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**Perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other”
among Palestinians and Israelis: A qualitative analysis utilising
grounded theory and integrated threat theory (ITT)**

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Communication

at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

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2021

Abstract

International conflict among and within nations is becoming more dire and magnified. Cyclical violence ensues as the victim/oppressor paradigm is perpetuated, thus instigating militant discourse. Cyclical violence becomes an anticipated pattern, while simultaneously appearing unavoidable due to antiquated or otherwise inadequate peace processes, most often overlooking the most vulnerable. To address these concerns, this research project explores the broad interplay of intercultural empathy, perceptions of peace and the “other,” and elements of integrated threat theory. Specifically, this study explores how Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy in regard to Palestinians and examines how Israelis perceive the possibility of peace within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. “Peace” as a concept is explored in addition to “intercultural empathy,” and how Israelis conceptualize these familiar words. This study also explores what factors or experiences have influenced Palestinian and Israeli individuals’ perception of the “other.” This study adds to our understanding of the Israelis’ perspective of the “other” as the dominant group and influencer within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Results reported in this dissertation indicate a significant perception of realistic and symbolic threat from Israeli participants toward Palestinians. It was also found participants had a cognitive understanding of empathy and intercultural empathy, though that understanding did not necessarily translate into more productive emotional empathy or position taking. Peace as an outcome was overwhelmingly viewed as impossible by Israeli participants. This dissertation contributes to the field of integrated threat theory from a qualitative approach in the context of intercultural conflict. This paper is a starting point for researchers and those involved in curricula development and intercultural training when engaging conflicting parties in key peacebuilding processes.

Keywords: Intercultural empathy, conflict, peace, integrated threat theory, qualitative

Acknowledgements

There have been several people that have stood behind me and beside me throughout the last few years as I have completed the requirements of my Doctorate degree. First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to my doctoral supervisor, Professor Stephen Croucher. He not only gave me the invaluable opportunities and resources to pursue my doctorate degree, but he also guided me through the most arduous moments of my doctorate journey and always kept me grounded and focused. Throughout this time, I have also been lucky to call him my friend. I must also thank my second supervisor, Doctor Debalina Dutta, who offered her expertise and academic knowledge, as well as pastoral care and support in various stages of my degree, particularly when life was doing its thing. I also must extend an honourable mention and my gratitude to Doctor Jeannie Fletcher, who extended opportunities, her knowledge of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, and an example of how to be an unapologetic and fierce academic.

While spending time with the faculty and staff of the School of Communication, Journalism, and Marketing, I have found dear friends who have been a massive support to me in the most trying of times. Breeze and I began our journeys in the department around the same time, and he and his wife Shweta have been amazing and genuine friends to both me and my partner. Michelle has been a kind friend from whom warmth was constantly extended. Erika is the embodiment of what a badass academic looks like, and Alyth and Claudia have been so helpful during these last few years. As for the rest of the department, I have learned so much and have grown respect everyone for both their academic rigour, as well as their strength of character. I am happy to have been shaped into the academic I am today with the CJM department.

My academic journey would have been lonely if not for my fellow doctorate students. Leon, the first of us to graduate, George, Melissa, Thao, Reece, and Flora; I have been inspired by you, and motivated as I got to celebrate your achievements with you throughout your individual journeys. Flora, I am so grateful for the close friend that you have become. Although we didn't always see eye-to-eye, I have been consistently inspired by you to be the best I could be. I am so grateful for the friendship we have developed throughout these last few years. Thank you for being the badass woman you are and for introducing me to the drag scene of Wellington.

While completing my Doctorate degree in Aotearoa, I found my community, some of which were by my side from the beginning, and some who joined me in only recent months. Firstly, I extend a massive hug to Mitra who has become a member of my core whānau and who I'll cherish forever. Second, my badass women, Sara and Alicia, who saw me through some of the most challenging hurdles of the last few years. The three of us are quite different now from the women we were when we met, but we have seen each other through the hard moments that shaped us into the women we became. You will always be my badass women. I also thank my friends and community: Maeve and Marc, Harmony and Joel, Kate and Aaron. Your friendship and support has meant the world to me and I cannot wait for our future adventures together.

I extend my gratitude and love to my parents for their support and assistance throughout my academic journey. They assisted me in my initial pursuit of international travel and university, which ultimately informed the woman and academic I have become. Your tireless efforts and sleepless nights will never be forgotten. I must also thank my siblings, Angel, Ellison, and Gabriel: my family by blood and choice. Your support, love, and shenanigans has provided me with support through the hardest of times that may have otherwise broken me. Ryan and Nic, I cherish your love and strength to me and my sibs, and I am honoured to also call you family. Kayli Rain, your love and support as my sister and bestie has buoyed up my soul over the years, especially these last few and I'll [always] be there for you. Thank you all for being my fam.

Finally, I thank my partner, Jaspal, for your unwavering love and support. There is no doubt that the doctorate journey takes a toll on our partners as much as it does on ourselves throughout the rigorous academic process, and Jaspal is no exception. He has stood by me, walked through the fire with me, and strengthened me in my weakest minutes. He brought me both literal and metaphorical tea on many a late night, pushed me when I felt weak, held me while I cried, and grounded me in peace and love. You are my greatest cheerleader and I know I can accomplish literally anything with you by my side. I can't wait to see where we go together after this.

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.

All my love to my whānau.

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List of Original Articles

Article I

Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. M. (in press, 2021). Intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” among Palestinians and Israelis: A qualitative analysis. In S. Roy (ed), *The global handbook of conflict and peace communication*. Wiley Blackwell.

Article II

Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. M. (Submitted, 2021). Israeli perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” among Palestinians and Israelis. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*.

Article III

Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. M. (Revise & Resubmit). Applying integrated threat theory in the Palestinian Israeli conflict: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and motivation for this study

Most violence in the current global setting “occurs within countries and comes in the form of inter-communal conflict that endangers internal and international stability” (Stein, 2017, p. 2021). Whereas several current intercultural conflicts could be examined as a case study, the Palestinian Israeli conflict serves as an exceptional case study in that it has continued in perpetuity, despite conflict resolution practices and efforts to seek effective reconciliation from as early as the 1900’s when the first Zionist Jews began immigrating to their Holy sites, as depicted in the Torah. For many Zionist Israelis, the conflict can be traced back to the first book of the Torah to Genesis. According to Christian and Judaic tradition, Isaac, would produce the *twelve tribes of Israel*, and eventually receive the land of promise. By tradition, the Arab people are descendants of Ishmael, who was the son of Hagar. Israelis hold firmly to their belief that the land of Israel is their land above all else, as per the Abrahamic promise. As of result of the Judaic interpretation of the Torah, Palestinians, who are not predominantly of the Judaic or Christian faith, found themselves in chaos and turmoil when their homeland of more than some 1000 years was suddenly given away on the grounds of religious text and the result of displacement.

As we explore the history of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, we can see two sides who both have equal rights to exist: the Israelis, a people marginalized and disposed of by Nazis in World War II, and the Palestinians, a people similarly marginalized by the Israeli military. While Jewish history includes generations of refugeeism, Palestinians have just recently become refugees (Har-Gil & Gitler, 2015). Hence, the common victim-oppressor interpretation is reinforced by a mental lock in a historic framework, which is perpetually reproduced (Har-Gil & Gitler, 2015). Israel may serve as a test case with which to examine the discourse of

recognition since it has played a pivotal role in the “growing global practice of apology as both victim and perpetrator” (Kampf, 2012, p. 431). Indeed, the Israeli state continues to do little to subside the conflict by recognizing the humanity in those whom they oppress, meanwhile, fear of the “other” continues to grow. The conflict is stuck in an endless cycle of abuse and retaliation by both perpetrator and victim, which may be considered a fluid dynamic by either side of the wall. With violence preceding the Oslo Accords of 1993, the initial peace agreements were undertaken with a sincere hope for peace from both Palestinians and Israelis, however, peace was short lived as if it were initially set up to fail, with both parties having different understandings and expectations of the word “peace” (DeTurk, 2001). Efforts have been made by some Palestinian and Israeli non-governmental organizations to encourage peacebuilding and empathy, yet ill-will among the majority is consistently perpetuated (Stein, 2017). Peace negotiation is paramount, but lasting peace must begin on a grassroots level to be truly substantial. Therefore, we must make an effort to understand the “other” by first understand how we view the “other” and why.

There are many contexts in which “intercultural empathy” may be addressed, but whereas the Palestinian Israeli conflict is among the most visible and widely discussed conflicts, this context serves as the case study for the purpose of this research. This dissertation begins to address intercultural empathy by expanding knowledge of empathy from an individual, to a cultural level, thereby enabling a more specific, individual-based approach to more efficient and dependable peacebuilding processes. This dissertation also seeks to understand what influencing factors either support or impede their view of the “other,” while also exploring how both sides of the conflict understand the familiar term “peace.” Gaps in existing research do not investigate empathy as a concept, and often confuse functions of empathy with other familiar terms, including sympathy, compassion, etc. Furthermore, intercultural empathy is not explored as a concept, either qualitatively or quantitatively. In

addition, existing literature does not address whether or not existing dislike or hate between conflicting individuals might be transformed into empathy through an effort of active perspective taking, nor does it examine the attitudes of Israelis toward Palestinians comparatively with prominent messages portrayed in the media to find if there is any substantial correlation or causation. Furthermore, peace is not explored qualitatively in existing literature that examines both Palestinian and Israeli perspectives of peace, intercultural empathy, and the “other.” This dissertation seeks to address this gap by taking the historical and longstanding conflict between Palestinians and Israelis into account by examining both Palestinian and Israeli perspectives of the “other,” while examining potential influencing factors that may impede active perspective taking or even further perpetuate conflict.

There is a lack of empathy and an ever-growing cognitive dissonance between the privileged and the less privileged in our societies. As a result, men, women, and children are starving, families are disbanded as violence ensues, and millions of people are displaced (Goldenziel, 2016). As this destruction and divisiveness continues, the overwhelming need for empathy increases. Empathy in intercultural communication reduces the tendency to use ourselves as a standard for judging others as filtered through our perceptions (Stewart, 1976). As we remain open-minded when communicating interculturally, becoming more empathetic may be achieved incrementally. To do so requires effort and consciousness on the communicators’ part. We can keep fighting over our differences and how things look while turning our backs to despairing and/or displaced “others,” or as Weaver (1990) recommended, we can devote ourselves to the global ideal of collaboration and position taking. According to Calloway-Thomas’ (2010) analysis of empathy in the global age, much is happening internationally in the arena of giving, while we are also at risk of “peril of the entire planet” (p. 205). Calloway-Thomas (2010) asserted we “must commit to global justice and the global public good,” because humankind could “go in the opposite direction,” meaning that

progression toward peace could be undone as a direct consequence of unwise action and forgetting historical consequences (pp. 204-205). At a time when we could find our interconnected achievements in the echelons of success, or the opposite reality, understanding intercultural empathy is essential. As Calloway-Thomas (2010) explained, “Part of empathy’s work, then, is to knit together human and cultural elements of both the near and the distant, so that we will care about other people even if they are an ocean away” (p. 12). By examining our similarities and differences while remaining open-minded, we may gradually strengthen our ability to be interculturally empathetic.

1.2 Research Questions

The main goal of this project was to investigate the perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” among Palestinians and Israelis. To this end, the project proposes different research questions and hypotheses at different stages in the research. Throughout the initial research process, research aims shifted according to new learnings that were informed from each preceding research article. For example, research pertaining to integrated threat theory (ITT) was not initially intended to be included in this research project, though, as a result of themes located utilising grounded theory, such theory became crucial when framing the literature and findings. These questions and hypotheses tackle the general goal of this project, which is to examine the individual experience of and perception of intercultural empathy, which is a key to international peace negotiation. Further, this project examines the experience of “peace,” a term which continues to illude Palestinian and Israeli stakeholders today. Finally, the project investigates the perception of the “other” on behalf of both Palestinians and Israelis, especially in correlation with ITT. To investigate the above objectives, this study seeks to answer the following question:

How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” in relationship to intergroup contact through the lens of integrated threat theory?

To answer this question, each publication in this dissertation proposes specific questions. The first paper, a qualitative analysis from the perspective of both Palestinians and Israelis, examines how intercultural empathy is conceptualized, if and how Palestinians and Israelis are able to have an empathetic exchange, and how that might be possible. This study also seeks to understand the various factors related to intercultural empathy and how one might empathize after having the opportunity to learn of a specific individual in the “outgroup” and investigates: 1) *How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize the “other” in relationship to the amount of intergroup contact?* 2) *How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy?* This paper is accepted for publication in *The Global Handbook of Conflict and Peace Communication*, edited by Dr. Sudeshna Roy.

The second paper, a qualitative study from the perspective of Israelis, broadens the scope from intercultural empathy alone to also include investigations of peace and perceptions of the “other.” The intent of this paper is not to focus on international politics in broad terms, but to fine-tune the focus toward the individual experiences or perceptions of the “other,” as well as to examine what factors may influence subsequent perceptions of the “other” that might get in the way of peace processes, reconciliation, and ultimately, intercultural empathy. This paper specifically seeks to answer the following: 1) *How do Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy in regard to Palestinians?* 2) *How do Israelis perceive the possibility of peace within the conflict?* This paper was submitted to the *International Journal of Conflict Management* (IJCM) and is presently under revision for the second time with a Revise / Resubmit.

The final paper studies elements of ITT within the Palestinian Israeli conflict from the perspective of Israelis toward Palestinians. It seeks to examine the influence and presence of

ITT within the conflict, and how both symbolic and realistic threats manifest themselves in Israeli's minds toward their Palestinian counterparts. To do so, this article first explores a brief description of the Palestinian Israeli conflict today, and then introduces key theory directly related to ITT. Two attributes of ITT are specifically focused on due to their applicability, including symbolic and realistic threat. Finally, this paper explores the Israeli perception of Palestinians as the "other," and examines threats or anxieties that Israelis as the ingroup may feel toward Palestinians as the outgroup. Two research questions are proposed: 1) *How do Israelis perceive Palestinians in regard to integrated threat theory?* 2) *To what degree do Israelis experience active perspective taking with Palestinians?* The details of the aforementioned research questions are outlined in Table 1.1. This paper was submitted to the *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* (JICR), a publication of the World Communication Association and is presently under review.

1.2.1 Contributions

At the most general level, this dissertation contributes to the limited stream of research on empathy and the more extensive stream of integrated threat theory, but from a qualitative approach. Specifically, the dissertation aims to contribute to the research on perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the "other" among Palestinians and Israelis in the following ways:

- a) It extends the literature on empathy and intercultural empathy, both generally and within the Palestinian Israeli conflict specifically.
- b) It explores the conception of the "other" in relationship to the Palestinian Israeli conflict by both Palestinians and Israelis, in addition to Israelis singularly.
- c) It investigates the perceptions of peace as regarded by Israelis within the Palestinian Israeli conflict.

- d) It extends the literature on integrated threat theory from a unique qualitative approach within the Palestinian Israeli conflict as experienced by Israelis as the dominant ingroup toward Palestinians as the outgroup.

Table 1.1 Overview of research questions in three chapters

	Chapter 2 The "other" and intercultural empathy	Chapter 3 Intercultural empathy and peace	Chapter 4 Integrated threat theory and perspective taking
RQ1. How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize the "other" in relationship to the amount of intergroup contact?	X		
RQ2. How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy?	X		
RQ3. How do Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy in regard to Palestinians?		X	
RQ4. How do Israelis perceive the possibility of peace within the conflict?		X	
RQ5. How do Israelis perceive Palestinians in regard to integrated threat theory?			X
RQ6. To what degree do Israelis experience active perspective taking with Palestinians?			X

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 An Ethnographic Overview of Key Components

The Palestinian Israeli conflict has been one of the most consistent and long-standing conflicts, both historically and today, yet substantial animosity between the two sides is consistently perpetuated. The conflict is stuck in an endless cycle of abuse and retaliation by both perpetrator and victim, of which may be considered a fluid dynamic from those on either side of the wall. Efforts have been made by Palestinian and Israeli non-governmental organizations to encourage peacebuilding and empathy, yet ill-will continues. Peace negotiation is paramount, but lasting peace must begin on a grassroots level to be truly sustainable. Therefore, we must consciously and responsibly move toward an understanding of the “other” by first individually recognizing how we view the “other” and why. What gets in the way of empathizing with our human counterparts? Do both sides understand familiar words differently, such as “peace,” as suggested by Stohlman and Aladin (2003), and DeTurk (2001)? What do “peace” and “empathy” mean and what are the implications of these familiar words on an international scale?

In this chapter, I explore the existing literature surrounding empathy, beginning with the conceptualization of “empathy” while clarifying other similar words such as “sympathy,” “compassion” etc. Following this, I introduce the efforts and findings of two researchers who have made considerable strides regarding how we view empathy and the associated nuances. I also examine research to date that aids in the conceptualization of intercultural empathy, as well as efforts of those who are actively attempting to improve empathy toward the “other” within the conflict through current peace projects on grassroots levels among Palestinians and Israelis alike. Finally, I share my personal experiences within Palestine as well as the Israeli state, relating my observations, conversations and preliminary research to the existing literature

on intercultural empathy within the conflict from a phenomenological approach (Schutz, 1967). These personal experiences are shared in an effort to validate the previous research claims, however, my true motivation for sharing my personal experiences and impressions in depth is to relate the true humanity of those on both sides of the wall. Those caught within the conflict and torn between Palestine and Israel are equal victims to the current circumstances and plight, perpetuated and agitated by the Israeli regime. The single greatest impression I left Palestine and Israel with is this: Everyone is hurting, everyone is the victim, and both sides are tired of fighting but feel powerless to change the conditions under the current Israeli rule.

2.1.1 Polarization in word and deed

In June of 2016, Tel Aviv Mayor, Ron Hundi, called on Israel to acknowledge their part in the ongoing conflict, stating, “We, as a state, are perhaps the only ones in the world with another people living among us under our occupation, denying them any civil rights.” He went on to add, “There is no way to hold people in a situation of occupation and think that everything is okay and they will continue to live like that” (Konrad, 2016, 1). Although Hundi’s statement caused some disagreement among conservative circles, it was not as bold as it may have seemed, as similar sentiments were suggested by the former Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, and the security agency, Shin Bet (Winer, 2015). While the conflict between Palestine and Israel continues despite public condemnation of the conflict from Israeli leaders of government, belligerency continues, resulting in a perpetual cycle of pain and revenge among many Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Over time, and even before the Palestinian state was first established under occupational rule by the British Empire, there has been a similar narrative of victimization from both sides of the wall. The Israelis underwent unimaginable persecution and extermination throughout the Holocaust when the Nazi German government and military systematically murdered approximately six million European Jews. As a people who were previously displaced and

underwent unimaginable atrocities, the promise of “Zion” was an assurance of safety and security, while for others it was tantamount to literally returning home, as per the Abrahamic promise outlined in the Torah. For the first time, the European Jewish refugees found a home – a piece of land gifted to them by the UN under contentious circumstances, although, the ethics of that exchange are often still widely disputed as the then existing Palestinian population questioned the legality of the proposition and rejected the plan of partition. They argued it violated the principles of national self-determination, which granted people the right to decide their own destiny (Mandel, 2004).

Throughout the history of the Palestinian Israeli occupation, the Israelis, a people marginalized and disposed of at the hands of the Nazis in World War II, and the Palestinians, a people similarly marginalized and disposed of by the Israeli regime, have both suffered. Evidence of this can still be felt in the echoes of the Holocaust, where Jews were the primary victim in that act against humanity. While Jewish history depicts generations of refugeeism, Palestinians have only recently become refugees at the hands of the very people who fled from their own terror. Hence, the common victim-oppressor interpretive framework is perpetuated and reproduced throughout an ongoing cycle of desperation and defence (Har-Gil & Gitler, 2015). Examining the Palestinian Israeli conflict may enable the discourse of recognition to ensue as it plays a pivotal role in the active effort of global apology as both victims and perpetrators (Kamf, 2012). Unfortunately, many efforts toward apology are lost, as the act of conflict denies empathy with the “other” among both the oppressors and the oppressed, thus, opening channels for empathy must first be highlighted for post-conflict reconciliation to be achieved (Cameron, 2011).

While peace, collaboration and empathy between cultures is of course ideal, we often experience a juxtaposition of that ideal that is presently characterized as war. Conflict, and other negative social situations such as displacement and even ethnic cleansing, are usually

accompanied by a process of dehumanization, in which complex individuals are reduced to stereotypes that allow for polarization of groups and sometimes an escalation of violence between groups (Oberschall, 2000). This extreme level of cognitive dissonance and dissociation can also be seen in the treatment of Israelis historically and are especially prevalent currently as ill-treatment has become all too common.

In *Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians, or, democratic Israel at work*, Gideon Levy explains the efforts of the Israeli government to systematically degrade the quality of life for the Palestinians until they would flee. Levy reported that making “the lives of Palestinians in the territories miserable to get them to leave” has been a success, with over 250,000 Palestinians leaving between 2000-2007 alone (2011, p. 1). While Israelis suffered horrific persecution, we can now see a similar note of hostility and dissociation in the Israeli treatment of Palestinians throughout the ongoing occupation. At checkpoints, for example, Palestinians are policed and harassed when making efforts to cross the border for work, to visit family, and even when seeking emergency medical treatment. Palestinians are perpetually ridiculed and reduced to sub-human by the Israeli military while they arbitrarily dictate the outcome of Palestinians’ lives (Syedshoeb, 2010).

Whereas the aforementioned example is specifically related to the Israeli military, it must not be discounted when looking at the greater Israeli population, who often share similar sentiments with the Israeli military. I witnessed a less intense, although similar perspective of Palestinians by an Israeli taxi driver in Tel Aviv. When a few members of my study abroad group tried to fit five of us in the available four seats of the taxi, the woman exclaimed, “What do you think you are doing?! There are only four seats so one of you has to stay behind!” After we split up our group and continued to our destination, the driver continued to convey her incredulousness at our attempt for several minutes. Finally, she asked us why we thought it was permissible to have included an extra person in the taxi. “We thought it would be fine since

we also did that in the West Bank.” She rolled her eyes and while waving her hand for emphasis stated, “Well, those were Arabs! Of course they’ll do that!” Although this case is indeed less extreme, it does highlight the use of polarizing labels that may be attached to the “other,” thus demeaning the value of their humanity. The framing of the “other” should also be noted as an assumption of behaviour, as though there is no question of “less than human” behaviour becoming an expectation of the “other,” and thereby perpetuating a self-fulfilling prophecy, locking oneself in an echo chamber within the victim/oppressor paradigm.

It is understandable how assumptions of toward the “other” which ultimately lead to polarisation come into fruition, particularly when considering the influence of media, government, and echo chambers within families and communities. To counteract polarisation and the corresponding negative consequences, work is needed at a social level, as well as within individual encounters to enable trust to be re-established in the “other” through re-humanization. Empathy is seen as central to re-humanization, though as the world becomes more globalized, it increases the uncertainty in peoples’ lives; this prompts a compensatory desire for stability in the sense of self, sometimes resulting in acceptance of authoritarianism, violence or religious fundamentalism (Halpern & Weinstein, 2004; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). As individuals feel their sense of identity being threatened in wake of occupation, it is natural for them to become unhappy, uneasy, and even violent as they struggle to retain their sense of self and identity.

There has been an overwhelming imbalance between the acts of violence against the “other” and a corresponding need for rectification and reconciliation. As the occupation continues within Palestine and Palestinian human rights are consistently infringed, dehumanization continues as the Palestinians are herded like cattle between settlements and homes are demolished, resulting in bloodshed, lives lost and an ever-greater sense of frustration and desire for revenge. Palestinians then, as a means of revenge, may act out violently during

demonstrations, and radicals may further that violence in the form of missiles fired into Israeli held territory and other retaliation. The death toll continues to grow on both sides, resulting in an ever-greater desire for revenge and further vindication as victims. Victimization narratives arise through a culmination of lived experience, whether presently among contemporary generations or historically through intergenerational narratives. Those experiences, however, risk becoming “mythologized or distorted, particularly when appropriated in support of an ideological agenda” (Wilmer, 2017, p. 61). Young men in Palestine who fall at the hands of Israeli soldiers for throwing stones then become a mythologized symbol of the occupation; their faces are then printed on posters that are carried into the conflict like a flag of war, further vindicating why the Palestinians must never give up at the hands of Israel.

During my time in the West Bank, I recall seeing several such posters depicting young boys’ faces who were killed by Israelis, along with statements calling all Palestinians to action. In one specific instance, these posters hung from streamers that also sported the Palestinian flag, while a young boy rode his bike among the crowd with Palestinian flags tied to his handlebars and streamers being carried in the wind behind him. The disconnect felt so surreal. As the men stood around, cheering the boy on, it seemed a morbid celebration when these boys had been alive just a short time ago, and were now serving as the turpentine on an emotional and angry flame. As an outsider, it felt disconcerting and phantasmagorical in nature, while for the Palestinians, it gave them reason to keep fighting and never give in.

2.1.2 Checkerboard jurisdiction, checkpoints, walls and water

Palestinians experience daily struggle as their quality of life is detrimentally impacted and their freedom is restricted, though there are three things that continue to cause particular strife: the walls that divide Palestine from Israel, and in some cases, enclose entire Palestinian towns, the distribution of water sourced to Palestine, and the use of checkpoints to restrict free movement across the wall (Wilmer, 2017). Many Palestinians have family located in various

jurisdictions, and whereas a journey to reach their friends and families once only took twenty to thirty minutes, now may take anywhere between six to ten hours, if they are allowed through the checkpoint at all. What was once mostly a direct journey, now requires them to travel around the wall to even access the nearest checkpoint. What was once a free-flowing area with ease of travel is now controlled and limited by the state of Israel. In addition to the presence of Israeli military, the Israeli government destroys housing of Palestinians in retaliation for terrorist attacks (Wilmer, 2017).

Between 1967 and 2005, hundreds of Palestinian homes in the occupied territories were demolished in efforts to control and maintain the Palestinian population and as an act of punishment. In 2005, the Israeli Defence Minister issued an investigation of the affectedness of home demolition as a punitive measure and finally ordered demolishes to cease as the affectedness had not been proven. Indeed, the Israeli state finally found that the policy of home demolitions may even have had the opposite effect. Following 2005, however, home demolitions have still occurred; if a home stood erect on the fluctuating territory line, entire families would have been forced to give up their home and relocate, often to settlements with meagre living conditions (B'Tselem, 2016). Luckily, the Israeli state hasn't always been successful in forcing demolitions. Some families who were requested to leave their homes to make way for the wall, refused any bribes or threats and in the end, got to keep their home, which echoed as a small victory for Palestine. In these cases, however, rather than building a wall through their homes, walls were instead built around homes, enclosing individual houses with less than one meter of space between the erected wall and the exterior of their homes.

This was something I saw first-hand while I was in Palestine when our group visited a family that was directly impacted by the Israeli state. We waited outside a barbed-wire gate near a military checkpoint for the homeowner within the confined space to unlock the gate and let us in. He hadn't always had access to the key and was only recently granted that freedom.

He showed us to his home where his children grew up, and he proceeded to serve us refreshing juice in the summer heat. We sat with him as he sombrely recounted the story of how his family had fought for the right to stay in their home, but it came at a price. He took us for a tour of his home, showing us the wall immediately outside his home that scarcely provided enough space to walk between. It is difficult to even imagine such life, especially from a privileged perspective, unless you have the opportunity to witness it first-hand. The Palestinians are a proud people with a unique culture and warm hospitality. They are resolute in their conviction that they deserve to live unencumbered by the Israeli state and that they should not need fear to simply live.

“This is an occupation,” we were told by a Palestinian war hero. He had been imprisoned for about ten years over the course of his life as a result of being present at peaceful demonstrations from the age of fifteen when he was first imprisoned for three years. Being in prison fuelled his fire to create change and to free his people, which resulted in intentional involvement with peaceful demonstrations and then several more years in prison in payment. However, during the course of his life he still managed to receive a full education and worked his way up through his PhD and was willing to present his experiences to our study abroad group.

“How would you feel if people with guns came into your home and said, ‘Okay, this is ours now. You have to stay in the bathroom with your family while we live in your home.’ How would you feel? This is an occupation,” he stated with passion and conviction. “The Israeli state will never be comfortable and they will never rest because they know they took our land unfairly. They know they stole it from us. That is why they fight us so hard every day; it’s because they’re insecure. They know they don’t deserve to be here so they will never stop pushing us down for fear that we’ll take it back.” The room became sombre as we reflected on his words, although we knew we could never relate as privileged white Americans. We could

never know of the ongoing effort to gain some autonomy and freedom in a world where everything else was dictated and controlled, including the availability of water and resources, the ability to organize to clean up the streets, and even the ability to freely pursue an education. As this was the first day we arrived in the West Bank, we couldn't even imagine life inside a wall as we hadn't really experienced the inside of it for ourselves. However, following our presenter's words, he soon gave us that opportunity as we all loaded into the bus and made our way to the wall.

The bus parked within walking distance of the wall and we filed out. It stretched as far as the eye could see in either direction and loomed sobering and menacing; the only thing that softened its presence was the presentation of art decorating the length of it. The erected cement was accompanied by paintings of a phoenix rising out of the ashes, a realistic depiction of a door opening to the other side of the wall, hands and ankles with shackles being broken and several inscriptions of, "Free Palestine." A few of us stood gazing at the wall in contemplation of those who decorated it and the stories they had to share, while a few others noticed randomly placed head stones and accompanying pictures of young boys, scattered among the brush and weeds.

"Weekly demonstrations are held here," the man told us. "Most of the time they are peaceful, but sometimes boys that are throwing stones are ended by a soldier with a rifle." We continued walking along the wall and I was reminded of just how disconnected we all were from the reality of the situation, as some of our group members took selfies with the wall as their background or asked other members of the group to take their picture as they smiled. I found myself wondering how anyone could smile as headstones lay just meters away when I noticed a couple of girls in school uniforms gazing down on us from a small hill immediately on the other side of the wall. They were close enough for us to notice their facial expressions, though I didn't understand the hatred and ill-contempt I saw on their faces. Feeling uneasy, I

continued to glance up over the wall, continuing with the group as we were guided along by our presenter, and now tour guide. As I watched, one girl disappeared, but soon returned, accompanied by two Israeli soldiers peering down at us with their military issued rifles held gingerly in front of them. After a few moments, the girls were no longer in sight, but the soldiers on the hill remained as they carefully watched us. Soon, the two soldiers multiplied to four. They continued to closely watch us, sizing us up and assessing whether or not we were of any particular threat.

Our tour guide also noticed the soldiers. “There’s a military checkpoint up ahead,” he stated with a note of amusement in his voice. “They must have been tipped off that we are here. There will be dozens of people here within a few hours showing up for the weekly demonstration. They usually only use the checkpoint for their military trucks to control the crowds of protesters.” I could feel the hair on the back of my neck raise as I continued to follow the group along the length of the wall, all the while feeling the soldiers’ eyes on us as we continued.

As we neared the gate of the military checkpoint, our guide stopped in front of it to continue regaling us of previous demonstrations and lives lost. With a sense of urgency now, I parted from the group while one other group member and I walked back toward the bus. He and I entered the bus and tentatively waited for the others to return, gazing out the window. As we waited, we could hear a military truck power up from the other side of the gate. Just as the others returned and we were finally ready to leave, I could hear the grating of metal against metal as the gate lifted. My heart was racing the entire time, and as we left, I finally let out a relieved sigh. Although I might not have been in any immediate danger, I couldn’t even begin to imagine living under such stress again as I knew countless other Palestinians did on a daily basis.

If the presence of the Israeli regime on the Palestinians' doorsteps weren't reminder enough, there was of course other evidence of the occupation. We took the long way back to our accommodation, stopping first at an area of abandoned and dilapidated apartment buildings. We knew there was an impoverished population in Palestine, which made it all the more nauseating to see such a waste of a possible solution for the housing crisis. Along the streets of the buildings, construction remains, fragmented furniture and other heaps of rubbish were in piles and strewn about the ground. The area was deserted except for us, but we would see similar conditions elsewhere among the West Bank, even among areas of residential living spaces. Abandoned and dilapidated apartment buildings are scattered throughout Palestine, despite an ever-growing impoverished population in Palestine, which could have been used to aid in the population and housing crisis.

In addition to the dilapidated spaces, we also grew accustomed to seeing large cisterns sit atop of every building. We came to learn that the Israelis had a monopoly on the water supply and only allowed a discretionary amount into the West Bank to be made available to the Palestinians, who don't always know when their water supply will be shut off without notice. At one point, we learned that the water supply had been shut off for up to a month at a time, requiring Palestinians to rely solely on their stored water reserves. According to the World Health Organization, 100 litres of water is recommended for a healthy lifestyle. Israel and the settlements average 242 litres per day per person, while the West Bank averages to 73 litres per day within some areas. However, in refugee camps, that may range as low as 36-44 litres per day (Wilmer, 2017). Having access to clean water is among the most basic of human rights, yet nearly 400,000 Palestinians are subjected to very limited water access or may live in areas with no running water altogether. Some may buy their water from private companies or tap into natural springs, though the cisterns are a common method for preparing for any unforeseen and relatively frequent water shortages (Vexler, 2016).

We could see the evidence of the occupation in the dilapidated city with cisterns atop every building, along the inside of the wall and carried with the presence of every Israeli soldier. Every day that we were in Palestine we could feel the weight grow increasingly heavier, but we had nothing to compare our experience to, as most of us had never been to Israel before. Even the air felt heavy and all I could see in the eyes of the Palestinians was frustration, weakening into desperation.

2.1.3 Looking on from both sides of the wall

We had the opportunity to speak with several people during our time in Palestine, including war heroes, educated scholars and parents who did nothing more than stand against the Israeli state amidst threats of the demolition of their homes. We listened to their poignant stories and found that many of them shared similar sentiments:

“This is an occupation.”

“It’s like we’re prisoners in our own home.”

“We are being held like animals in a cage.”

“They know what they did.”

I didn’t understand just how real these sentiments were until we exited through the checkpoint at the wall after a quick investigation of our bus by a guard, and could suddenly see the stark difference of what lied on the other side of the wall. The road immediately opened to a smooth and renovated highway. The buildings were in perfect order, both the commercial businesses and homes. The streets were clean and well-maintained. I could hardly believe I was in the same country as where I had entered Palestine. I felt nauseous as I viewed the scene. I may have listened to the plights of the Palestinians lightly, though I didn’t understand the magnitude of how unjust and dire their situation was until seeing all that they were missing out on with only a wall to separate them. I found myself wondering, what is the value of a life? Why are some people less deserving than others of their basic human needs? How can you

militarily occupy a place that is already part of your country? These questions must be explored equally from both sides of the wall.

A poll conducted in 2013 found that 53% of Jewish Israeli respondents opposed ending the occupation while 39% supported ending it (Gluntz, 2013). However, we can see these perspectives are slowly shifting over time. A more recent study conducted by the Pew Research Centre surveyed more than 5,000 Israeli Jews on religion and politics in Israel. Almost half of the respondents said that “Arabs should be transferred or expelled from Israel,” but almost equally, 46% disagreed with those sentiments (Lipka 2016). It seems that at the time of the poll, almost half of Israelis didn’t agree with the occupation of Palestine. By a small majority, 52% of the same respondents expressed the importance of having a Jewish majority Israeli state than to have sovereignty over the historical lands of Israel (referring to the West Bank), with only 22% of respondents submitting that sovereignty over “greater Israel” was more important. So how then do Jewish Israelis view the occupation? In a more recent study conducted in May of 2016, Israelis were asked, “To what extent do you fear that you or one of the people important to you will be harmed in the current wave of terror attacks?” Sixty-four percent said that they were “greatly or moderately” afraid, which was down by 5% from the previous month from those who felt that sovereignty over Israel as a whole was more important (Times of Israel Staff, 2016). Terror attacks are also a fear among many Israelis; their experiences and fears may create even more of an inability to empathize with Palestinians, as many Israelis feel as though they are victims with every rogue missile launched into Israel by Palestinian radicals.

I found these fears and insecurities to be confirmed in an unofficial interview I conducted with an anonymous Israeli. When asked if he personally experienced or felt fear and insecurity within the conflict, he explained the more immediate fears shared by his family during the Gaza War. He explained how hard it was to wake his kids up in the middle of the night to take them to the safe-room, and the sense of fear that came along with protecting his

family in the middle of the night due to unpredictable missile attacks. Although he works with a few Palestinians professionally, he explained how these experiences still provoked a sense of fear when he saw Palestinians in Jerusalem. He expressed fear that Palestinians he might encounter on public transportation could be terrorists, no matter how small of probability, and even if he tried to reserve judgement, those fears were always at the back of his mind. With this example, we can see how, despite an individual's best efforts to empathize with the Other, they may still face some cognitive dissonance based on realistic fears, personal experiences or the experiences from their ingroup toward the outgroup.

It would be unproductive to claim that one group or party has illegitimate claim to their pain and whose narrative is less valid, as both Palestinians and Israelis seem caught up in an endless cycle of retribution while sinking lower into despair. Palestinians are desperately frustrated and longing for their right to exist to be validated, though they aren't the only ones who are ready for change. Israelis are also frustrated at the endless destructive cycle supported by their government, but feel helpless to effectively create change, thus rendering the ideal of peace unrealistic. During my time in Palestine and Israel, I consistently heard repeated statements on both sides of the wall:

"We can't go on this way."

"I cannot see how things will change."

"We are tired of fighting."

I was not alone in my observations. In December of 2015, the *New York Times* Jerusalem Bureau Chief, Jodi Rudoren, published a popular and widely cited video describing "how the despairing sentiment has deepened over the years" and that "there is a deep hopelessness in the Palestinian society about their own future and in the Israeli society about the possibility of an agreement" (Brekke, 2015). Last year, it was also reported by the Israeli security service, Shin Bet, that "Hopelessness [was] fuelling recent Palestinian attacks" and

that “for some terrorists, attacks allow an escape from a bleak reality which they perceive as unchangeable” (Winer, 2015). If hopelessness is indeed fuelling the ongoing attacks from both sides, then how can we again instil hope in the Palestinians and Israelis, and in so doing, begin to reverse the destructive cycle? Alternatively, “what will happen if the occupation continues?” The answer: “continued violent Palestinian resistance in the form of attacks on soldiers and settler and more arbitrary violence directed at Israeli civilians in and outside Palestine” (Winer, 2015, p. 62). I noted this cycle acknowledged by a Palestinian shop owner in the Palestinian quarter of Old Town Jerusalem, who suggested Israelis would always be defensive, because they knew they took something that didn’t belong to them and they will die defending it before admitting to wrong doing. If this perspective is also shared by other Palestinians, then it is understandable why arbitrary acts of violence would continue, despite Israel’s best containment strategies. This view is also acknowledged by the Israeli security agency, Shin Bet. The victim/oppressor paradigm is consistently perpetuated today and as recently as May 11, 2021, when at least seven of more than 150 rockets launched by Hamas targeted Jerusalem. Such an advance on Jerusalem has not been noted since 2014 (Schwartz & Lieber, 2021).

2.2 Empathy and Intercultural Empathy in the Palestinian Israeli Conflict

There has been scant research regarding empathy or similar emotions and experiences surrounding the Palestinian Israeli conflict to date. Indeed, only two articles have been found, one qualitative (Wilmer, 2017) and one quantitative (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006). Both articles focus specifically on the term “empathy” within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. The autoethnographic investigation titled: *Victimization, empathy, and breaking cycles of violence in Israel and Palestine*, focuses on the personal experiences of the researcher in Palestine and Israel as they reviewed various NGO’s, and otherwise, surmised their personal experiences, observations and interviews with both Palestinians and Israelis. This article offers preliminary observations, though a complete research article is yet to be released. This initial article

explores an in-depth first-hand account of several participants, both Palestinian and Israeli, in an effort to humanise and indicate pain from an individual perspective on both sides of the conflict. This investigation may be the first qualitative research effort that looks at intercultural empathy generally, and specifically within the Palestinian Israeli context. Wilmer (2017) concluded by posing the following questions that might guide their future research:

How [can we] put what we know into action, [provide] support for encounters that enable ordinary people to engage empathetically with one another, and how [can we] translate that experience into the demand for leaders on both sides who have the political will to act on that engagement in a constructive way. (p 75)

By examining the above stated qualitative study, it is emphasised how little research there is on empathy within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. By so noting, we may more deliberately engage in shaping future research questions with the effort of better understanding intercultural empathy within the conflict.

The quantitative article titled: *Intergroup reconciliation: effects of adversary's expressions of empathy, responsibility, and recipients' trust*, was the only quantitative article that specifically looked at empathy within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. This article examines “the effects of expressions of empathy for the intergroup’s conflict-related suffering and assumed responsibility for causing it by a representative of the rival outgroup on recipient’s willingness for reconciliation” (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006, p. 459). Primary findings indicate that an expression of empathy leads to more positive attitudes when trust is high, though tended to have the opposite effect when trust was low. This study, however, only consisted of Jewish-Israeli student participants in the two studies included in the article. This is a particular limitation, in that the study negates the point of view of the “other,” which in this case, are the Palestinians. The researchers’ survey questions included in this study informed the second and

third articles included in this dissertation, which focus on the Israeli individual's perspective of Palestinians as the "other," intercultural empathy and peace.

Although the aforementioned articles are of course meaningful as two of the research efforts toward understanding intercultural empathy within the Palestinian Israeli conflict, there is more work to be done while establishing future foundations for peace processes. It is particularly meaningful to incorporate a thematic analysis of collected survey and interview data in relationship to Brené Brown's existing framework on empathy and shame for the purpose of identifying similarities and differences. According to Lim and Desteno (2016), "Severity of adversity does not directly influence dispositional compassion when controlling for empathy" (p. 178). Having some adversity, no matter how great or how it compares to others' adversity, might be the first link to an increased empathic response interculturally. Our experiences, even when founded in pain, could ultimately remind us of our similarities.

Research and discourse surrounding empathy and other familiar words is insufficient, while ambiguity continues to surround such concepts. The meaning and implications of empathy are often confused with or used interchangeably with various familiar words, such as sympathy, compassion, and tenderness (Cuff et al., 2014). The lack of clarity around an understanding of empathy negatively impacts any surrounding research on intercultural empathy and may have even falsely negated the need for such research altogether as a result (Cuff et al., 2014). This is perhaps due to the difficulty of examining a concept that remains largely ambiguous, which thereby inhibits researchers from examining the nuances of intercultural empathy as a concept, and therefore related implications utilised in furthered development of potential peace processes. Indeed, few studies examine the discourse of empathy actively outside of professional contexts and among intercultural scholars, and any analysis of the discourse is not usually sophisticated in terms of the research tools and methods used (Cameron, 2011). Researchers have often confused terms such as "empathy" and

“sympathy” in monocultural contexts, and intercultural empathy, intercultural awareness, intercultural competence etc. in multicultural contexts without providing a clear distinction between them (Cameron, 2011; Chen, 1997). In this dissertation, I borrow Brown’s (2019) definition of empathy: Empathy is not connecting to an experience. Empathy is connecting to the emotions that underpin an experience (Brown, 2019). Sympathy provides a cognitive understanding of an experience, although it does not feature the connecting to emotions. Empathy is feeling *with* people, while sympathy is feeling *for* them. Empathy fuels connection while sympathy drives disconnection (Brown, 2019). Emotional resonance and a sense of commonality can lead to sympathy, yet we must also emphasize that the act of conveying cultural empathy is not sympathy with, agreement with or identification with a specific culture (Ivey et al., 1997). Cultural empathy, or intercultural empathy, is composed of an appropriate understanding of a culture’s values and beliefs and has been described as seeing the world through another’s eyes. Intercultural empathy can be characterized as the appropriate understanding of a culture’s values and beliefs, yet there is still a need for a more discourse-analytic approach to further clarify the multi-layered nature of empathy (Cameron, 2011; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004).

Empathy has been long recognized as a central element to intercultural sensitivity (Alder & Towne, 1987). Although it is only recently gaining some attention, it is primarily examined within the limited sphere of the medical field. For example, empathy has been a focus within the practitioner/patient relationship as efforts to achieve a more empathetic bedside manner among Western medical professionals. Experimental neuroscientific and psychological studies have also been conducted that often focus on the neurological function while empathetic thoughts are being felt by the participant for both loved and hated peers, as demonstrated by Giulia Bucchioni in their research article, “Do we feel the same empathy for loved and hated peers?” (Baron-Cohen, 2011; Bucchioni et al., 2015). The results of this

research article attest we do not experience the same depth of empathy for loved and hated peers, though when we at least recognize another's humanity despite our opinion toward them, we still experience a pain that is similar to the pain felt within a personal experience. While we are gaining more understanding about empathy in present discourse as introduced by healthcare practitioners and researchers, our understanding of empathy continues to be severely limited in expansiveness of context, especially within intercultural contexts.

In the last 20 years, advances in neuroscience have provided some clarity regarding the nature and mental basis of empathy, however, it is usually in congruence with mono-cultural studies of autism, as led by prominent and accomplished clinical psychologist, Simon Baron-Cohen, one of only two empathy researchers in the world. Baron-Cohen (2018) defines empathy as "the ability to recognize another's thoughts and feelings, and to respond to these with an appropriate emotion" (Greenberg, et. al, 2018, p. 2). This definition is problematic in the ambiguity of key words, such as "appropriate." While most of his 270 published research pieces focus on autism studies and the capacity for empathy among the autistic, they are exclusively held within a European/Western context, excluding one research article that compared the Italian version of the Empathy Quotient, which is often used as an autism predictor in children (Preti, et al., 2011). While the "Empathy Quotient" is unique in its effort, it is unfortunately severely lacking as a quantitative scale that does not translate across varying cultural planes and lacks in validity and reliability. Furthermore, Baron-Cohen (2018) exclusively conducts his research utilizing quantitative methods, which is already limited in its nature, as one cannot quantify empathy, nor other human emotions.

In October 2017, Simon Baron-Cohen presented a prepared speech at the UN Vienna to discuss an alternative empathy-based approach in the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Baron-Cohen is largely funded by Israel and may have had Israel's best interests in mind when citing the conflict in his presentation. He expressed the importance of empathy, stating:

Empathy is a key necessary step for truth and reconciliation, which will ultimately be needed for peace, and to enable trust to be rebuilt, so that other difficult steps can follow in peace talks; most importantly, the discussion about mutual security for both Israel and Palestine. If we recognize that finding peace will require empathy, we should do all we can to accelerate this process.

He made efforts to point out and validate the pain experienced on both sides of the wall, however, at the end of his presentation he ultimately positioned himself on Israel's side, stating:

Some Palestinians are starting to acknowledge that as long ago as 1936, the national Arab leadership was inciting violence against the Jews in Palestine, and that most Israeli families have lost a relative in the conflict. Eventually the Palestinians will need to face up to this fact as yet another cause of this long and painful conflict.

After dictating the importance for the Palestinians to “face up” to their part in the conflict, Baron-Cohen failed to cite the Israeli hand and responsibility within the conflict, thus denying Israel an opportunity to take up an accountable position to aid in future problem solving and peacebuilding processes. He may have made an effort to contribute his perceived expertise on empathy in relation to the Palestinian Israeli conflict despite his lack of experience with intercultural empathetic contexts, though it is clear that even those with the best intentions may still be swayed by bias, lacking an equally accountable view.

In addition to the research completed within the medical field and through the efforts of Simon Baron-Cohen, we have also gained a deeper understanding of empathy as pioneered by empathy and shame researcher, Brené Brown in the United States (Brown, 2018). She characterizes empathy as being on the opposite side of the spectrum from shame. Shame results in fear, blame (of self or others), and disconnection. Empathy is cultivated by courage, compassion and connection, and is the most powerful antidote to shame. Brown references Theresa Wiseman's four defining attributes of empathy: To be able to see the world as others

see it, to be non-judgmental, to understand another person's feelings, and to communicate your understanding of that person's feelings. Brown defines empathy as a skill, and so she stresses actively practicing giving and receiving empathy.

Previous studies have suggested that the element of "cultural shame" may exist, though it is not widely understood, just as the concept of "intercultural empathy" continues to evade us. Once we understand how and why the perception of the "other" is formed, we may be more equipped to identify empathetic processes and begin to understand "cultural shame" as a whole. Individually, shame is very familiar and widely experienced; everyone has experienced it to some extent and have felt the paralyzing effects of sinking into shame. According to Brown (2013), empathy is the antidote to shame (Okura, 2013). Therefore, if "cultural shame" exists, then "intercultural empathy" must as well, at least to some degree. Brown (2018) also suggests it is not essential to have experienced the exact experience of another to make empathizing possible, but rather, simply recalling a similar experience with a related emotional response is enough (Brown, 2018). Brown communicates this phenomenon very clearly. "If you put shame in a petri dish, it needs three ingredients to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence, and judgement. If you put the same munt of shame in the petri dish and douse it with empathy, it cannot survive" (Brown, 2010).

As ground-breaking and significant as Brown's research is in a mono-cultural context, a profound gap is identified in that it is yet to be explored within intercultural contexts while examining the accompanying nuances. Intercultural awareness, or intercultural empathy, can be regarded as the foundation of communication and often requires an awareness of one's own culture before the awareness of another culture is made possible. It requires the ability to stand back from one's own cognitive cultural framework and become aware of not only one's own cultural values, but also the values and perspectives of other cultures. Furthermore, that recognition allows for differences between cultures, languages and values. Differences may

then be explored as unthreatening inquisitiveness that ultimately build collaboratively, though misinterpretations may occur primarily when we are not conscious of our own behavioural and cultural rules and then project them onto others. Indeed, the mere cognitive recognition of cultural awareness is far from sufficient (Zhu, 2011) as we must further develop the conceptualization of our own identity and how we fit in the world. After achieving some level of self-actualization, we may realistically and responsibly examine our relationship with cultures outside our own. Assigning blame without active perspective taking may also instigate more conflict and further distance opposing parties from each other, resulting in perpetuated false perceptions of the “other” and instigating furthered anger and aggression toward the “other,” especially between dominant ingroups and minority outgroups, as suggested by integrated threat theory (ITT).

2.3 Integrated Threat Theory

The Israelis are the dominant ingroup within the Palestinian Israeli conflict, yielding little power to Palestinians to enact change (Kershner, 2021; Wilmer, 2017). Thus, understanding the conflict from the Israeli perspective is essential. According to integrated threat theory (ITT), feeling threatened by the outgroup, either realistically or symbolically, is a form of prejudice (Kinder & Sears, 1981; McConahay, 1986; Sears, 1988). However, “in most cases such fears are overblown, and it may be possible to undermine them with accurate information about the other group” (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 40). Increased empathy mitigates imbalances and bridges the gap in our understanding of the “other,” thereby softening the lack of understanding between dominant and marginalized groups. As we endeavour to deepen our understanding of intercultural empathy and refined peace processes, gaining a deeper understanding of the Israeli perspective of the “other” through the lens of ITT must first be addressed.

Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996), who initially theorized ITT, asserted that when individuals believe their values, norms, and social groups are threatened, prejudicial reactions

are more likely to occur in defence (Allport, 1954; Duckitt, 1992). Prejudice, or a set of negative attitudes or beliefs related to the expression of negative emotions or hostility toward the outgroup, is more likely to be intensified in these cases, such as when Israelis feel threatened by Palestinians, thus reacting with prejudice and hostility. There are several factors that can explain prejudice, including personality actors, membership in social groups, adherence to values or beliefs, and cultural differences between in and outgroups (McConahay & Hough, 1976; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Sears, 1988; Stephan & Stephan, 1993, 1996).

While threat may be real or perceived, it is important to point out that the perception of threat is real, and the perception of threat alone is enough to produce prejudice. According to Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996), threats that lead to prejudice can fall under four categories: realistic threats, symbolic threats, negative stereotyping, and intergroup anxiety. However, more and more ITT researchers have simplified Stephan and Stephan's (1993, 1996) ITT categories to include only realistic and symbolic threats (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan et al., 1998; Nshom & Croucher, 2017, 2018). For that reason, this research focuses exclusively on realistic and symbolic threats. Based on what we know about ITT, there are limited economic, physical, and political resources, leading to competition over such resources (Sherif, 1966). When individuals perceive a competition for scarce resources, this competition leads to prejudicial and discriminatory behaviour. For example, it is common to hear political rhetoric blame minority and/or immigrant groups for economic problems. Such rhetoric leads to an increased distrust of minority groups (Croucher, 2008; Laurence & Vaisse, 2006).

Realistic threats are primarily economic, physical, and political (Stephan & Stephan, 1993), and related to the conditions instigated by the outgroup toward the ingroup's existence (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Realistic threats include emphasized threats to welfare, political and economic power, and the physical well-being of the ingroup and its members. In addition, Stephan and Stephan (2000) stated realistic threats lead to prejudice regardless of the viability

of the perceived threat. Symbolic threats are based on perceived differences in values, beliefs, and norms between groups (Stephan & Stephan, 1993). Outgroups, or minority groups, often have different worldviews from the dominant groups, which may be considered to counter the norm. Furthermore, symbolic threat can be described as concerns to the ingroup's "way of life," which varies from "morals, values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes of the outgroup (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). We can see these threats occur when members of the ingroup feel that their "way of life" are threatened by the outgroup. In addition, perceived symbolic threats predict prejudice and perceptions of cultural difference, indirectly affecting attitudes toward the outgroup (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Studies show symbolic threats in minority groups are related to negative attitudes toward these groups (Croucher, 2008; Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2011; González et al., 1998; Laurence & Vaisse, 2006; Sinderman & Hagendoorn, 2007).

Israelis are the dominant ingroup in Palestine, and as such, are the primary actors toward an ideal of peace. Stephan and Stephan (2000) argued that when people feel threatened while having intergroup interactions, they may experience intergroup anxiety for fear of potentially negative outcomes. Alternatively, negative outcomes may indeed be the result of fear, embarrassment, rejection or ridicule (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). To better understand this dichotomy, we must first break down Israelis perspectives of Palestinians thematically by noting their perceived similarities and differences, surveying their level of openness or fear toward the "other," and examine to what degree Israelis feel personally threatened by Palestinians in the conflict. Furthermore, the Israeli participants express what they view are the principle difficulties faced by Palestinians, as well as whether or not they have friends on the other side. Familiarity with, or exposure to the "other" may dramatically influence the level to which individuals feel comfortable with or threatened by the "other," though they rarely get the opportunity (Manney, 2008). An increase of positive exposure to the "other" could

dramatically influence the perception toward the “other,” and decrease cognitive dissonance. When people empathize with the outgroup, their empathetic reactions can take three forms: cognitive empathy, reactive empathy, and parallel empathy (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Cognitive empathy is beneficial when attempting to understand the perspectives and experiences of the “other,” in addition to an understanding of cultural norms, practices, values and standards. Cognitive empathy may also be key in processing attributional patterns (Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

The use of ITT for the purpose of analysing perceived threat from the dominant ingroup toward the minority outgroup has already been utilised by several recent articles and with consistent reliability and quality of findings. Similarly positioned groups with a parallel power structure has explored ITT among Finns and Muslim immigrants in Finland (Croucher & Sommier, 2013), Muslim immigrants in Western Europe (Croucher, 2013), prejudice toward American Muslims (Croucher et. al, 2016), threats and attitudes toward Russian-speaking immigrants (Nshom & Croucher, 2014), threat of Muslim immigration in Spain (Croucher et. al, 2014), with a more recent analysis of Covid-19 related prejudice in the United States, Spain, Italy, and New Zealand (Croucher et. al, 2021).

The above noted articles noted interesting findings and themes that also corresponded with the research included in this dissertation, including that of a religiosity having no significant effect on the relationship between threat and intergroup contact (Croucher & Sommier, 2013). This was noted as a particular theme in Article II and Article III of this dissertation, which found that Israelis regarded the conflict as driven by and supported by the government and largely out of their control; they did not indicate that they viewed the Palestinian Israeli conflict as a religious conflict. Another common theme was that of the dominant perspective of the “other” and their desire to assimilate (Croucher, 2013). It was interesting to note a similarity between Croucher’s (2016) assertion that increased contact was

negatively correlated with perceptions of real and symbolic threat. This theme was found repeated in Article III of this dissertation, which noted that, due to a lack of contact between Palestinians and Israelis, feelings of both real and symbolic threat increased. This is particularly important to note within the Palestinian Israeli conflict, because as long as there is a wall separating Palestinians from Israelis, thus enforcing an even greater wall within Israelis' minds and further reinforcing cognitive dissonance, intercultural empathy and peace will not be a foreseeable outcome.

2.4 Toward Intercultural Empathy and Peace

Empathy is enhanced through a culmination of experiences that leads individuals to broaden their perspectives of the "other" and engage empathetically with the narrative of the "other." Proximity in a non-threatening environment is key for obtaining this ideal, otherwise, fears of the "other" are enhanced by impersonal and dissociative influences instigated through the media and other channels. The physical relationship between Palestinians and Israelis has been overwhelmingly violent while neutral space has been erased, so it is not hard to understand why peaceful contact is incomprehensible. Due to the separation barriers, checkpoints, settlements and only four binational schools in the entire country, interpersonal encounters are less likely and often impossible for most Palestinians and Israelis (Wilmer, 2017).

Despite the nearly impossible odds, there are some NGOs led by both parties who are making substantial efforts to bridge the gap of cognitive dissonance between Palestinians and Israelis. For example, the Parents Circle Families Forum is a group of 600 families from both sides of the wall who have lost loved ones throughout the violent conflict. Doubi Schwartz, former General Manager of this organization, explained that members of the organization visit high schools in teams of one Palestinian and one Israeli family member to share their stories of loss and their plea for peace and nonviolence. "Some of the schools in Israel will not let us

bring a Palestinian in, and for many who do, it is the first time they have encountered someone from the other side” (Wilmer, 2017, p. 75).

Misunderstanding has thwarted the Palestinians and Israelis, even amidst efforts to compromise and create sustainable peace between both parties. According to Stohlman and Aladin (2003), the Palestinians ultimately felt cheated by the Israelis’ definition of “peace” after previous failed peace negotiations. They postulated that the Palestinians’ understanding of “peace” meant that there wouldn’t be an Israeli military presence in Palestine, and they would be free to live independently and autonomously outside of the Israeli control. However, the Israelis’ understanding of peace simply meant that they would not actively instigate conflict with the Palestinians, although they may have intended their active military to remain present. At the time of the most recent peace agreement, the Palestinians understood “peace” as a promise that they would be free to live their lives unencumbered by the Israeli state, though the Israelis understood “peace” as simply not actively engaging in conflict with the Palestinians, although that did not strictly mean that they would leave Palestine as an autonomous entity (DeTurk, 2001).

Miscommunication continues to instigate further violence and unrest on both sides (Roland & Frank, 2011; Stohlman & Aladin, 2003). DeTurk (2001) also investigates this misconception even further in her breakdown in *Intercultural empathy: myth, competency, or possibility for alliance building?* where she examines the mythological and historic factors that influence the perception of the “other” in relation to the conflict. She confirmed Stohlman and Aladin’s (2003) explanation suggesting the Palestinians and Israelis didn’t even have a mutual understanding of basic and essential terms, such as “peace,” while further postulating that the variance of mythological and historical understanding does indeed influence the state of the present conflict, however, she also expresses the potential for empathy to bridge the gap of understanding between the two sides of the wall (DeTurk, 2001).

For physical walls to be put in place, cognitive and emotional walls must first exist. Similarly, if those physical walls are to be taken down, we must relearn how to see the similarities and build bridges to recognize our shared humanity. Those who have been crying out on grassroots levels have started the conversation that could lead the collective toward tolerance and peace, but it is vital that policy makers and public influencers share in the conversation if we are to tip the scales in favour of collaboration, coexistence and peace. It is time that we demand that leaders on both sides who have political will to act and engage in constructive ways and put what we know into action, support possibilities to share in encounters that may enable ordinary people to engage empathically with one another.

Chapter 3: Methodological Approach

3.1 Framework and methods

This research project consists of three empirical studies. Qualitative methods were employed to explore the perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” among Palestinians and Israelis within an interpretive paradigm, thus allowing for investigation utilising grounded theory. Decisions on the methodological approach for each paper were based on the nature of each study and the respective research questions. Qualitative studies take an interpretive and critical approach to the research topic, with grounded theory as the foundation of each approach. To enable this ideal, I have adopted an interpretivist paradigm, which “holds that reality is constructed through subjective perceptions and interpretations” (Croucher & Conn-Mills, 2019, p. 30). In the field of human and social science, qualitative approaches are fitting as they yield relevant epistemological and ontological assumptions, such as separating common themes or opinions communicated through informal investigation that is not grounded in scientific theory. Indeed, many opinions shared surrounding what we think we know about the Palestinian Israeli conflict has been largely informed by informal investigations, though little academic research has been sought out to inform these epistemological assumptions. Furthermore, understanding how Palestinians and Israelis view the “other” from an ontological approach gives way to understanding their relationship with their own identities and how relevant mythology informs identity. The current research project examined existing research projects to date utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods that informed administered surveys (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006; Wilmer, 2017), though qualitative analysis methods were primarily employed. The data collection and analysis were carried out separately. This project informs upon the Palestinian Israeli conflict from the unique lens of qualitative investigation utilising grounded theory, which seeks to not only expand upon our academic understanding

of intercultural empathy, but further, to separate assumptions previously yielded from informal investigation not grounded within academic research.

3.2 Participants and methodological reflection

Article I

This study addresses how intercultural empathy is conceptualized, if and how Palestinians and Israelis are able to have an empathetic exchange, and how that might be possible. This study also seeks to understand the various factors related to intercultural empathy and how one might empathize after having the opportunity to learn of a specific individual in the “outgroup.” The researchers examine how historical references support or dismiss the present conflict between Palestinians and Israelis overall. While examining empathy on a larger scale through the scope of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, it will help us understand how greater empathetic responses might be made possible and may eventually lead to more substantial peacebuilding processes. People are often motivated to increase others’ positive experiences and to alleviate others’ suffering (Cikara et al., 2011). This study was conducted in the West Bank and Israel. Although Palestinians also populate both the Gaza Strip and Israel, the West Bank was selected as the base for this study.

Data were collected through self-administered online questionnaires in 2017 after appropriate ethical approval. Participants did not receive any kind of financial incentive for their participation. The researcher utilized both personal contacts from her time in the West Bank and Israel, however, those personal contacts were too few in number to provide proper saturation of data. Thus, in addition to personal contacts, the researcher also created a database of 200 contacts of those involved in higher academia.

Contacts sourced from Palestine ($n = 97$) were pulled from academic websites representing the largest universities and colleges in the West Bank. Universities included: Bethlehem Bible College, Bethlehem University, An-Najah National University, Health,

Development, Information and Policy Institute (HDIP), and Arab American University, among others. Israeli contacts ($n = 202$) were also sourced from academic websites representing the largest universities and colleges within Israel (excluding the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). These institutions included: Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and The Open University of Israel. Fewer Israeli institutions were selected in contrast to Palestinian institutions due to the scarcity of higher academic institutions within Palestine as compared with Israel. After compiling the list of 200 contacts, the researcher sent the same email to each contact with an invitation to complete the prepared survey (see Appendix D) delivered via SurveyMonkey, a common and reliable survey tool. SurveyMonkey was further utilised as the School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing at Massey University had an existing subscription to the platform.

After distributing the surveys to the 200 contacts within higher academia, 15 contacts responded to the survey of both Palestinians ($n = 8$) and Israelis ($n = 7$) over a period of two months. Palestinians accounted for 53.3% of the sample ($n = 8$) and Israelis accounted for 46.7% ($n = 7$). Participants ranged in age from 29 to 81. Men accounted for 66.7% ($n = 10$) of the sample, and women made up 33.3% ($n = 5$) of the sample. The sample was concentrated in educational level: 6.7% ($n = 1$) bachelor's degree, 26.67% ($n = 4$) master's degrees, and 66.7% ($n = 10$) PhD's. All questionnaires were administered in English.

The researcher began coding the survey responses utilising grounded theory and went through a systematic process of grouping similar themes with each other. Some outliers emerged, which were categorized as 'Other', while other strong consistent themes emerged. After locating the various themes and grouping them together, the researcher found Weaver's (1990) four steps to empathy, which outlined primary themes, including Identification, Incorporation, Reverberation, Detachment, and Influencers. Based on the thematic analysis of

the various emerging codes identified, unique subthemes were created that fell within the overarching theme, but allowed for more specificity and closer examination.

Within Identification, emerging subthemes included: Identification and experiences of self, identification and experiences of the “other,” and identification of perspectives and/or experiences of historical counterparts and “others.” Within Incorporation, emerging subthemes included: Acknowledging experiences of the “other,” perspective taking, and noticing similarities/positive differences. An example of “positive differences” were usually in reference to the positive qualities identified in the other, such as appreciation of cuisine and culture. Within the theme of Reverberation, emerging subthemes included: Feelings of hope, joy, trust, etc., for the “other,” feelings of pain, fear, apprehension, etc., and shared experiences with the “other.” The theme Detachment included various subthemes, including: Negative experiences of the “other” resulting in fear, hatred, etc., distance from perceived differences, and acts of aggression against the “other” or similar counterparts. Finally, a unique theme was created independent of Weaver (1990) that the researcher called Influencers. Subthemes identified within this theme included: Ignorance as a result of a lack of education/a need for education, government/similar external forces being the instigator for conflict, and religious context. This final subtheme was usually in reference to the conflict either being caused or sustained by religious differences or interpretations of religious text.

Following this initial coding protocol, the researcher sought to confirm themes and subthemes through saturation, which led her reach out to two personal contacts, one Palestinian and one Israeli, to conduct interviews via Skype. Each participant was aware the interviews were recorded, that their anonymity and safety was the first priority, and they knew they had the freedom to cancel the interview at any time. Interview questions asked primarily included survey questions, with additional follow-up questions with the intention of delving deeper into the respondents’ experiences (see Appendix D). The Palestinian interview was 36 minutes, 27

seconds in duration, while the Israeli interview was 45 minutes, 55 seconds in duration. The audio of these interviews was recorded with the respondents' permission, and then transcribed and coded. While coding, the researcher again went through the transcriptions and identified similar themes and then organized subthemes. The themes and subthemes, although coded without the initial application of Weaver's (1990) themes, again sustained the original identification of said themes. At this point, the researcher felt as though she had reached a point of saturation and did not seek a third round of data to code.

Article II

This study focuses on how Israelis perceive intercultural empathy in relation to the "other," in addition to their perception of peace within the conflict. The initial case study presented in Article I (Jackson & Croucher, 2021 in press) presented a strong starting point for establishing a foundation in this type of research, specifically an understanding and application of intercultural empathy in relation to the Palestinian Israeli conflict. As the starting point, it informed upon which questions were provided valuable insight and what questions could be revised or omitted to gain more specific insight into the Palestinian and Israeli experience and perception of intercultural empathy, peace, and the "other." In order to establish that valuable insight, the initial survey questions (see Appendix D) were revised according to the new specific scope, thus forming new survey questions (see Appendix E).

Following the formation of the new survey (see Appendix E), Qualtrics, a third-party academic survey service, was employed to gather responses from 44 participants, including 22 Palestinians and 22 Israelis. Surveys predominantly allowed for open-ended responses in paragraph form. Interestingly, it was found that most of the Palestinian participants ($n = 9$) plagiarized some or all of their responses. This additionally proved interesting in that up to three consecutive participants responses were sourced from the same websites for the same answered. This leads one to imagine a situation where Qualtrics initial quality control became

limited in their inability to either control how many people were allowed to answer multiple surveys, that several participants sat next to each other and pulled their responses from the same websites, or simply that Qualtrics was unable to account for potentially plagiarised responses. Another interesting note is that most plagiarised responses were often pulled from online psychology-centred websites. Although these several points prove interesting, the researcher had limited funds and was unable to pay for another round of data. Thus, the Palestinian respondents were withdrawn focusing the study primarily on the Israelis. Although the Palestinians were eliminated from this study, the Israeli focus still proved very valuable, especially as the initial case study (Jackson & Croucher, 2021 in press) elicited shorter and less reflective responses. The primary focus on the Israeli perspective for this study allowed for a closer look at the Israeli perspective.

After the surveys were gathered, the researcher went through a similar process of coding as with Article I. However, in this case, an existing framework was not identified and the themes and subthemes identified throughout the coding process provided a new structure and understanding for this study. This still allowed for rich themes to emerge that focused upon the participants' understanding and experience of empathy and intercultural empathy, in addition to what influenced a possibility or impossibility for peace. Themes identified when participants defined empathy and intercultural empathy included Action, Object, Understanding, and Ability. When describing how participants experienced intercultural empathy specifically, themes established included Expresses Intercultural Empathy (IE), Demonstrated IE, Never Experienced IE, or expresses fear. When participants described their perception of any possibility for peace, themes that emerged included: Primary Difficulties Impacting Peace; Solutions for Peace; and The Role of Empathy for Peace. Each primary theme also informed several subthemes for every theme (identified in Table 3 of Article II).

Article III

In addition to the analysis of empathy, intercultural empathy and perceptions of peace among Israelis, several additional themes were noted that produced more data than was able to be contained within Article II. This afforded the ability to provide a more rich and in-depth analysis of various emerging themes, which became the focus of Article III. This study focuses on how Israelis perceive Palestinians in regard to both symbolic and realistic threats as outlined by integrated threat theory (ITT). This study also investigates to what degree Israelis experience active perspective taking with Palestinians, if any. Questions surrounding threat surfaced in a previous case study (Jackson & Croucher, 2021 in press), thus, this term is researched further, in addition to a potential presence of intercultural empathy within the conflict. This study also explores the capacity for Israelis to practice active perspective taking, which is a strong indicator of empathy and essential in the development of peace processes. This study adds to our understanding of the Palestinian Israeli conflict from the perspective of ITT from a qualitative approach. A previous case study (Jackson & Croucher, 2021 in press) indicates that Israelis experience or perceive a certain degree of threat from Palestinians which appear to be largely based in symbolic and realistic threat, though Israelis occupy a position of dominance as the ingroup within Israel. As such, this study focuses specifically on the Israeli experience of the “other,” while also exploring their ability to practice active perspective taking.

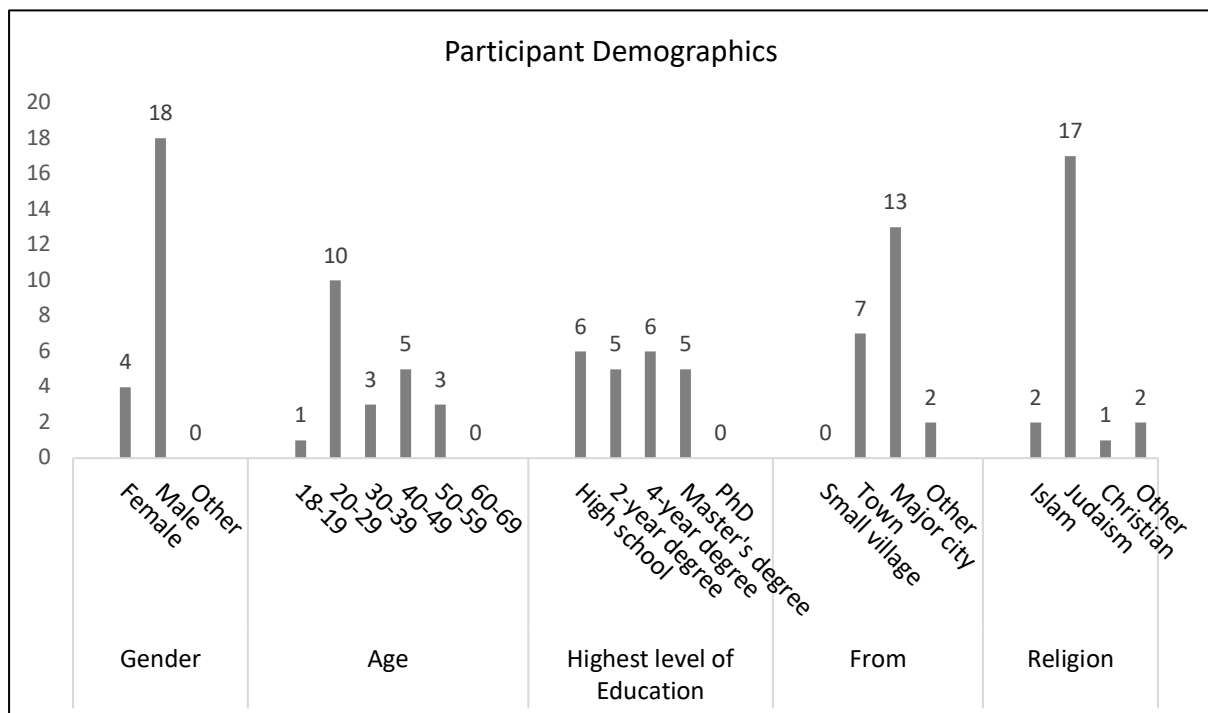
In addition to themes related to empathy, intercultural empathy, and perceptions of peace, it was also indicated that “Israelis experience or perceive a certain degree of threat from Palestinians,” which was found to be related to both symbolic and realistic threats as per integrated threat theory (ITT) (Jackson & Croucher, 2021). These related themes became the focus of Article III, which then allowed different and more specific application of ITT. The quality checks between Article II and Article III were the same in that the data was pulled from

the same Qualtrics medium. Meaning, Article III also featured plagiarised response from Palestinians, which therefore led to the dismissal of feedback in the coding process.

The process of coding for Article III were also similar in that of Article II in the application of grounded theory in the process outlined by Tie et al. (2019), including: 1) purposive sampling that directed data collection, 2) constant comparative analysis, 3) memoing, 4) generating/collecting data, 5) coding, 6) initial coding intermediate coding, 7) advanced coding, and finally 8) theoretical sampling. In this final stage, themes were identified and outlined for each question.

Demographic information for **Article II and Article III** are outlined below:

Table 3.1 Demographic information for Article II and Article III



It is important to clarify that in all co-authored pieces included in the dissertation, I spearheaded all states of the research projects. The co-author helped with development of some theoretical frameworks and data analysis, as well as editorial assistance.

Reflections of the researcher

While this project was still in its infancy and yet to be carried out in methodological action, I admit I had some expectation as to how the research might be carried out, in that I didn't foresee many, if any, obstacles that might have deterred me from my original projection. I had idealistic hopes of perhaps developing a replicable framework for peace, which would ultimately inform future peacebuilding processes to include the voices on the ground in grassroots levels that are first effected by domestic and international conflicts before those with power as the primary stakeholders. This, however, proved untrue in that I was faced with instances along the way that forced me to reframe, recalibrate, and recommit to the scientific process that my bias could not have personal stake in.

The first obstacle that I encountered was learning how little, if any, research existed on empathy from a qualitative and grounded theory perspective, excluding Brown's (2015) research. While Brown's (2015) research is incredibly insightful and concretely developed, there are few additional researchers that reflect on, or repeat her processes to confirm similar findings. Indeed, the concept of empathy alone is still widely disputed, and is often framed with an intangible and incomprehensible emotion or cognition, such as love. A further hurdle I faced was discovering that the concept of intercultural empathy has not been researched, especially as the intent of the research. Indeed, many studies that reference "intercultural empathy" at all are often only stated as a note of reflection, rather than a concrete concept. However, based on what I learned of intercultural communication, and empathy as two differing concepts, I could see the concepts were actually married in the world around me, and particularly from first-hand experiences in my interpersonal relationships, as well as through studying abroad and living in various countries. I had hoped to investigate intercultural empathy and apply at least some structure to the concept, but it felt as though I was feeling

around in the dark and doing the work to will “intercultural empathy” to even exist in academic contexts.

The second obstacle I encountered was that of the difficulty to gather data to support my research. Various videos can be found online that depicts reflections from casual passers-by in Palestine and Israel who engage in informal interviews on the streets and offer their reflections on the concept. This, however, is not as easy in an academic sense, as rigorous human ethics requirements must be respected and adhered to at every step of the research process. I found it difficult to secure the surveys and interviews used for this study, and especially difficult to ensure quality with the limited resources I had at my disposal.

Although Article II and Article III both included 27 participants from Israel, my initial intention was to include Palestinians to balance the overall narrative. However, unforeseen problems arose, making the majority of data gathered not usable. These unforeseen circumstances were unfortunate indeed, and following the initial scope of this project, funding did not remain to attempt further data collection from Palestinians. I found it an interesting learning experience while working with Qualtrics, the employed data collection service, in that however dependable a service may be, their available panels of use that they employ independently may not always be entirely reliable. For example, in my collected data from Palestine, many participants plagiarised their results. I learned this after copying and pasting several polished responses into Google and thereby located each website from which each response was taken from. In some cases, adjacent participants in the study in order of identifying participant number had duplicated the website from which they copied and pasted their responses. I believe that this may have been only a few participants filling out several surveys. This was an unexpected hurdle, particularly after the interesting responses gathered from Palestinians in Article I, which featured several participants who were very communicative and generous in their response. Interestingly, the Israeli participants in Article

I were less communicative by comparison. In the future, I would like to do more research of a similar scope in Palestine and Israel, but with greater participant numbers, from controlled groups of nationality/age/religion/education, and in person for translated interviews vs. qualitative surveys. In so doing, I believe that data gathered will provide rich detail and uncover various nuances that are otherwise overlooked by the use of surveys.

The third and final obstacle I will note was the response I have gotten from other academics, as well as friends and colleagues who, whereupon learning about the nature of my research, asked “why does that matter?” This was particularly evident toward the beginning of my research, while conditions in Palestine and Israel were still largely consistent; not peaceful, but consistent. It seemed as though the world had grown used to the conflict and accepted it as a constant. I was frequently asked, “But why intercultural empathy?” However, after the beginning of the most recent attacks on May 11, 2021, I am now met with enthusiastic responses in regard to how timely and relevant my research is. This is somewhat frustrating, as the validity of research on issues such as intercultural empathy for the sake of furthering future peace processes does not become irrelevant during a perceived time of peace, or otherwise, a lack of active conflict. There has never been a more crucial time for my research, nor will there ever be a more perfect time to commit to the understanding of those directly affected by conflict in grassroots levels. These voices should be the primary stakeholders in any conflict and should be listened to when regarding furthered conflicting pursuits, such as war. In short, if you want to understand what is truly at stake, listen to the voices on the ground who are the only voices that truly matter. It may not be the most financially lucrative option, but it must be the only option.

Chapter 4: Articles Included in the Study

4.1 Article I

Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. (forthcoming 2021). Intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” among Palestinians and Israelis: A qualitative analysis. In S. Roy (ed), *The global handbook of conflict and peace communication*. Wiley Blackwell.

The first piece of this project is a study addressing intercultural empathy and if or how it is present among Palestinians and Israelis. The field of communication studies in the social sciences lacks particular focus on intercultural empathy. Indeed, there is opportunity for applications of intercultural empathy to historically conflicting parties. Leaving some empathetic conclusions as the product of personal experience may be beneficial, even if slightly biased. Intercultural empathy is often confused or associated with a few characteristics that limit the power of the word, and the ability to further develop empathy as a principle for future use. There are various components of empathy, as well as intercultural empathy essential to defining empathy. This study has three purposes. First, it seeks to understand how conflicting parties conceptualize intercultural empathy. Second, it explores whether or not intercultural empathy exists between similar historically conflicting parties. Third, it seeks to understand how intercultural empathy might be strengthened between conflicting parties, specifically between Palestinians and Israelis. Thus, the following research questions are posed in this study:

RQ1: How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize the “other” in relationship to the amount of intergroup contact?

RQ2: How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy?

In total, 15 individuals in both the West Bank and Israel participated in the study. The first research question was answered following surveys distributed to various Palestinians and

Israelis involved in higher education. After analysis of the surveys, as well as the personal interviews, a variety of themes emerged. Four main themes borrowed from Weaver (1990), were then modified and coded in both the surveys and personal interviews. The themes that emerged included Identification, Detachment, Reverberation and Incorporation.

Identification was defined by the way in which we consider ourselves, and then absorb others' views and their experiences. This definition was formed by the primary researcher after examining the survey comments and interview transcriptions, which was also supplemented by Weaver's (1990) description of the term. Several subthemes were identified within this major theme, including the self-identity, identification of the "other," and historical justifications for identity. In some cases, there were experiences of guilt for the present situation between Palestine and Israel, though not necessarily shame. This was present when participants described how they felt in various situations in regard to the "other." Detachment was coded whenever there were instances of differences causing distance, acts of aggression, or negative experiences that the participants discussed, particularly in context of the "other" and experiences that lead to feelings of fear, hatred, etc., as a result.

Reverberation was defined by similar emotions that individuals might feel and the common experiences that might ignite such emotions. This definition was formed by the primary researcher after examining the interview transcriptions and noticing the commonalities between the emerging themes and Weaver's (1990) previous research. In the context of reverberation, the primary researcher found the individuals who experienced positive emotions, i.e. optimism, joy, trust etc., was usually due to appreciation and respect for the "other," as well as a certain amount of optimism for future peace with the "other."

The final theme that emerged was Incorporation. This study defines Incorporation as taking the experiences of another into ourselves as adopted from Weaver (1990). Subthemes of this main theme included perspective taking, acknowledging the "other", and distinguishing.

Perspective taking was defined as leaving one's own world and enter into the world of the "other" (Buccioni, 2015) by imagining the circumstances of the "other" and/or feeling with them. Perspective taking may also be known as "imaginative placement" as discussed by Calloway-Thomas (2010), which requires one to "see" through the eyes of others. It did not necessarily have to involve empathy on the participant's part, though it did include an act of imagining the situation of the "other." In this study, the theme that emerged where people who might have had negative experiences with the "other" were still capable of understanding the situations of the "other," though it did not take away from their desire for autonomy and peace.

The first article included in this dissertation is accepted for publication in *The Global Handbook of Conflict and Peace Communication*, edited by Dr. Sudeshna Roy. After presenting the related article at the 105th National Communication Association annual convention in Baltimore, Maryland in 2017, Dr. Roy approached me and Professor Stephen Croucher to ask if we would be willing to submit our article to her handbook and we were happy to. This is a fitting place for publication based on the common theme of conflict and peace, as is also the theme of the article. *The Global Handbook of Conflict and Peace Communication* is expected for publication on December 14, 2021.



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STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION DOCTORATE WITH PUBLICATIONS/MANUSCRIPTS

We, the candidate and the candidate's Primary Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of candidate:	Kelsea Jayne Jackson	
Name/title of Primary Supervisor:	Professor Stephen Croucher	
Name of Research Output and full reference:		
<small>Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. M. (in press 2021). Intercultural empathy, peace, and the "other" among Palestinians and Israelis: A qualitative analysis. In S. Roy (ed). The global handbook of conflict and peace communication. Wiley Blackwell.</small>		
In which Chapter is the Manuscript /Published work:	Chapter 4	
Please indicate:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of the manuscript/Published Work that was contributed by the candidate: 	75%	
and		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Manuscript/Published Work: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Candidate compiled literature review, data collection, and analysis - Co-author informed upon some theoretical framework and assisted with coding. 	
For manuscripts intended for publication please indicate target journal:		
The global handbook of conflict and peace communication		
Candidate's Signature:		
Date:	14/6/2021	
Primary Supervisor's Signature:		
Date:	14/6/21	

(This form should appear at the end of each thesis chapter/section/appendix submitted as a manuscript/ publication or collected as an appendix at the end of the thesis)

Intercultural Empathy between Palestinians and Israelis: A Qualitative Analysis

By

Kelsea Jackson, Stephen Croucher

Massey University, New Zealand

Word Count: 6131 (excluding Title page, Abstract and Keywords)

Abstract

This study addresses intercultural empathy, and how it is present among Palestinians and Israelis. There has been little research on the term, “intercultural empathy.” Moreover, the term has not been extensively explored among conflicting parties. Through interviews and open-ended survey questions, Palestinian and Israeli concepts of intercultural empathy were examined. Specifically, how these individuals conceptualize the other in relationships and the amount of contact each has with the other was analysed.

Keywords: Intercultural empathy, Conflict, Interviews, Qualitative methodology

There is a lack of empathy and an ever-growing cognitive dissonance between the privileged and the less privileged in our societies. As a result, men, women, and children are starving, families are disbanded as violence ensues, and thousands of people are displaced (Goldenziel, 2016). As this destruction and divisiveness continues, the overwhelming need for empathy increases. Empathy in intercultural communication reduces the tendency to use ourselves as standards for judgment and to judge others by our own feelings, choices, and preferences (Stewart, 1976). As we remain open-minded when communicating interculturally, becoming more empathetic may be achieved incrementally. To do so requires effort and consciousness on the communicators' part. We can keep fighting over our differences and how things look while turning our backs to despairing and/or displaced "others," or as Weaver (1990) recommended, we can devote ourselves to the global ideal of collaboration and position taking.

According to Calloway-Thomas' (2010) analysis of empathy in the global age, much is happening internationally in the arena of giving, while we are also at risk of the "peril of the entire planet" (p. 205). Calloway-Thomas (2010) asserted we "must commit to global justice and the global public good," because humankind could "go in the opposite direction" (pp. 204-205). At a time when we could find our interconnected achievements in the echelons of success, or the polar opposite reality, understanding intercultural empathy is essential. As Calloway-Thomas (2010) explained, "part of empathy's work, then, is to knit together human and cultural elements of both the near and the distant, so that we will care about other people even if they are an ocean away" (p. 12). By examining our similarities and differences while remaining open-minded, we may gradually strengthen our ability to be interculturally empathetic.

Communication studies, as a field, lacks a particular focus on intercultural empathy. There is opportunity for applications of intercultural empathy to historically conflicting

parties. This study has three purposes. First, it seeks to understand how conflicting parties conceptualize intercultural empathy. Second, it explores whether or not intercultural empathy exists between similar historically conflicting parties. Third, it seeks to understand how intercultural empathy might be strengthened between conflicting parties, specifically between Palestinians and Israelis. For the purpose of this research, Palestinians and Israelis will be referred to as the “other” when being addressed from an ingroup/outgroup perspective.

Historical Background

The Palestinian Israeli conflict can be traced back thousands of years. For many Zionist Israelis, the conflict can be traced back to the first book of the Torah to Genesis. According to Christian and Judaic tradition, Isaac, would produce the “twelve tribes of Israel,” and eventually receive the land of promise. By tradition, the Arab people are descendants of Ishmael, who was the son of Hagar. Israelis hold firmly to their belief that the land of Israel is their land above all else, as per the Abrahamic promise. As of result of the Judaic interpretation of the Torah, Palestinians, who are not dominantly of the Judaic or Christian faith, found themselves in chaos and turmoil when their homeland of more than a 1000 years was suddenly given away on the grounds of religious text and the result of displacement.

As we explore the history of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, we can see two sides who both have equal rights to exist: the Israelis, a people marginalized and disposed of by Nazis in World War II, and the Palestinians, a people similarly marginalized by the Israeli military. While Jewish history includes generations of refugeeism, Palestinians have just recently become refugees (Har-Gil & Gitler, 2015). Hence, the common victim-oppressor interpretation is reinforced by a mental lock in a historic framework, which is perpetually reproduced (Har-Gil & Gitler, 2015). Israel may serve as a test case with which to examine

the discourse of recognition since it has played a pivotal role in the “growing global practice of apology as both victim and perpetrator” (Kampf, 2012, p. 431).

Intercultural Empathy

There is ambiguity in defining empathy. The term is often used interchangeably with different words such as sympathy, compassion, and tenderness (Cuff, Brown, Taylor, & Howat, 2014). Indeed, the lack of clarity of this definition has had “a negative impact on both research and practice” (Cuff et al., 2014). Indeed, the lack of clarity between these different terms has negatively impacted research on intercultural empathy, and may have even negated the necessity of said research (Cuff et al., 2014). Furthermore, intercultural scholars and practitioners have often confused terms such as intercultural empathy, intercultural awareness, and intercultural competence without providing a clear distinction (Chen, 1997).

Empathy has been long recognized as a central element of intercultural sensitivity (Alder & Towne, 1987); however, research on empathy specifically is still lacking in recent studies, especially surrounding interculturalism. The two terms most often confused as synonymous are empathy and sympathy. However, for the purposes of this study, as described by Broome (1991), sympathy is based on projection and depends on similarity, making it inappropriate for an intercultural encounter. Indeed, whereas sympathy is based on projection rather than position taking, it has less power in an intercultural interaction. For empathy to have intercultural validity, it must be seen as part of the communication process itself, and thus it “must be influenced by the variables in that process” (Broome, 1991, p. 238). Intercultural empathy is not merely a factor or by-product, which may or may not be present, but rather, a crucial step within the intercultural communicative process.

Perspective taking might offer a new understanding to intercultural empathy. Schutz (1967) described perspective taking as the importance of an individual’s stream of

consciousness coinciding with another person's (Schutz, 1967). Rogers (1980) described empathy as "entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it" (p. 142). To heighten our ability to empathize with the "other," we must have a clear understanding of our personal identity. "Identity is a critical reflection upon who we are and what we want" (Gilroy, 2000, p. 99). Thus, it becomes important for us to first understand our personal identity in relation to who we are and where we came from.

Intercultural Empathy as a Concept

Calloway-Thomas (2010) stated the true essence of empathy is imagining the feelings of others. With imagining the feelings of another it then becomes unnecessary to be accurate; rather, "accuracy decreases the usefulness of empathy for intercultural communication" (Broome, 1991, p. 236). Leaving some empathetic conclusions as the product of personal experience may be beneficial, even if slightly biased. Intercultural empathy is often confused or associated with a few characteristics that limit the power of the word, and the ability to further develop empathy as a principle for future use. For example, Broome (1991) explained how previous definitions of empathy have not been useful in intercultural communication contexts because of overemphasis on accuracy, inappropriate focus on affect, and an improper portrayal of empathy as an ability or a skill (Broome, 1991).

There are various components of empathy, as well as intercultural empathy essential to defining empathy. Katz (1963) characterized the effective empathizer as one who respects the integrity of others, is self-accepting, is capable of spontaneity, tolerates anxiety, and has courage and patience to suspend judgment (Katz, 1963). Alder and Towne (1987) referred to three skills necessary for empathy to occur, including open-mindedness, imagination, and commitment. Weaver (1990) also described four steps to empathy, first including identification, which is when we consider ourselves and then absorb others views and their experiences. Second, incorporation, which is when we take the experiences of another into

ourselves. Third, reverberation, which is when we share a common emotion with another that comes solely from inside ourselves, and fourth, detachment, which is when we “withdraw from our subjective involvement and use reason and scrutiny (Weaver, 1990, p. 137).

The characteristics described by Katz (1963) and Weaver (1990) are also related to Calloway-Thomas’ (2010) expression of “imaginative placement.” This requires us to “see” through the eyes of others, creating both a “subject and object-oriented focus” that can shift (Calloway-Thomas, 2010, p. 13). Although some might argue the validity of empathy as a concept as it is related to emotion and feeling, which cannot be quantified, the notion of feeling is already insinuated in the concept of empathy (Calloway-Thomas, 2010). Thus, empathy as an experience cannot be made obsolete simply because feeling is a basic function therein.

The primary researcher is defining intercultural empathy as “projecting oneself” into another individual’s point of view so as to momentarily think similar thoughts and feel similar emotions as that person (Alder & Towne, 1987). Concerning outgroups or the “other,” Baron-Cohen (2011) said:

People are often motivated to increase others’ positive experiences and to alleviate others’ suffering. These tendencies to care about and help one another form the foundation of human society. Then the target is an outgroup member, however, people may have powerful motivations not to care about or helps that ‘other.’ (p. 11)

Gaps in existing research do not address whether or not existing dislike or hate between conflicting individuals might be transformed into empathy through an effort of perspective taking. This study seeks to address this gap by taking the historical and longstanding conflict between Palestinians and Israelis into account.

Since there is a relationship between empathy and a cognitive dissonance toward the “other,” it leads us to the question; if an individual has an opportunity to get to know an individual in a personal way, might there be greater capacity for empathy and a shared experience? A study by Giulia Buccioni (2015) showed that taking on perspective-taking tasks more clearly define the role of familiarity in empathy for pain (Bucchioni, et al., 2015). Through learning this, we may begin to integrate similar practices in the future for the sake of instilling more empathy in the hearts of conflicting parties, including Palestinians and Israelis as per this study.

Looking at the details of empathy and the inability to empathize with the “other” leads us to inquire how empathy might grow between conflicting parties and if it is possible. Whereas previous research confirmed the hypothesis that level of empathy depends on affective proximity (Bucchioni, et al., 2015), it stands to reason that future research on this point would be beneficial. It may be possible that empathy could be shared between conflicting parties, or between “in” and “outgroup” members if they had the ability to be within close proxemics of each other over long periods of time. The individuals we surround ourselves with in our lives will be easier to relate to as they are more familiar, but it is also possible that this familiarity, followed by empathy, might be nurtured over long periods of time. Factors such as altruism may also influence the level of empathy felt (Bucchioni, et al., 2015). Buccioni also stated:

Empathy enables us to understand and share another person’s feelings. As such, empathy plays an essential role in social interactions between humans. Perception of another person is in a painful situation involves much of the neural network activated during first-person experience of pain. (2015, p. 6)

Having a shared adversity, or otherwise, being able to feel another individual's pain or similar more familiar pain, might be the link between the growth of empathy between conflicting parties.

This study aims to understand how empathy is conceptualized by Palestinians and Israelis, if and how Palestinians and Israelis are able to have an empathetic exchange, and how that might be possible. In this study, the researchers explored how historical references supported or dismissed the present conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. While examining empathy on a larger scale through the scope of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, it helps us understand how greater empathetic responses can be made possible, which may eventually lead to more substantial peace building processes. Two research questions are explored in this study:

RQ1: How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize the “other” in relationship to the amount of intergroup contact?

RQ2: How do Palestinians and Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy?

Method

This study addresses how intercultural empathy is conceptualized, if and how Palestinians and Israelis are able to have an empathetic exchange, and how that might be possible. This study also seeks to understand the various factors related to intercultural empathy and how one might empathize after having the opportunity to learn of a specific individual in the “outgroup.” The researchers explore how historical references support or dismiss the present conflict between Palestinians and Israelis overall. While examining empathy on a larger scale through the scope of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, it helps us understand how greater empathetic responses might be made possible and may eventually lead to more substantial peace building processes. People are often motivated to increase others' positive experiences and to alleviate others' suffering (Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011).

Respondents

As the primary researcher had personal connections with universities in the West Bank and Israel, the primary researcher conducted personal interviews among a convenience sample of participants. The pool of participants was drawn directly from controlled academic circles, which may have influenced the findings, as the participants were from academia.

Procedures

The primary researcher conducted interviews over Skype with students and professors. The sessions were recorded with participants' permission, which were then transcribed and coded utilizing a grounded theory approach. Open-ended surveys were completed by each participant to gather their basic demographic information. Each survey also had open ended questions that may have been answered in written form to assess each individuals' perception and understanding of the term "intercultural empathy," their familiarity with the history of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, the amount of contact they have add with the "other" and how they viewed the "other." This may have yielded significant correspondence between the participants' attitudes toward members of the "other" and their familiarity with the "other."

Several strategies were implemented to recruit participants. An email was dispersed among professors present at a West Bank university and at an Israeli university. However, after the attempt to solicit a response failed, the primary researcher then emailed 100 Palestinian and 100 Israeli individuals within higher academia after the primary researcher googled all present higher academic facilities for both parties and sent random emails to the faculty and staff obtained from each university website. Of those emails, eight Palestinian and seven Israeli participants responded on a volunteer basis and completed an open-ended qualitative survey (see Appendix A) via Survey Monkey, which aided in a demographic assessment (see Table 1).

[Insert Table 1 here]

The interviews were similar in structure between Palestinians and Israelis, though all interviews were fluid according to each participant. Questions also included how much they knew about the “other” on an individual level. Each participant was aware the interviews were recorded, that their anonymity and safety was the first priority, and they knew they had the freedom to cancel the interview at any time. The interviews were then transcribed and coded after they were conducted to find possible consistent themes according to the participants’ permission. The project was approved by appropriate ethical review boards.

Data Analysis

By researching the potential presence of empathy utilizing a grounded theory, we may better understand intercultural empathy, why attempts of intercultural empathy fail and how building lasting empathy between conflicting cultures may be possible. Because there has been little to no research on intercultural empathy, the results of this study might provide a foundation for future theoretical developments. According to Lim and Desteno (2016), “Severity of adversity does not directly influence dispositional compassion when controlling for empathy” (p. 178). Having some adversity, no matter how great or how it compares to others’ adversity, might be the first link to an increased empathic response.

Results and Discussion

The first research question was answered following the surveys distributed to various Palestinians and Israelis involved in higher education. After analysis of the surveys, as well as the personal interviews, a variety of themes emerged. Four main themes borrowed from Weaver (1990), were then modified and coded in both the surveys and personal interviews. The themes that emerged included Identification, Detachment, Reverberation and Incorporation. Totals from the interviews and surveys can be seen in Table 2. To further test the themes and eliminate or add to the list of emerging themes, interviews and surveys were done with a balanced amount of Palestinians and Israelis. Personal interviews were coded

according to the themes from the surveys and interviews, and were then adopted from Weaver's (1990) research. Participants are noted with assigned numbers.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Self-identity and the “other”

Identification

Identification was defined by the way in which we consider ourselves, and then absorb others' views and their experiences. This definition was formed by the primary researcher after examining the survey comments and interview transcriptions, which was also supplemented by Weaver's (1990) description of the term.

As a result of thoughts shared by participants, self-identity was defined by the factors in which individuals identify themselves in terms of culture and their supporting personal experiences. In context with identification, self-identity looks primarily at the person behind the lens that they are looking through, as our identity often shapes how we view the world. This survey participant shared how her experiences growing up in Israel influenced how she reacted in a particular situation. She said,

During the second intifada I taught at an institution that included a separate college for training teachers for the Arabic speaking school system. All teachers shared the same coffee room, but didn't speak to another. I felt this was wrong, and tried to reach out. (Participant 5, a 64-year-old PhD and professor from Israel).

This quote shows the personal experiences of this individual and how those shaped how she handled that specific situation.

Many of the participants in this study identified as being either Palestinian or Israeli depending on where they spent the majority of their formative years, whereas one participant identified as being more of a “citizen of the world” due to his previous experience traveling and his exposure to various cultures. Indeed, his previous experience traveling and studying

abroad widened his intercultural scope tremendously, which also translated into his perception of “the other.” He showed increased instances of recognizing his own identity as a cultural being, which included the factors about himself and his culture that he deemed perhaps unfortunate, but factual. For example, he stated, “Israelis and Palestinians have many similar traits as Middle Eastern people, for example, warmth coupled with hot-headedness, welcoming to others, society run by an honour-based social code.” This quote demonstrated how a more developed personal identity can aid in recognizing similarities and differences between himself and the “other” (Participant 16, a 39-year-old PhD and professor from Israel).

Identification of the “other” was defined as the way in which we view others, either simply by our personal perception of them or in how we come to view them through personal experience. This theme considered when participants might also project their perception onto the “other,” although it may or may not have been correct. The following quote gives an example of identifying the “other.”

Israel is not content with the territory it is having now. Israel dreams to occupy all the land of Palestine and they believe that this land is their property while Palestinians are a bunch of Arabs who must go to Saudi Arabia. (Survey Participant 13, a 29-year-old Master’s student and language teacher from Palestine)

This quote shows the way in which this individual perceives the “other,” in this case being Israelis, which is fundamentally a generalizing perception and not necessarily reality. Furthermore, the individual projected her beliefs about how she as a Palestinian is viewed by the “other,” however it again might not be factual of all Israelis.

In the context of identification, the primary researcher found the participants often recalled history to justify or explain why they felt the way they felt toward the “other.” The following quote gives an example of historical context.

The main reason for this belief [that neither a one state or a two-state solution can work], is that the existence of the Zionist entity on this land is ILLEGAL since the very first day of their claimed independent state in 1948. This land is for its people who are still living and their descendants know their right of this land. The whole world, as well, witnessed and assisted the brutal invasive operations to this land since 1948. (Participant 14, a 28-year-old Master's graduate and professor from Palestine)

The quote above shows that as this individual identifies the history of his native land; his perspective supports his belief that neither a one state nor a two-state solution could work. Similar references to historical context supported several participants' perspectives.

In some cases, there were experiences of guilt for the present situation between Palestine and Israel, though not necessarily shame. This was present when participants described how they felt in various situations in regard to the "other." The following quote gives an example of negative emotions.

Jewish culture is based on feelings of guilt. Right? We're feeling guilty about things... I think that the Palestinians have undergone a process of shame... And it's a really specific sort of sociological paradigm where I don't think that maybe Jewish Israelis really operate on that level of honour or pride versus shame. We have a sense of guilt, of what's happened, but we don't necessarily feel shame for it.

(Participant 16)

The quote above shows that this individual experienced a sense of guilt for the present situation, though not necessarily shame.

Detachment

The second theme that emerged was Detachment. Detachment was coded whenever there were instances of differences causing distance, acts of aggression, or negative experiences

that the participants discussed, particularly in context of the “other” and experiences that lead to feelings of fear, hatred, etc., as a result.

In the context of detachment, ‘differences causing distance’ refers to the lack of desire or ability to engage with the “other” personally, leading to cognitive dissonance or physical distance, thus inhibiting connection. A survey participant said the following:

I think that there is just such a level of hatred... that the idea of having one state where, you know people who are on the far right of Israel will, and people from Hamas will be able to sit in the same room as parliament and come up with some kind of idea of where this one state is heading, is kind of preposterous. There needs to be a kind of division of nationalities. (Participant 16)

This quote suggests there are external factors that limit the ability to communicate with the “other,” while also supporting the participants’ belief that a form of division needs to exist even still.

Acts of aggression was defined as explicit or perceived acts of violence against the “other,” either without cause or in response to. The following quote is an example of a coded thought for this subtheme:

How can I put my hand in the hand of that person who killed my father? And how can I shake hands with someone who killed my brother? And how can I shake hands with someone who demolished my house when I said ‘no’ for Israel and when I said I’m going to fight this state? (Participant 17, a 29-year-old Master’s student from Palestine)

This comment suggests there is little room for forgiveness amidst such violence, while also pointing out the participant’s part in the aggression as she expressed her desire to also fight the state of Israel.

Negative experience was defined as situations where an incident occurred directly, or in relationship with the “other,” resulting in fear, hatred, etc. A survey participant stated,

They have the right to hold weapons to protect themselves from you, but you do not have the right to hold any weapons to defend yourself... the ruler must be a chosen by them and their allies, and must meet their standards not your own standards. Would you accept peace? (Participant 13)

This participant and others expressed their frustration as a result of varying situations after being adversely affected by the “other.”

Conceptualization and presence of intercultural empathy

Results suggest previous research addressing empathy was supported. The varying definitions of intercultural empathy from the participants in this study mirrored Cuff, Brown, Taylor, and Howat’s (2014) assertion that there are as many definitions of empathy as there are authors.

Previous research by Schutz (1967) was also confirmed in instances where the participants demonstrated perspective taking quite frequently, so too did their efforts to empathize with the “other” despite previous associated pain. One such participant stated, “Friends from Israeli Christian congregations would show support and understanding to the difficulties we go through as Palestinians” (Participant 12, a 33-year-old PhD and professor from Israel). There also seems to be a relationship between identity and the ability to empathize with the “other.” This study confirmed Gilroy’s (2000) assertion that if individuals have a limited perception of their cultural identity, they might also have a limited ability to recognize the culture of the “other” in productive manner. Indeed, where the participants expressed a limited view of their personal identity, they similarly demonstrated little to no instances of intercultural empathy.

Reverberation. Reverberation was defined by similar emotions that individuals might feel and the common experiences that might ignite such emotions. This definition was formed by the primary researcher after examining the interview transcriptions and noticing the commonalities between the emerging themes and Weaver's (1990) previous research.

In the context of reverberation, the primary researcher found the individuals who experienced positive emotions, i.e. optimism, joy, trust etc., was usually due to appreciation and respect for the "other," as well as a certain amount of optimism for future peace with the "other." One survey participant shared how she feels Palestinians and Israelis are quite similar in many ways and that she ultimately wishes for both parties to share in a sustainable peace. She said, "We are similar in our loss and tragedies and the longing to have immanent peace... Humans are alike if not categorized and labelled... [which should] enrich and broaden our sense of shared humanity" (Participant 15, a 31-year-old Bachelor's graduate and optician from Palestine). This example showed how the participant recognizes the hardships, yet is still hopeful for a positive outcome.

In context with reverberation and combined with Weaver's (1990) definition, shared experience refers to individuals' first-hand experiences with the "other," or their expression of interest in having future experiences with the "other." This interview participant shared how having shared experiences with the "other" was important to her. She said,

This earth is for everyone, but we created the borders! We don't want borders! Let's live together and have people who can regulate things ... It will be just a piece of land where people are living and trying to do good. Maybe. But it's good to have hope.

(Participant 17)

This quote shows the desire of the individual to share experiences with the "other." She acknowledged the suffering on either side, but understands the importance of having shared experiences.

Incorporation. The third theme that emerged was Incorporation. This study defines Incorporation as taking the experiences of another into ourselves as adopted from Weaver (1990). Subthemes of this main theme included perspective taking, acknowledging the “other”, and distinguishing.

Perspective taking was defined as leaving one’s own world and enter into the world of the “other” (Buccioni, 2015) by imagining the circumstances of the “other” and/or feeling with them. Perspective taking may also be known as “imaginative placement” as discussed by Calloway-Thomas (2010), which requires one to “see” through the eyes of others (Calloway-Thomas, 2010). It did not necessarily have to involve empathy on the participant’s part, though it did include an act of imagining the situation of the “other.” In this study, the theme that emerged where people who might have had negative experiences with the “other” were still capable of understanding the situations of the “other,” though it did not take away from their desire for autonomy and peace. One participant said,

On some level, we have the same kind of similar understanding and social engagement between Israelis and Palestinians even if we are divided by the conflict... Israel has a role to play in that Israeli leadership and in society as well. (Participant 16)

A second quote provided more clarification of this theme:

I felt sad and upset in the beginning, yet I tried to see things from his angle and said it is just ignorance and fear that makes people act in this way. Maybe he has never travelled abroad and never knew a Muslim, so he thought that all Muslims are bad. I no longer feel that bad when a racist action happens in front of me. (Participant 13)

These statements are examples of how individuals practice perspective taking in various situations.

Acknowledging the “other” was defined as situations where individuals were able to honestly look at the “other” and their experiences, either positive or negative, without necessarily taking accountability for their experience or practicing imaginative placement. When one participant was asked if she had been faced with intercultural empathy in her daily life, she responded, “As far as my own experience - many cases of seeing and recognizing the hardships faced by people in other cultures” (Participant 8, a 43-year-old PhD and professor from Israel). Another such example of this presented itself in this study; an Israeli participant was asked to define “intercultural empathy,” and they responded, “Identifying with other people from a culture different to yours... Understanding what they go through and being supportive to their current circumstances” (Participant 11, a 30-year-old Master’s graduate and professor from Palestine).

For this study, the primary researcher defined distinguishing as the way in which individuals notice the similarities or positive differences of the “other.” In context with incorporation, distinguishing refers to the way that people within varying cultures perceive the other, but in addition, find characteristics that they appreciate which are different and/or recognize the similarities that they may share. One participant expressed a few things he found in common with the “other.” He stated, “Israelis and Palestinians have many similar traits, as Middle Eastern people; for example, warmth coupled with hot-headedness, welcoming to others, society run by an honour-based social code” (Participant 1, a 39-year-old PhD and professor from Israel). This quote shows an example of how these similarities are noted while also pointing out the appreciation that this man had for characteristics of the “other.”

Furthermore, the participants ranged in a basic knowledge or familiarity with “intercultural empathy” as a concept. Out of the seven Israeli participants, three showed little to no understanding of what intercultural empathy meant, nor had they reported experiences

such instances. Out of the eight Palestinian participants, only one demonstrated little to no understanding of the concept. In such situations where the participants appeared to not understand the term, their lack of understanding was similarly mirrored in their lack of interculturally empathetic experiences except in two cases where the individuals, although reporting to not know what intercultural empathy was as a concept, still reported such interculturally empathic tendencies. This may display an understanding of the term on some level although it was not reported as such.

In such situations where participants demonstrated a greater understanding of the meaning of the term, “intercultural empathy,” they similarly displayed many more instances of intercultural empathy for the “other.” One example of a developed understanding of the term, “intercultural empathy,” can be found in this study, where a Palestinian participant suggested that intercultural empathy is, “The ability to empathize with another person from a different culture regardless of the cultural differences... Focusing on humanity that we share with them” (Participant 15). This participant went on to further display their concrete understanding of the term by stating the following:

Humans are alike if not categorized and labelled. Difference in culture, religion, politics... etc. should encourage us to get to know each other more and learn from one another to enrich and broaden our sense of shared humanity. (Participant 15)

Other participants who demonstrated a similar fundamental understanding of the term “intercultural empathy” provided similar definitions in depth and scope.

Those who demonstrated no understanding of intercultural empathy reported little to no such instances, and in some cases, they even expressed a strong indifference toward the “other,” or even an open hostility.

Surprising findings included that of participants who understood intercultural empathy to be an ability or a skill seemed to demonstrate less empathy than those who

understood intercultural empathy to simply be that of imagining the feelings of others, as characterized by Calloway-Thomas (2010). This was found in this study where participants characterized “intercultural empathy” as an ability or a skill. In one such example, the participant suggested intercultural empathy was “the ability to make balanced and realistic judgements about intercultural “other” (Participant 10, an 81-year-old PhD and professor from Israel). Of the Palestinian participants, no one characterized it to be that of an ability or a skill, whereas four of the seven Israeli participants suggested that it was an ability or a skill; in such situations, these participants demonstrated much less empathy as the other participants. These findings also confirmed Broome’s (1991) previous research on empathy in relationship to empathy being referred to as an ability or a skill (Broome, 1991).

This study added support to Triandis’ (1977) findings, that those who recognize themselves as cultural beings have a greater capacity of intercultural awareness. As previously discussed, intercultural awareness is not to be confused with intercultural empathy, but it is a functioning component therein.

Additional findings showed that the Palestinian participants demonstrated a greater ability to empathize with the “other,” which may be due to their increased suffering. They demonstrated more enthusiasm while participating in this study and were quite expressive in the personal interview and surveys, whereas most Israeli participants gave much less feedback in comparison. These results also support the research done by Lim and Desteno (2016), where they asserted that suffering and compassion may be the link to prosocial behaviour and empathy.

Bucchioni (2015) also made a similar assertion when he explored the magnified ability of those who had suffered from adversity to empathize with individuals who experienced similar adversity. In this case, the Palestinian participants demonstrated more empathetic instances by almost twice as much than the Israeli participants as the results of

this study suggest. This was perhaps due to their greater collective and present adversity, contrasting with the Israelis' perhaps more brief and past adversity, which still allows for them to live developed and comfortable lives. It may also be due to cultural differences in communication. Therefore, it would be an unfortunate assumption to think that Palestinians might not want to empathize with "the other" solely based on their negative past and present experience with the "other." Indeed, intercultural empathy may not be a choice as much as an inevitable by-product of adversity.

Limitations and Future Research

This study addressed important points of the concept of intercultural empathy between Palestinians and Israelis. Limitations for this study should be considered. This study did not look at gender differences or age. This study also did not consider the perceptions and experiences of those who have not been involved in higher education. Educated individuals are the minority in both Palestine and Israel, thus these findings do not reflect the broader Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Future research should examine the differences in intercultural empathy between individuals with different levels of education. Another limitation is that of language. The interviews were not conducted in the participants' mother tongue, which could alter how the participants respond in the interviews.

This study was conducted prior to December 6, 2017, which marked the day when the President of the United States, Donald Trump, declared Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This event resulted in riots and further unrest between Palestinians and Israelis, which may influence the findings in this study. When conducting future research, the events of December 6 in and around Palestine and Israel should be taken into account, and an effort to better understand if/how that specific event shaped or changed individual perspectives of the "other."

Additional studies of intercultural empathy should be conducted among other conflicting parties in different geographic locations to better assess the concept of intercultural empathy across a variety of situations and contexts. More studies could be done within other religious or non-religious groups to see similarities between levels of religiosity and intercultural empathy. In addition, future research could address the presence of shame in various cultural groups more critically, so as to gain a better understanding of how shame influences our lives. Only then will we gain a clearer idea of how to address shame and hopefully transform it into empathy. Addressing these additional factors will help determine if intercultural empathy might be prevalent within other groups who remain in conflict.

Intercultural empathy may be the next step in our collective evolution. Everyone is hardwired for empathetic connection at birth. This need for empathetic connection is not a recent necessity, but has always been present as our joining together is how we have survived as a species from the beginning of time; it is our empathetic connection that allows us to collaborate, innovate, and build. However, simply focusing on empathy alone is no longer enough as we continue to interact more and more with those around the world. Indeed, at this time with difficult and growing conflicts, international interconnectedness is also growing. This is the time to better understand our counterparts and to develop our intercultural empathy for one another and as we do so, we may eventually find ourselves in a more empathetic world.

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Table 1. Participant Demographics

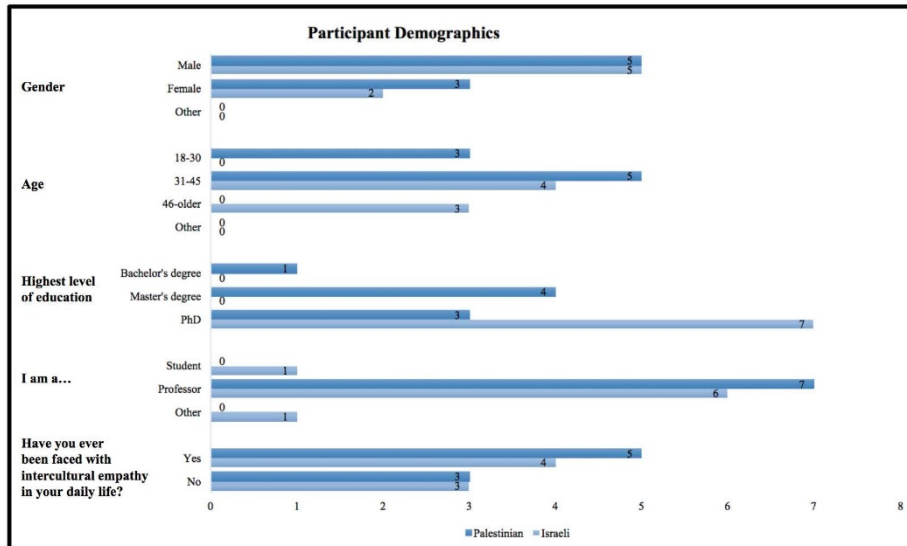
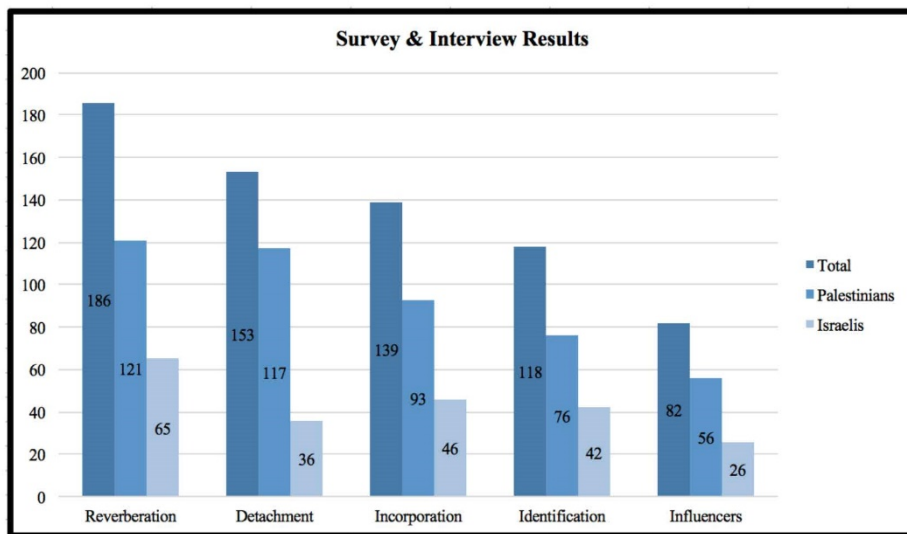


Table 2. Survey and Interview Theme Totals



4.2 Article II

Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. (revise/resubmit, 2021). Israeli perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” toward Palestinians. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*.

The purpose of this research was to discover how Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy in regard to Palestinians and explore how Israelis perceive the possibility of peace within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Results from this study indicate a significant perception of threat on behalf of Israeli participants toward Palestinians, both symbolic and realistic in nature. It was also found that the participants had a cognitive understanding of empathy and intercultural empathy, though that understanding did not necessarily translate into a more productive emotional empathy or position taking. Peace as an outcome was overwhelmingly viewed as impossible by the Israeli participants in this study for various reasons.

As there is little research available that encapsulates the individual Israeli experience of the “other” within the Palestinian Israeli conflict, this study aims to understand how Israelis view Palestinians as the “other,” if and how they understand and experience intercultural empathy, and their understanding of peace within the conflict. In this study, we examine the historical influences on the present-day conflict, but in large part, searched for themes that yielded an understanding of how an average Israeli experiences their world on the ground. To date, much of our discourse exists in political realms and is entrusted to those with a higher capacity for decision making. However, we fail to know what the individuals on grassroots level experience, think, or feel. By tapping into a collective intelligence of those on the ground whose input is often overlooked, we’ll be more informed and prepared to undertake lasting peace processes. Two research questions are explored:

RQ1: How do Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy in regard to Palestinians?

RQ2: How do Israelis perceive the possibility of peace within the conflict?

The results of this study reveal the significance of the perception of threat on intercultural empathy and perception of peace. Integrated threat theory (Croucher, 2013, 2017; Stephan and Stephan, 1993, 1996, 2000) (ITT) may help explain the overall lack of intercultural empathy. Within ITT there are two kinds of perceived threats that the dominant culture perceives from the minority culture, symbolic (threat to culture) and realistic (threat to physical, economic, political, etc.). In the case of Israelis, many expressed a fear that Palestinians are changing Israeli culture (symbolic) and also are a physical threat to Israel (realistic). In this case, the presence of such threats will lead to prejudice and negative attitudes towards the minority group (Palestinians) and make it extremely difficult to create common ground (Croucher, 2013; Maoz & Ellis, 2008). Research should continue to explore the links between ITT and intercultural empathy.

It was found that the participants had a cognitive understanding of empathy and intercultural empathy, though that understanding did not necessarily translate into a more productive emotional empathy or position taking. Participants in this study often characterized intercultural empathy as having an “understanding” of the “other.” This understanding may be indicative of cognitive empathy, which is one of two noted functions of empathy (Daun & Hill, 1996; Davis, 1994). While cognitive empathy alone signifies an understanding of the “other” or the function of empathy, emotional empathy primarily refers to the emotional responses of empathy. In some cases, Israeli participants regarded empathy toward the “other” as an understanding, therefore a cognitive function, though several of those participants still demonized Palestinians or indicated having no empathy for them. This issue needs to be examined further to find what influences a cognitive empathy vs. emotional empathy in this conflict.

Peace as an outcome was overwhelmingly viewed as impossible by the Israeli participants in this study for various reasons. Participants exhibited frustration with the Israeli government, and a subsequent feeling of helplessness to change it. Previous research indicates that not all Israelis agree with the occupation but believe it has reduced Palestinian attacks and they don't see another way, which confirms Wilmer's (2017) previous findings. In addition to some participants perceiving the impossibility of peace, a few participants also noted the only way to achieve peace would be for Palestinians to be expelled from Israel and to just "disappear." These findings echo findings from a poll of Israelis conducted in 2016 which conveyed that 46% of Palestinians should be expelled from Israel, while almost the same amount disagreed (Lipka, 2016). However, increased empathy toward the "other" mitigates interpersonal aggression (Björkqvist & Österman, 2000). Religious differences were interestingly not typically used as an indicator or justifier of the conflict, though cultural differences were frequently cited.

This was an explorative study that focused on a qualitative method for investigating Israelis perception of and experience with intercultural empathy toward Palestinians and the possibility for peace. This is a unique study in the investigation of intercultural empathy in the context of longstanding intercultural conflict, specifically within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Few such studies have been conducted to build upon intercultural empathy theoretically, thus this study provides a concrete building blocks for future research. Furthermore, this is one of few studies that researches ITT qualitatively, though doing so yields interesting findings unique to qualitative studies. It would be beneficial to apply additional focus toward the qualitative exploration of ITT and especially existing theory related to intercultural empathy in future research.

There have been great efforts made by local and international parties to integrate more effective peacebuilding strategies in the form of intercultural trainings, which have proven

quite successful in many cases. Moving forward, there are some factors that trainers, teachers, policy makers, and potential key stakeholders must consider when undertaking intergroup trainings to improve peacebuilding efforts. Utilising trainings, such as multicultural education curricula (Banks, 1988, 1997; NCSS Task Force, 1992; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), cultural diversity training programs (Ellis & Sonnefield, 1994; Hollister et al. 1992; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), and cooperative learning techniques (Aronson et. al., 1978; Aronson & Patnoe, 1997; Cohen, 1992; Johnson et. al. 1994) would prove beneficial when considering furthering peacebuilding processes. Utilising cooperative learning techniques has specifically proven to “increase cross-ethnic liking and helping, as well as empathy” (Stephen & Stephen, 2000, p. 41). Intergroup dialogue programs would also prove beneficial, leading to a “better understanding of issues concerning racial identity, reduced perceptions of racial polarization, and increased perceptions of commonalities across groups (Gurin et. al. 1998; Schoem et. al. 1993; Stephen & Stephan, 2000, p. 41). In addition, Ran et al. (2021) asserted team building activities in organizations that employ empathy-based exercises could increase organizational members’ empathy and perspective taking toward other organizational members. Logistics of each training program type need to be carefully considered to ensure adequate preparation by the trainers, thus providing optimal short-term and long-term positive impact for participants.

The *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* (JIIC) has been active since 1999 and was selected for article submission and is presently awaiting review. This article was submitted to JIIC based on the journal’s emphases, including negotiation, conflict management dispute resolution, organizational justice law, peace studies and international conflicts. Published articles formatting includes meta-analyses, critical or integrative theory, original theory-based empirical articles, and comprehensive literature reviews. According to Scimago Journal & Country Rank (SJR), JIIC has had a slight decline of international collaboration (from 19.05% in 2017 to 15.15% in 2020), but has also had an increase of citable

documents (from 53 in 2017 to 58 in 2020). The H-Index for IJCM is 21 and has been a consistently ranked journal since 2008. JIIC is an A level journal in the Australian Business Dean's Council (ABDC) list.



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION DOCTORATE WITH PUBLICATIONS/MANUSCRIPTS

We, the candidate and the candidate's Primary Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of candidate:	Kelsea Jayne Jackson	
Name/title of Primary Supervisor:	Professor Stephen Croucher	
Name of Research Output and full reference:		
<small>Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. M. (Revise & Resubmit). Israeli perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the "other" among Palestinians and Israelis. <i>International Journal of Conflict Management</i>.</small>		
In which Chapter is the Manuscript /Published work:	Chapter 4	
Please indicate:		
• The percentage of the manuscript/Published Work that was contributed by the candidate:	75%	
and		
• Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Manuscript/Published Work:	<p>- Candidate compiled literature review, data collection, and analysis - Co-author informed upon some theoretical framework, particularly regarding integrated threat theory, and assisted with some editing.</p>	
For manuscripts intended for publication please indicate target journal:		
International Journal of Conflict Management		
Candidate's Signature:		
Date:	14/6/2021	
Primary Supervisor's Signature:		
Date:	14/6/21	

(This form should appear at the end of each thesis chapter/section/appendix submitted as a manuscript/ publication or collected as an appendix at the end of the thesis)

Abstract

Purpose – This study explores how Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy in regard to Palestinians and examines how Israelis perceive the possibility of peace within the Palestinian Israeli conflict.

Design/methodology/approach – This study focuses on how Israelis perceive intercultural empathy in relation to the “other,” in addition to their perception of peace within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. “Peace” as a concept is explored in addition to “intercultural empathy,” and how Israelis conceptualize these familiar words. This study also explores what factors or experiences have influenced Palestinian and Israeli individuals’ perception of the “other.” This study adds to our understanding of the Israelis’ perspective of the “other” as the dominant group and influencer within the Palestinian Israeli conflict.

Findings – Results from this study indicate a significant perception of realistic and symbolic threat on behalf of Israeli participants toward Palestinians. It was also found participants had a cognitive understanding of empathy and intercultural empathy, though that understanding did not necessarily translate into more productive emotional empathy or position taking. Peace as an outcome was overwhelmingly viewed as impossible by Israeli participants.

Originality/value – This paper contributes to the field of integrated threat theory from a qualitative approach in the context of intercultural conflict. This paper is a starting point for researchers and those involved in curricula development and intercultural training when engaging conflicting parties in key peace building processes.

Keywords – Conflict, peace, integrated threat theory, intercultural empathy, qualitative

Paper type – Research paper

**Israeli perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” toward
Palestinians**

Conflict among and within nations is on the rise, resulting in war and genocide at most, or systemic racism at the very least. As these conflicts ensue, militant discourse is often favored, impeding space for intercultural empathy. As such, cyclical violence becomes an anticipated pattern, while simultaneously appearing unavoidable. Some grassroots organisations and movements have inspired and motivated change, but most discourse continues to trickle down, with policy and decision makers influencing how the “other” is engaged with and framed. This influence is evident through media channels. Media often force the viewer to think poorly of the “other,” framing them in an inherently negative light. According to Calloway-Thomas (2010), “Emotionally charged hostage-generating images tell us that we should care about some people and not about others” (p. 123). While the subsequent influence of the viewer of these messages conveyed in the media and via other avenues may not be entirely pernicious in intent, it does not change the resulting thwarted perception of the viewer toward the “other.”

Our intent in this article is not to focus on international politics in broad terms, but to fine-tune the focus toward the individual experiences or perceptions of the “other,” as well as to examine what factors may influence subsequent perceptions of the “other” that might get in the way of peace processes, reconciliation, and ultimately, intercultural empathy. Broome (2017) defines empathy as “one of the most important human capabilities. Through empathy, we can step outside the boundaries of our own awareness and imaginatively enter the world of another person. Without empathy, meaningful human interaction and genuine dialogue would not be possible” (p. 1). Although research on empathy is limited, scholars consider it an essential aspect of human intelligence. Calloway-Thomas (2010) refers to empathy as the “moral glue” that holds

societies together. Humankind's very survival is dependent on the physical and social adaptation made possible by empathy (Broome, 2017), because empathy allows us to relate with shared experiences, engage in meaningful exchanges, problem solve, and collaborate in innovative and cutting-edge ways.

It is the understanding and development of intercultural empathy that could literally save us as a species (Rifkin, 2009). With evolution, inventions such as the internet, convenient air travel, and other methods of learning about and connecting with our international neighbors, we have propelled our evolutionary ability to empathise with the "other," but in so doing, have put ourselves up against a racing clock. Rifkin (2009) observes the paradoxical relationship between empathy and entropy and points out the irony that our technological advances allowing for heightened empathetic exchange have simultaneously put us at a tipping point with climate change. We are destroying the planet along our evolutionary track, and it is more paramount now than ever to heal old wounds, build bridges between ourselves and the "other," and learn at the very least to coexist so that we may collaborate together toward innovative solutions that may not just buy us more time, but propel our evolution as a species even farther.

To explore intercultural empathy, we examine the Palestinian Israeli conflict, which has been steeped in generations of cyclical conflict stemming back to when the United Nations first "gifted" Palestine to the Israelis following the Holocaust, when over 100,000 survivors were given immediate admission to Palestine in 1947. This article draws on personal reflections, experiences, and perceptions of Israelis toward the "other" to aid in the fine-tuning and creation of future peace processes with Palestine and Israel.

Intercultural Empathy

Empathy is a term that has eluded scholars as either a misunderstood or underestimated phenomenon or emotion and has therefore resulted in as many definitions as there are authors. While ambiguity continues to surround the term today, a reason for this ambiguity is due to the limited fields of discipline in which empathy is researched. Hornblow (1977) and others emphasize there is little agreement on how empathy is to be defined due to the absence of an agreed theoretical framework surrounding it. Reynolds (1987) agrees, revealing that, although empathy is the most critical ingredient in nurturing a relationship, there is little agreement as to how it should be defined. Despite ongoing ambiguity, the importance of understanding empathy is, namely, “how it is recognized, nurtured and sustained, under what conditions does it flourish and diminish, and [whether it is] static or dynamic” (Wiseman, 1996, p. 1162).

Empathy as a term has been researched almost exclusively within fields of nursing and psychology. According to Wiseman (1996), “empathy is term widely used and written about in nursing and, as such, its meaning and application has become blurred” (p. 1162). Wiseman (1996) compiled 53 pieces of literature that provided varying definitions of empathy within the field of nursing. Of these definitions, Fontana (1978) explores the origins of the word empathy. It was first coined by Lee in 1904 as a translation of the German ‘*Eingefühlung*’ and then introduced into North American psychology by Titchener (1909). Gerdes (2011) compares sympathy and empathy. In defining sympathy, Gerdes stated, sympathy is a feeling of sorrow or concern for someone based on the other’s emotional state or condition” (p. 233). As for empathy, Gerdes borrows from De Waal (2009) in asserting that empathy is “the capacity to (a) be affected by and share the emotional state of another, (b) assess the reasons for the other’s state, and (c) identify with the other, adopting his or her perspective (p. 234).

Here we can see a notable difference between empathy and sympathy, with the first distinction being made in 1904, again, by Lee. Sympathy was first introduced as *Mitgeföhlung*, or sympathy, though it is still rarely distinguished today.

According to Wiseman (1996), early theorists and writers saw empathy as “a trait or characteristic which were stable and could be measured but not taught” (p. 1163). Among these are Cronbach (1955), Hogan (1969), Smither (1977), and more recently, Astrom *et al* (1991). Cronbach and Hogan regard empathy as having both ‘trait’ and ‘state’ components. *Mosby’s Medical and Nursing Dictionary* (1986) recognizes the difference between empathy and sympathy, noting empathy requires a recognition of, and an ability to share those emotions to some extent to truly understand the significance of a person’s behavior. Sympathy is simply characterized as an expressed interest or concern for another. In this explanation, we can see sympathy is an expressed interest or concern but is not required to feel or internalise the pain of the sufferer. Burnard (1988) defines empathy as the ability to see the world through another’s eyes but distinguishes empathy from sympathy. Sympathy involves ‘feeling sorry’ for the other person, while empathy is our imagining of how another would feel in that situation, not simply to imagine how we would. This is yet another example that points to the complexities of defining intercultural empathy. For example, Nicovich *et al.* (2005) regard intercultural empathy as being multi-dimensional. Wang *et al.* (2003) further supported this multi-dimensionality and identify four empirical elements to intercultural empathy: feelings and expression of empathy (FEE), empathetic awareness (EA), acceptance of cultural difference (AD) and empathetic perspective-taking (PT) (abbreviations are used later in text and tables).

Most of our understanding of empathy today has been pioneered by Brown. While pioneering, Brown (2015) conducted her research in a strictly monocultural space. Studies on

empathy are few and far between, we have even less of an understanding of intercultural empathy; that is, empathy within intercultural contexts. Most existing studies that explore empathy interculturally are limited to higher education among students in university classes. One such study by Solhaug and Osler (2018) empirically investigated their students' empathy for their increasingly pluralistic society. Their research points to an issue that thwarts us today, in that we don't have a clear understanding of how intercultural empathy can be nurtured and implemented, especially in conditions of intercultural conflict. Rasool *et al.* (2001) empirically investigated the similarities and differences between empathy and ethnocultural empathy using different scales. They found the two emotional and cognitive functions share significant similarities. Intercultural empathy allows for increased perception of concern about the wellbeing of other people, it elicits a change in attitude toward groups experiencing oppression (Wang *et al.*, 2003), challenges distinctions between individuals and the "other" (Hall, 2010; Zembylas, 2012), and is linked with higher levels of intercultural sensitivity (Kohli Bagwe and Haskollar, 2020). Where there is a lack of empathy in both intergroup and intercultural contexts, we can see an increase of social dominance and aggression (Wang *et al.*, 2003).

Intercultural empathy may not only be a tool to facilitate connection, but it could also be used to alleviate conflict. While Zhu (2011) refers to intercultural empathy as essential for communication with and understanding of the "other," Hofmann (2000) links empathy to pro-social behavior. In fact, we may go as far as to say that empathy may mitigate aggressive behavior (Eisenberg, 1989; Hofmann, 1987). Empathy training has been shown to be an effective tool for reducing aggressive behavior (Kalliopuska and Tiitinen, 1991). Hofmann's finding was also supported by Richardson *et al.* (1994), who found empathy was negatively related to

aggression. Thus, there are reasons to believe intercultural empathy may mitigate intercultural conflict. According to Broom (2017):

Engaging in intercultural empathy means that we no longer view our self as the center of the world. Rather, we see ourselves as situated in relationship with the larger cultural system within which we operate. This allows us to acknowledge and learn about the other person's different interpretations and experiences. (p. 3)

While having the ability to view our self in a larger cultural system may elicit openness toward the "other" exterior to our immediate circle, we must also note what barriers could get in the way of intercultural empathy. Zhu (2011) notes three primary barriers, *stereotype*, *prejudice*, and *lack of cultural sensitivity*. Zhu (2011) notes *stereotype* is the misperception of particular groups, supported by the outgrowth of the dominant culture. He describes *prejudice* as the "premature judgement or negative attitude towards a person or group of people which is not based on objective facts" (p. 118). *Lack of cultural sensitivity* is characterized by both an "ignorance of differences of thought patterns," and "ignorance of differences in values, norms and beliefs" (p. 118). Intercultural empathy is regarded as both an evolutionary characteristic of our human species, as well as a skill that could, and should be taught.

Intercultural empathy is required for not only the facilitation of a meaningful connection among individuals of varying cultural backgrounds, but also essential in regard to supporting an actualized perception of the "other" and peaceful conflict negotiation. Despite the growing importance of these concepts in today's global climate, there is very little evidence to create or improve future peace-building processes at grassroots levels.

Historical Background

Palestinians and European Jews once lived in peace during the time of the Ottoman Empire in the early 1900's when the first Zionist Jews began immigrating to their Holy sites, as depicted in the Torah. However, peace was short-lived. As more European Jews began immigrating in the early 1900's, tensions among European Jewish settlers and Palestinians grew until the 1930's when the British began limiting Jewish immigration. This was met with violent resistance as local militias grew in an effort to fight both local Arabs and the British militia's rule. These tensions intensified until the advent of the Nazi regime in Germany in the 1930's and the Holocaust that followed, leading far more Jews to flee Europe for British Palestine, and galvanizing much of the world in support of the Jewish state (Reich, 1991). Finally, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations adopted Resolution 181, which would divide British Palestine into two separate states: Israel for Jews, and Palestine for Arabs (Reich, 1991). The acceptance of this plan meant that Jews would have their own state and a place to establish Palestinian independence, and the end of violence that the British could no longer control. The Jews accepted the UN plan declaring independence as Israel, but Arabs throughout the region viewed this as European colonization and an effort to steal their newly claimed land and declared war on Israel in an effort to establish a unified Arab Palestine where all British Palestine had been.

The new state of Israel won the war, pushing far past the borders indicated in the original UN plan. This eventually formed a new refugee population as thousands of Palestinians were forced out of their homes and dispersed throughout the Middle East, with conflict thus ensuing until the Six-Day War in 1967. This war resulted in complete control of Israel, suddenly leaving Palestinians, a people already displaced, without the autonomy initially proposed in 1947 by the

UN (Reich, 1991). Palestinian frustrations continued to grow until 1987, leading to the First Intifada, or uprising. What initially began with protests and boycotts soon became violent as Israel responded with deadly force. Meanwhile, some Israelis considered the PLO too powerful and too secular, which led to the creation of Hamas in 1987, a violent Palestinian Islamic movement determined to destroy Israel. With the eruption of extremist groups on both sides of the wall, it became increasingly paramount to find a peaceful solution, which led to the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. The Oslo Accords was meant to be an indication of good will and instigate further peace processes, but this too was met with contention. While this step should have afforded Palestinians some autonomy, this initial peace agreement was undertaken with varying expectations of the word “peace” (DeTurk, 2001). What followed, however, was constant struggle for Palestinians as they continued to fight for their autonomy, but sometimes violently in the form of violent demonstrations, bombs and missiles, targeting Israeli civilians and instigating further retaliation of the Israeli regime toward Palestine. This cycle of retaliation has continued to what we know as the present day, with Israel in a constant state of damage control and defence, and Palestine determined to not back down during what they view as an occupation.

There is a clear divide in both experience and perception between Palestinians and Israelis. Four things predominantly affect daily life for Palestinians: the checkerboard jurisdiction; the wall or security fence that both divides Israel from Palestine and, in some cases, encircles entire Palestinian towns; the distribution of water sourced on the Palestinian side of the green line, and the use of checkpoints between Palestine and Israel, restricting movement of Palestinians (Wilmer, 2017). Within Palestine, every building features a large cistern, equipped to battle water limitations from Israel. Their water may be shut off at any moment, and in some

cases, their water has been shut off for almost an entire month. The cisterns atop their buildings are both their lifeline, as well as a constant visual reminder of who holds the power. According to B'Tselem (2016) and Amnesty International, the main water source shared by Palestinians and Israelis is the Mountain Aquifer located mostly under Palestine and replenished by rainfall there. Although much of the water supply rests in Palestine, the Israelis still control it.

Although political and key stakeholders may dictate dealings between Palestinians and Israelis, not all Israelis agree with the occupation. Jewish Israeli views can be broken down into roughly three camps. One regards the assertion of military and civil authority with the existing system checkpoints, travel restrictions and settlements creating a “buffer zone” around the wall. The second view is that the occupation is necessary due to the continuing threat to Israel’s security by surrounding Arab states and continuing Palestinian attacks on Israelis. They don’t like the occupation but believe it has reduced Palestinian attacks and they don’t see another way (Wilmer, 2017). Despite these instances, some Israelis oppose the occupation altogether, which is the third view (Wilmer, 2017). Since Wilmer’s (2017) article, it should be noted that the situation in Palestine and Israel has changed dramatically, following the unveiling of Donald Trump’s Middle East Plan on January 29, 2020. If enacted, it would recognize Israeli sovereignty over major settlement blocs in the occupied Palestine.

While the Palestinian Israeli conflict has been ongoing, it seems some may be tired of fighting. The Pew Research Center conducted a poll in 2016 on religion and politics in Israel with more than 5000 Israelis surveyed. The results indicated almost half of Israeli Jews said, “Arabs should be transferred or expelled from Israel,” and in almost equal numbers, 46% disagreed (Lipka, 2016). Although the ideal of peace may be far off, it is beneficial to explore how the word “peace” is understood by Palestinians and Israelis. DeTurk (2001) explore the

meaning of the word “peace” in how it is perceived by both Palestinians and Israelis. According to DeTurk (2001), the Palestinians and Israelis didn’t even have a mutual understanding of the term when the very first peace process was underway. In fact, the Palestinians understood peace meant they would have sovereignty over Palestine, independent of Israel with no Israeli presence, whereas Israelis understood peace simply as not actively inciting conflict, while having no intention of freeing Palestine of military presence. How can any peace process be successful when oppositional sides don’t even have the same understanding of the word, “peace?” A basic understanding of fundamental terms must first be agreed upon.

The Palestinian Israeli conflict is among many international conflicts that plague our world today, and as such, there has never been a more crucial time to commit to understanding the functions of intercultural empathy and how its functions can be implemented into grassroots levels to support international peace negotiation and curricula. It is not enough for political leaders alone to point fingers and sign executive orders; they must also be engaged with the individual experience of said conflicts. An understanding of intercultural empathy, varying perceptions of peace, and the “other” must be understood on an individual level if we are to create new peace processes.

As there is little research available that encapsulates the individual Israeli experience of the “other” within the Palestinian Israeli conflict, this study aims to understand how Israelis view Palestinians as the “other,” if and how they understand and experience intercultural empathy, and their understanding of peace within the conflict. In this study, we explored the historical influences on the present-day conflict, but in large part, searched for themes that yielded an understanding of how an average Israeli experiences their world on the ground. To date, much of our discourse exists in political realms and is entrusted to those with a higher capacity for

decision making. However, we fail to know what the individuals on grassroots level experience, think, or feel. By tapping into a collective intelligence of those on the ground whose input is often overlooked, we'll be more informed and prepared to undertake lasting peace processes.

Two research questions are explored:

RQ1: How do Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy in regard to Palestinians?

RQ2: How do Israelis perceive the possibility of peace within the conflict?

Method

This study focuses on how Israelis perceive intercultural empathy in relation to the “other,” in addition to their perception of peace within the conflict. Questions surrounding “peace” surfaced in a previous pilot study (First and Second Author, 2021 in press), thus, this term is explored further in addition to “intercultural empathy,” and how Jewish Israelis conceptualize these familiar words. This study also explores what factors or experiences have influenced Israeli individuals’ perception of the “other.” This study adds to our understanding of the Israelis’ perspective of the “other” as the dominant group and influencer within the Palestinian Israeli conflict welcoming a qualitative lens.

Participants

A pilot study (First and Second Author, 2021 in press) indicates Israelis refer to either an ambivalence toward, or a fear of Palestinians, though Israeli participants divulged very little insight, especially as compared with the Palestinians in that study. As such, this study focuses singularly on the Jewish Israeli experience within the conflict. The pool of 22 participants was gathered during a two-month period in 2020 by Qualtrics, a third-party academic survey service. Online panels, such as Qualtrics are comparable in comparison to other populations in published research (Second Author *et al.*, 2020; Troia and Graham, 2017). After conducting quality checks,

five participants were discarded from the analysis due to a lack of responsiveness in the majority of survey questions.

Procedures

Questions were formed based on the pilot study (First and Second Author, 2021 in press). Some questions were made more specific or withdrawn to provide further insight into the Jewish Israeli experience within the conflict, their views of Palestinians, and their perception of the role of intercultural and peace. Similar themes were used from the pilot study. Open-ended qualitative surveys (see Appendix A) were distributed by Qualtrics. The surveys invited participants to communicate their understanding of “empathy,” “intercultural empathy,” and “peace.” Further, their familiarity and framing of the “other” was explored. Each survey invited participants to self-identify demographic information (see Table 1).

[Insert Table 1 here]

Data Analysis

The surveys were collected and coded utilising grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Themes were located and reported for each question, allowing for thematic analysis. The project was approved by the appropriate ethics committee. Researching and reporting on the experience of individuals within areas of conflict may yield more fine-tuned peace building processes that aim to target those on grassroots levels. Those individuals on the ground are invariably the ones affected by conflict, and especially those influencing policy and decision makers in positions of power.

Results

The first research question was answered by analysing questions designed to assess Israeli participants understanding of “empathy,” and then their understanding of “intercultural

empathy.” Their understanding of “intercultural empathy” in relationship to the “other” was further assessed by inviting them to share personal experiences they have had with the “other,” or to otherwise imagine such an exposure to a Palestinian and to guess how they would react in said situation. After analysis of the surveys, a variety of themes emerged that answered the first research question.

Defining Empathy and Intercultural Empathy

When defining empathy and intercultural empathy, some Israeli participants (8/17) defined empathy with no humanizing characteristics in their definition. Meaning, they offered a singular definition that didn’t provide any humanizing attributes to such an exchange. Some participants simply defined empathy as “Free love and care” (P5), “Caring” (P15), or “Patience” (P6).

Comparatively, only a couple participants (2/17) provided a definition for intercultural empathy that entirely excluded a humanizing component. One participant characterized intercultural empathy as “helping the other in case of sorrow or difficulty (P3). Another participant characterized it by stating, “I can stop something that I do for give attention to the other. Listen to his problems” (P22). Interestingly, both participants regarded the humanizing element of intercultural empathy by referring to people, though they do so by characterizing the human element as “the other.”

Another common theme found when participants (6/17) defined empathy was regarding it in an actionable sense, or something you do, as a qualifier. These definitions were perhaps the most accurate of the ones offered. One participant characterized empathy as, “Feeling participating in grief, feeling shared with emotion” (P1). Another participant referred to empathy as “Feeling sorrow with the other one” (P3).

When defining intercultural empathy, more participants (10/17) referred to it in an actionable sense. One participant defined intercultural empathy as, “Learn more about the different culture. To visit more with each other. And most importantly try to feel ‘what he things’ and not ‘what I think’” (P1). Another participant defined intercultural empathy by stating, “Empathy is empathy whether intercultural or not: it requires the humility to know that you don’t know anything until you have stood in someone else’s shoes, whether those shoes be another culture or anything else” (P9). Another interesting definition offered suggested “intercultural empathy happens when both cultures understand each other. Both cultures have to identify with each other, even if it means giving up something. Making a net of trust, working for co-operation in various aspect, making love and peace” (P20). These definitions indeed capture this theme of empathy and intercultural empathy in an actionable sense. It is interesting to note participants regarded “intercultural empathy” in a much more actionable sense, in contrast with “empathy” alone.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Israeli participants (5/17) occasionally characterized empathy as an “understanding.” To have an “understanding” alone limits one to experiencing as purely a cognitive function, although there is no “feeling with” if empathy is limited to an understanding alone. One participant characterized empathy as, “The ability to understand and share the feelings of another” (P8). Another participant expressed empathy as, “The ability to understand and share feelings of other” (P17).

Similarly, some participants (7/17) also characterized intercultural empathy as an “understanding.” One participant regarded intercultural empathy “as the basis for mutual understanding of representatives of different cultures” (P16). Another participant referred to

intercultural empathy as “one of the key skills needed to develop a real understanding across cultures” (P21).

It is perhaps counterintuitive as per the dominant Israeli narrative to see dehumanizing definitions of “empathy” subside when defining “intercultural empathy.” As per the narrative, there may be reason to believe the Israelis are uncaring or calloused toward the Palestinian’s plight, though their defining of these two terms may point to a presence of more empathy than previously thought. That being said, it should also be noted fewer Israelis characterized “empathy” as an understanding than they did “intercultural empathy.” This may be indicative of empathetic feelings being dominated by cognitive functions, thus decreasing the emotional affect. While Israelis may characterize “intercultural empathy” as an “understanding” more so than “empathy” alone, it should also be noted that they did acknowledge “intercultural empathy” in an actionable sense more frequently than they characterized “empathy.” This may be indicative of an empathy toward Palestinians that may not transcend the cognitive function of understanding, but may still translate to action, or aid they may find themselves personally in a position to provide. The Israeli participants regarded empathy as an “ability” with similar infrequency. We understand today due to research by Brown that empathy can indeed be characterized as an ability. Meaning, it is a skill that one may be able to practice and increase during the course of their life through deliberate discourse.

Experienced or Demonstrated Intercultural Empathy

When asked if Israelis have ever experienced or demonstrated what they would consider to be intercultural empathy, eight participants (8/17) expressed an empathetic disposition for Palestinians. For example, one participant stated:

Yes, I feel real empathy for the people on the other side. They have a much harder life than we do, with very limited possibilities for better life, for which I am very sorry and

feel ashamed even. It saddens me to learn of harassment of children and other innocent persons by soldiers at borders and similar things. (Participant 10)

Similarly, Participant 17 suggests intercultural empathy promotes equal and active participation of residents and community with openness and tolerance of foreigners.”

Six participants (6/17) said they have personally demonstrated intercultural empathy. One such participant said, “Yes I have, my father built schools for 10 years for people from the other side of the conflict. The pharmacist in my local pharmacy is from the other side of the conflict and is conserved part of the family; we are very close” (P13).

Three participants (3/17) admitted to never experiencing intercultural empathy, but did say that they try to “be a good person and respect whoever they’re talking to” (P5). Participant 15 also suggested they should have help to live with dignity, and that Palestinians should be given at least the basic things to live including food, clothing, electricity and move forward with development. Two participants (2/17) expressed fear, one suggesting that you find those who spread hate on both sides (P2). Another participant said that they struggle to feel empathy today when they hear about rockets and soldiers being attacked daily (P4).

The second research question was answered by analysing survey questions designed to assess Israeli participants’ perceptions of the possibility or impossibility for “peace,” and what they perceived the primary difficulties that stood in the way of obtaining peace. In addition, the survey questions explored what the participants viewed as possible solutions for peace, and how they perceived the role of empathy fit, or didn’t fit, into possible peace solutions. After analysis of the surveys, a variety of themes emerged that answered the second research question.

Primary Difficulties Impacting Peace

The Israeli participants were asked how the difficulties previously stipulated would impact the likelihood of success in the efforts to achieve peace. While some provided specific reasons as to

what may indicate the success of peace, overwhelmingly, most participants (11/17) said that they thought peace would be too difficult. Those who indicated such argued it would take too much time, that they were too different, and that the gap is too big. They suggested it's getting worse and there's no understanding. It was also said that personal dignity is what causes peace, of which was said to be sparse. Other reasons included a difference in languages and that the Israelis were too proud.

[Insert Table 3 here]

When asked for their view, six participants (6/17) demonized the "other" by either citing violence on the Palestinians part that would make peace impossible, or otherwise insisted they must leave Palestine for peace to ever be possible. For example, Participant 13 suggested Palestinians would "destroy any chance of peace... As long as people believe that spilling blood is righteous there can never be peace." It is also noted that both parties have perceptions of the "other," both as perceived of themselves and the other party. For example, Participant 4 said, "Israelis are perceived as, 'they are just lying occupiers!' and Palestinians are perceived as, 'they're just blood thirsty animals!' This creates a block when anything is said." Otherwise, it was assumed by participants that Palestinians really didn't want peace.

Five participants (5/17) referenced a political influence that got in the way of peace. For example, one participant stated:

Little hope for peace, given the current leaderships on both sides. It is politically easier for Palestinian leadership to keep the situation as is, since it keeps them in power and the West Bank and in Gaza. It is easier for Israeli leadership to resort to conflict-mongering instead of tackling the internal issues the country is facing. (Participant 10)

Participants also suggested there have been international peace agreements, all of which have been rejected by Palestine (P8), in addition to the importance that humanity is prioritized before nationalism and religion (P2).

Four participants (4/17) referenced an inability for Palestinians to let go of the past. Participant 5 said, “When nobody is talking about peace and moving on, but only shows how bad things are; it’s hard to make a change when you live in the past. I think it’s time to move on, create a memory day and let’s all just get along.” Three participants (3/17) regarded religiosity as a block for peace. Participant 20 said that “each side is not fair. Jews claim Palestinians disparage the Bible while Palestinians claim that Israelis don’t care about the poor living conditions.” Three participants (3/17) insisted war was the only outcome. Participant 8 said, “It will be difficult and impossible to solve those issues by agreement. It will require an army takeover to end this.” Similarly, Participant 15 said “wars have not led to any real solutions. It is likely the conflict won’t end.”

Although participants did not entirely say that peace was a possibility, some did mention issues that peace needed to be prioritized for it to be possible, and that perhaps concessions on both sides could lead to real peace (P15, P17). Participant 19 said, “We need to sit down at a table and discuss this to find a solution. We need to find a solution, but it’s getting worse and there is still no understanding. It’s too bad.”

Solutions for Peace

When participants were asked what in their view was the best kind of solution for peace, seven participants (7/17) insisted humanity must be prioritized. Participant 2 said “humanity needs to be prioritized over nationalism to solve the issue of peace.” Participant 19 referred to what they

called the “recipe for peace and love,” which included “passion, love, understanding, giving, and listening with open ears.”

Some participants (5/17) suggested peace was not possible and that Palestinians must leave. For example, Participant 3 said, “They need to go away and live in another place, but they would still make problems wherever they go. The best solution in the world is to make them vanish.” This harsh statement characterizes not only the assumed impossibility for peace, but also clearly demonizes Palestinians, while even wishing for them to “vanish.”

Participants (4/17) also said peace may be possible with negotiation and a change of leadership (*P10, P15, P16, P17*). Particularly, Participant 17 said “negotiation is the best solution for peace to be achieved in order to solve this conflict and give a chance to succeed and each party accept each other’s opinions.” Some participants (3/17) clearly stated the importance of education, particularly education of their young people on either side to teach empathy and tolerance. Participant 20 said, “Each state has to teach about the point of view of the other in schools, and the importance of empathy. It will create a whole new generation of peace and will create empathetic people.”

One participant (1/17) referred to the issue of Palestinians recognizing that Israel was a gift from God. Participant 1 said, “Arab people must recognize that the State of Israel is the land of the Jews and was given to them by God. The Arabs can still live here.” This statement is problematic, as both the Torah and the Quran can be interpreted in a number of ways. In addition, claiming ownership of Israel, but stating that “the Arabs can still live [there]” points to a much larger issue of claimed ownership. This issue of religious claim as an actual issue among present-day Israeli Jews should be addressed in future research.

The Role of Empathy for Peace

When Israeli participants were asked what role empathy for those on the other side (i.e. intercultural empathy) might play in achieving peace, seven participants (7/17) characterized empathy as key. As stated by one participant:

Empathy for those on the other side has a profound ability to transform the way in which we resolve and understand conflicts, and enable individuals to open hearts and minds to act in a way that is more likely to lead to a peaceful solution. Without empathy, we can't get to conflict resolution or peace. (Participant 17)

This quote perfectly encapsulates the need for empathy within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Participant 10 shared a similar sentiment, both citing the importance of empathy, as well as the possibility for peace to be a fruitful process when both parties came to have enough such empathy.

A few participants (3/17) said there was no place for empathy. Most of these statements were disparaging, such as the statement provided by Participant 4 who stated:

Empathy is not a factor anymore for the majority of Israel. The general population doesn't see the need to feel empathy to the others while they feel they are in danger. It's hard to feel empathy when rockets fly over your head and 18-year-old soldiers are getting attacked and killed. (Participant 4)

A few participants (3/17) also said they felt no empathy for Palestinians, including Participant 3 who simply stated, "I feel zero empathy for them." Similar sentiments were also shared by Participant 19 and Participant 21.

A couple of participants (2/17) proposed religion should be central to law, while a couple others (2/17) said concessions must be made to achieve peace. One participant (1/17) suggested war doesn't solve problems, but may be the only outcome otherwise, stating:

I feel the need for meetings between Jews and Palestinians to listen to each other.
Address the two heads of state and make a change among leaders. Painful concessions

must be made on both sides. We need to come to an understanding that we are on the verge of a war that will be difficult and we'll find ourselves counting and burying our brothers on both sides. (Participant 15)

It is interesting that this participant refers to concessions as "painful," a term of which may not be generous, but is factual. Accepting that a peaceful concession will require some pain and sacrifice on both sides is critical, as neither party will materialize peace without first self-actualizing with the price required for such a reality.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to discover how Israelis conceptualize intercultural empathy in regard to Palestinians and explore how Israelis perceive the possibility of peace within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Results from this study indicate a significant perception of threat on behalf of Israeli participants toward Palestinians, both symbolic and realistic in nature. It was also found that the participants had a cognitive understanding of empathy and intercultural empathy, though that understanding did not necessarily translate into a more productive emotional empathy or position taking. Peace as an outcome was overwhelmingly viewed as impossible by the Israeli participants in this study for various reasons.

First, the results of this study reveal the significance of the perception of threat on intercultural empathy and perception of peace. Integrated threat theory (Second Author, 2013, 2017; Stephan and Stephan, 1993, 1996, 2000) (ITT) may help explain the overall lack of intercultural empathy. Within ITT there are two kinds of perceived threats that the dominant culture perceives from the minority culture, symbolic (threat to culture) and realistic (threat to physical, economic, political, etc.). In the case of Israelis, many expressed a fear that Palestinians are changing Israeli culture (symbolic) and also are a physical threat to Israel (realistic). In this case, the presence of such threats will lead to prejudice and negative attitudes towards the

minority group (Palestinians) and make it extremely difficult to create common ground (Maoz and Ellis, 2008; Second Author, 2013). It is also becoming increasingly crucial that research continues to explore the links between ITT and intercultural empathy, especially in regard to the “othering” of outgroups. Such “othering” can be seen more recently in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Israel endeavoured to be a leading country in vaccinating all Israeli citizens as early as January 2021, however, this ideal has not yet extended to Palestinians (Kershner, 2021). This lack of accessibility to a fundamental resource for quality of life is instigating further unrest in Palestine, with increased retaliation. As recently as May 11, 2021, at least seven of more than 150 rockets launched by Hamas targeted Jerusalem. Such an advance on Jerusalem has not been noted since 2014 (Schwartz & Lieber, 2021). Due to the historical backdrop and especially due to present day conditions, it is paramount that we explore the links between ITT and intercultural empathy qualitatively to inform future peace negotiations.

Second, it was found that the participants had a cognitive understanding of empathy and intercultural empathy, though that understanding did not necessarily translate into a more productive emotional empathy or position taking. Participants in this study often characterized intercultural empathy as having an “understanding” of the “other.” This understanding may be indicative of cognitive empathy, which is one of two noted functions of empathy (Daun and Hill, 1996; Davis, 1994). While cognitive empathy alone signifies an understanding of the “other” or the function of empathy, emotional empathy primarily refers to the emotional responses of empathy. In some cases, Israeli participants regarded empathy toward the “other” as an understanding, therefore a cognitive function, though several of those participants still demonized Palestinians or indicated having no empathy for them. This issue needs to be examined further to find what influences a cognitive empathy vs. emotional empathy in this conflict.

Third, peace as an outcome was overwhelmingly viewed as impossible by the Israeli participants in this study for various reasons. Participants exhibited frustration with the Israeli government, and a subsequent feeling of helplessness to change it. Previous research indicates that not all Israelis agree with the occupation but believe it has reduced Palestinian attacks and they don't see another way, which confirms Wilmer's (2017) previous findings. In addition to some participants perceiving the impossibility of peace, a few participants also noted the only way to achieve peace would be for Palestinians to be expelled from Israel and to just "disappear." These findings echo findings from a poll of Israelis conducted in 2016 which conveyed that 46% of Palestinians should be expelled from Israel, while almost the same amount disagreed (Lipka, 2016). However, increased empathy toward the "other" mitigates interpersonal aggression (Björkqvist and Österman, 2000). Religious differences were interestingly not typically used as an indicator or justifier of the conflict, though cultural differences were frequently cited.

Fourth, this was an explorative study that focused on a qualitative method for investigating Israelis perception of and experience with intercultural empathy toward Palestinians and the possibility for peace. This is a unique study in the investigation of intercultural empathy in the context of longstanding intercultural conflict, specifically within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Few such studies have been conducted to build upon intercultural empathy theoretically, thus this study provides a concrete building blocks for future research. Furthermore, this is one of few studies that explore ITT qualitatively, though doing so yields interesting findings unique to qualitative studies. It would be beneficial to apply additional focus toward the qualitative exploration of ITT and especially existing theory related to intercultural empathy in future research.

Fifth, there have been great efforts made by local and international parties to integrate more effective peace building strategies in the form of intercultural trainings, which have proven quite successful in many cases. Moving forward, there are some factors that trainers, teachers, policy makers, and potential key stakeholders must consider when undertaking intergroup trainings to improve peace building efforts. Utilising trainings, such as multicultural education curricula (Banks, 1988, 1997; NCSS Task Force, 1992; Stephan and Stephan, 2000), cultural diversity training programs (Ellis and Sonnefield, 1994; Hollister *et al.* 1992; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), and cooperative learning techniques (Aronson *et. al.*, 1978; Aronson and Patnoe, 1997; Cohen, 1992; Johnson *et. al.* 1994) would prove beneficial when considering furthering peace building processes. Utilising cooperative learning techniques has specifically proven to “increase cross-ethnic liking and helping, as well as empathy” (Stephen and Stephen, 2000, p. 41). Intergroup dialogue programs would also prove beneficial, leading to a “better understanding of issues concerning racial identity, reduced perceptions of racial polarization, and increased perceptions of commonalities across groups (Gurin *et. al.* 1998; Schoem *et. al.* 1993; Stephen and Stephan, 2000, p. 41). In addition, Ran *et al.* (2021) asserted team building activities in organizations that employ empathy-based exercises could increase organizational members’ empathy and perspective taking toward other organizational members. Logistics of each training program type need to be carefully considered to ensure adequate preparation by the trainers, thus providing optimal short-term and long-term positive impact for participants.

Limitations and Future Research

This study addressed the two stipulated research questions, both of how empathy and intercultural empathy toward Palestinians are perceived by Israelis, as well as the nuances of any possibilities for peace within the conflict. Limitations for this study should be considered,

especially the issue of language. Some participants provided very limited responses, which may have been a result of disinterest, but may have also been due to a lack of confidence or ability with the English language. Future research should explore the issue of empathy in respondents' native language. Future research should also examine the attitudes of Israelis toward Palestinians comparatively with prominent messages portrayed in the media to find if there is any substantial correlation or causation. Further, it would be beneficial to examine religious claims as an actual issue among present-day Israeli Jews. Finally, future research should consider what insecurity or vulnerability Israeli soldiers might face or experience that might then lead them to act out violently or with hostility toward Palestinians as a coping mechanism, as suggested by Brown (2015) in her research.

This study was conducted after December 6, 2017, which marked the day in which the previous President of the United States, Donald Trump, declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel. This event resulted in violence and further unrest among Palestinians and Israelis, which may have affected this study. Future analyses of empathy would benefit from longitudinally examining how empathy, particularly intercultural empathy potentially changes over time. It must also be noted that the surveys for this study were gathered during a time of international upheaval and insecurity in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants may have been affected both emotionally and cognitively during this time, therefore results may have been influenced by this event and may not accurately capture their true perspective(s).

Additional studies should also be conducted among other interculturally conflicting parties in various geographic locations to more accurately assess the concept of intercultural empathy in a variety of situations and contexts. Furthermore, more studies should be done that look specifically at the element of religiosity to find if religion may influence their view of the

“other” and the accomplishment of peace. Other factors should also be analysed to fall in line with Brown’s research on empathy, shame, and vulnerability. If a true exploration of intercultural empathy is to be examined, intercultural shame and intercultural vulnerability should also be taken into account.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we had the rare opportunity to examine our own humanity, or lack thereof, uninterrupted from most factors that would normally turn our attention away from global events. Doing so resulted in unrest, as well as heightened demonization of the “other” as perpetuated by many world leaders. Never before have we as humanity had such an opportunity to consider ourselves in the grand scheme of this world. If we are to survive as a species, we must learn to better understand our human counterparts, and ultimately work together to address the suffering being felt around the world. This is a resolve we owe to our children, and grandchildren. Without intercultural empathy, we will not survive.

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Table 1:

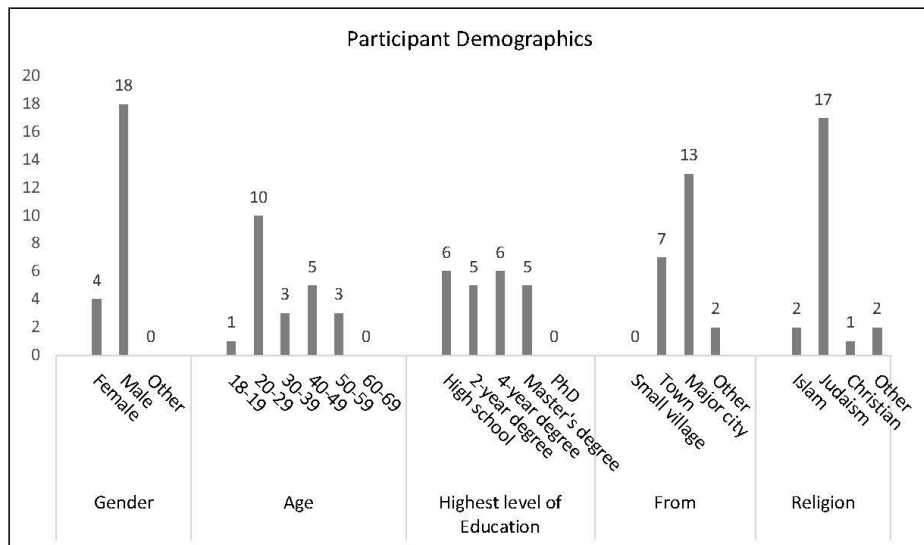


Table 2:

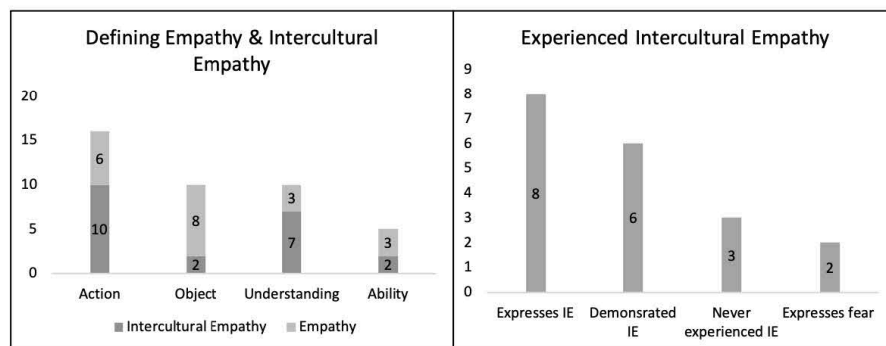
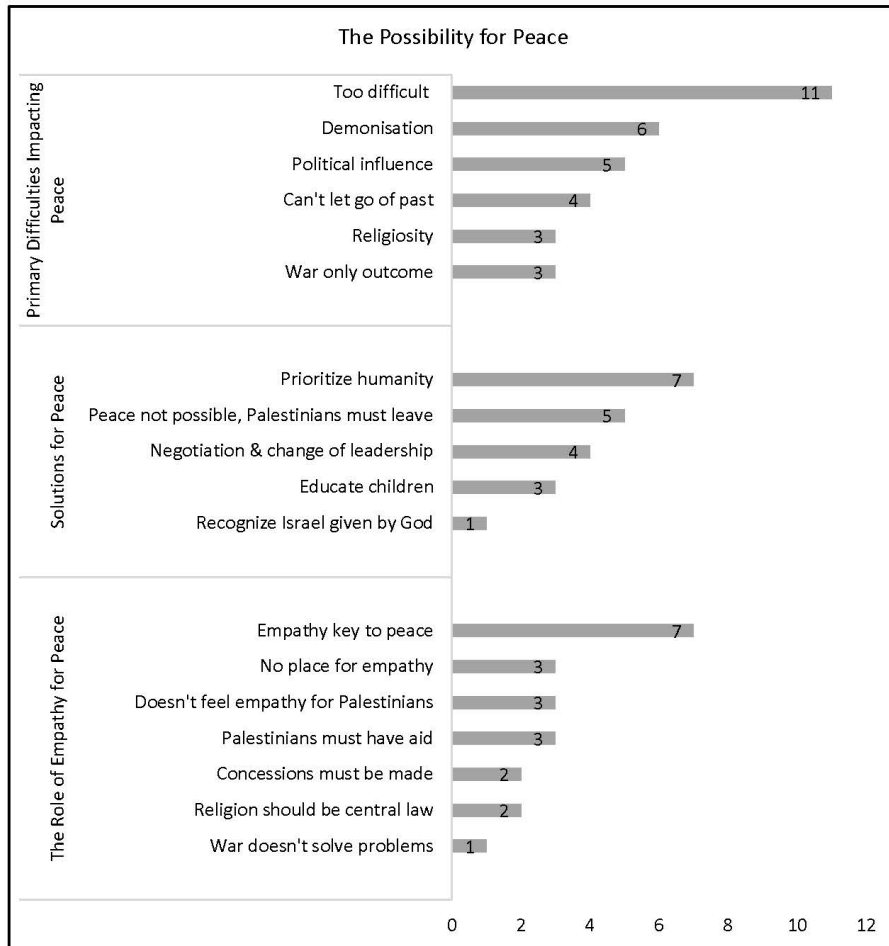


Table 3:



4.3 Article III

Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. (submitted 2021). Applying integrated threat theory in the Palestinian Israeli conflict: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*.

This article does not attempt to synthesis the historical events of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, but rather examines the influence and presence of integrated threat theory (ITT) within the conflict and how both symbolic and realistic threats manifest themselves in Jewish Israeli's minds toward their Palestinian counterparts. To do so, this article first explores a brief description of the Palestinian Israeli conflict today, and then introduces key concepts directly related to ITT. Two attributes of ITT are specifically examined due to their applicability, including symbolic and realistic threat. Finally, this article explores the Israeli perception of Palestinians as the "other," and examines threats or anxieties that Israelis as the ingroup may feel toward Palestinians as the outgroup.

As there is little research investigating the Israeli experience of the "other" qualitatively, as well as a lack of research on integrated threat theory (ITT) in relation to the Palestinian Israeli conflict, this article examines the influence and presence of ITT and how symbolic and realistic threats manifest themselves in Israeli's minds toward their Palestinian counterparts. In this study, we searched for themes that may yield a deeper understanding of the average Israeli experience of Palestinians. Previous discourse has been taken up for political motivations or as part of non-profit efforts, yet there is still little understanding of Israelis' experience of the conflict. By undertaking this research, we hope to better understand what factors, if any, may attribute to the cognitive dissonance experienced by Israelis, and how they view themselves in relation to Palestinians. This article also seeks to examine the potential for intercultural empathy and active perspective taking within the conflict. One research question is explored:

RQ1: How do Israelis perceive Palestinians in regard to integrated threat theory.

RQ2: To what degree do Israelis experience active perspective taking with Palestinians?

The results of this study indicate a strong element of threat within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Stephan and Stephan's (1993, 1996, 2000) integrated threat theory (ITT) may help explain the levels of openness and fear felt by Israelis toward Palestinians, which would therefor dictate the symbolic or realistic threat perceived by Israelis. Symbolic (threat to culture) and realistic (threat to physical, economic, political etc.) threat are the two primary variations of perceived threat by the dominant culture toward the minority culture. For example, many Israelis expressed a fear of or hostility toward Palestinians in that the Israeli culture (i.e., threat to language, religion, way of life) is perhaps under attack or otherwise threatened by the presence of the Palestinian culture. Furthermore, realistic threat (i.e., fear of missiles, busses exploding, local bombers, etc.) was another strong indicated element of ITT. Results indicate the presence of such threats leading to and justifying prejudice and negative attitudes toward the minority group (Palestinians), and make it difficult to find a point of unification within the two sides (Croucher, 2013; Maoz & Ellis, 2008). Research should continue to explore links between ITT and cognitive empathy.

It was found that several participants demonstrated abilities for active perspective taking, which is a strong indicator of intercultural empathy. Where sympathy centered in projection rather than perspective taking, it has less power in intercultural interaction (Broome, 1991, 2008; Jackson & Croucher, 2021 in press). Cognitive empathy has often been understood as perspective taking, and what we refer to as emotional empathy in the literature has been labeled affective empathy, affective perspective taking, or emotional responsiveness (Gilroy, 2000; Rogers, 1980; Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Elements of cognitive empathy and emotional empathy was found in the results, particularly when participants reported the difficulties that Palestinians face. Participants noted their understanding of the challenges Palestinians face,

with poor living conditions, having no civil rights, and being victims of war and displacement. This may indicate a cognitive empathy in that they understand that these may be challenges faced by Palestinians, though the participants did not extend that empathy to emotional empathy in most cases. Rogers (1959) characterized empathy as “entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it” (Rogers, 1959, p. 142). Although participants seem able to practice perspective taking to a degree, it seems as though that ability is limited to a less productive cognitive empathy.

While results indicate that more emotional empathy does not transcend the dispositional cognitive empathy experienced by most participants, the element of exposure to the “other” must be noted. Most participants reported little to no contact with Palestinians in a familial way, or even professionally. This, however, is not surprising when we consider the severe limit of contact with the “other” in Israel. A neutral space between Palestinians and Israelis has largely been erased, leaving predominantly violent contact as the primary point of reference for almost all Israelis. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why peaceful relationships is so incomprehensible. Barriers, checkpoints, settlements and only four binational schools in the entire country mean that Israelis are never given an opportunity to come to know a Palestinian in their full humanity (Wilmer, 2017). As contact is impossible, Israelis are left to imagine the similarities they share or the differences that divide them with only situational evidence and confirmation bias to guide their perceptions.

This article was submitted to the *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* (JICR), a publication of the World Communication Association and is presently under revision for the second time with a Revise / Resubmit. This article was submitted to JICR based on the journal’s credibility, quality, and overall theme of research and has been active since 2006. JICR publishes manuscripts that report results from cross-cultural comparative research, such as reports on the ways culture affects human symbolic activities. Even articles that are

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We, the candidate and the candidate's Primary Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of candidate:	Kelsea Jayne Jackson	
Name/title of Primary Supervisor:	Professor Stephen Croucher	
Name of Research Output and full reference:		
<small>Jackson, K. & Croucher, S. M. (Submitted, 2021). Applying integrated threat theory in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: A qualitative analysis. <i>Journal of Intercultural Communication Research</i>.</small>		
In which Chapter is the Manuscript /Published work:	Chapter 4	
Please indicate:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of the manuscript/Published Work that was contributed by the candidate: 	75%	
and		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Manuscript/Published Work: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Candidate compiled literature review, data collection, and analysis - Co-author informed upon some theoretical framework, particularly regarding integrated threat theory, and assisted with some writing on ITT. 	
For manuscripts intended for publication please indicate target journal:		
Journal of Intercultural Communication Research.		
Candidate's Signature:		
Date:	14/6/2021	
Primary Supervisor's Signature:		
Date:	14/6/21	

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Applying Integrated Threat Theory to the Palestinian Israeli conflict:

A qualitative study

This article does not attempt to synthesize all the historical events of the Palestinian Israeli conflict but examines the influence and presence of integrated threat theory (ITT) within the conflict, and how both symbolic and realistic threats manifest themselves in the participants' minds toward their Palestinian counterparts. To do so, this article first explores a brief description of the Palestinian Israeli conflict today, and then introduces key concepts directly related to ITT. Two attributes of ITT are specifically explored due to their applicability, including symbolic and realistic threat. Finally, this article explores the Israeli perception of Palestinians as the "other," and examines threats or anxieties that Israelis as the ingroup may feel toward Palestinians as the outgroup.

Keywords: conflict, peace, integrated threat theory, intercultural empathy, qualitative

Applying Integrated Threat Theory to the Palestinian Israeli conflict:

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The Palestinian Israeli conflict is one of the most long-standing conflicts, despite efforts for peace and reconciliation by both government and non-profit entities. There is a clear divide in Palestinians' and Israelis' experiences of the conflict, with both parties holding and experiencing pain. While Palestinians have been systemically targeted by the Israeli regime in the West Bank and Gaza, Israeli civilians have also grown familiar with the fear of missiles from Palestinian radicals. It is clear both parties consider themselves the victims of this conflict, though it should be noted Israel indeed holds more military and structural power that often leaves Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza indefensible.

Palestinians are often not provided resources or ability to organize, which can be seen as recently as Israel's response to the COVID-19 crisis. Israel endeavored to be a leading country in vaccinating its citizens as early as January 2021; however, Palestinians were left out of this plan (Kershner, 2021). The lack of accessibility to resources has been met with further unrest among Palestinians, which ultimately came to a peak as recently as May 11, 2021, when missiles launched by Hamas targeted Jerusalem (Schwartz & Lieber, 2021). Preceding the launching of these missiles and Israel's intensified targeting of Gaza, national protests erupted over the expulsion of Palestinian families and the demolitions of their homes, which were often built illegally after years of waiting for building permits to be approved. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), only 13 percent of East Jerusalem is allocated to Palestinians for construction (Frykberg, 2021). This imbalance of power can also be seen in the form of the erection of walls, checkerboard jurisdictions, a monopoly and control over water accessibility, and an inability to move freely and organize. Where does the divorce in cognitive dissonance occur, distancing Israelis from their

Palestinian counterparts? How might we bridge that divide and one day lead to a peaceful resolution that recognizes Israelis' and Palestinians' shared humanity?

This research does not attempt to synthesize all the historical events of the Palestinian Israeli conflict but examines the influence and presence of prejudice within the conflict. Prejudice is conceptualized and operationalized using integrated threat theory (ITT) in this study. Within the ITT framework, it's critical to explore how both symbolic and realistic threats manifest themselves in the Israelis' minds toward their Palestinian counterparts. To do so, this article first explores a brief description of the Palestinian Israeli conflict today, and then introduces key concepts directly related to ITT. Two attributes of ITT are specifically explored due to their applicability, symbolic and realistic threat. Finally, this article explores the Israeli perception of Palestinians as the "other," and examines threats or anxieties that Israelis as the ingroup may feel toward Palestinians as the outgroup.

Prior to exploring ITT within the Palestinian Israeli conflict, points of clarification are offered to the reader. When the authors refer to Palestinians throughout this study, we are referring to those of Palestinian descent who reside within the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Israelis are referred to as Jewish Israelis who immigrated to Palestine before and after independence in 1948 and don't reside in Palestinian territories. Finally, the authors refer to what is commonly known as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as the Palestinian Israeli conflict. This is a conscious choice made by the authors in an effort to shift the power within the name toward equity, especially as Palestinians are already positioned as the weaker outgroup in comparison to the dominant Israeli ingroup. Thus, the authors initially and consciously prop up Palestinians for a more equitable positioning by shifting the naming of the participants within the conflict to the Palestinian Israeli conflict.

Overview of the Palestinian Israeli Conflict

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the state of Palestine was first established under British occupational rule. In the 1930's, European Jews were targeted in an ethnic cleansing programme that systemically eliminated over six million lives during the Holocaust, which later galvanized much of the world in support of the adoption of Resolution 181 by the United Nations. The United Nations Partition Plan for Mandatory Palestine at the end of the British Mandate divided the European-occupied Palestine into separate states to house both Palestinians and Israelis. This exchange of land was viewed as the gift of Zion by Jewish Israelis, or the assurance of safety and security as per the Torah, which was tantamount to the Abrahamic promise coming to pass. However, the ethics of this exchange are still widely disputed. Some argued the gifting of Palestine to the Jews was a violation of the principles of self-determination, which grants individuals the right to decide their own destiny (Mandel, 2004). Principles of self-determination refer to the right of every nation to establish an independent state and to freely choose its own political system, according to the United Nations Charter (U.N. Charter, art 1, para. 2). However, as most Palestinians at that time were not given a platform to share their opinion or influence the overall outcome, the very existence of the Jewish state of Israel undermines Palestinians' right to self-determination.

As we begin to explore the conditions of the creation of the Israeli state, we can see two sides that have an equal right to exist; the European Jews, a people brutally victimized by the Nazis during World War II, and the Palestinians, a people displaced by the Israeli military: massacres of Palestinian villages of Qalqilya, Kufr Qassem, and Khan Younis in 1956, and "Operation Protective Edge," which was the biggest assault on Gaza since 1967 (Al Jazeera, *n.d.*). Evidence of this displacement can still be felt in the aftermath of the Holocaust. While Jewish history depicts generations of refugeeism, Palestinians have also suffered and have been made refugees by the Israeli government, which were the very same

people that fled from their own lands because of the Holocaust. Hence, we see the common victim-oppressor interpretive framework come into play as perpetuated and reproduced throughout an ongoing cycle of desperation and defense (Har-Gil & Gitler, 2015). Furthermore, as cultural distance between two parties increases, the assessment or judgement of the conflict negotiation process is more likely to become increasingly polarized and misconstrued by both parties. Perceived core differences, including historical grievances, cultural worldviews and beliefs are more likely to occur as greater cultural distance increases (Ting-Toomey, 2007). These distances separating conflicting parties from the “other” need to be bridged for constructive peace communication to be possible.

As we examine the Palestinian Israeli conflict, we begin to understand the need for recognition discourse that plays such a pivotal role in the active effort of global apology by both parties, as both perpetrators and victims, from Palestinians and Israelis alike (Kamf, 2012). Such efforts toward apology and reconciliation have been attempted in South Africa during apartheid with dramatic lasting effects. However, most efforts toward apology are lost as Israelis consistently deny any claim or accountability for the present condition of dilapidation and despair of and within Palestine, which would be required for post-conflict reconciliation to be achieved (Cameron, 2011). This would be incredibly difficult to achieve as we look at the singular fact that over 250,000 Palestinians have been forced to leave their homes between 2000 and 2007 (Levy, 2011) as a result of the failure of the Camp David Accords in 2000, in addition to the construction of the wall in 2002 that led to further displacement among Palestinians. While the Israeli military has targeted Palestinians and have over time degraded their quality of life, it should be noted that Israeli’s also consider themselves the victims as arbitrary attacks on Israeli civilians have become increasingly prevalent. Thus, the common victim/oppressor paradigm is perpetuated in an ongoing cycle

of retaliation and abuse as both parties feel threatened, particularly Israeli's as the dominant in-group. This phenomenon is more easily understood through the lens of ITT.

Integrated Threat Theory

Understanding the Palestinian Israeli conflict from the Israeli perspective is essential, as they are the dominant ingroup in the country, with Palestinians being the marginalized outgroup. According to integrated threat theory (ITT), feeling threatened by the outgroup, either realistically or symbolically, is a form of prejudice (Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Stephan & Renfro, 2002). However, "in most cases such fears are overblown, and it may be possible to undermine them with accurate information about the other group" (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 40). While a lack of understanding between the dominant and marginalized groups will increase the disparity between parties, we also know that increased intercultural empathy can mitigate those imbalances and bridge the gap in our understanding of the "other." To build toward a deeper understanding of intercultural empathy and subsequent peace processes, we must first gain a deeper understanding into the Israeli perspective of the "other" through the lens of ITT.

Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996), who initially theorized ITT, asserted that when individuals believe their values, norms, and social groups are threatened, prejudicial reactions are more likely to occur in defense. Prejudice, or a set of negative attitudes or beliefs related to the expression of negative emotions or hostility toward the outgroup, is more likely to be intensified in these cases, such as when Israelis feel threatened by Palestinians, thus reacting with prejudice and hostility. There are several factors that can explain prejudice, including personality actors, membership in social groups, adherence to values or beliefs, and cultural differences between in and outgroups (McConahay & Hough, 1976; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Sears, 1988; Stephan & Stephan, 1993, 1996).

While threat may be real or perceived, it is important to point out that the perception of threat is real, and the perception of threat alone is enough to produce prejudice. According to Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996), threats that lead to prejudice can fall under four categories: realistic threats, symbolic threats, negative stereotyping, and intergroup anxiety. However, more and more ITT researchers have simplified Stephan and Stephan's (1993, 1996) ITT categories to include only realistic and symbolic threats (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan et al., 1998; Other & Second Author, 2017, 2018). For that reason, we focus this research in the context of realistic and symbolic threats only. Based on what we know about ITT, there are limited economic, physical, and political resources, leading to competition over such resources (Sherif, 1966). When individuals perceive a competition for scarce resources, this competition leads to prejudicial and discriminatory behavior. For example, it is common to hear scapegoating in the form of political rhetoric blame minority and/or immigrant groups for economic problems. Such rhetoric leads to an increased distrust of minority groups (Croucher, 2008; Laurence & Vaisse, 2006).

Realistic threats are primarily economic, physical, and political (Stephan & Stephan, 1993), and related to the conditions instigated by the outgroup toward the ingroup's existence (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Realistic threats include emphasized threats to welfare, political and economic power, and the physical well-being of the ingroup and its members. In addition, Stephan and Stephan (2000) stated realistic threats lead to prejudice regardless of the viability of the perceived threat.

Symbolic threats are based on perceived differences in values, beliefs, and norms between groups (Stephan & Stephan, 1993). Outgroups, or minority groups, often have different worldviews from the dominant groups, which may be considered to counter the norm. Furthermore, symbolic threat can be described as concerns to the ingroup's "way of life," which varies from "morals, values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes of the outgroup

(Stephan & Stephan, 1996, p. 422). We can see these threats occur when members of the ingroup feel that their “way of life” are threatened by the outgroup. In addition, perceived symbolic threats predict prejudice and perceptions of cultural difference, indirectly affecting attitudes toward the outgroup (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Studies show symbolic threats in minority groups are related to negative attitudes toward these groups (Croucher, 2008; Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2011; Gonzalez et al., 1998; Laurence & Vaisse, 2006; Sinderman & Hagendoorn, 2007).

Israelis are the dominant ingroup in Palestine, and as such, are the primary actors toward an ideal of peace. Stephan and Stephan (2000) have argued when people feel threatened while having intergroup interactions, they may experience intergroup anxiety for fear of potentially negative outcomes. Alternatively, negative outcomes may indeed be the result of fear, embarrassment, rejection or ridicule (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). To better understand this dichotomy, we must first break down Israelis’ perspectives of Palestinians thematically by noting their perceived similarities and differences, exploring their level of openness or fear toward the “other,” and explore to what degree Israelis feel personally threatened by Palestinians in the conflict. Furthermore, the Israeli participants express what they view are the principle difficulties faced by Palestinians, as well as whether or not they have friends on the other side. Familiarity with, or exposure to the “other” may dramatically influence the level to which individuals feel comfortable with or threatened by the “other,” though they rarely get the opportunity (Manney, 2008). An increase of positive exposure to the “other” could dramatically influence the perception toward the “other,” and decrease cognitive dissonance. When people empathize with the outgroup, their empathetic reactions can take three forms: cognitive empathy, reactive empathy, and parallel empathy (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Cognitive empathy is beneficial when attempting to understand the perspectives and experiences of the “other,” in addition to an understanding of cultural

norms, practices, values and standards. Cognitive empathy may also be key in processing attributional patterns (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Reactive empathy and parallel empathy could also play a part in the empathetic process, though reactive empathy may not be as productive and may even be less conducive for active peaceful communication versus parallel empathy, as reactive empathy is more prevalent during an already escalated damage control.

As there is little research exploring the Israeli experience of the “other” qualitatively, as well as a lack of research on ITT in relation to the Palestinian Israeli conflict, this article examines the influence and presence of ITT and how symbolic and realistic threats manifest themselves in Israeli’s minds toward their Palestinian counterparts. In this study, we searched for themes that may yield a deeper understanding of the average Israeli experience of Palestinians. Previous discourse has been taken up for political motivations or as part of non-profit efforts, yet there is still little understanding of Israelis’ experience of the conflict. By undertaking this research, we hope to better understand what factors, if any, may attribute to the cognitive dissonance experienced by Israelis, and how they view themselves in relation to Palestinians. This article also seeks to explore the potential for intercultural empathy and active perspective taking within the conflict. One research question is explored:

RQ1: How do Israelis perceive Palestinians?

RQ2: To what degree do Israelis experience active perspective taking with Palestinians?

Method

This study focuses on how Israelis perceive Palestinians in regard to both symbolic and realistic threats as outlined by integrated threat theory (ITT). This study also explores to what degree Israelis experience active perspective taking with Palestinians, if any. Questions surrounding threat surfaced in a previous case study (First & Second Author, 2021 in press), thus, this term is explored further, in addition to a potential presence of intercultural empathy

within the conflict. This study also explores the capacity for Israelis to practice active perspective taking, which is a strong indicator of empathy and essential in the development of peace processes. This study adds to our understanding of the Palestinian Israeli conflict from the perspective of ITT from a qualitative approach.

Participants

A previous case study (First & Second Author, 2021 in press) indicates Israelis experience or perceive a certain degree of threat from Palestinians, which appear to be largely based in symbolic and realistic threats, though Israelis occupy a position of dominance as the ingroup within Israel. As such, this study focuses specifically on the Israeli experience of the “other,” while also exploring their ability to practice active perspective taking. The initial pool of 22 participants was gathered by Qualtrics, a third-party survey company. Online panels from companies, such as Qualtrics are comparable to other populations in published research (Croucher et al., 2020; Troia & Graham, 2017). The pool of Israeli participants gathered from Qualtrics resided exclusively in Israel, excluding the West Bank, the Palestinian Quarter of Old Town Jerusalem, and Gaza, and all identified as Jewish. After conducting quality checks, five participants answered some or all of the survey questions in Hebrew. As the researchers were not able to assure translation quality and accuracy of these responses, they were not included in the final analysis.

Procedures

Survey questions were formed based on an initial pilot study (First & Second Author, 2021 in press). Some questions were fine-tuned or withdrawn. Similar themes were explored from the initial pilot study, though resulting themes informed the specific research question and supporting theory. Open-ended qualitative surveys (see Appendix A) were distributed by Qualtrics. The surveys invited participants to communicate their perceptions of the “other” in regard to familiarity with and ability to practice active perspective taking, which is a strong

indicator of empathy. Each survey invited participants to self-identify demographic information (see Table 1).

[Insert Table 1 here]

Data Analysis

The surveys were collected and coded following grounded theory techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Tie et al., 2019). Grounded theory seeks to discover theoretical concepts from data and through comparative analysis. In a grounded theory analysis, researchers typically approach an area of research to construct theory. However, researchers may add to existing theory or discover new elements of existing theoretical constructs (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this case, ITT yields few qualitative studies; thus, such an analysis is particularly valuable. Furthermore, while most existing research on the Palestinian Israeli conflict focuses predominantly on the depiction of the conflict through the scope of media reporting, the experience of individual Israelis and Palestinians continues to go overlooked. Endeavoring to deeply understand the experience and perspectives of those on the ground that are directly affected by the decisions of those in power will be essential for any successful peace building process. In conducting the analysis, the researchers followed the process outlined by Tie et al. (2019): 1) purposive sampling that directed the collection of data, 2) constant comparative analysis, 3) memoing, 4) generating/collecting data, 5) coding, 6) initial coding, intermediate coding, 7) advanced coding, and finally 8) theoretical sampling. It is at this final stage that themes were identified and outlined for each question. The project was approved by the appropriate ethics committee.

Results

The research questions were answered by exploring questions designed to assess Israeli participants perceptions of and experiences of threat in regard to the Palestinian Israeli conflict, specifically symbolic and realistic threats. Furthermore, the degree to which Israelis

experience active perspective taking with their Palestinian counterparts was also assessed by inviting them to share their level of familiarity and experiences with their Palestinian counterparts. Finally, Israelis' perceptions of the primary difficulties that an average Palestinian might face was investigated. Through the grounded theory analysis, a variety of themes emerged that informed the research question.

Similar or Different

Israeli participants were asked if they felt they were more similar or different from those on the other side, and asked how much they felt they had in common with Palestinians (see Table 2). Responses proved to be rather nuanced, as several participants (14/17) expressed similarities they shared with Palestinians, although of those participants who expressed similarities, 10 of those participants also communicated differences they saw between themselves and Palestinians, including difference of religion, way of life, culture, language, etc. Several participants (11/17) also noted difference between themselves and Palestinians. Of those differences, six participants also communicated contempt for Palestinians or their corrupt government and leaders. As such, values listed in the following graph are not collective of participants, but by instances where similarities or differences were communicated. These values exceed the seventeen participants. The below items were identified and organized thematically upon instances of occurrence.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Israeli participants expressed more shared similarities on the whole, although expressions about the possibility for peace was quite equal. Out of 17 participants, eight participants (8/17) expressed a desire for peace. Eight participants (8/17) also regarded culture as a similarity between them, including food (*P10, P20*) and music (*P20*). Five participants (5/17) regarded the shared desire for quality of life. This was expressed by a participant, stating:

We are under the same problem and there is a solution that we will reach with the help of dialogue and our children will have the privilege of living alongside the Jewish people and the Palestinian people owe it to the future of our child parties and in this we are similar in the same situation. (Participant 15)

Other similarities suggested by Israelis included their shared humanity (4/17), that they are not different (3/17), both parties are entitled to exist (2/17), and they share the same ancestors (2/17). Three participants (3/17) regarded peace as “[living] with love in your heart and [taking] care of each other” (P5, P15, P17). Other participants said they “would like to live a peaceful life” (P10, P13).

While several participants (9/17) saw a path to peace, eight participants (8/17) regarded peace as an impossibility. Participant 10 stated, “The problem, I believe, is that there are enough people on both sides that will not compromise in order to live in peace.” Of the eight participants who suggested peace was not possible, five of those participants communicated aggression toward the “other.” Participant 3 said, “I have nothing in common and will not have in the future with the fanatic terrorists Arabs. They are thirsty for blood and we are thirsty for life and I have nothing more to say.” These feelings of animosity were also shared by other participants (P5, P6, P8, P10). Participant 5 stated, “All in all I feel that you can protest, but to loot, that’s a crime and it’s not the point. You are just hurting someone else for no reason.” In other cases, participants cited political difficulties that got in the way of peace. Participant 8 stated, “We meet at wars and we both think the other side is wrong, we’re a democracy and they are corrupt, their leaders take their money and send them to die.” Of the eight participants who suggested that peace was not possible, primary differences that were listed included religion (4/17), language (3/17), culture (3/17), and skin colour (2/17).

It is interesting to note that just over half of the participants wanted peace and saw a path to peace based on their similarities, while just under half of participants didn’t see peace as a possibility while pointing to their differences. In other cases, however, participants cited

the differences they shared with Palestinians as a positive thing. Participant 9 suggested, “A different language, religion, and culture do not take away from our shared humanity in any way. I am glad there are so many different people and cultures in the world. It enriches everyone.” It is interesting to note that about half of participants want peace and can identify similarities. This finding is perhaps unique among the popular narrative of Israelis perpetuated by international media and political leaders, being that of a clear divide between people with a particular stress pointed toward suggested hostility by Palestinians. Based on this sample size, there may be more voices on the ground that are going unheard that media and politics does not accurately portray.

Openness or Fear

When asked if participants generally felt more openness or fear toward a person from the other side, six participants (6/17) reported having feelings of both openness and fear (see Table 3). For example, Participant 19 said, “You know, when you live in the conflict area you cannot ignore the fear you have inside not to get hurt or pay in your life or your health so you have definitely the fear. But you have inside your body the hope for good reality to come soon.” This sentiment was similarly reiterated by another participant who stated:

Generally, I feel openness and interest. I would like to see their city and be able to visit them. But I wouldn't dare go alone. When there is violence and daily suicide bombings or attempted ones, I feel anxious. When it is peaceful, on the whole I am not afraid. I would definitely befriend an Arab Palestinian person if I like them. There are not usually opportunities to meet them, that's all. But fear wouldn't stop me if I met someone nice. (Participant 9)

Of those participants who had feelings of both openness and fear, most reported a physical threat as their fear, but not fear of the people themselves. For example, Participant 20 said, “I did never meet a Palestinian... Some of the Palestinian people are very nice, some of them

are not, like in every side (even Israel has unempathetic people). Unfortunately, Palestinian terror is very common these days.”

Five participants (5/17) reported feelings of openness toward Palestinians. Participant 2 stated, “On the contrary, I always like to know how the other side looks at me. I always like correcting my thoughts towards me that I am not a bad person and I am not different from them.” Another participant stated:

I am sure that on the Palestinian side, most majority want us to live side by side with the openness of the part is greater than those who do not want peace. We need to believe that there are people on each side who want to be at peace with the other side and give opportunities for peace. It all depends on our customs and theirs. (Participant 15)

Other participants who expressed openness generally tried to find some common points with the “other” (P2, P10, P16).

Four participants (4/17) reported feelings of fear, three of which may have reported intergroup anxiety (P1, P4, P13), while two participants’ accounts may resemble a realistic threat (P8, P9). In regard to intergroup anxiety, one participant admitted:

Many times, I am ashamed to say, but yes, I feel afraid of the Palestinian people, even those who cross the fence and come to work for us, especially after the terror, of knives and trash, there are situations where I am scared when I see the other people. But I know that in many cases fear is unjustified, but that is the case. (Participant 1)

Although a realistic threat may not always be present, it is important to note that this participant still felt afraid because of the potential presence of danger. In regard to a realistic threat, another participant stated,

I’m afraid they are going to assault me with a knife like they do many times, or even they will kill their employee like they did many times, or just launch missiles and attack us. I fear from real not from an image, I base my fear on reality and based on the past. (Participant 8)

When charactering specific fears or threats on behalf of the Israeli participants toward Palestinians, frequent repeated words by all five participants included, “terror,” “knives,” “assault,” “killing,” “launching missiles,” “violence,” “terrorist attack,” and, “daily suicide bombings.” One wonders if these common words are due to reports of violence perpetuated in the media, or by their own experiences.

Two participants (2/17) suggested feeling neither openness nor fear. Participant 5 expressed this ambivalence by saying, “Not really, you can find creeps in all shapes and from colors of skin. Where you are from does not apply or make you a bad person. Action does.” Other participants expressed what they referred to as “intrigue” toward the other side (P6).

Results for this question again proved to be quite nuanced, with several emerging themes, including influences of the media. Participant 22 said that “the media, they paint as a terrorist,” and Participant 3 stated, “I have a natural discomfort when meeting a person from the opposite side since we are taught from a small age to suspect each other.” This self-awareness and pointing to the media as suspect by participants are interesting.

Feels Personally Threatened by Conflict

When participants were asked to what extent they felt personally threatened by the conflict, seven participants (7/17) referenced a realistic threat. These mentions of a realistic threat involved fear of missiles, busses exploding, and local bombers. In some cases, participants stipulated their fear being born from lived experience. For example, Participant 1 said, “I am very scared to start firing missiles at my house and my area. Once that happens, we will have to run far. We already had experience with this and it was really unpleasant.” Further to this point, another participant shared a similar sentiment, stating:

I feel very little personal threat from the current conflict at the moment. This is, however, not always the case. In times of conflict escalation, rocket shooting, local bombers, etc., I feel more threatened (for example having to run to the bomb shelter

when rockets are being fired from Gaza). It's important to understand that the situation fluctuates between different times here. (Participant 10)

It is important to note that realistic threat is not always present physically, but the fear of what could happen is certainly very present for many people. That insecurity no doubt is present in shaping how Israelis perceive the "other."

Four participants (4/17) expressed no fear of Palestinians, or otherwise did not feel threatened by the conflict (P21). Whereas for some it is determined by day to day circumstances, (P4), others suggest the older they get, the more they realize there is nothing to be afraid of and resolves to not worry (P6). It is interesting to note that in the case of Participant 4, they recalled feeling fear in the past, specifically when they were a soldier. They recalled feeling more threatened when walking around in their uniform on the street, because they felt like a bigger target.

Three participants (3/17) expressed their frustrations with the government in regard to how the conflict is dealt with, and specifically pointed a finger toward the government as the cause of their fear. One participant iterated this by stating:

I feel threatened to live in a world where the powerful may decide at their own will if to humiliate, torture, kill, and in any way abuse the less powerful. I feel much more threatened by the power money gives people to control other people's lives than I feel threatened by the conflict. (Participant 9)

Similarly, Participant 15 shared a similar view by stating, "They are not able to make peace and then there is hurt on both sides... I feel threatened because there is no leader who takes responsibly to make peace and give up on both sides." This issue would particularly be interesting to carefully examine in future research, particularly the satisfaction and personal views of Israelis toward their leaders and the government's effectiveness.

There was some noted recognition of the plight of Palestinians and potential empathy by two participants (2/17). For example, one participant communicated their fear of "living in

a world that does not respect human rights and justice” (P9). They went on to recognize Palestinians, stating, “I know that the human rights of Palestinians and Israelis are being violated by Israel and that it is far worse for Palestinians.” Participant 9 even recognized that if they “happened to be born in Palestinian, [they] would have no human rights.” This participant went on to express that the two sides are not Palestinians and Israelis, but those who believe in human rights and justice, and those who don’t.

Principle Difficulties Faced by Palestinians

When the participants were asked what they thought to be the principle difficulties that might face those on the other side of the conflict, eight participants (8/17) acknowledged the poor living conditions of Palestine. Some suggested that Palestinians must feel “out of control and helpless in the situation” (P4), and recognized that they have been living “under military occupation for the last 50-60 years with no civil rights” (P10). Several participants also referenced the severe poverty of Palestinians (P9, P19, P13, P22). Participant 15 offered their reflection of the Palestinian’s plight, stating:

The other side faces fear from severe poverty and inability to take care of themselves. Lack of development in their country. Depression leads Palestinians to carry out attacks, because they prefer to die than live with deteriorating health conditions from lack of progress. (Participant 15)

In regard to the possibility that poor living conditions may lead Palestinians to carry out attacks, another participant similarly suggested that “poor conditions, lack of jobs, no good education, and unsolid government leads to crime and lack of development” (P20). Two participants also acknowledged the struggle for water in Palestine (P9, P22).

Eight participants (8/17) referenced hate, crime, aggression, etc. with regard to Palestinians. One such participant self-identified as a Muslim living in Jerusalem, yet “believes Palestine brainwashes Palestinians to hate everyone who is different from them” (P1). Participant 6 suggested that “Palestine faces the challenge of not giving up when they

know they have lost. They just want to be the “winner” in the argument.” Finally, Participant 8 said, “Their leaders get money, but give none to the people, leading them to kill as many Israelis as possible. Israel defends its borders, so the Palestinians kill them.”

[Insert Table 3 here]

Six participants (6/17) suggested that the Palestinians are at fault for their own situation in the conflict. This was especially prevalent in regard to either not letting go of the past, or pointing to a corrupt government in Palestine. For example, Participant 5 said, “Palestinians don’t let go of the past, like the Jews forgave Germany and will fly there today to have fun, but the Palestinians won’t let go.” Another participant referenced “racism,” “theft in their own communities,” “women being treated as second class citizens,” and “homophobia” (P9). Three participants (3/17) acknowledged the Palestinians corrupt government and lack of representation (P8, P10, P13).

Communication Difficulties

Israeli participants were asked what, in their view, were the principle communication difficulties between the two sides. Of those, seven participants (7/17) referenced corrupt political leaders and a “lack of normal debate” (P19). Four participants (4/17) referenced religious differences as being the most difficult. For example, Participant 20 communicated that Islam does not believe the Bible, as it says Israel belongs to the Jews. Four participants (4/17) said that cultural differences were a difficulty, which also included language barriers and differences in values. Four participants (4/17) expressed an unequal humanity, depicting Palestinians as “thirsty for blood” (P3), “radicals” (P4, P5), and acting in a way that “leads to unnecessary hatred” (P15). Two participants (2/17) suggested that old grudges are the main communication difficulty. For example, Participant 8 said, “It’s a 100 years conflict, no one wants to give up now, we got used to defend ourselves and they got used to attacking innocents.” This statement is indicative of cognitive dissonance toward the “other” caused by

layers of both historical and cultural conditioning, particularly in the participant's framing of them, the Israelis as "innocents" and the Palestinians as the attackers.

Friends on the Other Side

When asked if the Israeli participants had many friends or acquaintances on the other side of the conflict, most participants (10/17) communicated that they had no Palestinian friends. One Israeli specifically mentioned "no longer" having friends on the other side, but knows some people in "every other profession... is represented by people from the other side of the conflict" (P13). It's interesting to note that Participant 13 suggested knowing Palestinians in various professions in Israel, though most participants communicated their lack of exposure to Palestinians, resulting in very little to no interaction with the "other." One Israeli communicated their loneliness, wishing for any friends at all, including on the other side (P9), while two individuals (P8, P10) communicated fear of the other side as their explanation for having no friends on the other side. Participant 10 simply said that they are afraid, while Participant 8 referred to "segregation" and "missiles being launched on their property almost daily" (P8). This as a realistic threat may also speak to literature on ITT.

Some participants (5/17) suggested they do have friends, and in some cases, "many friends." This particular participant (P2) self-identified as Palestinian working in a Jewish company. Another participant who indicated that they had Palestinian friends stated, "I think we must live side by side and help each other. That way there will be no unnecessary wars and killing people (P15). In some cases, it seemed that Israeli participants consciously chose to not discuss the conflict with their Palestinian friends, stating, "I had some Muslim Arab friends. We were great friends. Although we had opposite states, we didn't speak about the conflict much. We enjoyed each other telling jokes, shared stories and played video games" (P20).

A couple Israeli participants (2/17) did not directly answer the question, though they still offered a substantive response in some form. This included a desire to “let the past go and live with love in your heart” (P5). This participant also acknowledged that their leaders are “dealing with their own problems and it’s bad, but the [Israelis] as a whole must be more kind” (P5). The other participant who did not directly answer this question seemed to justify the present situation by saying that they are “against everyone else and everyone in the world is against every other person.” This participant went on by saying that they are “personally tolerant... but each one lives in his own way” (P6).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the Israeli participants perception of Palestinians through the lens of ITT, focusing predominantly on symbolic and realistic threat. This study also explored to what degree Israelis experience active perspective taking with Palestinians, if any. Questions that surfaced from a previous case study (First & Second Author, 2021 in press), informed the theoretical scope of this research, in addition to a potential presence of intercultural conflict within the conflict. This study also explored the capacity for Israelis to practice active perspective taking as a strong indicator of empathy and essential within the development of peace processes.

First, the results of this study indicate a strong element of threat within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Stephan and Stephan’s (1993, 1996, 2000) ITT may help explain the levels of openness and fear felt by Israelis toward Palestinians, which would therefor dictate the symbolic or realistic threat perceived by Israelis. Symbolic (threat to culture) and realistic (threat to physical, economic, political etc.) threat are the two primary variations of perceived threat by the dominant culture toward the minority culture. For example, many Israelis expressed a fear of or hostility toward Palestinians in that the Israeli culture (i.e., threat to language, religion, way of life) is perhaps under attack or otherwise threatened by the

presence of the Palestinian culture. Furthermore, realistic threat (i.e., fear of missiles, busses exploding, local bombers, etc.) was another strong indicated element of ITT. Results indicate the presence of such threats leading to and justifying prejudice and negative attitudes toward the minority group (Palestinians), and make it difficult to find a point of unification within the two sides (Maoz & Ellis, 2008; Croucher, 2013). Research should continue to explore links between ITT and cognitive empathy.

It was found that several participants demonstrated abilities for active perspective taking, which is a strong indicator of intercultural empathy. Where sympathy centered in projection rather than perspective taking, it has less power in intercultural interaction (Broome, 1991, 2008; First & Second Author, 2021 in press). Cognitive empathy has often been understood as perspective taking, and what we refer to as emotional empathy in the literature has been labeled affective empathy, affective perspective taking, or emotional responsiveness (Gilroy, 2000; Rogers, 1980; Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Elements of cognitive empathy and emotional empathy was found in the results, particularly when participants reported the difficulties that Palestinians face. Participants noted their understanding of the challenges Palestinians face, with poor living conditions, having no civil rights, and being victims of war and displacement. This may indicate a cognitive empathy in that they understand that these may be challenges faced by Palestinians, though the participants did not extend that empathy to emotional empathy in most cases. Rogers (1959) characterized empathy as “entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it” (p. 142). Although participants seem able to practice perspective taking to a degree, it seems as though that ability is limited to a less productive cognitive empathy.

While results indicate that a more emotional empathy does not transcend the dispositional cognitive empathy experienced by most participants, the element of exposure to the “other” must be noted. Most participants reported little to no contact with Palestinians in a

familial way, or even professionally. This, however, is not surprising when we consider the severe limit of contact with the “other” in Israel. A neutral space between Palestinians and Israelis has largely been erased, leaving predominantly violent contact as the primary point of reference for almost all Israelis. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why peaceful relationships is so incomprehensible. Barriers, checkpoints, settlements and only four binational schools in the entire country mean that Israelis are never given an opportunity to come to know a Palestinian in their full humanity (Wilmer, 2017). As contact is impossible, Israelis are left to imagine the similarities they share or the differences that divide them with only situational evidence and confirmation bias to guide their perceptions.

This was an explorative study that focused on qualitative methods for investigating the presence of threat felt by Israelis as the ingroup toward Palestinians as the outgroup utilizing integrated threat theory (ITT). This is a unique study in the investigation of ITT qualitatively in the intercultural context, as most studies in ITT are quantitative and not often focused in areas of active international conflict. As such, intercultural studies surrounding peacebuilding that are conducted quantitatively may draw attention away from individuals’ unique voices and perspectives, thereby resulting in somewhat limited results. This study provides a unique contribution to the literature by further expanding our understanding of such nuanced areas of conflict, peace and intercultural empathy by attributing the lens of ITT qualitatively. Few studies have been conducted that explore the individual perception of Israelis as the dominant ingroup toward Palestinians as the minority outgroup, especially qualitatively. One potentially catastrophic assumption would be that of assuming individuals’ experience in tumultuous times and perception toward the “other,” especially in such a constantly evolving conflict. This study attempts to draw upon current themes of the Palestinian Israeli conflict that may more accurately inform future peacebuilding processes. Furthermore, this is unique study in its effort to understand elements of active perspective

taking as an indicator of intercultural empathy within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. It would be beneficial for future studies to also investigate ITT as it corresponds with intercultural empathy in future qualitative research.

Moving forward, educational practitioners and peace building policy makers and stakeholders should commit to understanding the individual perspective of threat within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. While Palestinians may be suffering at present under occupation, it should be noted that Israelis feel an equal right to their suffering. Multicultural educational curricula as outlined by Stephan and Stephan (2000), Banks (1988, 1997), and the NCSS Task Force (1992) need to be applied to our understanding of ITT, providing opportunities for both parties to practice imaginative placement consistent with successful transformative peace building processes (Ellis & Sonnefield, 1994; Hollister et al., 1993; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). The designing of intercultural training programmes can provide comprehensive interventions targeting students, as well as professionals in achieving their diversity goals. Diversity trainings which integrate intercultural competence pedagogy, one-on-one mentoring, learning reflections, peer support, and intercultural interactions can provide comprehensive and effective training (Bagwe & Haskollar, 2020). Engaging in such practices ultimately informs upon the perspectives and experiences of the “other,” thus lending to increased intercultural empathy. Validating both parties’ perspectives and facilitating experiences for active perspective taking may yield positive impact for participants, both short-term and long-term.

Limitations and Future Research

This study addressed a singular research question focused upon integrated threat theory (ITT) in the context of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, as well as the nuances of active perspective taking as an element of intercultural empathy in relation to the amount of contact with the “other.” Limitations for this study should be considered, particularly the limitation of

language. Responses provided by participants were sometimes very limited, which may have been the result of a lack of confidence or ability with the English language. Future research should undertake a similar framework of study, but provide survey questions in the participants' native language if possible. It would be beneficial to further investigate the cognitive dissonance experienced by Israelis toward Palestinians as the "other" to assess points of pain that could be addressed by key stakeholders. Future research should also examine attitudes of Israelis toward Palestinians, juxtaposed with prominent messages in the media to find if there is substantial correlation or causation. Doing so would inform upon the gravity of such dominant messages repeated in the media in their ability to inform, and ultimately, influence cultural attitudes resulting in significant friction between particular peoples of varying difference. In addition, Israeli soldiers' experiences and feelings of vulnerability within the conflict or otherwise would be interesting to examine further in future research, which is informed by Participant 4 who recalled feeling vulnerable threatened when wearing his uniform in Palestine as if he were a target. This note is of particular interest, especially as the State of Israel requires every citizen over the age of 18 to serve a minimum of 32 months in the military for men and 24 months for women (IDF, n.d.). Indeed, if every Israeli citizen is required by law to spend significant time in potentially dangerous situations that might directly or indirectly elicit feelings of vulnerability, fear, and potentially anger toward the other, then this particular issue should be deeply researched to thereby inform potential alternative peacekeeping measures. Finally, future research should investigate the Palestinian experience within the Palestinian Israeli conflict for the purpose of locating similarities in experience and outlining themes that could be applied to curricula in future peace building processes.

This study was conducted following the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the previous President of the United States on December 6, 2017. This event

resulted in an uprising and protests across Palestine and the world, which added to the unrest among Palestinians and Israelis. Such events perpetuate a strengthened cyclical violence that progresses over time, and is contrary to efforts to build peace among parties. Future analyses of the perception toward the “other” that runs parallel to active peace building efforts should be investigated in a longitudinal study that also analyzes influences of the media when forming the dominant narrative. It must also be noted that surveys for this study were gathered during the initial breakout of COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in international insecurity and instability. Such instability may have affected both emotional and cognitive functions of participants during this time, which may have influenced the results of this study.

Questions were posed at the beginning of this study. What justifies “othering” in the Israeli view? Why is Palestine claimed as part of Israel, while Palestinians are not extended the same right to live without fear of COVID-19 that Israelis are offered? It is becoming increasingly prevalent that this level of cognitive dissonance toward the “other” is the result of both shared narrative of pain and victimhood, as well as insecurity perpetuated by those in political positions of power and policy makers. Despite the ongoing cycle of retaliation and abuse among Palestinians and Israelis, this study indicates Israelis’ recognition as political influences as the key instigator of a conflict that they otherwise feel helpless to counterbalance or circumvent. Although Israelis may feel helpless to influence the political environment that could allot Palestinians more freedom and a right to exist, it is clear that most Israelis do not share the sentiments of those in positions of political influence or even messages perpetuated in the media. Indeed, if Israelis were afforded the knowledge that they share similar sentiments with their fellow Israelis, they may discover their collective power to bridge the gap and tip the scales in favor of equity and equality.

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Table 1:

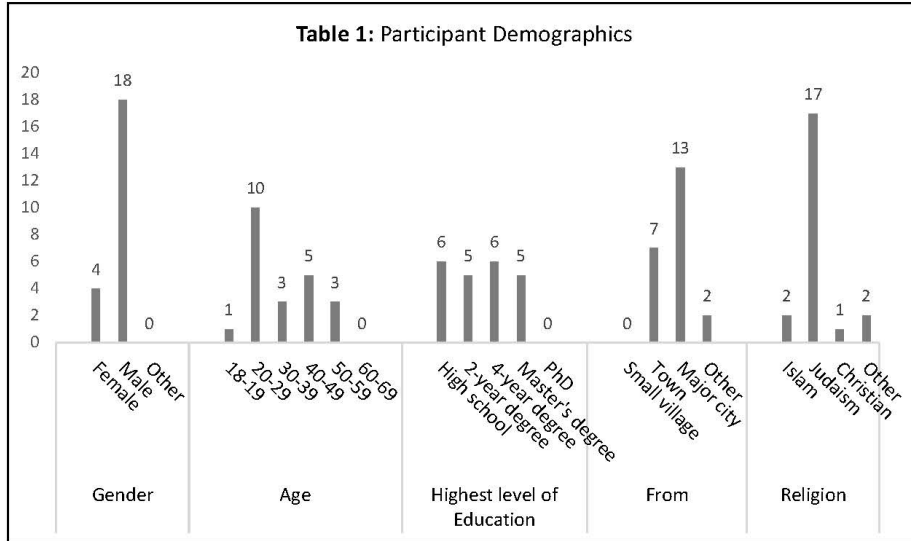


Table 2:

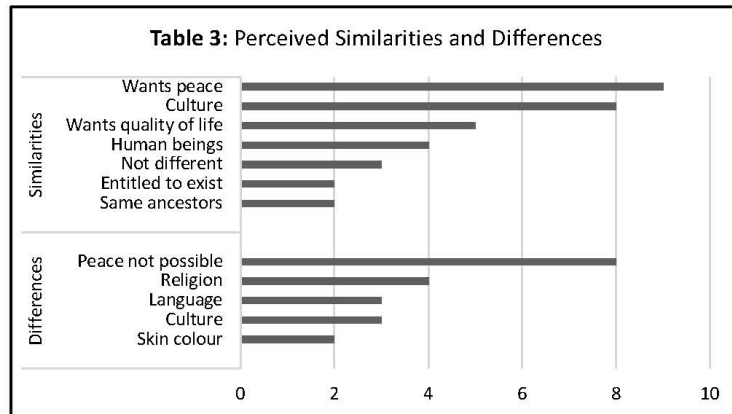
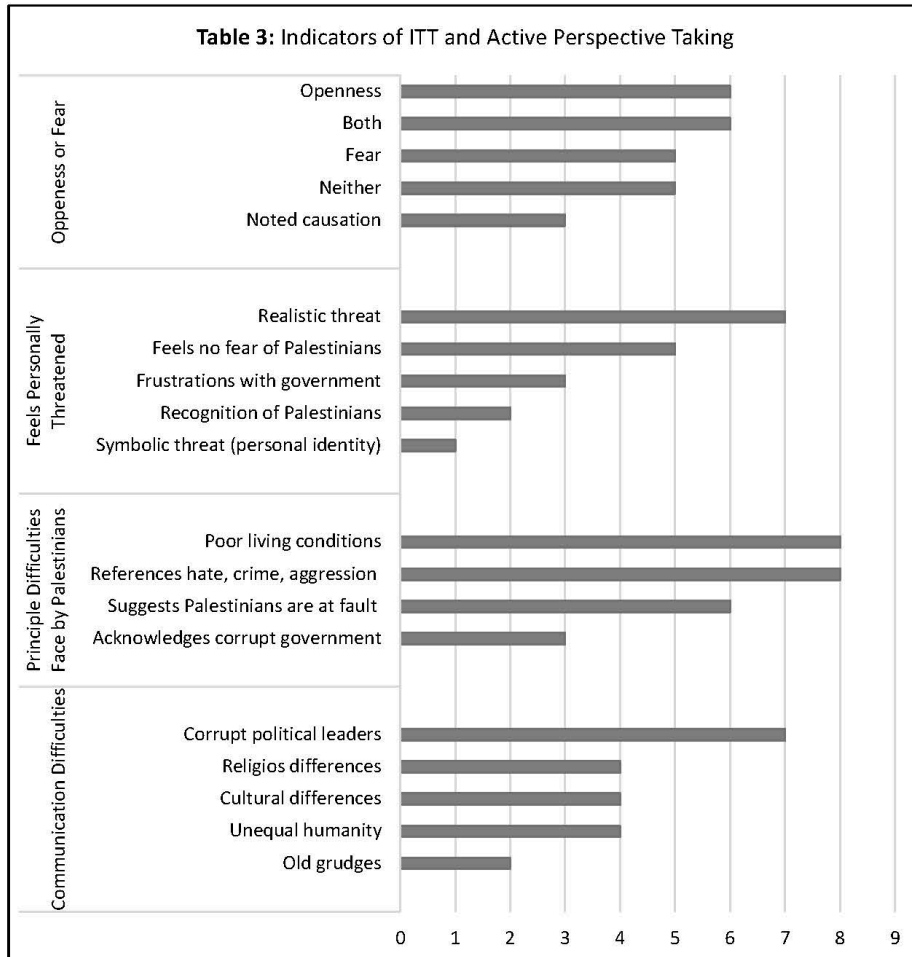


Table 3:



Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the findings

This research project complements previous research by investigating the relationships between peace, intercultural empathy, and integrated threat theory (ITT). Both similarities and differences between the results from this project and those from previous literature are found. While each article makes a unique contribution to the existing literature, the following section focuses on the findings collectively supported in the articles. The results from this research project can be summarized into three main points:

1. An understanding of “intercultural empathy” does not predict behaviour

One particular contribution this project makes is linking a cognitive understanding of intercultural with affective or emotional experience of intercultural empathy. Cognitive empathy and perspective taking have oftentimes been viewed as synonymous, while what we refer to as emotional empathy is often characterised as affective empathy, affective perspective taking, or emotional responsiveness in the literature. Characterising elements of both cognitive empathy and emotional empathy were noted in the first article included in this dissertation, which suggests that those who conceptualized intercultural empathy as an ability or skill seemed to demonstrate less empathy. However, participants who conceptualized intercultural empathy as imagining the feelings of others demonstrated a greater proclivity toward empathizing with the “other.” It is postulated that intercultural empathy may not be a choice as much as an inevitable by-product of adversity. These findings were repeated in Article II, where it was found that the participants that had a cognitive understanding of empathy and intercultural empathy did not necessarily translate into a more productive emotional empathy or position taking. Indeed, emotional empathy primarily refers to the emotional responses of empathy. In some cases, Israeli participants who regarded empathy toward the “other” as an

understanding, or a cognitive function, still demonized Palestinians or indicated little to no empathy for Palestinians. Article III also aimed to concur active perspective taking as an indicator of intercultural empathy within the Palestinian Israeli conflict.

2. Differing perceptions of “peace” result in differing expectations

Previous studies that examined differing perceptions and understandings of the concept of “peace” indicated Palestinians and Israelis overwhelmingly have differing perceptions and expectations of the concept, stemming back to the first initial peace agreement. In Article I, the primary researcher found individuals who experienced positive emotions, i.e., optimism, joy, trust, etc., was usually due to appreciation and respect for the “other,” as well as a certain amount of optimism for future peace with the “other.” It was also noted that those who might have had negative experiences with the “other” were still capable of understanding the situations of the “other,” though it did not take away from their desire for autonomy and peace. Although the desire for peace was significant, it did not indicate that participants viewed it as possible. These findings were also echoed in the Article II, in which some participants viewed peace as an overwhelming impossibility, with a few participants noting the only way to achieve peace would be for Palestinians to be expelled from Israel and to just “disappear.” It was also assumed by Israelis in this study that Palestinians really didn’t want peace. Despite this, Article III indicated a strong desire for peace, despite the likelihood of attaining it with about half of participants expressing a desire for peace. It is interesting to note that just over half of the participants wanted peace and saw a path to peace based on their similarities, while just under half of participants didn’t see peace as a possibility while pointing to their differences. In other cases, however, participants sited the differences they shared with Palestinians as a positive thing. It is interesting to note that about half of participants want peace and can identify similarities. This finding is perhaps unique among the popular narrative of Israelis perpetuated by international media and political leaders, being that of a clear divide between people with a

particular stress pointed toward suggested hostility by Palestinians. Based on this sample size, there may be more voices on the ground going unheard that media and politics does not accurately portray.

3. Integrated threat theory is linked to intercultural empathy and the “other”

Previous research on integrated threat theory (ITT) has yielded significant findings within ingroup/outgroup dynamics. Although, the examination of the Palestinian Israeli conflict through the lens of ITT was not an initial objective, Article II uncovered themes later explored in Article III. Initial results revealed the significance of the perception of threat on intercultural empathy and perception of peace. Integrated threat theory (Croucher, 2013, 2017; Stephan & Stephan, 1993, 1996, 2000) (ITT) may help explain the overall lack of intercultural empathy. Within ITT there are two kinds of perceived threats that the dominant culture perceives from the minority culture, symbolic (threat to culture) and realistic (threat to physical, economic, political, etc.). In the case of Israelis, many expressed a fear that Palestinians are changing Israeli culture (symbolic) and also are a physical threat to Israel (realistic). In this case, the presence of such threats will lead to prejudice and negative attitudes towards the minority group (Palestinians) and make it extremely difficult to create common ground (Croucher, 2013; Maoz & Ellis, 2008). Article III's results indicated a strong element of threat within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Integrated threat theory (ITT) may help explain the levels of openness and fear felt by Israelis toward Palestinians, which would therefore dictate the symbolic or realistic threat perceived by Israelis. Symbolic (threat to culture) and realistic (threat to physical, economic, political etc.) threat are the two primary variations of perceived threat by the dominant culture toward the minority culture. For example, many Israelis expressed a fear of or hostility toward Palestinians in that the Israeli culture (i.e., threat to language, religion, way of life) is perhaps under attack or otherwise threatened by the presence of the Palestinian culture. Furthermore, realistic threat (i.e., fear of missiles, buses exploding, local bombers, etc.) was another strong

indicated element of ITT. Results indicate the presence of such threats leading to and justifying prejudice and negative attitudes toward the minority group (Palestinians), and make it difficult to find a point of unification within the two sides (Croucher, 2013; Maoz & Ellis, 2008). Research should continue to investigate links between ITT and cognitive empathy. Furthermore, this is one of few studies that examine ITT qualitatively, though doing so yields interesting findings unique to qualitative studies. It would be beneficial to apply additional focus toward the qualitative exploration of ITT and especially existing theory related to intercultural empathy in future research.

5.2 Theoretical and practical implications

Findings about different conceptualizations of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” indicate the urgency to develop cultural specific theories and measurements which better explain the process of intercultural empathy, while distinguishing it amongst other familiar words such as sympathy, compassion, etc. Pre-existing theoretical models hold value in their application to core theories and principles, such as Weaver’s (1990) work, however, it is essential to continue updating and creating new theories that are applicable to changing times and reflect continuously transforming perceptions of the “other,” and causes for those changes. As an example, existing literature on the Palestinian Israeli conflict communicate a certain positioning from Israelis toward Palestinians that reflect that of a stoic or ambivalent lack of care, or an otherwise comfort in the conflict. This is challenged in Article II and Article III, in that both desires for peace and a feeling of helplessness to influence the Israeli government were communicated.

Theories and applied as lenses are often done in an exclusive quantitative or qualitative method, which can thereby limit the scope of the yielded results. For example, integrated threat theory (ITT) is almost exclusively applied quantitatively, thereby limiting results. Study III provides a unique contribution to the literature by further informing upon

the nuanced areas of conflict, peace and intercultural empathy by applying ITT qualitatively. We must commit as researchers to not furthering the potentially catastrophic assumption of individuals' lived experience during tumultuous times and their perception of the "other." This must further be avoided when a comfortable status quo has already been established. This body of work seeks to inform upon and potentially critique existing bodies of work, and further invites criticism and improvement of such dated work. Doing so may ultimately build upon and inform more accurately the peacebuilding process.

Future research must endeavour to understand peace in a grassroots level, particularly, how concepts of peace are conceptualized among conflicting parties. Indeed, simply having a shared understanding and expectation of the term may improve existing peace processes. Future research should also continue to examine integrated threat theory (ITT) in qualitative studies to further develop and fine-tune this research. Qualitative research should also have the potential to yield equally reliable results, thus, rigorous processes should be continuously developed and improved. Continuous improvement of such methods thereby yielding more reliable and replicable processes (Harzing et al., 2013) would ultimately increase peaceful outcomes in ongoing peace processes internationally.

While results in this project indicate that a more emotional empathy does not transcend the dispositional cognitive empathy experienced by most participants, the element of exposure to the "other" must be noted. Most participants in the three included studies reported little to no contact with Palestinians in a familial way, or even professionally. This, however, is not surprising when we consider the severe limit of contact with the "other" in Israel. A neutral space between Palestinians and Israelis has largely been erased, leaving predominantly violent contact as the primary point of reference for almost all Israelis. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why peaceful relationships is so incomprehensible. Barriers, checkpoints, settlements and only four binational schools in the entire country mean that Israelis are never

given an opportunity to come to know a Palestinian in their full humanity (Wilmer, 2017). As contact is impossible, Israelis are left to imagine the similarities they share or the differences that divide them with only situational evidence and confirmation bias to guide their perceptions.

Moving forward, educational practitioners and peacebuilding policy makers and stakeholders should commit to understanding the individual perspective of threat within the Palestinian Israeli conflict. While Palestinians may be suffering at present under occupation, it should be noted that Israelis feel an equal right to their suffering. Multicultural educational curricula as outlined by Stephan and Stephan (2000), Banks (1988, 1997), and the NCSS Task Force (1992) need to be applied to our understanding of ITT, providing opportunities for both parties to practice imaginative placement consistent with successful transformative peacebuilding processes (Ellis & Sonnefield, 1994; Hollister et al., 1993; Stephan & Stephan, 2000;). Validating both parties' perspectives and facilitating experiences for active perspective taking may yield positive impact for participants, both short-term and long-term.

5.3 Synthesis of original contribution

Article I as the initial pilot study of this project endeavoured to solidify a starting point and inform future research, the researcher did note very interesting findings that informed the methodological process for the following two articles in this dissertation, and also contributed interesting findings and new knowledge that must be further investigated in future research.

An initial understanding of basic knowledge or familiarity with “intercultural empathy” as a concept was gauged in the first study. Of the Palestinians and Israelis, those that claimed an “understanding” of intercultural empathy reported fewer experiences with it, or otherwise reported actioning fewer elements of intercultural empathy. This leads one to inquire whether a cognitive understanding of empathy is can be counter to the actual experience of intercultural empathy. Potential implications of this may inform peacebuilding

processes and the way in which intercultural empathy is taught. Meaning, it cannot be taught as merely conceptual if experiential learning is negated. Indeed, merely an understanding of the “other” may lead to a “strong indifference toward the ‘other’, or even an open hostility” (Jackson & Croucher, 2021 in press).

Article II was formulated based on the findings informed by Article I, which allowed for more specific and focused survey questions that thereby elicited more specific results. New application of theories and themes were applied in this study for perhaps the first time. For example, integrated threat theory, a well-known and commonly actioned analysis has not been applied through an additional scope of intercultural empathy and perceptions of peace. Applying this additional lens to the already established ITT allowed for new insight that may inform future engagement with ITT as a theory, in addition to future work with intercultural empathy. For example, symbolic and realistic threats are key in regard to ITT, though engaging in this research within the Palestinian Israeli conflict and with the application of intercultural empathy in regard to the “othering” of outgroups. This “othering” is demonstrated in the COVID-19 crisis as the West Bank were not afforded the same efforts to vaccinate Israeli populations. This actioned “othering” is further informed by intercultural empathy as we are led to investigate further what holds the “other” as such in an Israeli’s mind, and what would influence more of an openness and desire to share resources.

Cognitive understanding of intercultural empathy as counter to the actioning of it was further informed upon in Article II, which confirms the initial finding in Article I. When empathy was regarded as a cognitive function, it often carried more demonization of Palestinians, or otherwise indicating no empathy. Alternatively, indications of a more emotional empathy which was positively correlated with an application of intercultural empathy. Another finding that was supported in Article II that was also demonstrated in Article I is that of an overall frustration toward government and a feeling of helplessness to

individually enact change, despite one's overwhelming desire to do so. What was further highlighted in Article II that surpassed that of Article I was that of a resulting ambivalence toward the "other" as a comfortable and less productive default.

Article III afforded an in-depth analysis of threat within the Palestinian Israeli conflict through the lens of integrated threat theory (ITT), of which is rarely applied qualitatively. This application allows for more in-depth and detailed findings, allowing further for more informed future research. Results indicate that the presence of such threats then influence the justification of furthered prejudice and negative attitudes toward the minority group and makes it difficult to establish unification within the two conflicting sides (Maoz & Ellis, 2008; Croucher, 2013).

Peacebuilding became an essential element of Article III. Peacebuilding as a field has seen an overwhelming push for more quantification of data, which may then mute individual's unique voices and perspectives, thereby limiting results. This study provides a unique contribution to the literature by expanding upon our understanding of areas of conflict that holds nuance, including peace and intercultural empathy, by attributing the lens of ITT qualitatively.

5.4 Limitations and direction for future studies

This research project makes significant contributions to the current body of literature by exploring intercultural empathy, peace, and integrated threat theory (ITT) qualitatively. However, it evidently has many limitations. Some participants provided very limited responses, which may have been a result of disinterest, but may have also been due to a lack of confidence or ability with the English language. Future research should undertake a similar framework of study, but provide survey questions in the participants' native language if possible. It would be beneficial to further investigate the cognitive dissonance experienced by Israelis toward Palestinians as the "other" to assess points of pain that could be addressed by key stakeholders.

Future research should also examine the attitudes of Israelis toward Palestinians comparatively with prominent messages portrayed in the media to find if there is any substantial correlation or causation. Further, it would be beneficial to examine religious claims as an actual issue among present-day Israeli Jews. Finally, future research should investigate the Palestinian experience within the Palestinian Israeli conflict for the purpose of locating similarities in experience and outlining themes that could be applied to curricula in future peacebuilding processes.

Global events play a large role in the individual experience and perception of the “other,” such as among times of political upheaval and instability. For example, Article I was conducted prior to December 6, 2017, which marked the day when previous U.S. President Donald Trump declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel, thus instigating violent protests and riots between Palestinians and Israelis. Future analyses of empathy would benefit from longitudinally examining how empathy, particularly intercultural empathy potentially changes over time. It must also be noted that the surveys for this study were gathered during a time of international upheaval and insecurity in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants may have been affected both emotionally and cognitively during this time, therefore results may have been influenced by this event and may not accurately capture their true perspective(s).

Additional studies should also be conducted among other interculturally conflicting parties in various geographic locations to more accurately assess the concept of intercultural empathy in a variety of situations and contexts. Furthermore, more studies should be done that look specifically at the element of religiosity to find if religion may influence their view of the “other” and the accomplishment of peace. Other factors should also be analysed to fall in line with Brown’s research on empathy, shame, and vulnerability. If a true exploration of intercultural empathy is to be examined, intercultural shame and intercultural vulnerability should also be taken into account.

The study of intercultural empathy is still in its infancy and it has incredible potential to inform and approve upon existing and future peace processes. This may be made possible as we seek to understand the experience of the “other,” particularly by relating to similar emotions that both Palestinians and Israelis share. The overwhelming conclusion of this project holds that both Palestinians and Israelis are entitled to their historical and present pain as their unique experiences, which are equally valid. It isn’t until both perspectives will be seen as valid that either side will cease to perpetually defend against the “other” and will begin to build collaboratively to a more peaceful future.

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APPENDIX A

EVIDENCE OF ACCEPTANCE TO THE GLOBAL HANDBOOK OF CONFLICT AND PEACE COMMUNICATION

WILEY

ADDENDUM A: CONTRIBUTOR AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT between **Kelsea Jackson and Stephen Croucher** (the "Contributor" which expression shall where the context admits include joint contributors) and John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, New Jersey 07030 USA (the "Publisher").

The Contributor has agreed to prepare an original and previously unpublished contribution in the English language (the "Contribution") on the subject of **Intercultural empathy between Palestinians and Israelis: A qualitative analysis** for inclusion in the forthcoming work tentatively entitled ***The Handbook of Conflict and Peace Communication (the "Work")***, edited by **Sudeshna Roy** (the "Editor(s)"), to be published by the Publisher in the Global Handbooks in Media and Communication Research series.

The terms are as follows:

The Contribution shall consist of *<between 5,500 words and 6,000 words>* words and shall be prepared in accordance with the Contributor Instructions provided by the Publisher. The Contribution shall be submitted to the Editor not later than **September 1, 2020** unless the Publisher has agreed to extend the time in writing (the "Due Date"). Having read the Contribution, the Editor may return the Contribution to the Contributor for revision and the Contributor will revise the Contribution in accordance with the Editor's instructions or advice. Upon completion of the revision of the Contribution by the Contributor, the Contributor will submit the final version of the Contribution to the Publisher within a reasonable time set by the Editor, or if, notwithstanding such changes, the Contribution is not, in the Editor's judgment, complete and satisfactory, the Publisher may terminate this Agreement. The Contributor authorises the Publisher and the Editor to make any amendments to the Contribution which the Publisher may deem desirable in the interests of uniformity and style of the Work. The Contributor shall be responsible for obtaining and paying for all necessary permissions to use any third party copyright material in the Contribution. Any fonts used in material delivered to the Publisher in printer-ready form or otherwise intended to be reproduced in the form whether in print or digitally shall be considered part of the Work and shall be limited to fonts from Adobe Font Folio 11 and/or approved open-source fonts. On the Due Date, Author shall deliver a list of all fonts included in any such materials delivered to the Publisher

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APPENDIX B

EVIDENCE OF SUBMISSION TO THE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION



Dear Kelsea Jackson,

Thank you for your submission.

Submission ID	211816722
Manuscript Title	Israeli perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” toward Palestinians
Journal	Journal of International & Intercultural Communication

You can check the progress of your submission, and make any requested revisions, on the [Author Portal](#).

Thank you for submitting your work to our journal.

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Kind Regards,

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APPENDIX C

EVIDENCE OF REVISE AND RESUBMIT TO THE JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Dear Kelsea Jackson,

Thank you for submitting your revised manuscript.

Submission ID	214151314
Manuscript Title	Applying Integrated Threat Theory to the Palestinian Israeli conflict: A qualitative study
Journal	Journal of Intercultural Communication Research

You can check the progress of your submission, and make any requested revisions, on the [Author Portal](#).

Thank you for submitting your work to our journal.
If you have any queries, please get in touch with [RJIC-
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Kind Regards,
Journal of Intercultural Communication Research Editorial Office

APPENDIX D

ARTICLE I SURVEY QUESTIONS & INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” among Palestinians and Israelis: A qualitative analysis

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- 1) What is your gender?
- 2) What is your age?
- 3) What is the highest level of completed education?
- 4) I am a...
- 5) Where are you from?
- 6) How would you define intercultural empathy?
- 7) Have you ever been faced with INTERCULTURAL empathy in your daily life?
- 8) Describe your feelings toward Palestinian/Israeli individuals? Are you similar? Different? How so?
- 9) Do you think a one or two state solution is possible for peace? Why or why not?
- 10) If you have anything additional you would like to add, please do so below:

Your participation is greatly valued.

If you would like to participate in an interview with the researcher over Skype or Zoom following the completion of this survey, please indicate so by emailing the researcher: kelseajayne2@gmail.com.

Thank you.

**Intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” among Palestinians and Israelis:
A qualitative analysis**

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) What is your level of education so far?
- 3) Where are you from?
- 4) How big is the village?
- 5) How would you define intercultural empathy?
- 6) Have you ever been faced with a situation where you practiced or experienced empathy in your daily life?
- 7) Have you had a lot of experiences like that, where you either felt like you were being treated differently based on who you are? Or where you had to remind yourself that maybe people are just curious?
- 8) On an individual level, if you were to think of Israeli people, do you think that you are quite similar to them? Or quite different? And how so?
- 9) Does that affect how you personally view them? Or how you feel about them?
- 10) What is your personal definition of peace within the Palestinian Israeli conflict?
- 11) Do you, do you think that there is a possibility for peace and reconciliation in the future?
- 12) How would you explain your feelings toward Israeli people?
- 13) Do you think a one or two state solution is possible for peace, and why or why not?
- 14) What gives you hope or peace to continue?
- 15) Is there anything additional you would like to add?

*Your participation is greatly valued.
If you would like to participate in an interview with the researcher over Skype or Zoom following the completion of this survey, please indicate so by emailing the researcher: kelseajayne2@gmail.com.
Thank you.*

APPENDIX E

ARTICLES II & III SURVEY QUESTIONS



Perceptions of intercultural empathy, peace, and the “other” among Palestinians and Israelis

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Thank you for participating in this study on empathy in conflict situations. The main quest in the Israel Palestine conflict is said to be peace, and as we all know this has so far proved elusive. One contributor to this situation may well be how the two sides see 'peace' and the degree to which they can empathise with those on the other side.

- 1) How would you define empathy?
- 2) Could you talk a little more about this and think about how you might define intercultural empathy?
- 3) Do you have many friends or acquaintances on the other side of the conflict?
- 4) In what ways do you feel you are similar to or different from those on the other side, and how much do you feel you have in common?
- 5) Do you generally feel openness or fear towards a person from the other side?
- 6) To what extent do you personally feel threatened by the conflict?
- 7) What are some of the principal difficulties you think are faced by those on the other side of the conflict?
- 8) Have you ever experienced or demonstrated, what you would consider to be intercultural empathy?
- 9) What in your view are the principal communication difficulties between the two sides?
- 10) How do you feel this impacts the likelihood of success in the efforts to achieve peace?
- 11) For peace to be achieved, what in your view is the best kind of solution?
- 12) What role do you feel empathy for those on the other side (ie intercultural empathy) might play in achieving peace?

Lastly, I'd like to complete some demographic information. This will be aggregated to ensure no participant can be identified. I'd appreciate it if you would answer the following questions.

- i) Age bracket: 18-27; 28-37; 38-47; 48-57; 58 or over
- ii) Do you come from a small village; a town or a major city (Name optional)
- iii) Education

Your participation is greatly valued.

If you would like to participate in an interview with the researcher over Skype or Zoom following the completion of this survey, please indicate so by emailing the researcher: k.jackson1@massey.ac.nz. Thank you.