moral duty. Throughout their studies the search is always for meanings an in the unlikely event of finding purpose, it remains unacknowledged. Which is why scholars such as Carr and Thies (2002) recognize realism’s lack of a finite goal that is indispensable to effective political thinking, even when it is there and it usually is because of the realists tendency to dismiss ‘ideals’ as pre-scientific history, which ultimately is a ‘blindness to the realities of international affairs’ (Thies, 2002:166). The realist concern is with the security of the individual which is directly linked to that of the sovereignty of any given state, which becomes a tool for justifying resorting to war at certain circumstances, for the state must appeal and satisfy the ego’s of its subordinates, to reach higher levels of autonomy (Thies, 2002:159). This practice has become mainstreamed to war and resistance as a form of political survival, present in almost all corners of our world, and in our specific context becomes omnipresent in the struggle between the Israelis and Hamas/Palestinians. So how do realist actually explain their respective reality. Reality is divided into four classes, the Actual represented by the “is’ or ‘was’, the probable which is likely to be, the possible of what can be and finally the desirable what ‘ought’ to happen which is placed on the pedestal of ideals (Wright 1955:11). Through this typology, realists have managed to infer that utopianism is a form of political idealism, but deny it from ever happening or being achievable through progress, as it does not contain the core assumption of significant security and power factors in any human society, proving the obvious bias towards suppressing cultural anarchy as a form of regulation and replacing it with hierarchy in their hegemonic ‘stability’ literature, proving that their stringent belief in laws and structure, provide a much more cohesive scientific relation, but lacks immensely any theory of change and could probably be the reason for state sovereignty and world government remaining exclusive and not simultaneously indoctrinated (Thies, 20002: 165-168).
Below are diagrams that illustrate how realism operates:

![Figure 1(a) Illustration of Realism](image)

![Figure 1(b) Graph of Realism](image)

Figures 1(a) and (b) show that realism is depicted as a circular set of relations set by boundaries that are impossible to cross, while our variables the State of Israel and Hamas are but objects revolving in a spiral of dogmatic beliefs and negotiation, with the time axis being a form of stability and a desirable objective in the relation. However, the threshold of violent action is consequential to the potency of these ideologically politicized beliefs and thoughts, once its passed acts of violence for the preservation of self-interest become justifiable as a reaction to ‘real’ events. That strict interpretation of conflict however cannot explain a shooting of a schoolboy or bombing of a discothèque except as reprisals for political developments, either the breakdown of negotiation channels, harassment at checkpoints or as conspiracy theories want everyone to believe that it is the proximity to a peace deal that lead to provocations to protect a favorable status quo. The power dynamics of the relation are represented in the size of each object and the speed in which it revolves around these set conditions, while Israel represents a symmetrical and stable cyclic frequency, Hamas is portrayed in an a-symmetrical erratic wave being the weaker of the two with limited accessibility to both action and negotiation within the power dynamic. For a clearer picture a 3D plane is illustrated in figure 1(c) on the following page shows that in fact what on a traditional 2D plane, seemingly, is a non linear relation, is false, for the relation is bound by a constant dependence on time and a static conflict threshold (grey plane) that both agents relentlessly and inevitably must collide at, showing a very realistic yet volatile connection between the two rivals.
Constructivism: ‘Turning the Page’ for a new social imaginary in ‘Ought’

This theory is encapsulated in its emancipation from objective conditions, played out in material gain or political interests in re-orienting policy to socially construct change. For constructivists, International relations is both the normative contexts and subjective identities that filters how social groups, anything from a tribe to a clan to an entire nation, should understand and attain their goals, which are shaped fundamentally by shared meanings and norms (Brysk, 2002: 267-269). The modes of relations between social structures and individual actors constitute one another within those shared meanings and are reproduced or modified by the on-going interactions, as the inter-subjective constructs represented by individual actors underlie interests, which are henceforth shaping policy (Brysk, 2002: 269-270). In that sense, norms and ideals are not superfluous and are a valid and more intrinsic characteristic that shapes politics and can or should be operationalized. Therefore, constructivist practitioners reject any form of analysis that measures capabilities invariably to social contexts, as their belief is that state interest is always deeply rooted in identity politics and is not just an accumulation of domestic private interests (Lynch, 2002: 207).

Wendt in Thies (2002) best describes constructivism as ‘Structural Idealism’, where as, idealism is explained as the culture of state life that depends on actions taken,
meaning that the state alone can promote culture and has the ability to transform it, burdening the state with the responsibility of keeping its culture intact. Wendt prefers the Kantian outlook of collective action under an authority acting towards peace as a plausible analysis of governments in times of conflict, insinuating to one of the interstitial cores of the constructivist school as a conflation or fusion of idealism with realism (Wendt in Thies, 2002:172). Here the collective identity ascribed represents a specific type of relationship that is empathetic rather than it being instrumental both in terms of domestic and foreign affairs, so as to diminish the impact of power in governing such interactions between rivaling groups and providing an environment that can be based on conflictual interests yet bonds are not severed. The theory of social constructivism is based on the influential works of Michael Mann, whose ‘heresy’ as a sociologist rejecting the claim that society was a building block of the analysis of social power and instead ascribing it to the networks and social ties within the political and cultural spheres, that help us explain and understand official power structures, transcending the realm of sociology by admittance in other social sciences from politics to economics with notions of social capital at its essence (Snyder, 2006:306).

The difficulty of describing constructivism in graphical depictions, as done previously with realism, owes to the idea of its anarchist origins with unregulated ties between different actors that is always dynamic and shifting and unlike realism does not have a well-defined course. That is not to be mistakenly thought out to be, as most critics of the constructivist school label it, ‘a pie in the sky’ mode of analysis, for it too adheres to the same principle parameters of the cultural, political and economic boundaries, but provides an alternative understanding that is purposeful and instrumental for overcoming the realist’s dominance of power dynamics in their search for ‘true’ meaning as the ‘true guarantor of peace’ whom accordingly blame the happening of the Second World War on the ambivalence towards such harsh realities that could not forewarn them of the incoming threats and is also why to present date, the atomic bomb is considered the bringer of an end (Thies, 2002:173). Was diplomacy at that point of time so hopeless, that the only means to stop the war was to create so much devastation producing enough fear to conform the human race back to civility?
It is these alternative routes that constructivists’ tend to territorially explore from a singular entity perspective, and not through static tracks, for figures 2(a) and (b) above are but models of what could be realized but can also diverge from the illustrations above. Conflict will probably always exist and could plausibly be indications of progress, yet conflict is not one singular barrier than we keep returning to, because of our political or cultural beliefs, they are numerous barriers that differ in shape, size and location over time, and relations between even any two rivals must be addressed from a collective viewpoint, as such constructivists in their analysis perceive both Israelis and Palestinians fate or destiny as one result and not that they both constitute the same thing, however they do not classify them according to who is powerful and focuses more on the choices of the people, as their interests and discontents are shared by a consequence of the moral norms that they abide to or reject within any given conflict. Figure 2(c) provides a 3D representation of the same phenomena as an aggregate of figures 2(a) and (b), showing the freedom of choices between the same two vertical barriers of action or cessation over time, however the relations to reach reconciliation, unlike in realism which is only describing the stationary inner happenings within our object in the diagrams with webs connecting to the boundaries, hence its spiral form, figure 2(c) shows that in constructivism they are not represented based on a strict formula of movement to overcome these diverse conflicts and do not include compromises as a kinetic force towards the end goal, instead it realizes that the object, in this case the Israeli and Palestinian people must make bilateral choices in the sense of shared norms if the object is to avoid colliding into various conflict barriers.
The preference in analysis for this paper given to constructivism over realism, as a means to achieving peace, is not supposed to de-legitimize one tradition over another as in classic research, since as mentioned previously, constructivism borrows heavily from both realist and the idealist school. But again it is to provide alternatives to dominant academic practices within political science and attempt to reframe the conflict between Hamas and Israel, from simplistic binaries to more complex ones in the form of conflict and peace through cultural interpretations, to derive how should Hamas act for the Gazans, based on ideals that come about through the ‘ought’ rather than a fixation on the ‘is’ and ‘was’ of events that are engraved in power relations dictating their respective ideologies.

‘Free society from the strengthening hold of an ideologically petrified science just as our ancestors freed us from the strengthening hold of the one true religion.’ (Feyerabend in Chalmers, 2004:156)
Chapter Two: Ideology and Hamas: A Genesis or Necrosis for Humankind?

Previewing the Sources of Ideological Power

The basis on which ideology is defined throughout, is based on the stance of Michael Mann’s writing on the anatomy of power that derives three main sources for effective ideologies: control over ‘Meaning, Morals and Rituals’ (Snyder, 2006:308). These three absolute terms were refined by Mann to accommodate derivations made from other scholars and starting with Weber, where he believed that ‘meanings’ present not only the determinant of which path to take and can be pursued, but furthers the idea that an effective ideology along with economics, military and politics can act through networks and relations in society to create new directions for collective action, whereas Weber only defines it from the standpoint of a ‘switchman’ that has only to choose from channels presented to him, however, both scholars agree upon the fundamentals of what the term means as it is not just a descriptive word to be used to express understanding, but also is the premise of action, which is why ‘concepts and categories of meaning’ are ‘necessary to social life’ and are procured from ‘social organization’ and not merely deduced from perception only, atoning for purposeful relations of man with nature, society, transition and most importantly legitimate authority, through those who control it yielding the distribution of its benefits and the ability to mobilize collective action (Snyder, 2006: 308).

Morals, according to Mann’s drawn out arguments of Durkheim represents the common norms which regulate the behavior of people together through an understanding of acceptable shared actions; in that sense they become equally as vital to the success of any form of social network as it provides a sustainable set of relations based on trust and the morale of the people, which can also be accrued through institutionalism (Snyder, 2006: 308). Beyond that Mann offers his contributions by adding that ideology does not only blend and reflect on the rules already governing any society, but could work as a catalyst for shifts creating new moral standards based on religious or cultural driven communities pertaining to the
social needs and desires they hope to achieve and is encompassed in the third source of ideological power embodied in ritual aesthetics, making doctrinal practice a commanding principle to collective action and distribution and through its repetition, becomes extremely hard to deny or even rationalize (Snyder, 2006: 308).

Snyder (2006) makes a coherent augmentation of Mann’s three sources of power under the dichotomy of an “is’ and ‘ought’, where he ascribes to ultimate meaning a ‘transcendental is’ which goes beyond the empirical ‘is’, or the ethical ‘ought’ constituting the core idea behind morality, and finally ritual presents the actions of both ultimate meaning and morality through concrete actions that display the two dimensions. Augmenting all three elements depict what Snyder and Mann call a ‘social reality’, however it becomes obvious the limitations of constructivist logic in this framework to verify empirical descriptions of the world we live in, but as Mann argues, ideology’s sole purpose is not just to do so, but is a means to re-forge our realities to succumb to and fit the appropriate description of the world we find favorable, however, that is not to say that ideology does not describe the world but it works as a mixture of both, as ideological power does not come from content ‘ but because of the way they go about answering basic questions of meaning and the consequences that this has for organizational potential’ (Snyder, 2006:309). In this sense the answers that ideology provide us seem temporarily absolute even though they are overripe with contradictions, they do so through their potential singular explanation and addressing of social problems and the contradictions inherent within networks of people especially when marginalized by incumbent powerful institutions, by doing so they manage to gain enough credibility to be followed (Snyder, 2006:309). This is not to say that ideology’s intentions are malice, on the contrary, they frame social relations and can be a motive for a unity between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic institutions in finding middle grounds in which a symbiotic relation can be found. The rise of Hamas is evidently a particular example of such effective ideology.
Historic Overhaul in Palestinian Political Society

Hamas’s creation dates at the start of the 1987 *Intifada*¹, but the unraveling of the movement predates its creation and starts with the access to Israeli labor markets that increased per capita income and mobility after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 making a profound impact on traditional bonds, rendering them weaker (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 126). The outcome lead to new leaders to come to the foreground of politics other than municipal leadership, a class that was bound to the secular nationalist claims of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), simultaneously paralleling the new class of political elite was a group of counter hegemonic elite, the so-called traditional elite, who found the PLO’s dispositions narrow and more importantly found inspiration in the region-wide popularity of Islamism (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 126). The counter-elite group consisted of conservative members, non-affiliated to the PLO from the refugee community and lower and middle class urbanites but specifically the poor desiring social equity and meritocracy as a binary opposite to what they saw as a graft-oriented PLO guided by nepotism and corruption (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 126). Also well known is the historic support for the Hamas movement at its early stages by the State of Israel, as Chehab (2007: 20) accounts the questioning of Late Yitzhak Rabin by other members in the Knesset² for his roles in supporting and even funding their activities which he responds too as a strategic choice ‘to undermine the influence of the PLO’ at the time, and has become common knowledge for those interested in the conflict as Joffe (2005) reaffirms.

The 1970s and 1980s as populations exponentially grew and financial resources became readily available with the sharp rise and support of oil-rich Arab states came the newfound educated traditional elite, discontent with the lack of opportunities and unable to attain their expectations, that the first *intifada* was promulgated by them and under the umbrella of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Palestinian territories (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 126). Henceforth came the genesis of a new resistance wing of youths; Hamas and their highly controversial 1988 charter which declared goals that

¹ The people’s revolt
² legislative assembly for the State of Israel
reflected not only the harsh environment that they were brought up in, but also the socioeconomic background of the social base and ideological inheritance of social morality based on the opposition of PLO elite and as a revamped adopter of political Islam from their predecessors the Muslim Brotherhood (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 126). Yet even the controversial 1988 charter is not Koran\(^3\), as Mohammed Ghazal a Hamas leader is quoted saying, when discussing `reality' and the political solutions that have transpired with time in these real relations (Siegman, 2006:3). The significant temporal effects are not only confined to changes in relations but also to ideology itself, which constitutes the sole purpose for movements to act and plays a significant role in the structuring and operationalization of most political institutions.

The quest for answers on ideologies’ role and the emergence of ‘latent organizational potential’ is dependant on Mann’s four main factors: First, the availability of an infrastructure with a means of communicating to the people to exploit the existing contradictions present; Second, a supplier for the ideology, in this case Hamas presents itself more than just a manipulator but as an entrepreneur that provides information based on a motive; Third, comes the demand for the idea which must to some extent reproduce the concerns and interests of Gazan’s in order to mobilize their action, and finally the advantage and positive feedback derived through competition with the State of Israel and Palestinian rivaling party Fatah, paving the way for even more legitimacy and credibility leading to an expansion beyond that of mere ideology to the manifestation of an influential social network (Snyder, 2006:310). These fundamental concepts will be addressed respectively over the entirety of the paper but starting with a historical analysis of the structural conception of Hamas.

**Wings to Soar: The Structure of Hamas**

Hamas has three wings, the charities, political body and military ‘Qassam Brigades’; The charities are autonomous and if circumstances allow would be reviewed by their trustees and their elected executive board; The political wing is structured around regional councils, a national council and a political bureau, of which biennial

\(^3\) Holy book of the Muslim faith considered to be the word of God and can never be edited.
elections results elect the decision makers, while both the national council and political bureau are comprised of internal leadership and those in exile (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 133). Finally the military wing of Hamas is extremely decentralized so as to avoid detection, the relative autonomy of each cell within the wing is entrusted with the responsibility of being obedient rather than transparent, and to a lesser extent some of the cells are able to bypass the brigades hierarchy and consult leadership in exile, which further complicates matters and signals the contradictory claims regarding their operations, ever since the early 1990s (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 133).

Hamas leadership comprises of well-educated doctors, engineers and teachers, their primary support comes from the well educated lower and lower middle-income classes and especially those that their income was aggravated with the coming of the Palestinian Authority (PA) (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 129). All three wings of Hamas gain their legitimacy from four intertwined sources of power, its well-established network of philanthropic organizations with a highly respected reputation for financials and responsiveness and uplifting community’s interests, even though most of the charities have grown and become independent professionally, they remain under the overarching umbrella of Hamas as a political entity; where 80 to 90 percent of Hamas’s estimated annual budget generated through zakat⁴, remittances from the Palestinian diaspora, and international charities, is believed to be spent on social projects and not resistance activities (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 127/129). The second source has been their political activism, by dominating rallies, consultative councils and student unions in almost all the occupied territories. (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 127). Thirdly, their resistance activities, not only in military terms, but the political leverage that augments it through the ability to foil negotiations and the tantamount prestige that comes from commoners in reflecting their popular belief that Hamas is ‘paying Israel back…in their own currency’ allows their military wing to operate with limited restraint and zero accountability (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 128). Lastly, the valued position that Hamas has reached in the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be dismissed at this point, for not only do they enjoy support for their resistance from the obvious choices of Iran, Syria and Lebanon, but also from Saudi

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⁴ Alms giving
Arabia for their Islamic principles and even secular governments such as Jordan as the late King Hussien, has on several occasions supported Hamas, by hosting their exiles, and in 1997, asking for the antidote for a poison used in the attempted assassination of the now political leader of Hamas, Khalid Mishal, and demanding the release of key figures in the organization. It is blatantly obvious that late king favored Hamas, not in support of their rigid initial charter or lack of ‘compromise’, a position that he clearly was one of the initial instigators of, but his personal preference to them over the PA and Fatah party (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 128). The conglomerate of all four sources makes the PA in fact dependant on Hamas in regulating and administrating the Gaza territory to avoid a humanitarian crisis and reduces the chances of any clamp down, if necessary (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 128). Equally, it places Hamas in an awkward position as a newfound political party rather than a resistance movement, as the vast popular support it enjoys is no longer justifying practices of its military wing to go about without any assessment from a panoptical view of the global community, whose prime concern is the responsibility of this government towards its people demanding much more accountability and the obvious skepticism towards indoctrinating political Islam post 9/11.

Square Rooting Ideology: A discourse on Islamism and its structural roots in Hamas

The most provocative idea handled, is challenging the norm that the sweeping generalizations made on Islamism are not entirely correct and that there is a place in the global society for some Islamic movements, ever since the disastrous events of September 11th 2001. Islamism as defined by the International Crisis Group (ICG, 2005) is the manifestation of activism, under diverse hermeneutic religious interpretations on how to preserve this identity. In ‘Understanding Islamism’ they explain how in reaction to events on 9/11, Western observers and policy makers alike have branded all forms of Political Islam (read: Islamism) as hostile (ICG, 2005). Islamism is explained to have always had both internal and external bearings throughout history, but like most doctrines it too has multiple streams of understanding (ICG, 2005). There is no camera obscura here, the ideology behind Islamism is not trying to disguise its essential features, but the overall perception of a
uniform Islamism is distorting the perception of reality (Loomba, 2005). Broadly construed, with some generalizations, nowadays Islamism falls under three main categories; Political, Missionary and Jihadi, noting that the term jihadi here pertains to ‘holy warrior’ which is one of many types of jihad in Islam, not all insinuating warfare. The Political is to challenge misgovernment and provide social justice. This category of Islamism has evolved over the years, from armed struggles to accepting ideas of a nation-state, democracy, constitutional values and in some cases even equality between sexes, contrary to rituals of branding the religion as a cause of gender inequality and underdevelopment in the Arab/Muslim World through reductionism (Mohanty, 2003: 29); a form of reduction equivalent to that of stereotyping to reduce images into manageable forms (Loomba, 2005: 29). The Missionary agenda, otherwise known as ‘da’wa’ movement challenges the corrupted Muslim values and weakening of faith, to preserve an Islamic identity, their intentions are not political but cultural, in hope of increasing conversions simultaneously. Finally, the most wearisome form, Jihadist movements challenge non-Muslim ideals, politically and militarily through armed conflict in three different spheres; internally, globally and the irredentist who are claiming back occupied land, roots of which can be associated with the wars in Afghanistan in 1979 or more recent events in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, as such they move between both national and global scenes (ICG, 2005). An offshoot of Jihadist movements and also an integral part of its origins is ‘Salafiya’ or Wahabism that is scholarly and enshrined in punitive action also against so called ‘Bad Muslims’ and are often referred to as ‘fundamentalists’ that are hostile to democracy (ICG, 2004).

A negotiation on whether Islam and democracy are compatible is a widely debated topic in our current scholarly paradigm for its significance in the political assessments of contested popular parties in the Arab and Muslim world such as Hamas, as irredentist movements that have managed to shift their focal point from that to a significant political actor on a national stage. Thus, the burden of proof falls on Hamas, which has taken it upon itself to be both political and jihadi at the same time, to choose which form of Islamism it would follow if it is to be considered a responsible actor for its people by conforming to the general consensus of morality that governments nowadays must be democratic and accountable institutions, Islamic or not. Amir Taheri (2004) argues that Islam and democracy are incompatible and
uses a linguistic argument to further his conclusions by stating that there are no transliterations of words such as democracy or equality or even politics, but claiming that ‘democratiya’ was only introduced very recently in the Arabic language, as was the case with English, and also ‘sawiya’ for equality to mean steady or balanced and finally ‘seyasah’ for politics as to mean shepherding. What Taheri fails to recognize is that Arabic has other words that prescribe the same meaning and are even more relevant to the question he poses. For example, democratic leadership is embedded in the word *hokm*, to lead; from its derivatives you get *hikma*, meaning wisdom, *mohakama* to mean accountability and *mahkama* to mean judicial adjudication. To be a leader, in the arabic sense of the word and augmented with the main principle of Islamic polity *shurra* meaning consultation or as a verb *ohkom*, referee, is to be democratic in the Greek meaning of equality in *isos*. Secondly, equality, while loosely based on *sawiya* as the author suggests, it is rather *sawy*, and its derivative *mosawah* is the act of equality, the word attains its meaning not from its form but its application. Finally, Taheri, makes an accurate interpretation of *seyasah* for politics, which comes from shepherding, but also notable is that the term too is quite contemporary, as not in one scripture or medieval Arab poetry do you come across such a word, instead the word *hokm* mentioned previously as an articulation of justice, refereeing, leading, accountability and acting upon these principles situated in equality, are the foundation for not just meaning for the word politics, but also the actions ascribed to it, the ‘political.’

What is generally being ignored is that more than 800 million Muslims live in democracies including two heads of states in Muslim countries have been women, Indonesia and Bangladesh (Khan, 2001). The main attributes used in explaining the global war on terror or militant *jihadi* political Islam has been that extremists, collectively to mean both extreme and moderate political Islamic movements, “hate our way of life, our freedom, democracy, and success” (Esposito, 2007). Esposito tries to annul such claims though a qualitative study in which the sample included respondents bearing both views of Islam bringing about some interesting findings such as the most spontaneous response of what they admire the most about the west being technology, value system including rule of law and fair political systems based on democracy, human rights, gender equality and so on, with extremists actually scoring significantly higher (50 – 35 percent respectively) in their belief that
democracy would bring progress to the Arab/Muslim world and even more so, that it is extremists who are even more eager to have better relations with the West (Esposito, 2007). Showing that in our post-modern world ‘Diasporic Islam’ or what Peter Mandaville calls ‘Transnational Muslim Politics’ is no stranger to globalization, as there is a willingness to include their own identity with that of the global community, as he reiterates how during the days of Ibn Battuta or Ibn Khaldun, 14th Century Muslim Scholars, a Muslim globalization was present in which one person could travel between three continents and still be in a familiar culture (ICG, 2004). The roots of Islam in the practice of democracy and tolerance to other cultures is evident in Makdisi’s parallels of humanism and scholasticism in classical Islam and that of the Christian Latin West, by questioning the rise of humanism in Italy rather than the superior literary of France. Quoting Jacob Burchkardt and his explanation that an Italian Mohammedan ideal of nobleness, dignity and pride are the origins of the Italian Renaissance (Makdisi, 1992). However, this preposition is being challenged in academia with rivalries in thoughts encouraging the divide between scholars such as Edward Said and their opponents such as Martin Kramer who critique these allegedly post-modern ideas as ‘misguiding the intellectual slaves’ by performing a revision of history (Owen, 2002).

Nevertheless, Weber, Nietzsche and Hegel all are quoted to have said that Islam is the most practical, rational and realistic of all religions. The problem commences from it being realistic which is why violence at certain times can be condoned in self defense, but that does not equate the religion promoting such acts, but shows the struggle within the religion between constructivist/idealist and realist beliefs in that two verses from the Koran send very different messages to the worshipers of Islam making the matter open to subjective interpretations (Khan, 2001). The following are the two verses that are not hierarchically organized and a person may choose between, in their quest for meanings at times of crisis or conflict:

And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them out of the places from where they drove you out, for persecution is worse than killing. (Koran 2:191)

Tell those who disbelieve that if they cease persecution of believers that which is past will be forgiven them. (Koran 8:38)
Omnipresent is that those who choose militant means of resolving conflicts are reverting to the first verse mentioned above, but the one thing that Islam as a religion is innocent of is terrorist activity that targets human civilians, and specifically those targeted by Hamas, even if the argumentation is that they inhabit an occupied land by banishing its indigenous people and have all received military training, as is usually said, that should never be used as an excuse for current trends, not even if in retaliation to the deaths of Palestinian children by the Israeli military, as the Koran says:

*He who has killed one innocent soul, it is as if he has killed all humanity. And he who has saved one soul, is as if he has saved all humanity.* (Koran 5:32)

While not as definitive as the Koran in Islamic tradition, the parables and teaching instructions of the prophet Muhammed, were clear in demonstrating the principles in Islam on War Ethics, which prohibits fighting against non-combatants within and beyond battlegrounds and those who do not wish to fight or have surrendered, as well as forbids the killing of women, children, the elderly, the handicapped, monks and clergy, anyone praying and prayer congregations, the sick and injured and not to follow deserters off the battlefield. Furthermore, it is inscribed that no animals be harmed, or plants excised, water or wells intoxicated or the deliberate destruction of homes be conducted, at which point the general strategies of war are clearly expressed and should not include acts of betrayal, treachery, excessive brute, the mutilation of the dead and one apocryphal command, to never attack at night (Sabiq, 1987:41-42).

Even though the discussion on Islam presents a tangent to our political discussion and lacks versed knowledge (read: Koranic) on the discourse on war ethics in Islam, or Islam in general, the normative understanding of what purpose religion plays in our lives would never accept estranged practices by Hamas in reality as doctrine, if our objective grounds for a ‘transcendental is’ can provide Hamas with meaning for their ideology. Furthermore, it complicates matters as the differentiation between jihadist organizations around the world confuses the perception of what is to be considered terrorism and what is not. Terrorism is generally defined as ‘a method, namely, politically motivated violence that deliberately targets civilians, or to be more precise, noncombatants’ (Heiberg, 2007: 6). War as an institution has always been associated
with the state, yet in our post-modern world it has become so decentralized and based on ‘identity politics’ making it so much harder to disassociate the activities of Hamas from everything happening in Afghanistan, Pakistan or any other war where Muslims are involved, ‘a period of terminal decay’ of war, making conflict seemingly become primordial (Latham, 2002:259). The similarities between al-Qaida and Hamas should not be ignored and have branded Hamas as a terrorist organization, with Shimon Peres calling Salah Shehada the head of the Hamas’ military wing up until his assassination in 2002 a ‘local Osama Bin Laden’ (Chehab, 2007:70). However, these similarities should be open for discussion due to a limited definition of the word ‘terrorism’ based on tactics with no reference to the context in which they take place, which could alternatively mean ‘freedom fighters’, and even though Hamas have relentlessly tried to differentiate themselves from al-Qaida as a spokesman for Hamas clearly points out that ‘Hamas believes that Islam is completely different [from] the ideology of Mr. al-Zawahiri’ (Siegman, 2006), yet the global community is yet to reach a decision on the matter as they rightfully remain weary of Hamas’ deliberate targeting of civilians as a form of negotiating for justice amongst other reservations made on their form of governance that is slowly being exposed as a regression to authoritarian rule for the Gaza population under the same pretence of the formation of an Islamic state and their political survival.

Mysterious who’s who in what ideology? Hamas or al-Qaida?

Whether these statements hold true in our analysis of Hamas is yet to be revealed, but for now we can conclude that what is being suggested is not simply for Hamas to shave their beards, put on a smile and act civil with everyone, feeding to the demands of a realist strategic choice, even though tragically this would actually work, but to
actually construct for themselves a new political image. One that can differentiate them as an irredentist Islamist movement from the more dogmatic forms of jihadist Islam and it starts by renouncing the use of violence to achieve their goals and gain the trust and much needed respect of the global community in their search for global political legitimacy by potently advocating for peaceful solutions rather than inciting hate, in order to obtain their people’s rights and benefits whom they are responsible for.
Chapter Three: The Efficiency in Supplying Ideologies and Practicality of Hamas

By now, the realization is that Islamism as an ideology is meant to serve multiple purposes and has varied meanings that depend on the situation that it is to be utilized for, so the question then becomes, how well has Hamas managed to effectively utilize their ideology locally as a supplier? Organization-centered ideological power or what Mann calls ‘Immanent’ ideologies tend to stagnate the status quo, as alternatives seem far fetched and the destitute conditions of people hinders any attempts to a ‘transcendental’ ideology, this lack of imagination is currently what can be described as an embodiment of the situation in Gaza (Snyder, 2006:314). What Hamas have ignored in their rise to power is that even the expansion of Islam was not solemnly based on armed conflict; the persuasion to conversion was actualized through literacy, law and ritual alike and not aggression or coercion (Snyder, 2006:314).

From the institutional plane, persuasion according to Mann becomes a key mechanism on the supply side of ideology; the only crippling factor for its proper implementation is primarily the influence of private interests or material gain embedded within the tool which certainly shrinks the legitimacy of the network (Snyder, 2006:315). Both Fatah and Hamas in the ventures for political survival have fallen victim of traps of persuasion, for differing reasons, while Fatah continues to enjoy legitimacy through acceptance in the world community, even though they share a similar history to that of Hamas, the constituency of Gaza are provoked by Fatah’s in-group mentality which has sidelined the interests of some. While on the other hand Hamas has locked in a rhetoric that comes from an emotional understanding of the conditions of their people, this form of persuasion is similar to both the developments occurring during the French revolution and the period of nationalistic pride. In both periods the nationalistic claims had overridden any speech for tolerance, these claims did not end with the toppling of monarchies but continued after the circumstantial
events, as the French people became locked in the rhetoric of treason, as do Hamas when prescribing dealings with Fatah in Gaza (Snyder, 2006:315). The particular shaping of identity on an ‘is’ situation is also what aided the emergence of nationalistic endeavors which primarily rule the people but have rarely been accountable to their people as Snyder (2006) suggests to be ‘the universal expedient of political elites’ this is usually formulated within this shift with the magnification of an external threat, in some cases the out-group in post revolution periods, thus ensuring the survival of the new political elite, which reflects the huge void between the ‘is’ and ‘ought’ (Snyder, 2006:316). Suggesting that Hamas’ in their acquisition of the reigns of government, furthered their political survival upon their resistance to Israeli occupation and role in de-legitimizing their political opponents, in skirmishes based on political differences that jeopardize people’s lives and as such cannot be ascribed to the moral ‘ought’ in what can only be described as Khalil Shaheen from the Palestinian Center for Human Rights says:

‘They are playing with the lives of people and their pain. There's a complete absence of responsibility.’ (Hadid, 2009)

Hamas and their objectives in trying to rule over Gaza, based on popular support, was not always so distant from a moral understanding, as the differences between the identity of Hamas and that of its political rivals the well renowned Muslim Brotherhood or Fatah depends on two main characteristics defining Hamas’ structure and parallels its political culture, which are consultation and pragmatism (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 134). Again, to distinguish themselves from their political rivals, consultation with the population takes place in almost all vital political decisions such as participation in the 1996 elections, a practice that is to make sure that their legitimacy, as an organization remains enshrined in their social base of adamant followers, by doing so, consultation becomes the tool to increase their power wielding ability when in confrontation with Fatah, which happens to enjoy such privileges and has on several occasions taken that liberty for granted when considering the interests of all their constituents (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 135). Hamas in their own right have managed to address their lack of power through what western society would call populist democracy, and their financial integrity only helps boost their claims of ideals of morality. Hamas was not always arguably pragmatic in nature, if at all, but
various factors account for changes in ideology and momentum, foremost is their imprisonment that exposed them to many ideas of the leftist activists political sphere, that encouraged a pluralist understanding over an absolutist one (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 135). A second and important factor is the widening scope of their supporters that followed diverse interests, rendering them the main benefactor of alms and electoral support not for their stance on Israel, but the belief in their governance model embedded in their leadership skills and perceived integrity, Hamas as a counter-hegemonic organization lent itself clearly to the pragmatic politics evolving at the end of the first intifada, as no longer was it valid for the PA to be threatened by Marxists and Brother ideologies, as they attained their international recognition, thus eliminating any specters of opposition, Hamas in this pivotal political environment was able to establish itself away from the Brother’s condemning of leftist as ‘non-believers’ and provide social cohesion for Palestinians to a large extent (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 136). From their early conception in the 1990s, Hamas by imperatively seeking popular support for their political gain, embraced coalition building, building strong alliances with the so-called ‘unbelievers’ from the left (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 137).

Other factors that the author expresses to show the level of pragmatism within the Hamas lines, are according to the author manifested in the key leadership positions given to Ismail Haniyeh and the late Ismail Abu Shannab, both of which portray and vocalize the Palestinian people’s need to a ceasefire and have shown the willingness to compromise, If Hamas was not interested in such developments then more extreme views from within the organization would have held these positions (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 134). Pragmatism in the Hamas cadres does not come from choice in fact it is necessary for their political survival, the charities that operate do not have the access to some of the political elites and need the pragmatic program to further their goals (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 135). Furthermore, the late Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, was unable to rule autocratically as a charismatic spiritual leader for the movement because of his paraplegic condition, he was forced to depend on others, such as the well-educated charismatic leaders of the organization, Musa Abu Marzouk and Abd El-Aziz al-Rantisi, both of which enjoyed a lot of charisma, but because of their
education and professional careers were even more skeptical of autocratic regimes, which translated into their movement’s leadership style (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 135).

‘Hamas has begun a shift from an absolutist, reactionary resistance movement to a more pragmatic, politically oriented resistance organization, which, at least domestically, has become increasingly accommodationist.’ (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007: 123)

This level of pragmatism that Gunning and other authors express has not always translated well within the field of international relations and especially with their politics towards Israel and the Western world, whether that is because of a realist read of the ontology of the ideology itself based on an ‘is’ partaken through unfolding events or a misconception that groups together all political Islamist movements or a precise interpretation of the epistemological hidden intentions of Hamas as an ideological representation of political Islam are all valid questions that must be addressed from two sets of relations that Hamas has, the one with the State of Israel and the second being with their people in Gaza, as prerequisites in the construction of a new paradigmatic peace oriented venture within their institution.
Chapter Four: Archaic International Relations – The Hamas and State of Israel Conflict

Josef Joffe (2005) recounts events in the Middle East to try and see whether it is true that the State of Israel is the root cause of the conflict and whether the disappearance of the state would have any positive change to the Middle East and Muslim world in general. By accounting for the several intra Muslim conflicts including the longest conventional war between Iraq and Iran, Joffe concludes that what Arab/Muslim countries are blaming on the state of Israel, is nothing more than a diversion of the real intent of several prevailing ideologies in the region from Baathist to Khomeinist to Wahabist, and Hamas is no different for they too would not disband once Israel is gone, claiming that Hamas ‘has bigger ambitions than eliminating the “Zionist entity” the organization seeks nothing less than a unified Arab state under a regime of God.’ (Joffe, 2005) He further argues that Israel’s role in the region and its existence has curtailed some of the enmity between Arab states and even smaller parties hold against each other. The recent events that occurred in Palestinian territories reinforce his argument that the more land the Palestinians acquire the more violent the internal strife becomes. While Joffe (2005) makes a strong case against Hamas he too recognizes the gravity of Hamas as an organization and does not belittle the suffering of Palestinians people, but through his argumentation he fails to see that the fate of Palestine is attached to that of Israel and that it should be of equal concern for the Israelis, as much as the Arabs, that all neighboring conflicts be prevented if there is to be any peace in the region, and as such any confrontation and isolation of Hamas does not serve such purpose.

The mossad⁵ are even quoted as saying, that Hamas constitutes a fifth of Palestinian society, that has political weight that cannot be ignored, and to wish that they disappear one day as an element that is central to their society would be a foolish undermining of their capabilities (Siegman, 2006:3). But there is no denying that the

⁵ Israeli National Intelligence Agency
Use of violence by Hamas provides grounds for its inclusion as a ‘terrorist’ organization under the current political nebulas or to say the least an insurgency group that has long threatened the State of Israel and must be engaged one way or another, perhaps? An image that is conducive to the practices that the organization has adopted over the years and the sharp rise in military activity prior to the recent events that occurred in January 2009 culminating in a war in Gaza, which has had devastating repercussions on both populations. The question then becomes for how long will they persist or continue to jeopardize their constituency like that? And what is to be gained from such military action? Alternatively, we could ask why do some insurgencies last longer than others? Intellectual accounts on conflicts in several regions of the world between the 1970s and 1990s emerged shifting the core arguments to the resilient products of national, ethnic and religious categories. While some claimed that the rivalry was primordial others saw them as novelties. To others it was instrumented by the dwindling authority of elites, in this case Fatah, others viewed it as consequential to colonialism, imperialism, globalization and the leading theory entertained at the time, was the vacuum at the end of the cold war, that could only be substituted with ‘political will’ of major powers.

In all the significant scholarly studies, accounts followed real-world events (Heiberg, 2007:9). Hamas as a case is not so different from many other movements that have taken shape in all corners of the world, except they remain in the lime light and part of one of the most spoken about conflicts of our time, they utilize what has been described as insurgency ‘a technology of military conflict characterized by small, lightly armed bands practicing guerilla warfare from rural base areas.” favorable in societies with weak states and political instability, rough terrain, but predominantly because of poverty, all indicators mentioned can be attributed to the predominance of Hamas and rejection of accords held between the PA and Israel (Heiberg, 2007:11). The main reason for Hamas’ refusal of taking part in the Oslo agreement is that they perceive it as autonomy and not sovereignty, under which Israeli can impose a limited self-government for the people of the land (MEPC, 2002). Furthermore, Hamas refrain from recognizing Israel as they claim to not know where the boundaries of Israel start and end, meaning is what being proposed as the land of Israel, the UN declared 1947 borders, or pre-1967 border or does it entail fifty percent of the West Bank as indications show, Hamas remain skeptical of what the Israeli intentions are
when defining the physical boundaries of the conflict over land and are not fully against the premise of peace, but in details that have never been transcribed (Siegman, 2006:5).

What the State of Israel fears from a two-state solution devised with Hamas is the advocacy for an Islamic state, yet this seems to be more of a political and socioeconomic choice than a religious one, it is how their identity can stay exclusive and different by representing a substitute paradigm for the relentlessly sterile/secular government championed by Fatah, according to Palestinian opinion (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007:130). Also, the Islamic state that Hamas envisions is ironically one that does not adhere to the teachings of Islam and the concept of *Umma*, which does not rely on any nationalistic components within the Islamic state in the grouping of people but on religious affiliations instead. What this shows is that the responsive context-sensitivity of their position is always changing and given the right political environment, Hamas would not hesitate to marry their Islamist identity with an inherently exhibited secular logic. Abu Shanab, former Hamas leader, reiterates such claims in one of his interviews that the demographic outnumbering of Arabs in the region is not necessarily a threat to Jews for as much a right that Arabs have to live as Muslims so should the Jews and that the main problem with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the persistence of association within religious groupings with disregard to treating both people as humans as the foremost principle of relations, which can ultimately lead to the solution of the crisis (MEPC, 2002).

The total liberation of Palestine is but rhetoric that is equally contextually situated, for the unraveling of events occurring portray the willingness to become part of a political framework and as such ‘not as absolute as its absolutist rhetoric.’ Furthermore, the resorting to violence by Hamas only started in 1994, early after the 1993 Oslo accords, again this is contextual, and is not reflective of relations with Israel but the internal strife with the PA and lack of achievements towards commitments which widened the income gap between the in-group and out-group or counter hegemonic elite (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007:130). But the entirety of the situation shows more than just internal struggles as being catalytic to the initiation of violence by Hamas, as this turning point reveals one of the first moments of fallout between the late Sheik Yassin and Yasser Arafat, whom had been dear friends over
the years and were a united front, since the peace deals, according to Sheikh Yassin, disregarded the rights of return for refugees, lacked definitive borders and the quest for a capital in East Jerusalem, which were all blinded by the then Koranic interpretation of Sheikh Yassin that the Israeli state had but only 28 years to go until their downfall, because of his alleged correlation between the story of Moses and his people being lost in the desert and that of current political situation in Israel (Chehab, 2007:104). Beyond stating whether these demands are rightful or not, or whether they were strategically impressionable to foil the peace deal and gain popularity as a resistance movement, this position and belief never remained static as the relation between armed attacks and support for the peace process, soon after, as illustrated in a December 1996 CPRS poll underlies an inverted relationship:

Figure 3. Support for negotiation and armed attacks among Palestinians, 1994-1995. Based on CPRS Polls, Nos. 12, 15, 16.

Yet proof exists that not all radical methods and resistance operations are a consequences of Hamas’ lack of compromise, but also in retaliation to targeted assassinations, and notably that not all the operations were authorized by Hamas leadership as ‘spoilers’ (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007:130). Some were aimed to deter Israeli killing of Palestinian civilians as Zahar a Hamas leader is quoted as saying (MECP, 2002). Notably, the consequence was the tainting and distortion of their image as in 1996, the Likud party were able to come to power lead by Binyamin Netenyahu, over the less popular Shimon Peres at the time, a failed move that not
only shows some of Hamas’ political naivety at the time but had an adverse effect on the declared intentions of Hamas to shift the balance of power and reach a truce instead resulting in a shift in mainstream Israeli opinion with injected manifestations in Israeli people voting for a conservative right wing government during elections (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007:130). It is not until years later, when Hamas is elected, that reflecting on this incident would instigate some regret for the loss of lives.

The manifesto that outlines Hamas’ strategy on the outset of coming to power reflects a willingness to open up the political spectrum for all factions and even though what is documented is not so far from the objectives of the PA or Fatah in accepting a two state solution, the renouncing of their right to resistance was never transcribed, providing Israel with more doubts and interpreted as a consideration of Hamas to keep the struggle open for future generations as one senior official says ‘you will never find anyone in Hamas who will recognize Israel’s right to exist. If you do, he is a liar’ (Chehab, 2007:203). Correlation made to the past on such particular events broaden and stalemate the conflict at the same time as an archival interview with Sheikh Yassin’s states that he accepts the 1967 borders as only a stage in the struggle for independence and not a definitive solution to the plight of his people, but in the same breath continues by saying that he envisions a one-state solution, a land in which Muslims, Christians and Jews can have equal rights, but when asked if this should occur under an Islamic state Sheikh Yassin assumes the role of democracy in choosing such matters as has happened in countries like the United States of America (MECP, 2002).

Hamas’ praise of the United States of America and its important role to bring about a cessation for hostilities is one thing that has haunted Hamas as an organization in recent years since 9/11, as Hamas believes fully that the unparalleled support of Israel, is in one part slowing down the peace process, yet acknowledges that only if a shift in US foreign policy happens as it did during the years of Eisenhower and his stiff letter to Ben Gurion calling for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of Sinai, an event that Hamas interprets as a prerequisite for a forceful withdrawal of Israeli troops, essentially needs a U.S president with moral fiber (MECP, 2002). This recognition of US intervention unfolds to show that Hamas and the PA are trying to be part of a larger global community and are aiming at appeasing the global identity
yet have equally both imagined international relations under the culture of political realism, thus shifting the burden of achieving peace to negotiating with the superpower and shying from the imperative need to also calmly negotiate with Israel as part of a ‘transcendental is’ administered through the a moral conduct brought about by an ‘ought’ that it is Israel that are their neighbors and not the US. That is not to suggest that Israel has played any constructive role too in reconciling the complex and somewhat mixed differences, as deterrence becomes the underlining common denominator for all political strategy when it comes to this conflict as Jabr Wishab, the deputy director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, explains that the purpose of the recent Israeli attack on Gaza in early 2009 was a collective punishment tactic to enforce a deterrent against the re-election of Hamas in Palestinian territories to curtail their popularity as well as to demonstrate that Israel does not accept the 2006 election results and has already chosen the partner for peace talks, regardless of people’s choices (Wright, 2009). The disadvantages of a strategy of isolation being imposed, as proposed by General Shlomo Brom from the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), is that the Palestinian population will always blame Israel and the West for their elected government Hamas being marginalized if it is unable to perform its duties and concludes that a strategy of engagement remains in Israel’s best interest for the alternative would evidently fail under these special circumstances (Siegman, 2006:7).

The deterrent capabilities of both players displays a culture of political realism that dictates their strategies in terms that magnify the private interest of each party with no considerations for a collective understanding of equally desired goals to end a conflict that is inflicting harm on citizens of both camps. Through this a personalization of the conflict emerges by facing off the State of Israel against Hamas as the agents of negotiation rather than a favorable representation of the aspirations of both people. Evidence of such misplaced judgments have been discussed in Hamas’ overall potential as a ‘spoiler’ in previous chapters, but has proven to be shifting to a more limited form ever since they came to power, yet Hamas’ ‘Real Politick’ with regards to policy seems to be continuing to be primarily determined by calculations that are strategic in nature (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007:131). Since they are aware that ‘security is the one commodity that Israel desires and the Palestinians can withhold’ (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007:132). From Hamas’ perspective it is Israel that is stalling
the peace process and as such is the ‘spoiler’; no trust between the rivals therefore no will or commitment for peace. Statements made by Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al Rantisi conform to the perception of Hamas that they are given no other political choices with daily humiliations and aggression overwhelming their choice for struggle and freedom (MEPC, 2002). Abu Shanab, also delivers on the same notion by contesting the seven years of negotiations with the Israeli government, which in his view, Palestinian needs and rights have been tossed around due to Israeli’s superior military strength which it tries to use as leverage to dictate the terms of peace with the PA (MEPC, 2002). Another significant shortcoming of political realism that envisions relations within a conflict based on power, but alternatives to such parasitic associations do exist within the realm of engagement.

Marc Lynch (2002) categorizes both realist and constructivist traditions within the typologies of engagement by consummating strategic engagement to the realist agenda while the communicative engagement is assigned to constructivist theories. He defines strategic engagement as a logic of action that is instigated through a threat and incentive program that brings one set of actors to align with the preferences of another by attempting to manipulate behaviors with slight compromises made on both sides, thus the initiator’s policies are driven by targeting the receptor more as an object rather than an equal partner (Lynch, 2002:203). Several examples of such practices have been widely applied to peace programs and relations, while the author concentrates on the China-US relation, so to can the relations with the former Soviet Union and Russia be thought of in a similar fashion. These bonds although entrenched in mutual respect exhibit a very limited form of peace, a civilized one nonetheless, but the crucial misstep is in assuming that the targeted state, depending on which side of the fence you look at it, is unaware of the changes requested or imposed under the carrot-stick thematic, which when works means either idealistically, is a desirable objective, or commonly a carefully calculated ability to change or in rare occasions is simply plain ignorance (Lynch, 2002:203). The compromises made here are subsequent to level of commitment and distribution of power, where the weaker state needs to show conformity, and the stronger state less so in terms of compromise (Lynch, 2002:204).
Alternatively, communicative engagement presents a seriousness and awareness of both actors in dialogue of reaching a consensus through reasoning and argumentation that is in the best interest of both parties instead of one that is based on preconceived interests, thus understanding follows from an empathetic relation of each others claims and not based on coercion or manipulation, where ideally self interests can be bracketed (Lynch, 2002:204). The communicative model is supposed to champion consensus over compromise and should not be a persuasive attempt through rhetoric to alter one’s arguments or appeal to the normative, but to create a new shared set of norms that can be viewed legitimately from both sides, as rare as this ideal is in practice it should not be dismissed as an instrumental end for such a valiant goal (Lynch, 2002:204). By doing so, an alteration of the perceptions within each community of the right to land must be changed if bonds of trust are to forge, Palestinians and not just Hamas, need to accept that Israelis have every right to inhabit these lands away from historic beliefs of the land being under Arab or Muslim rule or the rhetoric of it being waqf land. While on the other hand, the Israeli and not just their state must acknowledge the rights of Palestinians to co-exist and that their interests are equally as significant in negotiations and that having a more powerful position does not necessarily mean that they can and will bow to the demands of the more superior military machine. Ideally, the best-shared norm would be to have a culture that believes in a one-state solution, however the viability of such a paradigm is extinguished by the Israeli aspiration to found a Jewish state as does Hamas arguably hope for with their Islamic state propaganda, both of which belong to the respective persistent private identities.

Both sides rely on their religious identity to further their politicized ideological stagnation which has to date only generated more settlement building, suicide bombing, civilian shelling and backward religious fundamentalism. From another perspective communicative engagement could also have a destructive element to it, as through intensive dialogue suspicions could arise of the intentions of actors as they realize what is at stake or the ‘depth of disagreement’ that might possibly inflame incidents, but that does not mean that communicative models are the proprietors of such damage but more of a consequence to a lack of trust that builds such hostilities.

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6 Islamic law of endowment of property owned by God to be managed by generations of Muslims and non other.
and lack of shared norms (Lynch, 2002:207). This is necessary to understand why most negotiations to date have failed between the two rivaling ideologies Islamism/Zionism and also between the State of Israel and Hamas as political actors, but also as maintained in constructivist tradition the deep-rooted identities of Palestinians and Israelis alike which draw a better map of what is expected from a peaceful resolution rather than political parties that are only temporarily the agents of change.

Lynch follows through his arguments for a shift towards communicative engagement by demonstrating the viability of reading and changing preferences in search of a stable order of relations by first and foremost proposing the need for a transparent and contesting public sphere for reading preferences which would constrain the state’s potential of strategic maneuvering (Lynch, 2002:211). However reading preferences is a somewhat ambiguous and as mentioned difficult task within conflicts, making it important to change preferences. Rationalists and realists in strategic engagement hold preferences as constant that need compromise to change as a solution, while interaction is the basis for the communicative proposition on three main points, that these preferences are open to discussion, and that the changes do not impose a regime change and entails more than strategy and change of behavior but socialization (Lynch, 2002:212). Hamas as a ‘limited spoiler’ has obviously had to accept these changes in a wake of compromise and not stemming from belief, so that their position is not to regain all the land they see as rightfully theirs, as the late Abu Shanab realized the inability of the rhetoric of Israel’s destruction from taking place and championed a ceasefire (Chehab, 2007:111).

This factionalism within Hamas is not only compounded on personal views but also in Rantisi’s statements that show that even the rhetoric of Hamas is what it is supposed to be, only rhetoric, where in an interview he states that ‘as for the destruction of Israel, we haven’t the strength. So to speak as though we did is not at all logical’ (MEPC, 2002). With that in mind, both populations must reach the conclusion that they are both destined to one fate as non will cease to exist whether the militaristic struggle continues or not, so what their actions are proposing is just prolonging the people’s entitlement to a peaceful settlement in the region. The equivalent of what we see today between European countries and specifically the peaceful relations with
Germany, a country that not so long ago was deemed an evil nation, bent on the destruction of our global shared norms. Within the act of persuasion, players must consciously agree to contemporary beliefs not by means of compromise but a preference of cooperation that does not assume away the conflict of interest but transforms the conflict away from identity politics and dogmatic beliefs whether they be national or religious to ones based on interest alone (Lynch, 2002:214). The socialization process should not extend a status quo of relational types but deliberately manifest itself in institutions that are accepted by both sides (Lynch, 2002:217). Tracing back to the hypothesis of Germany becoming one of the most fond of nations within the European union was tested on a sample of SOLIYA facilitators, the results that came are as follows:

Table. 1(a) : SOLIYA facilitator’s responses to poll on Cultural attitudes in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>As a National Of Britain/France/Germany, which of the other two nationalities do you have a more positive cultural attitude towards?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American/Australian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American/Australian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American/Australian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results although marginal in terms of numbers show that out of a group of 30 peace and conflict mediating practitioners, most respondents do prefer Germany nowadays than the other two nations. What was even more surprising is that even though American’s responses are to be considered errors, yet they yield the same result contrary to anticipated results based on the political belief that the US and Britain have stronger ties. These results are in no way definitive or accurate, but only an indication that change in cultural attitudes is not such a far fetched ideal, but as ‘real’ if not more than ‘real’ political affiliations between nations. We would suppose that after the Second World War that the French would appreciate the British more and overcome their historic rivalry based on an alliance against an aggressor, which
was made not so long ago, however, the newfound bonds between Germany and France prove otherwise from a culturally constructed perspective within this sample. Which evidently means that ‘real’ peace is not a by-product of political negotiation and affiliation, bearing its fruits in relations between USSR and China with the US but is actually brought about by self-reflexive nations that realize their deviance from the moral ‘ought’ and seek to create new ties based on a ‘transcendental is’ that accepts events as moments of the past, but ensure that progress is not based solemnly upon them, to allow for change, recreation and a re-imagination of relations.

Compromise is not the only viable solution through peace talks, for within the tradition of constructivism, if both parties are willing to accept each others interests even if they do not agree with the boundaries, then it is more of a mutual understanding that is needed rather than compromise. Establishing peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis is not based on power dynamic’s simple reconfiguration of lines on maps, but the understanding with no compromise the rights of both people in their respective states not only to land, but resources, respect for holy sites and the integral disposition of dignity, which is why Tanya Rienhart (2005) believes the Camp David negotiations were a mere strategic manipulation attempt by Ehud Barak to re-interpret UN resolutions 181, 242 and 338, contrary to beliefs of generous offerings, to provide the Palestinians with an undignified settlement that imprisons them in four separated enclaves on 60 percent only of the 1967 West Bank with no acknowledgment of the question of refugees, which she proposes would be the least requirement of the Israeli state to attempt to move closer to an end of the conflict, as it no longer poses any real threat for the Jewish state, but would imply a genuine attempt to reconcile the differences among the two people. (Rienhart, 2005: 42-60)

Political realism defines conflict in such rigid terms that restrict the people from imagining different societies, ones in which the track choices, are not obtained from what can be understood as feasible under the current ‘real’ conditions but rather allows for the formulation of new tracks that enable a conducive environment based on morality.
Chapter Five: Hamas and Governance,
Relations with Constituency and Rivals

Zeal is not the ‘God of War’

Religious identities were not always perceived with such negative connotations and did not become predominant for their advocacy of intolerance against other social groupings. Mann’s first arguments made on the role of ideology in track laying or track following, helps examine the structural potential of ideology from two dimensions, its existent social networks and ties prior to the qualitative leap in the ideology itself through a vessel or medium of dissemination and the contradictions that diminish the power of authority in existing monopolies (Snyder, 2006:310). Mann’s thesis on the analysis of ideology based on social constructivism revolves around what he calls ‘spurs’ in social power that take place in networks going beyond existing ones, as religious ideologies have done in the past tapping into and unleashing ‘the qualitative leap’ in cooperation between these various networks to their mutual benefit (Snyder, 2006:307).

The cases that Mann present are Islam and Christianity, as Islam worked as a tracklayer, setting down a pattern of social organization that managed to integrate feuding tribes that were incommensurable societies, solving disparages in collective action that bid the Arabian tribes against each other and especially the affluent trading families in Mecca, made reciprocal practices based on belief rather than kinship; Islam created a new moral standard by applying the simplistic yet much needed reform of equality and rigorous ritual to indoctrinate the new code of conduct between the Arabian tribes prior to its expansion (Snyder, 2006:311). Christianity on the other hand, exposed and purposefully utilized the contradictions within the networks of the Roman empire and within the Jewish community and in that sense became a track-shifter as society in Roman times was riddled with universalistic versus regional ties, hierarchy versus equality, centralization versus local governance and the use of military or civility; All this happened within the framework of a civilization that was
already burdened with the failure of imposing uniformity in culture and accepting multiculturalism; the utility of which provides empirical evidence of collectivity in a new culture that would be void of ethnic ties over a vast region, as Christians did not materially gain from being part of the in-group but significantly managed to survive famine because of the collectivity enshrined in their religion over that of the pagans’ (Snyder, 2006:312).

What both examples of the founding of Islam and Christianity show is that the empirical demonstration of the ‘is’ allowed for the validity of the ethical ‘ought’ for social utility, as political Islam nowadays fills the gap of deficient public services, Hamas evidently prove that point with their community programs, but just like salvation religions, their lack of sustainability lies within its interaction over time, with outsiders and the coming to power, as did Christianity in recognizing the much needed relations with the so-called barbarians, so instead of civil communication, militaristic tendencies plagued their society shifting the power and authority from their initially established moral code to that of the realm of military dominance (Snyder, 2006:313). In that sense, Hamas is only acting as a track-shifter as is unable to produce a different path for their people’s afflictions. Reservations made on the structuring of Hamas and contradictory ideological claims do not end with the apparent hostility towards the Israeli state but have also caused a rift within the organizations core, a schism that exists within its framework, as leaders of the military wing left to join the PA security apparatus namely Abdul Fattah Al Satari, Kamal Khalifa and three other highly recognized figures, because of repeated internal assassination threats and lack of communication with the political wing, reflective of an impairment within the armed struggle movement (Chehab, 2007:110).

The questions that arise from the demonstration effects of an ‘is’ tends to provide an answer to why do Gazans continue to follow Hamas and their ideology in general? Mann presents four plausible solutions to our dilemma, Ideology becomes effective if the propagators control all means of dissemination and persuasion and thus are exemplary of an immanent ideology which can only sustain itself as long as no decentralization of control mechanisms such as Media, Education and in the case of Gaza even weaponry to fend for dignity, do not flow to society, the only shortcoming of this answer is that supply alone cannot justify the demand for ideology (Snyder,
Furthermore, this form of totalitarianism is implicated beyond the acquisition of the ideological expansion and is no longer consistent with what is considered morally acceptable. The recent events documented by Amnesty International show an alarming change within the tactics of Hamas to remain in power, as during the recent war on Gaza, a campaign of violence was initiated against Fatah supporters, Hamas critics and allegedly escapist from the Gaza central prison who were accused of being informants for Israel while others were part of the PA security forces; two dozen men were abducted and then shot dead while many others were severely beaten, tortured or shot in the kneecap rendering them permanently disabled (Amnesty International, 2009). It is this among other factors that Hamas must reform and re-examine its priorities, whether it is to be seen as a government that acts responsibly for the good of its people or whether they choose to engage in two struggles that are diminishing their legitimacy and goes against the principles that have aided them to get where they are now as a just and popular movement.

The second reason for successful ideologies was examined previously in the paper and disproved, that of the illusory form of ideologies which entails a self-fulfilling prophecy that legitimizes the defensive stance against a foreign enemy through a process of othering which could in turn even provoke the enemy to methodologically adopt or believe in the rhetoric to a point where pacifism can be replaced with militancy, a similar notion to Lacan’s ‘gaze’ (Snyder, 2006:316). The third concept is beheld in cultural preconceptions, a variety of self feeding ideologies that are supported by the beliefs or based on familiar ideas that are accessible to the general public, which can indoctrinate the propaganda either in ethno or religious centric lines resonating in a fulfillment of what is believed to be general norms of the culture (Snyder, 2006:316). And what better concept can there be than that of freedom and right to land, a universal characteristic that is common in almost all contemporary conflicts. Finally and most vital for success is the ‘social utility’ of the ideology for its intended target group what Mann explains as

‘An ideological legitimation for private activity outside authoritative hierarchies or an ethical basis for stable relations of reciprocity that underpin market transactions.’ (Snyder, 2006:316).

The social utility of the ideology plays a significant role in the effectiveness of the demand for ideology and better explains the reasons as to why do followers follow?
Imperatively this is not to mean that followers are sheep, lead on by a shepherd, their respective role in the acceptance of ideology consumes a large portion and will in cases influence how the ideology develops. The two logics that consequently arise from analyzing the utility side show that their motivation creates themes that fit to their needs, as mentioned previously with Christianity, alternatively cultural meanings and preconceptions exert more effort in the process rendering other salvation religions or ideologies such as Buddhism and Jain asceticism from Hindu cosmology to flourish under such conditions (Snyder, 2006:317). Stark in Snyder (2006) is a strong believer in the social utility of ideology he even chose to use the same cases presented by Mann to develop further the reasoning behind the importance of utility over pedigree for ideological efficiency, as he explains that Christianity challenged the overwhelming pedigree of the Roman empire and ancient polygamous ideals, furthermore, Christianity required the exclusive conversion away from these hegemonic understandings into a community built through normative bonds that incubate collective action and the provision/distribution of goods within a particular group, a prime example of how qualitative leaps in ideology occur within a network (Snyder, 2006:318).

The expansion of socially utilized ideologies comes through two forms of effects; competition and demonstration, taking place within the network in the form of collective action. Increases are directly correlated to the motivational levels of the mobilized group towards the network’s goals through a reduction of opportunism and shirking or the tapping into of emotions that tie families together (read: culture) or linking the practical objectives to ‘high energy motivators’ such as religion or God (Snyder, 2006:319). The creation of a collective is an imbue of cooperative norms with sacred force to find resolve, however that notion is weaker at the track laying stage but can be inferred later on, as did Hamas by utilizing ostracism as a means of substantiating the killing of so-called brand of ‘traitors’ in Gaza or the events that culminated in the expulsion of Fatah, both noticeably similar to the persecution of Brahmin in the Hindu faith, basically fusing a fear of repercussions and forming an adhesive for those incorporated so as to avoid any decentralization (Snyder, 2006:320). In this case ideology also works to stratify society and should no longer be permitted as change for the sake of change as they are as efficient as their local competitors, which leads to the self realization that no one ideology is more
altruistic than another, but in a few cases they may override existing ideologies because of the purpose they portray and as such need competition for their own survival. Which is why recent changes and shifts in intra-politics in the Palestine political sphere with the engagement in reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas supported by all Arab states is seen as a positive change away from ‘moderate/rejection’ views towards Hamas, including the engagement of the US in this matter, even if this is just a beginning to a longer intra-struggle, however, these relations as unfruitful as they seem at the moment could provide initial ground for the acceptance of Hamas ideology and reforming their structure and would work as a catalyst in constructing change that does not recreate a hegemonic organization from their counter-hegemonic cultural roots (Lynch, 2009).

Gazans: Are they Blindly Following a Frankenstein?

According to a survey conducted by Jeroen Gunning of which results are shown in Heiberg (2007: 129) at the Islamic University in Gaza in 1997 several findings indicate an anomaly to what is widely accepted to be the image of Hamas, as the install base of support for Hamas comes from the refugee community compared to Fatah supporters that come from small villages with typically low numbers of refugees. Hamas supporters are religious with a recorded 73 percent positive responses compared to the 0.2 percent that were not religious at all. Yet, religion does not necessarily mean the same thing to all respondents as 38 percent selected ‘Islamization’ as the most important issue facing Palestine, compared to the 45 percent of the religious respondents indicating that peace, human rights and the economy was of higher importance. Furthermore, when Hamas supporters were asked what religion meant to them, 33 percent chose ‘integrity’ as a core moral understanding of the religion signifying a somewhat democratic tendency or approach to their religiosity, especially when 55 percent of the supporters also select modernity compared to the 5 percent that chose religious people to be the most influential institution with regards to their political views (Heiberg, 2007:129-130).

Hamas, proves to be not just a hostage of public opinion, but as a former pluralistic political organization, it has shown that it respects the interests of its constituency, as
it did in the 2003 ceasefire, when 73 percent of respondents to a poll stated that if Hamas continues to foil plans for peace talks, internal strife would be inevitable and a lack of support for the movement would grow (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007:138). The intentions of Hamas for doing so whether as strategic political maneuvering or genuine pluralism cannot be fully identified, either way, the wishes of the population in Gaza were respected and represented by their popular organization, which are all signs of democratic and not autocratic forms of governance (Gunning in Heiberg, 2007:138). The unequivocal founding of Hamas on political acclimatization and support base means that change can occur based on these two variables. While the political realm continues to be very volatile, the people’s frustrations with the protraction of the war could be enough incentive to change the political situation if democratic institutions are in place ushering for normalizations based on the respective communities and the downplaying of an exasperated personalized conflict between the State of Israel, Hamas and its rivaling political party Fatah. A conflict that has shrunk the humanitarian space and is ambivalent to the respect of human life and dignity. The lack of political backing and actions taken by political entities eroded the humanitarian space making it hard to access aid and information for both the international development agencies and the victims they are bound to protect making the demonstrative aspect of ideologies of war for protection fragile and paradoxical (Von Pilar, 1999: 8).

Everything seems to be understood from its contradictions, Hamas while playing the popular support card is using its newly acquired powers to crush any form of opposition. From their history as a counter hegemonic elite they have mutated into the one thing they were adamant on modifying. Is it power that lead to this distortion or is it a sense of leadership? And what does leadership entail, the brutal use of force? Gandhi had immense powers at his disposal, yet chose leadership instead, why? Was he thinking about ruling his people? Or salvation for his people? I think its obvious, no matter what the turnout was with concessions made of parts of India to Pakistan, that his choice was to trust and lead rather than the confrontation of his opponents. Not so many people have been so close to approaching sainthood, but if Hamas is propagating a similar discipline, then there is no room for the malice that is reported in the Amnesty International Report. Hamas in Gaza, with their recent acclaim of power, a position that eventually should be changed if their sentiment is to lead and
not control as they frequently state. It is no wonder that when the SOLIYA facilitators were asked in a poll whether they believed that Hamas was acting responsibly for their people, that all non-Arab facilitators with one exception thought they were not, not to be misinterpreted as a lack of awareness of the Palestinian rights to a state and their humiliating siege, but a moral awareness that violence does not solve the conflict and in fact endangers the livelihood of the people.

Table. 1(b): SOLIYA facilitator responses to poll on whether Hamas was acting responsibly towards its constituency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Is Hamas acting responsibly towards the people in Gaza?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Resistance legitimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No value for individuals liberties and violent form of resistance incites more conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Use of violence incites more conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not recognizing Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American/Australian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Use of Violence, strategic manipulation of Ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Use of violence persuades Israeli retaliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Violence inciting more conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Violence harms the conditions of the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French/American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Resistance is legitimate and much needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Use of violence creates more conflict and harms the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Violence not the best form of resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese/American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Media distortion and cannot be sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Resistance legitimate but still politically naïve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Resistance important for Palestinian survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Resistance movement not a government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Use of violence and unrecognizing of Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More interested in political survival than people’s well being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not enough devotion to domestic social and economic policy and more political maneuvering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, what was less surprising was the dominant view of Arab respondents, obviously more empathetic to the cause and emotionally attached to the conflict to receive the question not in terms of Hamas’ governance policy but in terms of resistance, which was rarely contested by the remaining facilitators, whom almost all of which empathize with the Palestinian people and are well aware of the views of Noam Chomsky and Robert Finklestein in debates and lectures, that argue that the latest attacks on Gaza were clearly and explicitly documented to have been premeditated and not reactionary to Hamas rocket fire and that the actual breaking of the ceasefire was deliberately planned by the targeted assassination of Hamas leaders. These facilitators were all well trained to not accept what is presented as ‘truth’ in mainstream news media and as such are highly critical of both Hamas and Israel, yet their opinions show, that Hamas as it is proceeding and reacting to events pertaining to the conflict is in no way providing security or the long awaited freedom of both respective populations. The positive feedback that pertains to the effectiveness of an ideology, occurs only when there is an increasing ‘returns to scale’ where the benefits outweigh the inputs leveraged for the ideology in terms of its followers (Snyder, 2006:320). To date the consequent choice or strategy of confrontation for the sake of dignity of the so-called ‘Arab/Muslim pride’ has provided the population with death.

What Palestinians are yet to realize is as much as the State of Israel can be pronounced as a violator of human rights laws within the conflict, so too has Hamas with its failure in providing protection and inflaming the conflict by extraditing the right to life, due process of the law, prohibition of torture and degrading treatment as well as the right to freedom of religion (Slim, 2004). The Religious aspects of their ideology although have been argued to be politicized and not doctrinal, yet alienates a Christian community within their population, when instead what is needed is to provide more social cohesion through coalitions to establish a homogenous political identity that can deliberate with the outside world and Israel. Israel on the other hand can afford to do so for they are, after all, a revival of the Jewish state, whether that
phenomena should be adjudicated in a similar fashion to the fears of a revival of an Islamic state on the same land is left to the readers to decide.

Social constructivists maintain that social facts such as identity and interests are comprised of norms and therefore the ‘is’ is sufficed by an ‘ought’, while Realists view social norms as a superstructure that rationalizes the social facts as in the readings of Weber and Marx, however both views do not disregard the ‘ought’ emerging from an ‘is’ premise (Snyder, 2006:322). Yet it is important to keep in mind David Hume’s dictum in Snyder (2006), that one cannot properly derive an ‘ought’ conclusion from an ‘is’ premise alone because of the ever changing variables that are underlying in an ‘is’. There is no certainty in reading events, accommodating different interpretations or readings, for as much certainty we can derive from the ‘is’ we can equally falsify such claims with our doubts of intentions behind actions taking place, good examples could be the explicit statements made by Hamas officials with regards to the end of violence if Israel was to recognize all the rights of the Palestinian people, according to the governing international laws that submit to the 1967 borders. If that were completely true then it becomes obvious that Israel is the wrong doer, however, the rhetoric remains inclusive of all Palestine pre-1948, and as such reinforces the Israeli doubts and rightfully so, under the conditions of realist thinking. Yet the recognition of Israel should only flow from a change in beliefs of the population and not a sense of surrender to daily humiliations. Mann believes that neither the ‘is’ or the ‘ought’ has primacy over the other but would rather want to see ideology more as a means of persuasion by conflating both the ‘is’ and ‘ought’

‘[Through] interactive and co-constitutive of social power networks. An Ideologically animated expansion of social power depends on the coming together of a latent potential for collective action in a social network, the motivation of a group of entrepreneurs to organize that collective action, and the provision of a normatively infused ideology that effectively overcomes barriers to collective action’ (Snyder, 2006:322)

Habits forged from cultural preconditioning and the use of force or even direct mutual reciprocity alone cannot overcome the dilemmas of society needed for survival against opportunism; transcendental meanings and norms that serve the paramount purpose of people’s well being, making social constructivism see social reality as a construction of norms through culture that helps both create and shift meanings within social groups, enabling a cross cultural dialogue to set their agendas, such as the
vanguard institutions, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have put in practical terms (Snyder, 2006:324). While Realists still believe that anarchy gives rise to the inescapable logic of fear and insecurity, as they believe that culture cannot diminish these effects and ironically even the most idealist of realists rely on military and economic coercion to unite the global community (Snyder, 2006:324). Regardless of the lack of scientific proof that military might can be attributed to peace making or keeping as purported in the realist paradigm, Constructivism as Snyder (2006) suggests is the only tangible form of logic that would prevent the occurrence or reoccurrence of conflict and that human resource strategies that are in tune with the constructivist tradition would have sharp improvements on a network’s efficiency (Snyder, 2006:325). Not to go as far and claim that constructivism is an altruistic solution to conflict in international relations, for their occurrence is as inevitable as our own existence, which will hardly be abolished, but we cannot dismiss the opportunity provided by this school in focusing on the exceptions to rules and the frequency of their application in curtailing world wide conflicts by acknowledging the Hobbesian trends of understanding existential questions but also knowing that the one percent counter reasoning for the human mind should not be limited to chance, but should be the goal that politics, especially in a time of conflict, should always thrive towards.
Metaphorical Euphemisms and Concluding Remarks:

The persistent calls for war on both sides puts the brunt toll of suffering on the citizens, what Hamas lacks in their vision is that the protection of its population is primarily dependant on the prevention of conflicts or crisis and not the reactionary defensive actions taken. ‘Power, as the outside world keeps telling Hamas, means accepting responsibilities too’ (The Economist, 2006). More importantly is the responsibility for their people, who under the beleaguered conditions have accepted a life of self-imprisonment ushering in a period of civil unrest. On the threshold of Civil War, one must ask, what are Fatah and Hamas squabbling over? Is it political survival or gains? A sandbox equivalent of sibling rivalry over who gets to open the Christmas present first, not knowing what will be inside the parcel and the delusional beliefs in a Santa Claus.

It is not denied that the situation in Gaza is as is often described ‘an open-air prison’ but what must be understood is what constitutes this prison? Is it the forceful physical jailing of an entire race, or the synoptical view in which Palestinians and Hamas alike have explored their existence from. What Hamas should have done with Gaza is not enroll in a new set of conflicts with Fatah and Israel, but work much harder with or without the support of the international community to prove that the uncertainties they hold against their future are false; A chance to prove oneself against all hardships and show restrain against the so-called jailers? Furthermore, what is even more curious about this situation is why do inmates choose the strongest as their protector/leader? As is the case with Hamas, does belonging to a group than can bear arms satisfy our needs for security? or is it wise leadership and neutrality as implied by countries such as Sweden, Switzerland and Costa Rica that ensures such due process? Would it not be reciprocally beneficial for Hamas to indoctrinate such principles in their ideology? Metaphorically speaking, and with no disrespect intended, Hamas represents a lion whose relation with nature can either be that of a caged zoo animal, a circus act, or co-existence in the wild. While obviously the panoptical view towards Hamas chooses to have it caged, yet Hamas with its realistic reactionary policies to events is
only delivering to commands uttered by the Gazans and State of Israel in what can only be called an ‘act’, of self defense or violence is irrelevant, when in fact, what is most promising for their ideology and acceptance levels is to choose to be as if they were in the wild, ignoring their surroundings and living on subsistence, but respected by all to ensure their survival.

The heroism subscribed to the sacrifice of life in name of God, religion, country and any other hyper-masculine definition cannot be permitted in constructivism, it is fair to say that Jesus Christ sacrificed himself to save humanity, but that never implied sacrifices on a battlefield, or even the more questionable targeting of civilian populations. Imperatively, what does the sacrifice accomplish? In no way is armed resistance by Hamas going to achieve the aspirations that they wish for and will probably only manage to retain some of the Palestinian rights in a distant future and nothing even marginal to what they fully deserve, if ever. These forms of identity politics and processes of ‘othering’ neglect ‘truth’ for the sake of individual accomplishment and interests, as Israeli’s and Palestinians are blinded by their thirst for self satisfaction that to achieve one’s goals they must squander the others, a zero sum game that begs the question of why do people choose to identify themselves in groups in the first place? Even if the world was divided into two camps, the warmongering humans and the docile peace-lovers, wouldn’t they eventually end up fighting over whether violence against others is morally acceptable or not, a future that not only proves the contradictions inherent in our beliefs but as an oxymoron shows the limitations of identity politics.

Without venturing too deep on why Hamas acts in a violent manner or whether it is in retaliation or retribution, one important phenomena must be highlighted, and that is the popularity and empathy gained from non-violent means of resistance. There is a reason why the monks in Tibet and Gandhi were enigmatic in capturing the global consciousness over current militant movements such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka, PKK in Turkey, FARC in Colombia, as well as Hamas. That is not to say that restrain either has provided durable solutions to such protracted crisis or conflicts, looking closer at the Tibetan issue and especially that of the West Papuans who’s quest for recognition is not even acknowledged but even suppressed by global moral bodies such as the UN, compared to more violent movements in East Timor which reached
independence. But, if we were to advocate for traditional realist logic then armed resistance is probably the best first stage to reach any cessation objectives. Hamas recognizing such sentiments, tried restraining themselves after the deliberate assassination of its spiritual leader Ahmed Yassin, a move that the Israeli state quickly recognized as a win due to its tightening security defenses. Simultaneously, Hamas also in the last war on Gaza, claimed a political win for the annihilation of its infrastructure and loss of lives, a celebration that induces lifting an eyebrow in discontent, but still managed to gain more sympathetic votes from the global community. While that could be relatively true, the apparent shirking of responsibility lies with its people, who lost even more, because of Hamas’ continuous rocket fire in a losing war that could have resulted in larger international support, if only, through constructivism, Hamas would realize that the pictures that hijacked the news on a daily premise were exacerbated by a position of an armed aggression of defenseless people calling on their moral consciousness’ and not a sign of weakness. Otherwise, Hamas remains in the shadows of al-Qaida, and while most empathize with afghani people, none have for the Taliban or al-Qaida, and for good reason, the Palestinian question and Hamas, should never be correlated with these dilemmas, under the pretence of Islamic association.

Conflict is resolved with visions that are principled by visionaries, people who socially construct reality to befit a situation that can be tolerated by even their worst enemies. Realism is unable to achieve such, because of its insistence on the ‘now’ and real time events in formulating recipes that help band-aid open wounds, covering the essence and severity of the gash, by announcing what is ‘real’ to be the truth. As if adding salt to a sweet dish can make it sour. Their strategies render a short sightedness in changing the status quo, yet they still dominate the international relations paradigm with a few exceptions in foreign policy that have managed to overcome this threshold and re-invent not only themselves but the path that humankind must take if we are to exceed the constraints of the ‘is’ in the ‘now’ and come up with the anticipated ‘transcendental is’ that constructivism accessibly promotes through advocating cultural (ex)change that redefines meanings by upholding the ethics of social relations that are beneficial to all, rather than self defeating animosity. Exceptions are not a minimal probability of events that can occur, but they should be the sought after norm of human interaction, for the time
being it seems that we are dictated and ruled by military and war machines in our advent search for security, but with non-lasting results. While it is maintained that Hamas has not been acting in the best interest of their people, their popularity shadows the harsh conditions that the Gazans have had to endure for decades. While this research might seem relatively inconclusive for not explicitly recommending a set of remedies to be administered, that is because by doing so it would claim that cultural change is not self induced, which is far from what this paper is repeatedly implying by avoiding impulsive didactics. And while I am not a proponent of either ideologies or activities embedded in Hamas, the State of Israel or Fatah, I am equally not against them either, but hope that in reviewing their claims, especially those of Hamas, critically and discursively that I do fairness to the cause of the Palestinian and Israeli people alike, and implore others from within the Israeli scholarly institutions to use constructivist’s holistic expression and perspective, as a means to reform their State, find just and fair solutions to the plight of both populations, that has been consequential to the ‘spectacle’ we call the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
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