

The influence of the Palestinian Factionalism and the political rifts on the political landscape and on the Palestinian Society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Amjad Husain Mohammad Bushkar

University of Carthage- Faculty of Legal, Political and Social Sciences of Tunis

bushkar_amjad2022@yahoo.com

Abstract. The current empirical study aims to discuss the influence of the Palestinian factionalism on the political landscape in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The study also seeks to identify the impact of the political rifts on the Palestinian factions, on the Palestinian people's struggle against the occupying power, as well as on the structure of Palestinian society in all of its sectors. The study concluded that the occupation of Palestine since 1948 has been ushering the rise of political factionalism and rifts among the Palestinian people. Accordingly, this led to the formation of many Palestinian's movements, factions, and forces operating outside the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization, i.e., it transformed the Palestinian issue from a people's struggle for freedom and independence into a struggle for power. The findings of the current study further demonstrated that the Palestinian political factionalism and rifts led to the Palestinians' disempowerment and preclude genuine mobilization. It also has a noticeable negative impact on the Palestinians' social fabric, public services systems include the sectors of health, education, housing, the economic, etc. It also negatively influenced all the values, principles, customs and traditions that ruled the Palestinian society for years. Moreover, it allowed foreign countries to increase their interference in Palestinian affairs. Finally, the study demonstrated that the Palestinians' political factionalism plays a major role in the occupation's evasion of agreements and obligations under the pretext that there is no Palestinian partner for peace in light of the existence of two different political bodies who represent the Palestinian people. Furthermore, it led to increase the Palestinian youths' immigration, the increase in suicide rates among the Palestinians youths of both males and females, partisans' fanaticism, increase in the poverty rate and the lack of job opportunities, isolating the Gaza Strip from the West Bank, reducing the Palestinian society's productive capabilities, decreasing its domestic and gross income rates, and at the top of that it created a state of partisans' fanaticism among the Palestinians in Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Keywords. Occupation, Factionalism, political rifts, partisans' fanaticism

Historical background of the study

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict which started by the Israeli occupation of Palestine in (1948) is described as one of the world's most often intractable and enduring conflicts as it has its roots in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict started by the several public declarations of claims that were made to fulfill the Jewish homeland's dream in Palestine which represented the everlasting aspiration rooted in Jewish history, religion, and culture, including: '*The 1897 First Zionist Congress*' (*the inaugural congress of the Zionist*

Organization (ZO) held in Basel in northwestern Switzerland, from 29th August to 31st August (1897) which was chaired by the founder of the modern Zionism movement ‘Theodor Herzl’ and formulated and founded the Zionist Organization) (Epstein, 1989) and ‘The 1917 Balfour Declaration’ (a public statement issued by the British government in 1917 during the First World War announcing support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine then an Ottoman region with a small minority Jewish population. The declaration was contained in a letter dated 2nd November (1917) from the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary ‘Arthur Balfour’ to ‘Lord Rothschild’, a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. The text of the declaration was published in the press on 9th November 1917) (Adelson, 1995; Allawi, 2014; Antonius, 1938).

The (1917) Balfour declaration led to an increase of the popular support for Zionism within Jewish communities worldwide and became a core component of the British Mandate for Palestine (*a League of Nations mandate for British administration of the territories of Palestine and the Amirate of Transjordan*), both of which had been conceded by the Ottoman Empire following the end of World War I in 1918. In fact, the mandate was assigned to Britain by the San Remo conference in April 1920, after France's concession in the 1918 Clemenceau–Lloyd George Agreement of the previously-agreed ‘international administration’ of Palestine under the Sykes–Picot Agreement). Actually, the Sykes–Picot Agreement in (1916) is a secret treaty held between the United Kingdom and France, with assent from the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Italy to define their mutually agreed spheres of influence and control in an eventual partition of the Ottoman Empire. The agreement effectively divided the Ottoman provinces outside the Arabian Peninsula into areas of British and French control and influence (Fromkin, 1989; Renton, 2016; 2007; Schölch, 1992; Reid, 2011; Salibi, 1998).

The previous mentioned public declarations of claims played a significant role in creating early tension in the region, starting from the time when the region started to witness a significant Jewish immigration to Palestine that followed the implementation of the founding document of Mandatory Palestine ‘*the mandate for Palestine*’, which included a binding obligation on the British government for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people that is later translated into the emergence of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (*the official terminology used by the United Nations to refer to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, namely the West Bank -including East Jerusalem- and the Gaza Strip*). Since then, the tension grew into sectarian conflict between Jews and Arabs and caused the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

In other respects, and since the emergence of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, several events took place including:

- **The Arab-Israeli War of (1948):** It was the first Arab war with Israel that took place after the end of the British Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of the establishment of Israel in mid-May (1948). The war claimed the lives of thousands of soldiers on both sides, and ended with the defeat of the Arabs, so they called it the ‘*Nakba War*’. Upon declaring the termination of the British Mandate over Palestine, the United Nations General Assembly approved on 29th November (1947) a resolution to partition Palestine into a Jewish state (56% of the total area of Palestine), an Arab state (43% of the area) and the internationalization of Jerusalem (1) % of the area. While the Jews welcomed the decision, the Arabs and Palestinians announced their rejection of the resolution. In the period between 8th–17th December (1947), the Arab countries declared that the partition of Palestine was

illegal and hence sent armies from five Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon) to fight in the intended war. On 7th January (1949), the war ended.

According to The Jerusalem Post (2015) and The Jerusalem Post (2016), the term ‘*Nakba*’ (*Lit. the disaster*) also refers to the destruction of Palestinian homeland in (1948) and the permanent displacement of a majority of the Palestinians. Nowadays, the term ‘*Nakba*’ is still used to describe the ongoing persecution and the displacement in Palestinian refugee camps throughout the region as well as to describe the occupation of West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The *Nakba*’s foundational events were taken place during and after the Arab-Israeli War of (1948). This includes: a) the declaration of 78% of Mandatory Palestine being as Israel, b) the depopulation and destruction of over 500 Palestinian villages with a majority being entirely destroyed, renamed with Hebrew names and repopulated by Jewish immigrants, c) the exodus of 700,000 Palestinians, and d) the denial of the Palestinian right of return, the creation of permanent Palestinian refugees and the shattering of Palestinian society (Hania, 2018; Nur, 2012; Ghanim, 2009; Morris, 2004; Aruri, 2001).

Admittedly, the *Nakba*, according to (Nur, 2012; Butenschon, *et al.*, 2000; Forman & Kedar, 2004; Bokae'e, 2003; Benny, 2003; Schulz, 2003; Kattan, 2005; Sa'di, & Abu-Lughod, 2007) encompasses: a) the displacement of the Palestinian society as during the Arab-Israeli War of (1948), an estimated 700 thousand Palestinians fled or were expelled, comprising around 80% of the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of what became Israel, b) the dispossession and erasure of the of Palestinian society: before, during and after the Arab-Israeli War of (1948), hundreds of Palestinian towns and villages were depopulated and destroyed. In addition, over a number of decades, numerous Palestinians historical sites and artefacts of museums and archives were destroyed by the Israelis. For instance, over 80% of Palestinian village mosques have been destroyed, c) the statelessness and denationalization of the of Palestinian society: which was a central component of the *Nakba*. As a result of the *Nakba*, all Arab Palestinians became immediately stateless. Indeed, after (1948), Palestinians were classified into: Israeli-Palestinians (*citizens of Israel who identify themselves as Arab*), UNRWA Palestinians (*whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1st June 1946 to 15th May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict*), West Bank-Palestinians (*the Palestinians who reside in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank*), Gazan-Palestinians (*the Palestinians who reside in the Gaza Strip*), the Palestinian diaspora (*the Palestinian people living outside the region of Palestine and the refugee camps*), and finally d) the fracturing of the Palestinian society: Nowadays, a majority of the 13.7 million Palestinians live in the diaspora (*primarily in Arab World's' countries: 6.2 million people registered by the UN's dedicated Palestinian refugee agency, UNRWA, about 40% live in the West Bank and Gaza, and 60% in the diaspora where a large number of them are integrated into their host countries*).

▪ The Arab-Israeli conflict had also witnessed (4) other major wars in the years 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982 (Aljazeera, 2004). Firstly, ‘The 1956 War’: which is also known as ‘*The Second Arab–Israeli war*’, the ‘*Suez War*’, and ‘*The Triple Aggression*’. As President Gamal Abdel Nasser (*the second president of Egypt from 1954 until his death in 1970*) had nationalized the Suez Canal, after the World Bank refused -at an American urging- to provide a loan to Egypt to build the High Dam, which made both France and England, in coordination with Israel, to launch a comprehensive attack on Egypt that began on 29th, October (1956). With the entry of Israeli forces into the Sinai, which France and England considered (*according to the previously drawn up scenario*) as a pretext for intervention in the Canal Zone, and despite the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Sinai, and despite the Soviet and American international pressure, Israel was forced to withdraw from the Sinai due to the Egyptian resistance which eventually led to the end of operations on 6th November

(1957). Mayer (2010) stated that 'The 1956 War' was an invasion of Egypt by Israel, followed by the United Kingdom and France. The aims of the war were to regain control of the Suez Canal for the Western powers and to remove Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had just nationalized the foreign-owned Suez Canal Company, which administered the canal. Secondly, 'The 1967 War': The Third Arab–Israeli war which is known as the '*an-Naksah*' (Lit. '*The Setback*'), and the '*Six-Day War*'. This war was an armed conflict fought from 5th to 10th June (1967) between Israel and a coalition of Arab states primarily comprising Jordan, Syria and Egypt (then known as '*United Arab Republic*'). This war represented a multi-dimensional disaster, the effects of which have not been completely erased from the Arab memory so far, as the armies of three Arab countries were subjected to a crushing defeat by the Israeli forces. During the 5th to 10th days of June, Israel occupied the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, the Syrian Golan Heights, the Palestinian West Bank, and Gaza Strip, in addition to East Jerusalem, which was controlled by the Jordanian forces. The results of this war still represents the main obstacle to the peaceful settlement of the conflict. Thirdly, 'The 1973 War': which is known as '*The Fourth Arab–Israeli War*', '*The Sixth of October War*' (or '*The Tenth of Ramadan War*'), and '*The 1973 Arab–Israeli War*', while Israel calls it the '*Yom Kippur War*': The Egyptian and Syrian forces, in the framework of a joint military plan, launched a historic surprise attack against the Israeli forces in Sinai and the Golan Heights. As a result, the first Israeli defense lines were completely destroyed, and while the Egyptian forces managed to establish their positions at a distance of 15-20 km east of the Suez Canal, the Syrian forces retreated to the lines of 5th October again, and then the conditions of the forces overlapped dramatically on the Egyptian front as well in what was known as '*The Gap*', before the shooting stopped on 24th October, and in the aftermath of the war negotiations began to disengage, which actually took place at the beginning of (1974). According to Herzog (1982) and Bean & Girard (2001), The 1973 War was an armed conflict fought from 6th to 25th October (1973) between Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria. The majority of combat between the two sides took place in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights; both of which were occupied by Israel in (1967). Fourthly, '*The 1982 War*': It is known as '*The Lebanon War*', or '*The invasion of Lebanon*', although some sources do not consider it as a '*major armed conflict*' like the previous mentioned war. This war was one of the most complex acute developments in the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Israeli forces invaded Lebanon to destroy the bases of the Palestine Liberation Organization and approached to besiege the Islamic sector of Beirut for a period of ten weeks before withdrawing after reaching an agreement regarding the exit of the '*Palestinian forces*' from Lebanon, Israel's expansion of the '*border Strip*' which it had occupied in southern Lebanon in (1978), the Israeli forces committed the massacre of Sabra and Shatila, and the Israeli army, which was led by Ariel Sharon, was subjected to a violent shock. According to Kahalani (1994), 'The 1982 War' started when the Israeli Defense Forces invaded southern Lebanon after repeated attacks and counter-attacks between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) -operating in southern Lebanon- and the Israeli Defense Forces. The war caused civilian casualties on both sides.

▪ The first Palestinian intifada: Which is the Palestinian protests and riots' series against the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The 1st intifada began in 9th December 1987 in the Jabalia Refugee Camp -a Palestinian refugee camp located 3 kilometers north of Jabalia in the North Gaza Governorate, Gaza Strip-. The 1st intifada lasted until the Madrid Conference '*a peace conference*' was held from 30th, October to 1st, November (1991), and was hosted by Spain and co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union to revive the Israeli–Palestinian peace process through negotiations, involving Israel and the Palestinians as well as many Arab countries, including Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. For others, the date of conclusion of

the 1st intifada lasted until (1993), with the signing of the Oslo Accords which were a peace process aimed at achieving a peace treaty based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions (242) and (338), and at fulfilling the "*right of the Palestinian people to self-determination*". The Oslo Accords consisted of the Oslo I Accord, which was signed in (1993) between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington, D.C., and the Oslo II Accord, which was signed in Taba, Egypt, in (1995). It is worth mentioning that the Oslo I and Oslo II resulted in the recognition by the Palestine Liberation Organization of the State of Israel and the recognition by Israel of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner in permanent-status negotiations. Further, the Oslo I and Oslo II also resulted in creating a Palestinian Authority tasked with limited self-governance of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Nasrallah, 2013; Said, 1989; Murphy, 1993; Lustick, 1993).

▪ The second Intifada (AKA '*the Al-Aqsa Intifada*'): Which was another Palestinian uprising, protests and riots against Israel that occurred between December (1987) and (1993) and was triggered by the failure of the 2000 Camp David Summit (*a summit meeting at Camp David between United States president Bill Clinton 'the 42nd president of the United States', Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak 'the tenth prime minister from (1999) to (2001)' and Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat 'the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from (1969) to (2004) and the President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) from (1994) to (2004)'*). The summit took place between 11th and 25th July (2000) and was an effort to end the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and to reach final agreement on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process which ended without an agreement. In fact, the 2nd Intifada started in September (2000), after [Ariel Sharon](#) '*the 11th Prime Minister of Israel from March (2001) until April (2006)'* made a visit to the Haram esh-Sharif '*The Noble Sanctuary of Jerusalem*' (Reinhart, 2006; Drakulich, 2005). Actually, many consider '*The Sharm el-Sheikh Summit*' (*a meeting of four [Middle Eastern](#) leaders at [Sharm El Sheikh](#), in the [Sinai Peninsula](#), [Egypt](#), that took place on 8th February in (2005) as an effort to end the four-year [Second Intifada](#). The four leaders were Israeli Prime Minister [Ariel Sharon](#), President of the Palestinian Authority [Mahmoud Abbas](#), Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and King Abdullah II of Jordan) to be the end of the Second Intifada (Tucker, 2019). The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas '*the president of the State of Palestine and the Palestinian National Authority. He has been the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) since 11th November (2004), PNA president since 15th January (2005), and State of Palestine president since 8th May (2005). Abbas is also a member of the Fatah party and was elected chairman in (2009)'* and the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon agreed that all Palestinian factions would stop all acts of resistance against all Israelis everywhere, while Israel would cease all its military activity against all Palestinians everywhere, release 900 Palestinian prisoners of the 7,500 being held at the time, and to withdraw from West Bank towns that had been reoccupied during the intifada. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the Roadmap for peace (*a plan to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict proposed by the Quartet 'a foursome of nations and international and [supranational](#) entities' on the Middle East, which includes: the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations. The principles of the plan were first outlined by U.S. President George W. Bush in a speech on 24th June (2002), in which he called for an independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace. A draft version from the Bush administration was published as early as 14th November (2002). The final text was released on 30th April (2003). The process reached a deadlock early in phase (I) and the plan was never implemented*) (Riley, 2016; Hanieh, 2000; Pressman, 2003). Furthermore, in the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, Israelis and Palestinians reconfirmed their commitment to the*

Roadmap. At the Annapolis Conference ‘*a Middle East peace conference held on 27th November (2007) at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, United States*’, both parties again expressed their commitment to the Roadmap. Despite intensive negotiations in the following months, the parties did not reach an agreement. The negotiations ended in September (2008) without result. When the Olmert’s (*the 12th Prime Minister of Israel from 2006 to 2009*) government started a major assault on Gaza in December (2008), the peace process completely collapsed. In addition, after the end of President Bush’s term of office in January (2009), the Roadmap fell into the background (ibid).

It is important to note that ‘*the armed conflicts*’ were not limited to the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict as was indicated to the major regular wars that determined the general course of the conflict, but rather included multiple patterns of a size that is sometimes difficult to limit to violent military interactions. These interactions range from military operations of strategic dimensions, armed paramilitary clashes, and organized armed violence, such as Hezbollah’s operations in southern Lebanon during the 1990s (*Note: Hezbollah is a Lebanese Shia Islamist political party and militant group that is led by its Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah since 1992*), the first Palestinian intifada (1987) and the second Palestinian intifada (2000), the limited cross-border incursions as was taking place on the Jordanian-Israeli borders for many years, the ongoing street clashes in the occupied Palestinian territories, the violent acts of a special nature, such as the hijacking of planes by some Palestinian organizations in the seventies, the assassination of Israel ‘*Abu Jihad*’ (*a Palestinian leader and co-founder of the nationalist party Fatah and eventually becoming the commander of Fatah’s armed wing al-Assifa*) in (1989), Hamas operations against Israel in (1996) and (2001), etc., which in total constituted a state of war without specific rules between the Arabs and Israel (Aljazeera, 2004).

Problem statement

Admittedly, the occupation of Palestine in (1948) led to the formation of many movements and factions of national action against the occupation throughout the modern history of the Palestinian cause. Despite the different visions and programs of these factions, political groupings and national movements, the common denominator among them all is that the available means at the time differed. As a result of the major events that took place against the occupier and the Palestinian land at the demographic, political and national levels, and the occupation of the entire Palestinian lands in (1967), and the decline of the Arab situation, a sharp discrepancy arose in the political programs and the reading of the scene of the Palestinian national project as a consequence of the Palestinian nationalist dimension between the Palestinian factions. The Arab nationalist shifted in (1964) to its revolutionary national dimension after the (1967) defeat in which the Palestine Liberation Organization’s (PLO) factions adopted the political orientation based on the interim program in (1974), which resulted in the international, regional, and Arab recognition of this Palestinian trend as the sole representative of the people in all its places of existence (Sweilem, 2007).

In that period, the Palestinian arena witnessed the emergence of Palestinian forces operating outside the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization with an Islamic character and a liberation project that stemmed from the Islamic conception in its analysis of the political phenomenon and the nature of the relationship with the occupation. With the escalation of political and military action in the 1980’s in what was known as the first intifada, the competition intensified between the most prominent faction in the Palestine Liberation Organization, represented by the Fatah movement, and the Islamic faction known as the Hamas movement, which was launched in (1987) with the start of the first Palestinian intifada, and each party set out to determine its positions

on the issue and ways to change its solution (Bani-Odeh, 2017). According to Kear (2018), Litvak (2008), and Mukhimer (2012), Hamas 'AKA *'the Islamic Resistance Movement'*, is a [Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist, militant, and nationalist](#) organization. It has a social service wing, [Dawah](#), and a military wing, the *'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades'*. It won the [2006 Palestinian legislative election](#) and became the de facto –according to Webster's College Dictionary (2018) and Dictionary.com (2017), the term de facto describes practices that exist in reality, whether or not they are not officially recognized by laws- governing authority of the Gaza Strip following the 2007 Battle of Gaza, It also holds a majority in the [parliament](#) of the [Palestinian National Authority](#).

Back to the Palestinian factionalism and political rifts between the most prominent faction in the Palestine Liberation Organization, represented by the Fatah movement (*according to Al-Zaytouna Center for studies & consultations (2011), Fatah is formerly the 'Palestinian National Liberation Movement', is a Palestinian nationalist social democratic political party and the largest faction of the confederated multi-party Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and second-largest party in the Palestinian Legislative Council-PLC*), and the Islamic faction known as the Hamas movement, the aforementioned conflict intensified after the signing of the Oslo Accords and its subsequent applications on the ground that put Fatah and Hamas into a direct confrontation that brought the relationship between the two parties into a major impasse, which ultimately led to a political division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, and the contradictions of the political programs presented in the Palestinian political arena. In addition, after the sudden developments and changes that occurred after the legislative elections in (2006), in which Hamas won, and this led to a conflict over power between the presidency, headed by Mahmoud Abbas '*President of the Palestinian National Authority*', Fatah movement, and the Legislative Council, which represents the majority of Hamas. This led to armed clashes that carried out between Hamas and Fatah, which ended with Hamas taking control of the Gaza Strip. Accordingly, this resulted in creating a state of political division among the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza which severely influenced the Palestinian cause in general (Bani-Odeh, 2017).

The Palestinian society has been affected by many internal and external factors that had an influential impact on its values, beliefs and relationships during its stages of inception and development, and the nature of the political situation of the Palestinian society it has been experiencing through several years. Such situation can be described as an existential struggle starting with land and ending with identity, entity, loyalty and belonging. The Palestinian society has gone through the most dangerous stage in its inception and development, the stage that has been afflicted by the Palestinian factionalism, which led to the division of the Palestinian entity into two independent geographical and political regions, and contributed to the dispersal of the independent Palestinian decision to get the Palestinian cause out again from its independent national framework, and let it enter again into other frameworks, affecting the internal Palestinian policy equation within its agendas and priorities, and keeping it away from the independent national decision (Al-Jabour, 2019).

The internal Palestinian political division (*AKA political rifts*) has negative effects on the Palestinian cause in general and on the political, economic and social system of the Palestinian society and its structure, such as the high rates of poverty, unemployment, declining growth rates, and the spread of dangerous social pests on the societal fabric, such as: immigration and partisan fanaticism, in addition to the infringement on public and private freedoms by the two divided authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

With the entry of Hamas into the Palestinian political system which resulted from its success in the legislative elections in (2006) and the formation of the government, signs of conflict began to appear between Hamas and the Palestinian presidency which reached the point of an armed military confrontation that led to the control of Hamas over the Gaza Strip. Hence, a new phase began in the history of the Palestinian people, which was characterized by a state of political and geographical division between Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which had clear repercussions on the internal official and Palestinian community, at the regional and international levels, and in light of the stage in which internal Palestinian disputes reached the point of armed conflict and political and intellectual division, which was directly reflected on the members of society by their division between supporters and opponents of the two sides of the internal Palestinian conflict (ibid).

An overview of the Palestinian Factionalism and political rifts

The state of the Palestinians' factionalism is represented in the condition in which the Palestinian people within a [larger](#) group had split into many movements, factions, organizations, and/or parties that are contentious or self-seeking, with differing and often opposing opinions or interests due to arguments or disputes.

An example of the Palestinians' factionalism is Hamas' agreement to enter the legislative elections which constituted a new political stage for Hamas' relationship with the National Authority. The movement agreed to participate in the legislative elections at the Cairo Dialogue in (2005) (which later became known as 'the Palestinian Cairo Declaration'. According to Ma'an News Agency (2007), the Palestinian Cairo Declaration is a declaration that was signed on 19th March (2005) by twelve Palestinian factions, including [Fatah](#), [Hamas](#), Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). The Cairo Declaration reaffirmed the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people through the participation in it of all forces and factions according to democratic principles. The Declaration implied a reform of the PLO by the inclusion in the PLO of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The signatories included Fatah, headed by Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas, headed by Khalid Mash'al who is a former leader of the Palestinian organization Hamas). What is new on this regards is that Hamas has joined, for the first time, the committee, which is composed of the president of the National Council, members of the Executive Committee, general secretaries of all Palestinian factions, and national figures.

After the elections that was carried out in January (2006) and the success of Hamas in the elections, the political system worsened after the Palestine Liberation Organization's Executive Committee rejected on 23rd March (2006) the government program formed by Prime Minister-designate Ismail Haniyeh (a senior political leader of Hamas and formerly one of two disputed Prime Ministers of the Palestinian National Authority. According to BBC News (2007) and Yahoo News (2017), Haniyeh became prime minister after Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections of (2006). President Mahmoud Abbas dismissed Haniyeh from office on 14th June (2007) at the height of the Fatah–Hamas conflict, but Haniyeh did not acknowledge the decree and continued to exercise the prime ministerial authority in the Gaza Strip. In September (2016), reports indicated that Haniyeh would replace Khaled Mashal as Chief of Hamas's Political Bureau. He was elected as Hamas political chief on 6th May (2017). So, it does not recognize the Basic Law that legislated the elections, and the Palestinian political system has become consisted of three bodies; The first is the Palestine Liberation Organization, the second is

the Palestinian Authority, and the third party is Hamas which started its [action program](#) without being acknowledged as part of the Palestine Liberation Organization (Abrash, 2017).

Hence, a political and economic siege was imposed on the government of Ismail Haniyeh and the salaries of thousands of employees in Gaza Strip were cut off, and an atmosphere of chaos and lawlessness prevailed in the Gaza Strip, where the Quartet Committee, after Hamas won the legislative elections and formed the government, imposed financial sanctions against it. It also imposed a political siege on it. Moreover, some Arab and regional countries also participated in these measures. The Quartet made a condition on Hamas to recognize 'Israel' and it declares its renunciation of 'violence' and recognizes previous agreements between the Authority and 'Israel' (Hilal, 2008, P. 7).

Disagreements continued and clashes renewed again at the beginning of May (2007). The agreements between Fatah and Hamas did not last for days. Clashes escalated on 6th July 2007, and the number of dead and wounded on both sides rose, which ended with Hamas taking control of Gaza Strip, turning the political division into a geographical division on 14th June (2007), during which it was able to control Gaza Strip in a military manner completely, Hamas quickly justified that it was obligatory, not optional, and that it did not intend to control Gaza Strip at first, but things rolled around until they reached this point (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Newspaper, 2007).

President Mahmoud Abbas announced the dismissal of Ismail Haniyeh's government, and he commissioned Salam Fayyad (*was appointed by the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas as a Prime Minister of a disputed emergency government between June 2007 to June 2013*) to form a government, and declared a state of emergency. The Palestinian Prime Minister in the West Bank, Salam Fayyad, issued a decision that seventy thousand employees of the Palestinian Authority are not allowed to go to their work places (Sayegh, 2010, P. 4). In the Gaza Strip, Ismail Haniyeh continued his work as prime minister and Hamas continued to move forward with its political project based on slogans of resistance in a geographical area from which the occupation withdrew which led to the latter's imposition of the siege and closure on the Gaza border crossings and the continuation of his aggression by land, sea and air. With Hamas's military control of Gaza Strip, a new phase began, represented by the political, geographical and service division, which imposed a new reality on the Palestinian arena, and a sharp division that took place between the authority represented by President Mahmoud Abbas and the Salam's government. Fayyad in the West Bank, based his legitimacy on the elected president, the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the recognition of regional and international powers, and between a de-facto authority in Gaza represented by the government and security services led by Hamas, which the international community refuses to recognize or deal with (Brown, 2008. P. 1).

Those who are interested in the history of the relationship between Fatah and Hamas comes to the conclusion that the relationship has been characterized throughout the past period after the launch of the Hamas movement with competition, tension and even clashes. This applies to the West Bank and Gaza Strip and most of the places that were an arena for the two parties to meet largely, whether in universities or professional unions, specifically during the period of elections and competition in the political sphere, as the Palestinian street became led by these two main forces that are close to being equal in terms of organizational extension and public momentum. Actually, the two movements were trying to control the street, each with its own style.

The conflict between the two movements began politically and ideologically and turned into a geographical division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which resulted in two different political and social systems. Not only politics and ideology overlapped in its scope, but also local and foreign political, security, economic interests, and agendas in the context of the quest for liberation (Al-Zubaidi, 2016. P. 88). The Palestinian disputes were greatly affected by Arab and

regional differences and divisions, and the two movements fell within the circle of regional polarization and the existence of two camps of moderation and opposition and the support of each party to one of the two camps. The moderate institution supported the presidency led by the Fatah movement while the axis of Iran supported Syria and Hezbollah, Hamas and its government after its control of Gaza Strip.

The impacts of the Palestinian Factionalism and political rifts on the structure of the Palestinian Society

The occupation of Palestine by Israel has ushered the rise of political factions as a reaction to the tactical stripping of agency from Palestinians. Forsooth, the factionalism and the political rifts among the Palestinians in the Palestinian context opened the door for the politicians from both sides to hijack the issue. In actuality, Palestinians in Gaza Strip and the West bank started to be marred by factionalism. As a result, the Palestinian struggle had become a hostage of factionalism. Meanwhile, the main hurdle to liberation and justice remains the Israeli regime; however, internal factionalism and the political rifts acted as a catalyst for Palestinians' disempowerment and preclude genuine mobilization. On the other side, Israel kept fueling the Hamas-Fatah divide and the Palestinians' energies were exhausted with no real result. Simultaneously, Fatah, Hamas, or others factions curtail unity efforts facilitated Israel's divide-and-rule strategies. This discourse actually, according to Barghouti (2017), illustrates the limitations of factions in the Palestinian context and the fact that they have nothing to offer today to the Palestinians. Other influences of the Palestinian factionalism and political rifts include:

1) The repercussions of the factionalism and political rifts on the Palestinian cause: The Palestinian reality posed challenges through the stages of the existence of the Palestinian cause, which added to the Palestinian political thought the determinants of visions and future political aspirations and contributed to the crystallization of the Palestinian political program. However, the existence of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, as a movement for political change, has created a political reality that is characterized by a state of political ambiguity which constitutes big question marks about the future of the Palestinian politics in the absence of national unity as an internal challenge and the Israeli plans' dealing with the new Palestinian reality as an external challenge. Together, they constitute challenges that stand as an obstacle in the way of achieving the Palestinian national project.

The events in Gaza Strip constitute a qualitative turning point in the history of the Palestinian national project which may be compared to the depth of the transformation brought about by the 'Nakba' in (1948) where the loss of the homeland due to the Nakba is equivalent to the loss of the unity of the people for a period of time. The secular and the Islamic projects considered the mid-June (2007) as the moment of collision between the two programs on the grounds that the collision was bloody, which reflected the narrowness of the space for compatibility between the previous mentioned secular and Islamic projects.

The current division in the Palestinian arena brought the matter back to before the year (1948), when the state of fragmentation affects the unity of the entire Palestinian people, and puts the Palestinian entity in a dangerous situation. The unity of the authority means the unity of the political system. On the other hand, the factionalism in the authority means making the entire Palestinian cause a card in the hands of the external parties, to get out of the context of the requirements of the national interest, and to be included in the entitlements of the multi-regional and international political agendas (Al-Numeiri, 2008).

The Palestinian factionalism led to the existence of two Palestinian governments and authorities under occupation, which is considered a destruction of the national liberation project in all its forms, through the following matters (Abrash, 2009. P. 8):

- a) Israel pretexts, in the absence of a Palestinian partner for peace, and thus evades its obligations.
- b) The division nullified the possibility of implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy in the Palestinian issue.
- c) The Palestinian fighter and weapon lost their respect and prestige before the world.
- d) Transforming the issue from a people's struggle for freedom and independence, into a struggle for power.
- e) The decline of international interest in the issue as a political issue to mere humanitarian concerns.

2) The political and geographical factionalism of the Palestinian entity: The Palestinian political factionalism, which was an evident on the ground in mid-June (2007) that led to the division of the homeland into two rival entities, two governments, and two authorities under occupation, as well as the consolidation of the concept of one party that caused a paralysis of constitutional institutions and all components of political life. This scenario expressed a precedent in Palestinian internal relations, including the threatens to the principle of national unity and the future of the national project where Hamas put itself in a political pit when it separated the Gaza Strip to perpetuate its political system based on the ideology of political Islam. On contrary, this state created a chance to the Israelis and gave the pretext for the occupation to swallow up all the strategic areas around Jerusalem, where the division enabled the dedication of settlement in the West Bank and Jerusalem in an unprecedented way (Abrash, 2009. P. 14).

Thus, the Palestinian division coincided with the Israeli vision based on separating the West Bank from the Gaza Strip and calling for the fragmentation of the cause of the 'Israeli Palestinian conflict', which is based on two states for two nations, by trying to return it to the circle of the previous Arab-Israeli conflict within Israel's options in resolving the Palestinian issue towards the West Bank to Jordan, and the Gaza Strip to Egypt (Shalhat, *et al.*, 2008. P. 32).

Giora Eiland (*a Major General (ret.) Israel Defense Forces and a former head of the Israeli National Security Council*) presented a study in September (2008) to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy in which he stated that the current circumstances open the way for rethinking the two-state solution and create an atmosphere towards one of the two options: the first is a return to the Jordanian option, which is summarized in perpetuating the annexation of settlements in the West Bank to Israel and placing the remaining parts of the Palestinian West Bank under Jordanian control. The second option is to go to a regional solution by offering land from neighboring countries, which means the Sinai region in Egypt, to expand the Gaza Strip threefold (Al-Awad, 2008. P. 72). Israel was also able to use the division to its advantage by investing as a fulcrum to bypass Palestinian representation and harm the Palestinian people and their national project.

f) Occupation is the primary beneficiary of the Palestinians' factionalism: The division plays a major role in the occupation's evasion of agreements and obligations under the pretext that there is no Palestinian partner for peace and the existence of two different political bodies of the Palestinian people who are incapable of determining the vision of the Palestinian policy, which has become a real danger through the occupation's claim that it does not negotiate with a leadership that represents the Palestinian people, just as it has prepared the fertile ground

for the occupation by disavowing agreements and commitments. Under the slogan of the absence of a Palestinian partner to negotiate with due to the existence of two different political leaderships who represent Palestinian politics and cannot determine the vision of the Palestinian state as a result of the dangerous trend of isolating the West Bank from the Gaza Strip. Embodying this, Ehud Olmert (*the 12th Prime Minister of Israel from 2006 to 2009*) supported the occupying state's stand after Hamas seized Gaza Strip and hence he described Mahmoud Abbas as a weak leader, and that his authority was limited to the West Bank only after the Palestinian lands became divided in Palestinian hands between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Al-Ashhab, 2007).

g) Increasing the impact of foreign interference in the Palestinian cause: The Palestinian political factionalism has strengthened the increase and impact of Arab and regional interventions in the Palestinian national issue as well as the foreign interference whether America's interference, the occupation's interference, or other regional parties' interference among countries and organizations that raise the slogan of opposition or those who raise the slogan of moderation. Most of the such external interventions are linked to political projects that transcends the national project, i.e., the Palestinian cause (Al-Jabour, 2019).

h) The declining status of the Palestinian cause on the Arab and international levels: The Palestinian division provided an opportunity for the occupation to distort the reputation and image of the Palestinian people and their civilized appearance, as the Palestinian fighters lost respect in front of the world due to the division as the compass deviated from its national path, i.e., the weapons became directed at the Palestinians. As a result, the Palestinian cause turned from a people struggling for freedom and independence to a struggle for power between what are supposed to be the factions of a national liberation movement. In fact, the divided Palestinian situation has distorted the image of the national project and the image of resistance in the eyes of Arabs, Muslims and other nations all over the world (Abrash, 2009).

Accordingly, at the Arab level, the Palestinian cause has become no longer the center of the main concerns of most Arab countries. In addition, the material and moral support for the Palestinian cause has declined, which was, before the division, real and serious support on the grounds that the Palestinian cause is the cause of the Islamic and Arab nation and not the cause of the Palestinian people alone. The Palestinian division also provided an opportunity for some Arab countries to find a justification to gradually abandon the Palestinian cause and encouraged some countries to resort to normalization with the occupying power. At the international level, the interest in the Palestinian cause as a basic issue has regressed to a mere humanitarian concern only (ibid).

3) The impact of the factionalism on the economic structure of Palestinian society: The continuation of the political division has led to a collapse in the economic structure of the Palestinian society, isolating the Gaza Strip from the West Bank, and disrupting the freedom of movement of people and goods between the West Bank, Gaza and abroad, which has increased the dependence of the Palestinian economy on foreign aid, reduced Palestinian society's productive capabilities, and decreased its domestic and gross income rates (Al-Jabour, 2019). The political division has also affected the Palestinian economy, as the occupying power, under various pretexts, struck and targeted economic and industrial facilities in the Gaza Strip. The siege imposed by the occupying power also increased and reached its highest levels, which played a role in impeding the growth of all sectors, which made businessmen and investors to feel helpless in the face of the destruction that followed the armed conflict at the end of (2008) and the beginning of (2009).

The repercussions of the Palestinian factionalism led to an increase in the poverty rate and the lack of job opportunities in the Gaza Strip in particular, which led to a rise in unemployment rates in Gaza to reach more than 50% with a total number of workers in the labor market increasing

by 8% in (2018) compared to (2017). This increase is attributed to the increase in the number of workers in construction and industry activities (Central Statistics Organization, 2018. P. 1).

It is noteworthy that universities in the Gaza Strip graduate between 15 to 18 thousand students annually, which leads to a huge surplus in supply, however there is no demand to absorb those graduates. More than 90% of them are unemployed and hence made redundant.

The same applies to the agricultural sector which has almost completely stopped exporting, in addition to the deterioration in the construction, trade and services sector due to the sharp decline in imports and exports in an unprecedented manner. In addition, many cases of bankruptcy of many companies have been registered in the Gaza Strip, where the number of institutions decreased from 17,796 in (2007) to 15,483 establishments, with a decrease of 13%.

In addition to the above mention loses, all factories have stopped production and exportation activities due to the lack of raw materials. Also, pharmaceutical factories have been stopped for the same reason. Another consequence was the emigration of human competencies which negatively reflected on the general deterioration in economic conditions especially in the health and education sector. Furthermore, many hurdles had started to appear in the agricultural, tourism and fishing sectors due to many factors including the poor distribution of income and consumption as well as the emergence of new segments of the wealthy people who built their wealth from the tunnels, black market dealers and smuggling (Al-Sourani, 2009. P. 4).

In March (2017), the Palestinian Authority took many punitive measures to dry up the sources of funds for Hamas to force it to return to the legitimacy standards as well as to force it to accept reconciliation. Among these measures is a 30% deduction from the salaries of the Palestinian National Authority employees, followed by a 50% deduction. In April of (2018), the employees' salaries were stopped permanently for a period of one month, which led to many economic problems for families. The authority also referred thousands of employees of the authority in Gaza to retirement, and cut the salaries of some employees under the clause of misdemeanor, and cut the salaries of some prisoners as well as those who have been released from prison. This measure affected the economic situation of the families, which negatively affected the society in Gaza. In addition to stopping sick referrals and reducing hospital supplies of medicines which has led to the death of more than 30 sick people, including 10 sick children who were waiting to be allowed to travel for treatment. According to the Ministry of Health, hundreds were suffering and some of them were lost their lives waiting for referrals. These measures were considered as one of the toughest measures imposed by the Palestinian Authority against Gaza Strip, which constituted a violation of human rights principles. In addition, the suspension of the electricity company's supply of fuel, which exacerbated the crisis and reduced the hours of electricity connection, had led to a serious deterioration in the level of all basic services, especially health services, environmental services, sanitation supplies and services, and the deterioration of work in industrial and commercial establishments (Al-Jabour, 2019).

4) The impact of factionalism on the societal structure of Palestinian society: The Palestinian political division created harsh social conditions that burdened Gazans and became an integral part of their daily lives resulted in suffering overthrew the system of the social fabric which led to the emergence of phenomena that threaten the cohesion of Palestinian society, including:

a) Youth immigration: The conditions of society's life, whether financial, social, political or environmental, are what help young people to meet their needs and enable them to take their roles in life. If the conditions are positive and encouraging, young people can translate their ambitions and hopes by adopting positive patterns to participate in life matters. However, if the conditions of society's life are negative, hence it stands as an obstacle towards achieving and satisfying the young people's needs and this will lead them to immigrate out of their homeland. In

fact, immigration represents a waste of young energies and competencies and this waste has its effects on the building, the development of society and on human health, psychological well-being, social security (Hijazi, 2005. P. 211).

The results of survey that has been conducted in (2015) about the Palestinian Youth showed that about 24% of individuals (15-29 years old) in Palestine have a desire and tendency to immigrate abroad. It seems that the prevailing conditions in the Gaza Strip have a role in increasing the rate of such desire to immigrate abroad as the percentage of young people who wish to immigrate abroad reached 37% in Gaza Strip compared to 15% in the West Bank. It is also noted that young males are more inclined to think about immigrating abroad compared to young females, as this percentage for males reached 29% compared to 18% for young females (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

The state of political stalemate and the diminished opportunities for achieving Palestinian reconciliation affected the youth. In fact, the state of fragmentation and internal division negatively affected all Palestinians and provided stimulating environments for Palestinian youth to express their desire to migrate abroad and even practically strive to do so. Thinking about immigration has become an obsession that dominates the minds of many young men, even young women. This was manifested in some aspects of preparation, including the demand of hundreds of young men in Gaza to enroll in foreign language teaching centers, in order to assess them and bring them closer to achieving their aspirations to immigrate abroad.

Moreover, the Palestinian political reality, the siege, the state of division and the ongoing struggle for power led to the destruction of the social, political and economic structure in Gaza Strip, which had a direct reflection of this conflict and division. Actually, in light of the constant inflation in prices, high unemployment, poverty and disease, all segments of the society are affected in general and the youth in particular. Besides, the continuous marginalization by the Palestinian leadership of the youth category, and the continuous Israeli wars and violations against people in Gaza Strip, led to the uncertainty of the future among the youth, which they have always believed in and worked to achieve within the community in order to achieve its development and cohesion in the face of all the consequences and challenges facing this society. Hence, the youth had no choice but to immigrate abroad to secure their future and their lives.

On this regards, Al-Jabour (2019) asserted that an effective strategy must be developed and applied in order to reduce the immigration of young people abroad, absorb young talents in institutions, and work to provide job opportunities for young talents to preserve the most important category in the Palestinian society, which it relies on to continue to defend its land and identity and to confront the racist policies and practices of the Israel against the Palestinian people and their sanctities. Further, effective strategy must be also developed and applied to support and emphasize the importance of the role of youth in every effort and endeavor to achieve sustainable development for society.

b) Suicide: The growing suicide in the Gaza Strip of both males and females formed a sharp debate on the Ghazi Street, while there is an absence of solutions and the identification of the real motives for some people to commit suicide. There is no doubt that the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation of the people in Gaza, the siege imposed on the Strip, and the high unemployment rates among thousands of young people play a major role in drowning Gaza in the quagmire of hunger and poverty, and thus became a clear and explicit indication of the spread of suicides.

Since the beginning of the division, the Gaza Strip has witnessed many suicides cases and suicide attempts, and this phenomenon has become increasingly common. The phenomenon of committing suicide emerged remarkably. According to police statistics in Gaza, the number of

suicide attempts in (2016) reached 610 cases, 16 of which led to death, while the number increased in (2017) to 543, of which 23 led to death, while 176 occurred in (2018), 6 of them led to death (Farhat, 2018).

The Israeli siege that was imposed on the Gaza Strip and the continuing division led to many phenomena, such as poverty and unemployment, which reaches 43%, where 230 thousand people have become unemployed, including 100 thousand university graduates. Besides, food insecurity for Palestinian families (80% of the Palestinians receive humanitarian aid), and the prohibition of movement and travel from Gaza Strip and the continuing psychological pressures that citizens suffer from due to the state of siege, division and lack of work, these reasons prompted many young people to commit suicide, especially young people who cannot face these pressures due to the lack of work and the state of poverty that push them to commit suicide (Al-Fayoumi, 2017).

Al-Jabour (2019) demonstrated that the increase in suicide rates in the Gaza Strip has negative repercussions on the Palestinian society as it reflects the state of despair, injustice, oppression and tyranny experienced by young people in the Gaza Strip, the lack of job opportunities and the spread of unemployment among graduates and non-graduates, and the obstruction of life horizons in the eyes of the youth. Actually, oppression constitutes one of the main driving forces in society which leads the youth to commit suicide. Although these cases are individual, but they reflect the environment of frustration and give an indication of the turbulent environment prevailing in the Gaza Strip, taking into consideration that the youth are considered the most affected segment in this society.

It is believed that the phenomenon of suicide has become a threat to the Palestinian society, especially since the majority of suicide cases are from the youth category, while there are no plans and solutions to reduce this phenomenon, the more the feeling of despair grows among the citizens and that their lives are become meaningless, the greater the percentage of those who think about committing suicide as they may see death better than their lives and to stop their miseries (Al-Jabour, 2019).

c) **Partisans' fanaticism:** Partisans' fanaticism is one of the dangerous phenomena that has spread in Palestinian society recently due to political division and cases of partisan mobilization that do not accept the other, given that this phenomenon is one of the main dilemmas that may split the society into symmetrical, antagonistic and divergent groups, in addition to its devastating negative outcomes on the individual and society because partisans' fanaticism produces differences between groups and the ensuing hatred, estrangement and estrangement between members of the same society.

The state of partisans' fanaticism and the absence of a culture of dialogue left by the division in the Palestinian arena has negatively affected the reality of young people and their ability to bring about this change. The reasons for the spread of partisan fanaticism in Palestine are due to more than one factor, foremost of which is (Zaydiyah, 2008):

- The state of internal political division (which represents a cause and an effect at the same time).
- The state of confusion affecting the prevailing cultural scene due to the rampant factional and partisan situation.
- The Israeli practices towards the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.
- The weakness of the components of the Palestinian political system, and the decline of the role of civil society institutions.

Conclusion

This empirical study aims to discuss the influence of the Palestinian factionalism and political rifts on the political landscape in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The study also seeks to identify the impact of the political rifts among the Palestinian factions, as well as on the structure of Palestinian society.

The study concluded that the occupation of Palestine in (1948) led to the formation of many movements and factions of national action against the occupation throughout the modern history of the Palestinian cause. In addition, the Palestinian arena witnessed the emergence of Palestinian forces operating outside the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization. With the escalation of political and military action in the first intifada and the second intifada, the signing of the Oslo Accords in (1993), and after the (2006) legislative elections, in which Hamas won, the competition and the Palestinian factionalism and political rifts had been intensified between the most prominent faction in the Palestine Liberation Organization, represented by the Fatah movement, and the Islamic faction known as the Hamas movement and put them into a direct confrontation and an armed clashes. This confrontation ended with Hamas taking control of the Gaza Strip, which led to a state of political division among the Palestinians in (the West Bank and Gaza). This resulted in creating a severe impact on the Palestinian cause in general and on the structure of the political, economic and social system.

The study has also indicated that due to this political factionalism and political rifts, the Palestinian society has been affected negatively by many internal and external factors that had an influential impact on its values, beliefs and relationships during its stages of inception and development, in addition to the nature of the political situation of this society it has been going through for several years which further led to an existential struggle starting with land and ending with identity, entity, loyalty and belonging. It also contributed to the dispersal of the independent Palestinian decision to get the Palestinian cause out again from its independent national framework.

In addition, the reviewed literature in the current study demonstrated that the Palestinian political factionalism and political rifts constituted a turning point in the history of the Palestinian cause, in terms of its negative political effects, due to the absence of coordination between Palestinian factions and organizations and the lack of agreement on a national program of action, a specific vision and strategy, and a partnership in political action, which led to a decline in its centrality, importance and presence not only on the Arab level, regional level and international level, but also at the Palestinian level, as many of the Palestinian people, especially in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, have lost the unity of the Palestinian institution, the unity of national and unifying ideas, and the unity of a common destiny.

The findings of the current study further concluded that the Palestinian political factionalism and political rifts had a noticeable negative impact on the system of social relations in the Gaza Strip, as well as on the social fabric of all its different sects. Furthermore, such political factionalism and political rifts caused effected the public services systems of the Palestinian community in the Gaza Strip, which include the sectors of health, education, housing, the economic institution and civil organizations. It also negatively influenced all the values, principles, customs and traditions that ruled the Palestinian society for years, which was characterized by cohesion, interdependence towards all the crises that it experienced as well as its just cause. Moreover, the political factionalism and political rifts have reinforced the geographical and political separation and economic disparity between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is worth noting that the Israeli occupation has contributed to prolonging the division in order to evade

international commitments and resolutions. The political division has allowed foreign countries to increase their interference in Palestinian affairs, which has contributed to deepening and prolonging the Palestinian political division.

The political factionalism and political rifts have further created two separate economic institutions, each with its own mechanisms and policies. Both imposed their own taxes on all basic and non-essential commodities, in addition to the occupation taxes, which burdened the Palestinians, causing a decline in Arab and international solidarity with the Palestinian people and their national cause. The division also played a role in tightening the siege on the Gaza Strip and weakening the political system's ability to confront Israeli threats. It also led to a rise in unemployment rates among young people, which led to a high crime rate, delinquency or fanaticism, extremism, anxiety and frustration. In addition to the above, the political division has led to an increase in the rate of immigration among Palestinian youth. To sum up, there was a negative reflection of the political division on all segments of Palestinian society, which led to the occurrence of gaps in the fabric of Palestinian society, and worsened the social and economic conditions in the society.

The study further found that the occupation of Palestine by Israel has ushered the rise of political factionalism and rifts among the Palestinians and make the Palestinian struggle a hostage of factionalism that led to the Palestinians' disempowerment and preclude genuine mobilization. On the other hand, Israel keeps fueling the Hamas-Fatah divide and make the Palestinians' energies exhausted with no real result. Indeed, many repercussions of the political factionalism on the Palestinian cause include: the emergence of two Palestinian governments and authorities under occupation, which is considered a destruction of the national liberation project in all its forms, and hence nullifying the possibility of implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy in the Palestinian issue. It also transformed the Palestinian issue from a people's struggle for freedom and independence into a struggle for power. Furthermore, it contributes to declining of international interest in the Palestinian cause as a political issue to mere humanitarian concerns. It also plays a significant role in the political and geographical division of the Palestinian entity. Besides, it coincided with the Israeli vision based on separating the West Bank from the Gaza Strip and calling for the fragmentation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And since the occupation power is the primary beneficiary of the division, the Palestinians' factionalism plays a major role in the occupation's evasion of agreements and obligations under the pretext that there is no Palestinian partner for peace and the existence of two different political bodies who represent the Palestinian people. Additionally, the Palestinians' political factionalism increased the impact of foreign interference in the Palestinian cause and made the Palestinian cause no longer the center of the main concerns of most Arab countries. On the same line, the continuation of the political factionalism has led to a collapse in the economic structure of the Palestinian society, increase in the poverty rate and the lack of job opportunities, isolating the Gaza Strip from the West Bank, and disrupting the freedom of movement of people and goods between the West Bank, Gaza and abroad, which has increased the dependence of the Palestinian economy on foreign aid, reduced Palestinian society's productive capabilities, and decreased its domestic and gross income rates. Finally, the political factionalism and rifts among the Palestinians had another catastrophic impact on the societal structure of Palestinian society and led to the emergence of phenomena that threaten the cohesion of Palestinian society, including: youth migration, the increase in suicide rates among the Palestinians of both males and females, and partisans' fanaticism.

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