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Reframing Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement—The Case of the Palestinian Refugees: Causes, Consequences, and Prospects for an Impoverishment Process Reversal

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Reframing Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement—The Case of the Palestinian Refugees: Causes, Consequences, and Prospects for an Impoverishment Process Reversal

Abstract

The Palestinian refugees issue is at the core of the Arab-Israeli multi-faceted conflict. This paper relies on a study which investigated the multi-level complexity of the Palestinian refugees case to identify the causes and consequences, and some prospects for its resolution. The study analyzed and compared frames and narratives used by the different parties at several stages of the investigated case, and also integrated lessons from two kinds of involuntary migration. During the Israeli/ Arab peace process, a transformation from exclusionary narratives and one dimensional “either/ or” solutions into a multi-optional synergistic environment was evident. The parties’ frames changed again while this protracted conflict re-escalated. This paper focuses on the Palestinian refugees claim for repatriation, and portrays a process of framing and reframing, of narrative co-creation and re-creation, and to a lesser degree of the creation of alternative options and solutions. The essay links insights from conflict analysis and resolution, and regional planning and development. It introduces an interactive model regarding the interconnections between reframing processes and transformation of intractable conflicts, and concludes with some lessons for this and other population displacement cases with regard to prospects for conflicts mitigation and for voluntary resettlement.

Keywords: *Arab-Israeli conflict, conflict analysis and resolution, Deir Yassin, Israeli-Arab peace process, Palestinian refugees, repatriation*

Author Bio(s)

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**REFRAMING INVOLUNTARY POPULATION DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT
THE CASE OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES:
CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, AND PROSPECTS FOR AN IMPOVERISHMENT
PROCESS REVERSAL**

Ariella Vraneski

Abstract

The Palestinian refugees issue is at the core of the Arab-Israeli multi-faceted conflict. This paper relies on a study which investigated the multi-level complexity of the Palestinian refugees case to identify the causes and consequences, and some prospects for its resolution. The study analyzed and compared frames and narratives used by the different parties at several stages of the investigated case, and also integrated lessons from two kinds of involuntary migration. During the Israeli/ Arab peace process, a transformation from exclusionary narratives and one dimensional “either/ or” solutions into a multi-optional synergistic environment was evident. The parties’ frames changed again while this protracted conflict re-escalated. This paper focuses on the Palestinian refugees claim for repatriation, and portrays a process of framing and reframing, of narrative co-creation and re-creation, and to a lesser degree of the creation of alternative options and solutions. The essay links insights from conflict analysis and resolution, and regional planning and development. It introduces an interactive model regarding the interconnections between reframing processes and transformation of intractable conflicts, and concludes with some lessons for this and other population displacement cases with regard to prospects for conflicts mitigation and for voluntary resettlement.

A major obstacle to the translation of knowledge to practice is disciplinary division within academia and fields of knowledge. In translating research insights from one discipline to another, a major barrier is the conceptual and theoretical baggage of each, which undermines the possibility of scientists talking to each other across corridors. But it is within the power of the research communities themselves to either stubbornly maintain or gradually demolish such barriers.

(Voutira and Harrell-Bound, 2000, p. 75)

Palestinians and Jews alike present themselves as victims, with a history of degradation and displacement. Both sides see themselves as endangered, and therefore justified in striking back.

(Blumenfeld, 2002, p.111)

Introduction

This paper aims to analyze a number of causes and consequences of population displacement, trying to bridge some of the barriers mentioned above. I focus on the population displacement aspects of the Israeli/Palestinian intractable conflict and on some prospects to remedy what many perceive as the core problem of the Arab-Israeli multi-faceted conflict. The paper relies *inter-alia* on issues related to my involvement in the Jewish-Arab reconciliation process, particularly to those linked to land and land-use, environmental management and inter-cultural concerns. Like Voutira and Harrell-Bound (2000), I have found that "unnecessary mental compartmentalization still undercuts conceptualization and research." I would add that this mental process undercuts also sensitive, sound and effective mutual-gain oriented interventions and conflict prevention³.

In this paper I address the mental compartmentalization phrase within the broader phrase 'framing' and also use 'framing'⁴ and its complimentary – 'reframing'⁵ with regard to different interpretations of the Palestinian refugees problems and optional remedies. I refer to three interconnected types or levels of framing and reframing. The first focuses on *narratives*. It addresses frames that various sides use to tell, create and recreate their stories/ histories. The second tackles prospects of reframing *the nature* of the conflict, specifically self and others' identities. The third addresses prospects of reframing *problems* in ways synergistic *solutions* may develop, and specifically the transformation of identity-based intractability into development-based win-win scenarios. This third level relies heavily on regional planning and development studies. I further suggest an interactive model that displays and initially explains the interrelations between the reframing types sequence and conflict reconciliation and transformation⁶ processes. This paper focuses on the narrative reframing phase, the first critical stage for further reframing.

The first part of this essay reviews the study's setting, and the literature relevant to the interconnections between intractable conflicts, reframing types/levels, reconciliation and conflict transformation. It introduces a model aimed to describe and explain these interactive interconnections; and presents lessons from other involuntary population displacement and resettlement settings (following Cernea, 1999; Cernea and McDowell, 2000) that might be useful to the Israel/ Palestine case. The second part portrays the origins of the Palestinian conflict-displaced population mega problem, and analyses the dynamic process of conflict framing, reframing and re-reframing that occurred during the last decades. The third part explores prospects of mutual reinforcement of the reframing types/levels, and elaborates on lessons from this study.

Can an identity-based intractable conflict transform into a synergistic development scenario?

The Israeli - Arab Conflict and the Palestinian Refugees

The Israeli-Arab conflict started as a clash of Jewish and Palestinian national movements. Both claimed the same tiny piece of land in previously Ottoman, and then British-ruled Palestine (see map no. 1 and 2) This conflict became a full blown interstate war between Israel and Arab states in 1948. About 800,000 Palestinians became refugees during that war. This displacement started a long and sad impoverishment, and the Palestinian refugee's mega-problem in general. The six days war, added in 1967 about 300,000 Palestinian refugees to the 1948 war refugees' population (see table no. 1).

Reforming Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement

Palestinian refugees and their descendants number today around eight million, about ten times the number of the originally displaced population. About half of these people are registered refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, receiving education, health, relief and social services from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East – UNRWA (2002). More than half a century after the Palestinian refugees issue emerged on the Middle Eastern national and regional agendas, many still live in dejecting, demoralizing conditions of deprivation in refugee camps. This case seems to be the most intractable population displacement problem in contemporary history.

The Palestinian refugees issue shares similarities with many population displacements worldwide. Both similarities and differences bring forth insights for future research and practice. Furthermore, this protracted case portrays why any effective remedy to population displacement problems should take into consideration both the relevant accumulated multidisciplinary knowledge, and the specific case characteristics. These features relate both to the context (including the issue's history/ histories; international, regional and organizational political background, and their evolution) and to the content (case, and time-specific problems; the views, concerns and needs of all influenced and influential parties). Shortcuts, such as applying a general model, or sporadic transfer of concepts and tools from one cultural and political environment to another, might be hazardous in the long run.

For several decades the Israeli-Palestinian arena has served as a population displacement and replacement “real scale” laboratory. To some extent also it has been a conflict dynamics laboratory. This paper portrays several insights from this arena, enlightening more paths to be explored. It looks at the Palestinian refugees protracted problem and offers some alternative points of view, aiming to add a modest contribution to the search for paths to end the Palestinian – Israeli tragedy.

The Middle East



Map. No. 1.

Israel



Map. No. 2.

Framing, Reframing, and Intractable Conflict Reconciliation and Transformation

Frames and Framing. Frames are images or internally coherent perspectives that people use to make sense of an aspect of their perceived reality within a perceivable focus. Framing is a sense-making activity. Parties in a dispute develop considerably different frames about what the dispute is about, who should do what about it, why, how and when they should do it (Vraneski and Richter 2002).

While the number of potentially possible interpretations is very large, our world image usually permits us to see only one – and this one therefore appears to be the only possible, reasonable, permitted view. Furthermore, this one interpretation also suggests only one possible, reasonable, permitted solution. (Watzlawick 1978 p. 119 in Moore 1986 p. 175)

Several writers have addressed the gain / lose or positive / negative framing patterns in particular (for example Bazerman and Neale 1992).

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Table No. 1 - Territory, Demography and Economy - Basic Data Comparison

Countries/ territories	Area sq. km	Popula- tion. in 2001	Popula- tion growth rate - % per year	Density people per sq. km. in 2001	UNRWA registered refugees (in 1950); in 2001	Registered. refugees rate in 2001	Unemploy- ment rate. est. in (---) %	GDP \$ per capita
In the Mid- dle East								
Egypt	1,001,000	69,536,000	1.69	69	-	-	(2000) . . 11.5	3,600
Gaza Strip	360	1,178,000	4.01	3270	(198,000) . . 853,000	0.72	(2000) . . 40.0	1,000
Jordan	92,300	5,153,000	3.00	56	(506,000) 1,640,000	0.32	(1999) **15.0	3,500
Israel	20,770	5,938,000	1.58	286	-	-	(2000) . . 9.0	18,900
Lebanon	10,400	3,628,000	1.38	349	(127,600) . . 383,000	0.11	(1997) . . 18.0	5,000
Saudi Ara- bia	1,960,580	22,757,000	3.27	1	-	-	NA	10,500
Syrian Arab. Rep.	185,180	16,729,000	2.54	90	(82,000) . . 392,000	0.02	(2000) . . 20.0	3,100
West Bank	5,860	2,091,000	3.48	357	(*) . . 607,000	0.29	(2000) . . 40.0	1,500
Other								
Canada	9,976,140	31,593,000	0.99	3	-	-	(2000) . . . 6.8	24,800
Netherlands	41,530	15,981,000	0.55	385	-	-	(2000) . . . 2.6	24,400

Data Sources: . . . The World Fact Book 2001 . . . <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>
 UNRWA - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). <http://www.un.org/unrwa/index.html>
 *. administrated as part of part of the Jordan field
 **. 15% - official. 25-30% - actual

Reframing and Resolution of Intractable Conflicts. Many processes of conflict resolution include one or more stages during which there is deliberate reconsideration of existing frames. According to Schon and Rein (1994), intractable conflicts by definition refer to disputes in which the opposing parties hold conflicting frames. Several writers view shifts from intractability to tractability as preconditions for resolving an intractable conflict. Reframing and transformation are suggested as means to meet this goal (Schon and Rein, 1994; Kriesberg, 1998). According to Lederach (1997), the transformation of protracted conflicts focuses on processes of reconciliation between adversaries. "...relationship is both the basis of the conflict and of its long term solution..." (p. 26). Mitchell (2002) claims that relationships have to be replaced and rebuilt through deliberate and directed efforts, and reconciliation can only take place as a result of these efforts. According to Folger and Bush (1994), the main goals of transformative conflict resolution are to empower the disputing parties, and to enhance each party's recognition of the other. Intractable conflicts reconciliation and transformation definitely involve reframing of the stakeholders' contrasting frames into mutually accepted ones. Drawing upon the transformative model and the narrative theory, Cobb (1993) redefines empowerment as a set of discursive practices that enhance the participation of disputants in an interactive co-elaboration or co-construction of a conjoint story. I assume that within this process parties address their and others' identities and might reconsider and re-frame them.

According to human needs theory, developed considerably by Burton (1990b), conflicts stem from the unfulfillment or oppression of several basic ontological needs. Identity, one of these needs is a fundamental essence of a person, a group or nation. As such it is un-negotiable, cannot be compromised or easily changed. Identity related conflicts stem from unrecognition, threats to security and even to survival. Hence these conflicts tend to be deep-rooted, protracted and intractable. Solving problems related to a clash of identities implies mutual recognition and therefore re-framing of self and others' identities. The identity reframing might be seen as the pivotal stage in the process of transforming an intractable conflict into a tractable one, and a crucial step toward its sustained resolution.

Kriesberg (2002) adopts a broad meaning to reconciliation emphasizing four dimensions pertaining to shared truths, justice, mutual regard and mutual security. Narrative reframing ("sharing truths"), identity reframing ("mutual regard"), and definitely justice and mutual security as well relate to basic human needs. Kriesberg portrays conflict reconciliation and transformation as sustained, prolonged and fragile processes, that may (or may not) conclude in the conflict's termination.

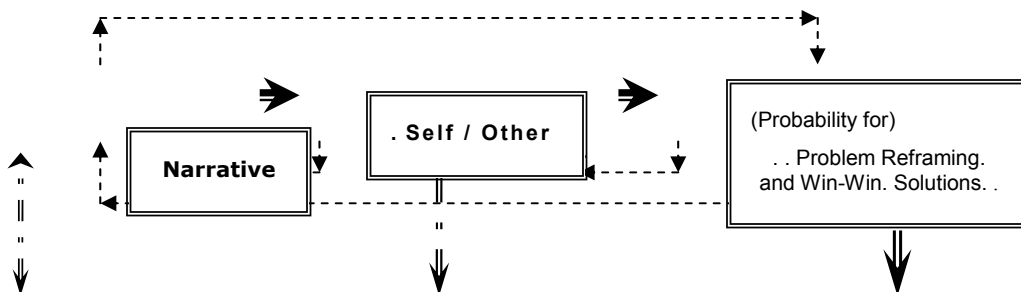
What does a conflict transformation process transform? According to Mitchell (2002) structural changes and relational change are fundamental conditions for any successful transformation processes regarding intractable conflicts. And what might the conflict be transformed into? Transforming an intractable and destructive conflict into a tractable and constructive one seems to be both a reasonable and attainable goal. Kriesberg (2002) compares destructive and constructive conflicts as they relate to reconciliation conditions. Destructive conflicts are characterized by exclusion of the others' identity. Each side seeks destruction of the other. Constructive conflicts include the others' identity, and the other side's goals are given legitimacy. Accordingly, in the destructive conflict, goals are regarded as in a zero sum conflict, while in constructive conflicts goals are regarded as in a mixed-sum conflict.

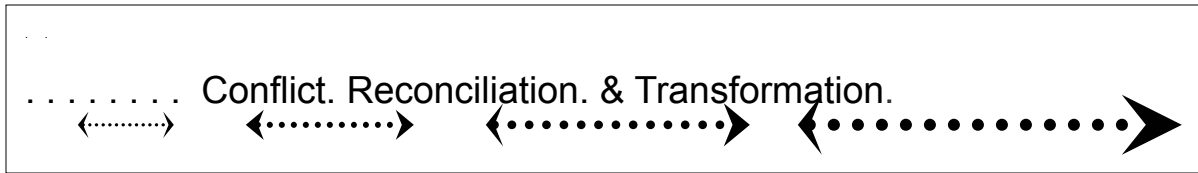
Reforming Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement

How might an intractable conflict be effectively transformed? I assume that reframing identity-based intractability into development-based win-win scenarios might be the response. Referring to interventions in ethno-political conflicts, Byrne and Keashly (2000) argue for multi-modal, multilevel approaches including such activities as structural change, developmental aid and economic investment. These activities may indeed reduce intra-party mistrust, enforce identity reframing process, and promote the reframing of destructive conflicts into constructive conflicts. Moreover, an appropriate reframing process of values-based conflicts into development-based scenarios may sustain reconciliation processes due to the disclosure and promotion of shared interests and of prospects for mutual gains. This process may lead to further recognition of the others' existence, humanity and goals' legitimacy. In the following section, I examine this assumption, and point out related options for reframing and transformation.

Kriesberg (2002), argues that some actions of reconciliation occurred during the decade of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, and the conflict had become partially transformed. Yet, "there have been very few significant reconciliation actions by major leaders on each side. Indeed, some important personages in each camp often have denounced reconciliation actions that have been taken." (p. 564). Further he argues that earlier, the conflict had been transformed significantly to allow the adversaries to begin negotiations and even to reach significant agreements. However the transformation was not sufficient to reach a more stable accommodation. In Kriesberg's view, a fundamental transformation of the conflict to be less destructive must rest on more substantial changes as referred to the primary reconciliation dimensions.

Following the previous discussion I now propose a tentative model that displays, and initially explains the interrelations between three types / levels of reframing and the reconciliation and transformation of intractable conflicts (see fig. no. 1). Initial narrative changes / truths sharing, might be crucial for mistrust reduction, self / other identity reframing and problem / solutions reframing. It may reduce antagonism and emotional stress, impact self / other identity perceptions, and enable problem reframing and collaborative formation / creation of solutions. However initial successful stages on the problem / solutions arena, would have a positive influence on narrative co-creation and identity re-framing, and may in consequence have a perpetuating positive impact on reframing, conflict de-escalation and conflict transformation. I would emphasize that, as clearly portrayed in the model: the reframing, reconciliation and transformation processes are not linear, irreversible processes. Cycles of re-escalation may persist. These are part and parcel of the essential feature of protracted, intractable conflicts that by definition elude resolution. The re-escalation does not necessarily indicate failure of the whole reconciliation process.





Population Displacement – Resettlers and Refugees

What conditions or interventions might sustain re-framing and reconciliation processes. What measures might facilitate the transformation of identity-based destructive conflicts and the related mutual hatred and fear? The process of self and others’ identity reframing into non-exclusionary frames, allows the sides to search for solutions that meet the needs of all parties, and reframe their problems into implementable and sustainable solutions. This section exemplifies an optional application of lessons from other settings into the Israel / Palestine arena.

To illustrate a promising option regarding the search for appropriate synergistic solutions, I shall introduce further on several insights from a preliminary comparison between two kinds of involuntary population displacement - resettlers and refugees. “Refugees populations” consist a sub-frame in “involuntary displaced populations”, and these belong to the supra-frame “displaced populations”. A wider frame enables a broader view. Situations where there have been problems with regards to "displaced populations" may supply new insights, ideas and options for developing and creating sound and appropriate responses to the refugees complex problem. This reframing level relies heavily on regional planning and development studies. In order to clarify the context, I first elaborate briefly on several complementarities between conflict analysis and resolution and regional planning.

Reconciliation and regional planning. Regional planning and the conflict resolution disciplines portray similarities and overlapping goals, means and interests (Vraneski, 1994). Their connection often results in innovative responses – such as environmentally sound solutions to territorial controversies. In many cases these disciplines may provide complementary means for approaching the problems, to create and evaluate options, and to finally create and sustain appropriate solutions. Both fields are interdisciplinary and relatively new, in process of creating, framing and re-framing their concepts, theories and boundaries. They both rely on the analysis and synthesis of multifaceted knowledge and data toward informed intervention in ongoing and anticipated processes, and with regard to influencing and inducing change.

“Urban and regional planning” is concerned with the human and physical environments, and with the interrelationships between their social, economic and political systems. Continuity, comprehensiveness, and collaboration are the main features of a proper urban and regional planning practice. Planners assemble, analyze and synthesize data from a variety of sources; identify problems, trends, objectives, visions and strengths; generate scenarios; create and evaluate alternative programs, policies and plans for the future. They follow-up, monitor and evaluate the implementation of plans and programs within cycles of revision, updating and re-planning processes. Urban and regional planning links between the past (for reference) the present (for capacities, needs, potentials and problems analysis and assessment) and the future. For planners “future” is much more than mere extrapolation of present trends.

The urban and regional planning discipline aims at effective, efficient and equitable management and/or enforcement of change, and at the prevention or mitigation of anticipated hazards. The planning profession implies creative thinking, and appropriate response to uncertainty and conflict. Some of the strengths of this intervention oriented discipline, such as expertise in synergistic synthesis of alternative scenarios and programs, complement the conflict analysis and resolution discipline, for example with regard to its traditional roots in social and political sciences.

Urban and Regional planning has in the last two decades extensively adopted conflict prevention and resolution tools for approaching inter-party controversies and for reaching agreements, and has further developed them in synergistic ways that may serve other disciplines (for example Susskind et al. 1999). Communicative/ collaborative planning has lately emerged as a leading planning paradigm (Innes 1996; Healy 1992, 1998; Forester 1999). Conclusions stemming from research in the framing and reframing of protracted environmental disputes inspire conflict resolution scholars and practitioners (Intractable Conflict Knowledge website, 2002). Resettlement of displaced populations is a crucial contemporary issue. It surfaces as a pivotal challenge for regional planning concepts and tools, and conflict resolution and transformation theory, research and practice to further enrich each other.

Involuntary Population Displacement. Large groups of displaced populations constitute a problem of worldwide proportions. These groups are: a). resettlers uprooted by development projects such as dams and reservoirs; industrial estates; ports, airports and other transportation infrastructures, and. b). refugees fleeing military conflicts and natural disasters.

a). **Resettlers.** During the last decade about 100 million people have been forcefully displaced worldwide by the development of hydraulic and transportation programs alone (Cernea and McDowell, 2000) - ten million each year. Local governments, developers and NGOs are typically engaged in resettling these people. Development-oriented agencies usually seek restoration, and if possible improvement of the pre-displacement livelihood, including integration into the host economy as regular citizens.

b). **Refugees.** There are some 30 million refugees and persons in refugee-like situations in the world, typically assisted by international organizations (UNHCR 2002). Although the mandates of these organizations include helping civilians repatriate to their homeland, integrate in countries of asylum, or resettle in third countries, their practice is mostly perceived to be one that seeks the elimination of the refugees' situation mainly by repatriation (Voutira and Harrell-Bound 2000).

The two groups of displaced populations bear both similar and dissimilar features. Unlike refugees, for development induced resettlers (oustees), returning to their original townships and lands is never an option. Ousteers know that, for fairly immutable technological /geo -environmental reasons they can never "go home" (it's often under 200 feet of water), whereas refugees feel they cannot (for the moment) "go home" but this is because of less immutable politico-strategic reasons that may be open to change. Unlike oustee resettlers, refugees are more often than not resettled temporarily outside their homelands. Despite dissimilar causes, the two groups share many similar displacement consequences, including a set of impoverishment risks . Therefore interdisciplinary research that integrates knowledge about these involuntary displacement processes as well as experience learned from voluntary migration (Eriksen, 1999) is most important.

For decades the concepts of ‘human rights,’ ‘social justice,’ and ‘social inclusion’ have not been uttered ever in mainstream development discourse.

(Cernea and McDowell, 2000, p.1)

Several features of the kind of development discourse mentioned by Cernea and McDowell persist:

- (a). little attention is paid to the impoverished populations’ risks;
- (b). over-reliance of project justification on investment-related cost-benefit analysis;
- (c). a typical absence of affected populations’ involvement in development projects.

... The [World] Bank and its partners must begin to ask hard questions about how we can best integrate a concern for conflict prevention into development operations.... **We will not have peace without economic hope...**

(Wolfensohn, 1998, in Cernea and McDowell 2000, p. 3.)

Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank, also declared that the Bank prioritizes the inequitable distribution of development’s benefits and losses on its policy, research, development and practice agenda (Cernea and McDowell 2000).

Investigations of refugee resettlement success stories, including cases in Cyprus, Greece, Tibet, Sierra Leone and Guinea (Voutira and Harrell-Bound, 2000; Lassailly-Jacob, 2000) portray several patterns which have much in common with features often found in oustee resettlement success stories. These include:

- (a) strong involvement of governmental and refugee organizations, and sophisticated uses of the displaced population issues to serve complex political and economic agenda;
- (b). framing of disaster as both a challenge and a development opportunity;
- (c). viewing the refugees’/ resettlers’ energy and skills as exceptionally important factors for the host society, and promoting them as instruments to fuel the economies of the receiving states;
- (d). social and economic integration of the refugees’/ resettlers’ rather than exclusion and separation;
- (e). resettlement success stories are typically linked to ethnic similarity between hosts and new settlers;
- (f). using humanitarian assistance to sponsor internal, nationally inclusive social rehabilitation and economical reconstruction processes, in contrast to relying on external, international agencies for relief and social services for the refugees / resettlers population.

The resettlement of 180,000 Greek Cypriot refugees, about a third of the island’s Greek population, after the Turkish invasion of the island in 1974, is an outstanding success story. “The catastrophe of 1974 has turned the government of Cyprus into an engine of economic development and social change” (Kliot and Mansfeld, 1994, p. 354). “Not having a choice” was the common, spontaneous response I received from Greek Cypriot officials and laymen, resettled refugees and hosts alike, when I interviewed them with regard to the economic boom that had started a quarter century before (Wright et al. 1999).

Didn't they? Why then do most military conflicts induce only. plight, perpetuated suffering, and escalation of already protracted conflicts? An integrative and comparative study of both success and failure stories might provide insights for more appropriate future practice. Cernea's (2000) impoverishment risks and reconstruction model might be an asset in this regard. This model aims to meet predictive, diagnostic, problem-solving and research functions. It deconstructs impoverishment into eight interconnected components as follows:

- (a). landlessness,
- (b). joblessness,
- (c). homelessness,
- (d). marginalization,
- (e). food insecurity,
- (f). increased morbidity and mortality,
- (g). loss of access to common property assets,
- (h). community disarticulation.

model has a dual emphasis: risk avoidance and reduction; and planning for risk and damage reversal and for reconstruction strategies. According to Cernea, reconstruction and a reversal of the impoverishment processes can be accomplished along the same variables by "turning the model on its head", resulting in: "*from landlessness to land based resettlement*", "*from joblessness to reemployment*", etc. The model has been applied to development-induced population displacement cases, and recently also to conflict-induced population displacement cases.

Several scholars and practitioners have suggested adapting some of the model's components to meet specific cases' patterns, e.g. adding components such as *loss of access to public services*,. and *loss of civil rights* (Cernea 2000, p. 53). Considering the model's potential, I would add one conceptual component: *hopelessness*, and in the reversed model - *hopefulness*. This hope fuels impoverishment reversal, the reconstruction and rehabilitation processes.

Development Induced Resettlement Cases. I now illustrate some of the examples of resettlement experiences, the principles listed above came from. Displacement and resettlement cases' features and dynamics differ enormously. There is no one agreed set of success criteria, all the more so a universal recipe for successful resettlement. More interdisciplinary integrative research with regard to intervention measures and processes has yet to be done. Nevertheless lessons from projects that attempt prevention, mitigation or reversal of the impoverishment of displaced populations may serve at least as talking points in other settings.

In the **People's Republic of China**, massive investments in infrastructure have resulted in extensive resettlement. Homes and jobs have been lost to reservoirs behind 86,000 dams constructed between 1952 and 1990. Over 30 million people have been involuntary resettled due to these reservoirs, 30,000 km. of railroads, 90,000 km. of roads and other projects (Meikle and Youxuan, 2000). Since 1980, responding among others, to increased internal resistance from potential resettlers, China established, in accord with the World Bank, a legal and procedural displacement and resettlement system. The Chinese resettlement policy can be seen now as equitable in ethos and approach. It emphasizes the needs of individuals, and on fair compensation for all aspects of their disruption. However any lessons from this example should take into consideration the operational environment of the Chinese regime which, unlike most other systems, allows accurate identification of affected people, protect rights to employment, and foster the ability to create that employment.

In **India**, unlike in the Chinese example there is no central policy for resettlement of people affected by development projects, although the problem of population displacement is ever growing there due to accelerated infrastructure development. Involuntary population displacement adds much stress to the existing extremely harsh urban poverty problems in many of India's regions (Reddy, 2000). The challenges of resettlement in India have to do with high population densities and high land values. Urban displacees are often forcibly relocated to distant sites where conditions deny them appropriate economic opportunities. In recent years, however, state and local governments have developed new approaches that significantly reduce the urban resettlement risks. These include the incorporation of resettlement action plans in the first stages of project design, the allocation of secure funding, alternative employment opportunities, and a greater environmental awareness. Supporting these efforts are measures such as facilities / infrastructure location and planning in ways that minimize the amount of displacees; before and after relocation needs assessment of affected people; consultations over shelter design; the creation of cooperative housing societies; and institutional capacity building.

Lassailly-Jacob (2000) reflects studies related to millions of **African** rural oustees (in Sudan, Egypt, Ghana Zambia and others countries) and refugees (in Sudan, Zaire, Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana and other countries). She states that both refugees and oustees are traumatized settlers, but for different reasons, and that they have more in common than usually presumed. Lassailly-Jacob argues that political attitudes of governments, and the organizational support given to the inhabitants of settlement schemes, resettlers and refugee alike, are crucial factors behind the success or failure of relocation. Furthermore, she highlights planning processes as a key factor for the establishment of viable new communities, and presents a list of recommendations for good planning practice including: a). allowing adequate timing for departure and collaborative processes. b). Selecting a proper agro-ecological and geographical location for the new sites. c). Controlling the settlements size and of the number of new comers. d). Restoring productive capacities by allocating new means of production.

In the next sections I discuss several aspects of the Palestinian refugees / displaced population impoverishment and the influence this process has had on the parties and the region. I argue that the Palestinian refugees' problem may be reframed as "displacement and resettlement" and that the recently accumulated experience of reversing impoverishment processes might bring new, cautious hopes also to antagonist parties in the Middle East and to the Palestinian underprivileged population in particular.

The Palestinian Conflict-Displaced Population Problem: Causes, Consequences, Frames and Narratives

In the following examples I portray some of the frames that have characterized the Arab-Israeli conflict in the past, some changes that occurred during the peace process phases as well as the frame shifts that have accompanied the recent vicious cycles of hostilities and revenge. From these I try to draw insights with regard to links between framing and reframing practices and the reconciliation processes.

Causes and Consequences

There is a proverb in the Middle East: If you want revenge, dig two graves, one for your enemy and one for yourself. (Blumenfeld, 2000, p. 277)

Reforming Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement

The refugee problem is at the core of the Palestinian problem. In the course of the establishment of Israel, roughly 800,000 Palestinians became refugees and their fate is more or less what the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is about. Two-thirds of Palestinians are refugees, meaning that the fate of the refugees engages the hearts and minds of most of the Palestinian public. Finally, this is the component of the conflict that most involves the Arab states. Large numbers of these refugees have been hosted in refugee camps in neighbouring Arab states, a fact that has created a whole host of ongoing political, social and economic difficulties. (Khatib, 2001).

The Palestinians prefer to start their version of the chain of events with the Israeli War of Independence of 1948, claiming that the refugees were expelled by Israel during this war, and that it is their right, according to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194, to choose between return and compensation. The Israelis, however, describe it differently. According to the Israeli point of view, the Palestinians made a huge mistake when they rejected the UN's Partition Resolution of 1947, according to which two nations would have been located in Palestine. Since the Arabs did not find this satisfactory, preferring to fight with Israel, the situation arose whereby, during the war, some 700,000 Palestinians lost their homes. UN Resolution 194 was rejected by the Palestinians and by the Arab countries, as was Prime Minister David Ben Gurion's willingness, proposed in Lausanne, to absorb 100,000 refugees. (Beilin, 2001)

Fifty four years have passed since the Palestinian refugees issue emerged on the Middle Eastern national and regional agendas. This multifaceted conflict, child of the 20th century dissolution of European colonialism, and late effects of the World War II threats, still perpetuates. Direct and indirect consequences of the Palestinian population displacement turned into huge frustration, much violence and incredible suffering for millions of Arabs, Jews and many others in the Middle East and worldwide, first and foremost for the refugees themselves. These consequences include four more wars, two sustained popular uprisings, chronic regional instability and endless cycles of revenge for more than five decades. The Arab-Israeli conflict has stimulated enormous amounts of scholarly research and publication. It has gained vast international attention, numerous attempts at intervention, and a much higher amount of media coverage than any other conflict.

The causes of the 1948 Palestinian population displacement are multifarious; yet, one significant horrific incident is often mentioned as a basis of the Israeli-Arab conflict's escalation. According to Matthew Hogan's retrospective (2001), the Deir Yassin massacre was pivotal in modern Middle East history as a perpetuator of decades of plight and revenge. This incident greatly stimulated Palestinian refugee flight, and has had a formative influence on the way the Palestinians perceive Israelis. The 1948 war was contemporaneously explained by Arab League chief Azzam Pasha in terms of the Deir Yassin incident:

The massacre of Deir Yassin was to a great extent the cause of the wrath of the Arab nations and the most important factor for sending in the Arab armies. (Sharq al-Adna, 1948).

Could the prevention of one specific wartime incident change the whole region's history? No one can respond to this kind of query. Nevertheless, lessons that may inhibit incidents that cause conflicts' escalation, and even induce further conflicts prevention as related to this case and many others might be driven.

As of the summer of 2002, many of the displaced Palestinians and their descendants still live in refugee camps in Arab countries that surround Israel, and in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The population growth rate of this population is among the highest in the world. The Gaza Strip population growth rate in 2001 was 4.01%, and in the West Bank 3.48%, while the US population growth rate was 0.9%, the Canadian 0.99%, and the Israeli 1.58%. (see also maps nos. 1 and 2, and table no. 1). For those refugees, the impact of displacement impoverishment risks continues, and any hope for a reversal in their impoverishment process is now as remote as ever.

In spite of the existence of a variety of different identities, the shared events of 1948 brought the Palestinians closer together in terms of their collective consciousness; even though physically they were dispersed all over the Middle East and beyond. Palestinian identity in many ways has been constructed out of the experience of dispossession, insecurity and uprootedness (Lindholm, 1993). The Palestinian "right of return" has been a central element of this identity-building process.

The right of return is expressed in terms of both the moral claim to return to homes from which they have been displaced, and by reference to a number of United Nations resolutions. The most important of these is General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of December 1948. This declared *inter alia* that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date..".

This paper focuses on the right of return, since it constitutes the pivot for both the Palestinian refugees' problem and resolution. The right of return should be addressed at three complementary levels:

- As the pivotal consequence of the Palestinians' displacement the Palestinian refugees are still waiting for repatriation.
- As the cause of additional local, regional and international acute problems. which developed as consequences of the fact that the right of return was not realized.
- As the solution to the Palestinian refugees problem – as soon as the Palestinian refugees realize the right of return, they bring to an end their refugee status, and in consequence –the Palestinian refugees problem.

The Palestinian refugees displacement and the right of return framed the Arab- Israeli relationship as a highly intractable conflict. Intractable conflicts are protracted and violent. They are perceived as irreconcilable, and the parties have an interest in their continuation. "Intractable conflicts are exhausting, demanding, stressful, painful and costly in human as well as material terms" (Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 23). Intractable conflicts are seen as resisting resolution, but are not considered "unresolvable".

As far as the right of return was perceived or framed as the repatriation of all the refugees and their descendants to Israel-Palestine, it implied a clash of basic interests, an extreme either / or existential quest. While all sides praised a utopian peace, the conflict escalated and the Palestinian refugees conditions degraded. According to the Israeli Law of Return, only Jewish immigrants, (including Holocaust refugees, Jewish refugees from Arab countries, and other people of Jewish origin) were assigned the right to join the Israeli population. Although the Palestinian refugees could not return to the pre-1948 conditions due to local and regional conditions and policies, other options have not been seriously considered. The victims of the displacement were continually victimized due to neglect with regard to addressing their basic needs. However, more recently a process of re-framing self and others' identities from the exclusion of the others into more inclusive perceptions gradually proceeded. Re-framing of clashing "rights" into more appropriate mutual and complementary "needs" and interests was under way.

Since the seventies, the Israeli-Arab intractable conflict began to portray features of tractability. Israel signed two bilateral peace treaties (with Egypt in 1979, and with Jordan in 1994). Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and interim agreements proceeded for about a decade. A historic reconciliation between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East was underway. However, a new wave of hostilities that started in September 2000 brutally interrupted this process. Internal tensions on each side of the divide induced renewed escalation of the conflict. Although the parties in the Israeli – Palestinian peace negotiation were very close to agreements on the disputed issues (statehood for Palestinians and its borders, the status of Jerusalem, the future of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza strip, and the Palestinian refugees fate) the peace process collapsed.

From Coping with Intractable Conflicts to Resolving Them.

To cope successfully with situations of intractable conflict, society members tend to perceive only their own perspective, while disregarding that of the other. Bar-Tal (1998) suggests the formation of the following societal beliefs as particularly functional for coping with intractable conflict:

- (a). the justness of one's own goals,
- (b). security,
- (c). the adversary's delegitimization,
- (d). positive self-image,
- (e). own victimization,
- (f). patriotism,
- (g). unity,
- (h). one's own wish for peace.

Bar-Tal argues that without these beliefs, a society might have great difficulty to withstand the enemy. These beliefs strengthen the society. Alas, they also constitute a certain psychological investment in the conflict and thus perpetuate its continuation. Bar-Tal has based his argument on his studies of Israeli society, assuming a need to investigate it within other societies as well. All these societal beliefs have behavioural implications. They underlie behaviours reflecting determination, heroism, persistence, sacrifice and many specific acts related to conflict. In addition they have affective implications: they arouse strong feelings and thus become relatively resistant to change. (Bar-Tal, 1998, p.30).

Resistance as well as susceptibility to frequent changes in views and opinions is induced by individual and group specific features. According to Sluzki (1993) ideologically committed people are less susceptible to cognitive shifts than those who are uninvolved, and in turn, those who are confused and search for some kind of guidance or order are the most susceptible. Considering the very nature of intractable conflicts, which by definition elude resolution, and the previously mentioned resistance to change, one could wonder why so many of us have been so deeply stunned by the new wave of harsh hostilities on the Arab-Israeli arena. Perhaps the ray of pure hope blinded our rational frames of thought. Some of the intractability causes and patterns have not changed. The refugee tragedy has not come to an end. Profound psychological investment in the conflict, together with immense frustration, and harsh internal contradictions on each side of the divide, as well as ideological and political interests of some groups and individuals in perpetuating the conflict, have drawn the parties back into additional cycles of hostilities and revenge.

What paths might lead adversaries out of an intractable situation toward sustainable trust and mutual understanding? How can an individual, a group or a nation move from coping with an intractable conflict to resolving it?. Reframing conflicts so that creative solutions may be generated, and transforming win-lose confrontations into win-win opportunities, are options promoted by many researchers (including Moore, 1986; Putnam and Holmer, 1992; Deutsch and Coleman, 2000)

Palestinian and Israeli Frames and Narratives

Palestinian and Israeli narratives of the past were mutually exclusive. In fact, what was viewed by one party – the Israeli as a dream fulfillment - their Independent State creation, for the other party – the Palestinians – was the beginning of an awful nightmare – their *Nakba*, or disaster. Israelis, and in a sense Jewish people worldwide, concluded two millennia of statelessness, while Palestinians were driven into a situation which soon developed into statelessness. In a way the creation of a homeland for Holocaust survivors and other Jewish refugees produced the Palestinian refugee problem. Palestinians and Arabs in general, perceived Israel as responsible for the refugee problem, and responded furiously to denials of this responsibility by the Israeli side. Israelis tended to cast the blame for the creation of the refugee problem on the Arab regimes. At best, the events of 1948 were viewed as natural, or excusable wartime occurrences. Both sides demonized the other in accordance with their perception of this problem. For a long time the conflict seemed totalizing and irreconcilable. It was almost impossible to imagine an alternative to the conflict.

Palestinian-Israeli enmity had been taken for granted as an ongoing fact of life, and violence was the daily fare. (Ashrawi,1995, p. 9)

Reframing the Causes of Palestinian Displacement. Changes in frames and narratives were well linked with the reconciliation process. When in 1989, post-Zionist historian Benny Morris published his book “*The Birth of The Palestinian Refugee Problem*” it created an acute outburst of debate in Israel. Until then, it was generally assumed that 700,000 Palestinians left their homes voluntarily during the 1948 War of Independence, following promises by their leaders that they would be able to return and plunder Jewish property when the war was over. According to what Morris wrote, the actions of the leaders of the Yishuv. (the Jewish Zionist community in pre-state Israel), contributed much to the fleeing of the refugees. The Palestinians did not leave and did not run away, these words are too soft. They were also not expelled - that word is too harsh. The Palestinians were, according to Morris, "driven out".

The narrative transformation process which accompanied the reconciliation process is fascinating. A “co-elaboration or co-construction of a conjoint story” (Cobb 1993) process was being created:

Above all, we were very close to an agreement concerning the story of the creation of

the creation of the refugee problem, which described the Israeli approach and the Palestinian approach to the issue, and their common denominator. (Beilin, 2001)

For decades Palestinians were virtually non-existent for most Israelis. They were typically included within a much broader group/ enemy frame - "Arabs". A long and arduous reframing process followed. For reframing an "enemy" into a "partner", and shifting the win - lose frame into a mutual gain, one needs a number of significant transformations. Within this process the views taken by different individuals and groups in the Jewish society differed widely.

It is possible to suggest that the Israeli society is in transition. While part of it views the Israeli-Arab conflict as being solvable and moving towards tractable characteristics, another part still perceives it as being intractable. Accordingly, while the former part has modified the societal beliefs of intractable conflict, the latter part still maintains them... Our assumption is that the same conceptual framework could be used in the analysis of Arab societies, as well as in any other societies engaged in intractable conflict.

(Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 44)

There are segments in the Israeli, as well as in Arab societies who continue to view the conflict as intractable and act accordingly. The trust that gradually emerged during the peace process was very delicate, tremendously fragile. Explicitly, many reversed to their previous ways of thinking and easily re-reframed Palestinians or respectively - Israelis as enemies again, as soon as their neighbours were suspected of vicious intentions. As an Israeli Jew I witnessed this process mostly on the Israeli side. On each side of the peace the reframing process is difficult, yet in different ways (Ashrawi 1995).

Reframing and Re- reframing Solutions

Even in principle, a recognition by Israel of a Palestinian right of return is problematic, since it would challenge the Israeli national identity and meta-narrative. (Frideman 2002)

The mutual understanding developed within the negotiations process seemed to modify formerly unfeasible options into realizable ones. The parties developed solutions which in principle met the needs and concerns of all sides, at least for a while transforming the "either-or" frame into a joint "all gain" narrative.

According to Yosi Beilin (2001):

[the] distance under dispute between the parties was narrowed substantially, and the Palestinian side agreed that the number of refugees must be such that it would not damage Israel's character as a Jewish country.

According to Abed Rabbo (2001) there are five complementary ways to resolve the refugee problem:

Returning to Israel, returning to the Palestinian state, settling them in the countries where they now live, moving them to a third country of their choice, and settling them in areas that would be handed over to the Palestinians in the context of a land swap.

The Palestinian Refugee ResearchNet (2002) concludes:

On the Israeli side, there appeared to be recognition that Israel would have to accept some refugee return, admit some responsibility or regret for the refugee issue, and accept primary responsibility for financing refugee compensation. On the Palestinian side, there was recognition that Israel would not permit practical implementation of the right of return to fundamentally change the demographic face of the Jewish state. However, these understandings were rendered moot--temporarily, perhaps--by the election of Ariel Sharon as Israeli prime minister in February 2001. The upsurge in violence that began in the fall of 2000 hardened public opinion on both sides.

The transition from an Ethos of Conflict into an Ethos of Peace is not linear. Powerful concerns, fears, beliefs and interests push and pull this process into what can look like random, chaotic directions.

The 'al-Aqsa intifada' has added new sources of uncertainty to a political landscape where every shift arouses complex reactions from near and distant actors ... Changes occurred in the positions of both parties towards the refugee issue. By far, the more dramatic shift was that in the Palestinian position towards reaffirmation of historic national claims. These were interpreted by some Israeli observers as maneuvering on Arafat's part to strengthen his bargaining position. (Sayigh 2001, p. 95-96)

Sayigh (2001) claims that this change was in fact imposed by popular mobilization on the right of return, with Arafat following refugee and public opinion rather than leading it. In her view, Arafat's turnaround on the refugees also must have been caused by seven years of Palestinian disillusionment because instead of making moves towards a sovereign Palestinian state, Israel continued its occupation and expanded its settlement activities.

Internal frustration within the Palestinian side with regard to the malfunctioning Palestinian Authority renewed previous opposition and criticism.

...Barak's small concession at *Camp David II* of a "symbolic return" to Israel, involving at most 70,000 refugees over ten years, went beyond Beilin, it did not begin to meet the Palestinian negotiators' revival of historical refugee claims. (Sayigh, 2001)

On the Israeli side, one year after the peace negotiations collapsed, and one dozen years after publishing his landmark book, "*The Birth of The Palestinian Refugee Problem*", the post-Zionist historian Benny Morris was cited saying:

If you recognize the responsibility [to the Palestinian displacement], millions will demand their lands in return immediately thereafter. If the notion of the right of return will be recognized, there is also going to be an attempt to utilize that notion, and that will be the end of the State of Israel. [If that happens], there won't be a Jewish State here. (Morris, 2001)

Reforming Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement

Joel Singer, former chief negotiator of the Oslo Agreements for the Rabin - Peres government, and author of the Israel-PLO Mutual Recognition Agreement, published in 2001 a paper titled, "No Palestinian 'return' to Israel", concluding that giving 3.5 million Palestinians a right of return to Israel would transform the country into an Arab state. The fears of Israelis with regard to the implementation of the right of return mirrored Ariel Sharon's words from 1996 which denied not only the right of return to Israel but also to the Palestinian territories:

If these people find themselves resettled once again in miserable refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, gazing out from them upon their towns and the remains of their former villages, the tension and anger will be enormous. The Palestinian refugee problem is a tragedy the Palestinians brought upon themselves. But one tragedy must not be replaced by another. (Sharon 1996)

Yet, during the re-escalation, while well known frames of struggle reappeared, new frames appeared as well. Many versions reframed the issues for different purposes and audiences, some for external uses, other for internal uses. Different variants of frames appeared for each kind of media. Nevertheless many frames actually serve as more than just literary weapons. Some play several complementary roles – communicating with and between two or more different groups - opponents and supporters of one's view on each side of the divide simultaneously.

How are the *Palestinian Right of Return* and the actual *Return of the Palestinians* two different issues? The re-escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with its extreme tension and distrust, does not help Israelis comprehend. how one can separate a Right. from its complete implementation. Is it only cultural – linguistic framing dispute or a new tactic in an old battle? Who can ensure Israelis that taking partial responsibility for the creation of the refugee problem--apologizing--will not cause the destruction of Israel and /or the disappearance of the Jewish State?

In the following examples I cite two personal stories which attempt to bridge the right of return duality. Sari Hanafi (2002) narrates:

Four years ago, I visited my family living in a Palestinian refugee camp in an Arab host country. My father refused to see photos I had taken in Haifa because, in his words, it was not 'his Haifa.' Haifa was now an Israeli city, he declared. He was adamant that he could not return as long it remained under Israeli sovereignty. The very next day a Swiss journalist interviewed my father and asked him if he would return to Haifa if it became possible. Suddenly, he waxed ideological and eloquent, announcing that "as a Palestinian, like any other, I long to return no matter what the conditions.

And Yaser Abed Rabbo (2001) clarifies:

We asked for the principle of the right of return, but the implementation of it, it should be discussed in a very practical and even pragmatic way, without affecting or without - yes, without affecting - the Jewish nature of the state of Israel.

We said it. This was our position. And I'm not saying this today. ... You want me, as a Palestinian who was born in Jaffa, to forget my personal thing, my attachment as a person to the place of my birth? I will not do that. But you want me, as a serious politician responsible for the future of my people, and as a person who wants, really, to put an end to these agonies, to take a position which hurts me - I should take it. I will do that. This is the difference.

Abed Rabbo apparently does not comprehend what the problem with this duality could be, and therefore, accuses the Israeli political right of brainwashing the world with fantastic stories of a Palestinian plot to destroy the Jewish state by inundating it with a million and a half refugees.

A wave of new ideas

The re-escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict stimulated new ideas and initiatives. Some of these recalled the “one state” solution, in contrast to the two- nation states partition solutions. Others attempted to further separate the two nations. For example, ‘Abd al-Hadi and de Jong (2001) went so far as to say that the Israeli Galilee communities should be annexed to a future Palestinian state, a proposal vehemently opposed by Palestinians inside Israel.

Abufarha’s “Alternative Palestinian Agenda” (2002) has much in common with the one previously mentioned, although framed by its initiator, the anthropologist Nasser Abufarha, as a “one state solution” (see fig. no. 2). I chose to describe this proposal due to the way Abufarha framed it, as an all-gain ‘perfect’ solution. It aims to focus on “substantive issues that address the concerns and aspirations of both Israeli and Palestinian society”.

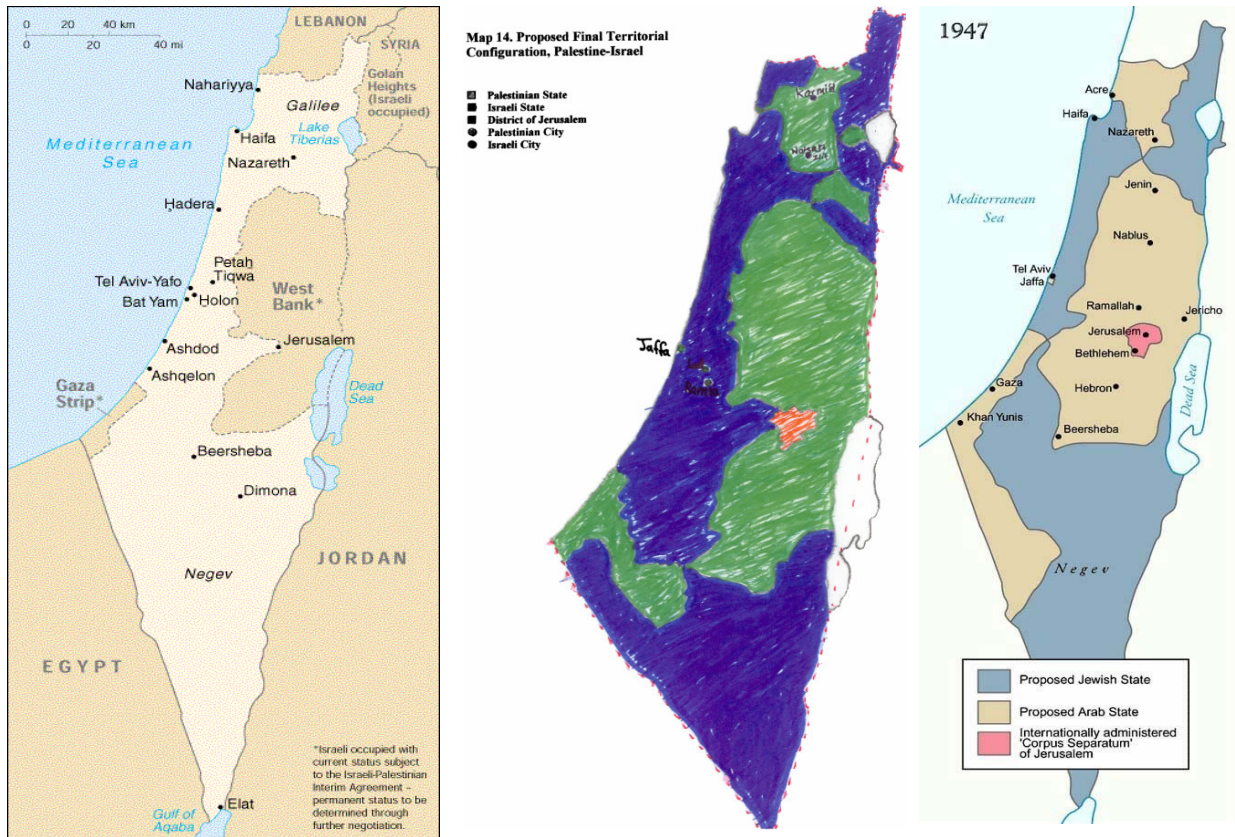
Abufarha claims that the recent peace process failed because it was not framed accordingly. He identifies concerns and aspirations as follows:

Israeli.	Palestinian
Security;	Statehood;
[regional] Acceptance;	Right of return. (represented as the central and most complex Palestinian concern);
Character of the Jewish State;	Ending the Occupation;
[Israeli] Identity;. Peace;	Security and Democratic Rights of ‘Israeli Arabs’;
Solving the Demographic Crisis in Jerusalem,. for the Israeli side.	the Gaza Strip;
	Jerusalem

Fig. No. 2 – Israel / Palestine Configurations

Reforming Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement

Israel-1948— 19672002APA (Aburfarha) 2002 Proposal 1947 UN Partition



Alas, Abufarha’s solution - transferring the regions inhabited by Israeli Palestinians as well as most of the few Israeli non-desert open spaces to the Palestinian side to be settled by repatriating refugees, does not meet Israeli concerns and aspirations, neither does it meet most of the Palestinians’. The proposal also contradicts basic environmental constraints. Abufarha’s proposal is based on the 1947 US partition proposal, a solution the Arab side had rejected before the 1948 war. Unfortunately, it seems that “experts” - affected groups and professionals—were not involved in the Alternative Palestinian Agenda planning process.

Linking Together: Toward Collaborative Planning for Sustainable Peace and Development

New ideas, even those that won’t work, can shake loose new possibilities
(Abufarha 2002).

Most protracted problems have been addressed with traditional means already, and these have failed. Through innovative ways, we might find new solutions, but also face the same, as well as many unexpected difficulties. Lately, while discussing issues addressed through this paper, I have been asked often, both in Israel and elsewhere, about the viability of the peace process

Additionally many wondered at my concern with regard to the Palestinian's fate. Under current conditions, this care, when accredited to a Jewish person is often viewed as strange, exaggerated or even bizarre.

My response to the first query is that the Arab-Israeli reconciliation process will die, if we let it starve— if we lose hope, if we don't actively invest in building peace, even while hate and fear and revenge are the dish of the day. What scares me is a self fulfilling prophecy: deep frustration enforces both apathy and antagonist activity, which in turn bring more hate and suffering, less chance for the fragile trust and understanding to recover, for the peace process to survive. I am speaking about measures of hope-building as means for trust-building within each side of the divide, and between the sides. In my view, by waiting for the struggle to come to an end before entering a peace-building process, we lose major opportunities for shortening the struggle phase itself, and for mitigating its influences. Regional planning can be shaped and framed as a mutual gain process, and therefore as a trust-building and peace-building measure. It may and should foster the process of reframing identity-based intractability into development-based win-win scenarios.

Responding to the queries regarding my care about the Palestinian refugees fate is, in a way more complicated, because these queries are typically rooted in the well-established "either-or"/ or "win – lose" frame, a mindset which differs significantly from the win-win, non zero-sum mindset, the frame my views and activity originate from. I tend to replay that I care because Palestinians are human beings, and because they are my neighbors and also because the Palestinian Tragedy has a complementary, less known side – The Israeli Tragedy. The Palestinian problems are different from the Israeli, but their problems are our problems as well, and vice-versa. In my view, both sides might mutually resolve their pivotal problems, resume their Tragedies, or alternatively, sink deeper into theirs, and continue to escalate this regional intractable conflict. In my view the best insurance program for my children's fate, for the next Israeli generations' health, self-esteem, ethics and prosperity involves peacefully resolving the Palestinians' fate. Helping the Palestinians achieve their legitimate needs, can and should induce the two nations' rights fulfillment, peaceful coexistence and prosperity in this struggle ridden region.

On a broader scale the Palestinian refugees case offers many prospects for learning. Most lessons this case provides are opportunities for. "learning from failure". These might be framed to promote reactions to failure which determine future success . and destructive conflicts prevention. Moreover, several insights might and should induce double-loop learning, and taking advantage of crisis as an opportunity for change and growth. Mitchell (2002) included structural changes as one of two fundamental conditions for successful conflict transformation. Byrne and Keashly (2000) point on structural changes within several multi-level intervention approaches they recommend within the scope of transforming ethno-political conflicts. Structural changes entail double-loop learning.

On a more pragmatic level. I would note that refugees' deep frustration and hopelessness under some circumstances may cause an inclination to commit acts of terrorism. In the wake of the September 11 2001 terrorist attack on the US, a war has been declared on terrorism, and much energy has been devoted to combat this kind of threat for both the short and the long run. Obviously, terrorism prevention is included in this realm. Yet mostly direct links such as renewed focus on combating national security have been addressed.

Population displacement proactive prevention; pretreatment of the displacement causes, as well as mitigation of displacement related problems; and appropriate, well-coordinated resettlement initiatives, should be perceived as long term terrorism prevention measures, and as means for intractable conflicts transformation.

Displacement and planning for resettlement. The Palestinian refugees' saga, bears lessons for other population displacement cases:

- To deal with emerging problems as soon as possible and prevent destructive consequences;
- To involve the displaced population in decision-making processes;
- To combine, apply and modify tools and solutions to fit case-specific cultural, political and environmental characteristics and constraints.

Investigations of refugee resettlement success stories portray patterns that have much in common with those found in development induced resettlement success stories. The current study enforced lessons from previous involuntary population displacement studies (Cernea, 2000; Voutira and Harrell-Bond 2000).

- Need of social and economic integration of the refugees rather than separation.
- Need to use humanitarian assistance for social rehabilitation and economical reconstruction processes, in contrast to relying on relief assistance.
- Need to channel refugees' energy and motivation to fuel the reversal of their impoverishment processes and for the growth of the hosting societies.
- Need for mutual learning between different kinds of involuntary population displacement
- Need for mutual learning between voluntary and involuntary population displacement and resettlement.

Lessons from uprooting, involuntary displacement, voluntary resettlement and immigration absorption, community rehabilitation and community participation experiences (Vraneski, 2002) might be assets for the resolution of the Palestinian refugees mega-problem. The Palestinian refugees resettlement, might be an excellent opportunity for integrating lessons from conflict-induced and development-induced migration. This case started as a conflict-induced migration, but might end as a development-induced population resettlement, due to the regional development, sustained by the continuation of the peace process. It also might integrate lessons from involuntary and voluntary migration. The original displacement was involuntary but the resettlement should be voluntary through choice from an array of appropriate structural options. The participation of the Palestinian refugees' representatives and the refugees themselves in the process, and in a collaborative planning (Innes, 1996) for peace process – more generally, should be assets for effective and fair practice toward a better future for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Taking in consideration the current situation on the Israel-Palestine arena, one might appraise parts of this paper as totally futuristic or simply naive. In my view, although the reconciliation process has collapsed, it can and should be reconstructed while hostilities persist. Plans for reversal of impoverishment and for resettlement, should be done at once, and be ready for implementation as soon as circumstances permit.

Toward sound intervention in framing and reframing processes. This study attempted to better understand the multi-level complexity of the Palestinian refugees case by analyzing and comparing frames and narratives used by the different parties at several stages. This is one step toward better understanding of framing and reframing dynamics, and a modest contribution to future appropriate interventions in these dynamics. This brief analysis suggests a need for further comparative and integrative research. Understanding the framing dynamics, utilizing better tools for interpreting the meaning behind the parties' use of words, phrases and narratives, might be assets for intra- and inter-party mutual understanding and improved communication. These should also be valuable for the conflict resolution research and practice more generally.

Building bridges and alternatives; talking hope across corridors. Bar – Tal, a well known Israeli Political Scientist has recently stated: “Almost all my life, I was deeply committed to the cause of peace in the Middle East.... My world collapsed because at present not only do I not see a light at the end of the tunnel, I even do not see the tunnel” (Bar-Tal, 2002). Reframing Bar-Tal's tunnel metaphor, I would say that sometimes not seeing light at the end of a tunnel, might be perceived as the best news – no train is there to run us over. If there is no tunnel, we still might find a corridor or a bridge. If we do not find any, and we still attempt to reach the other side, then building corridors and bridges might well meet our aim. Indeed finding optimal routes, designing real and metaphoric links, and facilitating achievement of the needs and interests of all parties, are among the primary goals and expertises of planning and conflict resolution theories and practices.

This paper aimed at improving understanding of reframing processes and trends. It introduced an interactive model regarding the interconnections between reframing processes and transformation of intractable conflicts, and initially configured and checked this model within the scope of the studied case. The Palestinian refugees case analysis pointed out the impact of the geo-political processes on frames and narratives, and on mutual influence between the parties' frames, among others through reading and citing each other's words. The ever-changing frames have had already a modest impact on geo-political processes. The paper aimed also at introducing several points of thought with regard to the options of integrating regional planning expertise in solving the Palestinian refugees problem. In my view conceptual options as well as comprehensive and site / subject specific plans should be promoted and developed through collaborative processes, which include the parties and experts from a wide range of disciplines. I intend to include further exploration of this issue and of the reframing-transformation model in the scope of a future article. In the meanwhile, I conclude this essay with several real life examples of mutual gain prospects for our region (see maps nos. 1 and 2).

Reforming Involuntary Population Displacement and Resettlement

The first is a site specific issue, which does not address directly the refugees problem but several major regional needs: For decades Israel's plans to enlarge "Ben Gurion" international airport, and to develop a new one, have been opposed and postponed due to internal, mostly environmentally based disagreements. In the meanwhile the Palestinian authority has developed "Dahanyia", a new, modern international airport within the Gaza Strip. This kind of facility is very expensive both financially and in regard to the amount of land it needs for proper operation, and with its environmental negative impacts. "Ben Gurion" and "Dahanyia" airports might well complement each other in fulfilling regional needs, while fostering more channels of collaboration, mutual trust and understanding. Here both Israel's need to increase its air-transportation capacity and Palestine's urge to both factual recognition and an enlargement of economic revenues, can meet. At present this kind of agreement between the two entities, is politically unfeasible. Yet, interventional and institutional mechanisms and tools might be designed to foster this kind of opportunities.

In the following illustrations I portray three out of countless possible thought directions that might be considered in designing comprehensive solutions for the region's problems:

(a) While my family and I visited recently Aquaba in Jordan, our host, a Jordanian of Palestinian origin insisted he take us to the "new" border with Saudi Arabia. The location of the border between the two countries was moved in order to triple Jordan's less than 10 km. long seashore, without significant change to the 2,600 km. long Arabian Coast. The value of this very land for each of the two entities differs enormously. Saudi Arabia's generosity might be motivated by concrete political gains, yet evidently there are no losers in this transition. For me it was an excellent lesson on how non-zero sum agreements between neighbours can be created and sustained.

(b) Forecasting the demographic Crisis in the Gaza Strip (see map no. 1 and table no. 1) an Egyptian colleague suggested many years ago that the area of the Gaza Strip could be increased by adding to it a "piece of cheap desert land from the Sinai peninsula", in the framework of a regional reconciliation process. (During the recent Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, the sides were close to agreement on expanding the Strip into the Israeli Negev desert). In an "either/ or" atmosphere, this kind of suggestion would be totally inappropriate, impossible, even dangerous. When multiple interests and needs are considered, a mutual gain agreement, which includes this kind of boundary redefinition, might be considered, and agreements can be framed to meet all parties' priorities, needs and concerns.

(c) During the peace negotiations, a mutual understanding has emerged that due to political, demographic and environmental / land-use changes alike, a full return of Palestinian refugees is not more feasible than the development induced displaced populations return to their lands. In many informal discussions (see the Palestinian Refugee ResearchNet for related reviews and documentations), an initial range of structural options for the Palestinian refugees' resettlement and compensation programs to choose from has been developed. These will be useful within further discussions and planning processes. Thinking "out of the box", brings forth countless possibilities, including many institutional and territorial solutions that might meet the parties aspirations, concerns and fears. A confederation of nation-states based on demographic patterns rather than on geographic boundaries, assigning citizens' rights in one's state even if she actually lives in another part of that confederation, might be one parameter for a sustainable solution. Defining mutually accepted connections and participation of Diasporas in local development could be another.

Conclusions

This paper portrayed a process of framing and reframing, of narrative co-creation, self/ other identity re-framing and re-reframing, and to a lesser degree of the creation of alternative options. During the peace process, a transformation from exclusionary narratives and one-dimensional “either/ or” solutions into a multi-optional synergistic environment was evident. This process should be sustained and enforced with reality based options and solutions. Reframing the “Palestinian refugees protracted problem” into the “Palestinian displaced population resettlement Challenge” might be one step towards both just and implementable solutions. With regard to this process and outcomes alike I would reframe an old phrase: “sky might be the limit, state borders are not”.

The Palestinian refugees’ case is extremely long lasting and liable to an unpredictable outcome. Yet lessons from previous years can and should serve to improve future function for this and many other cases, for solving the problems, for bringing an end to the Palestinian refugees tragedy, to the intractable Arab-Israeli conflict, and a Happy new Beginning for this struggle-traumatized region.

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Endnotes

¹ I presented parts of an earlier versions of this paper on September 19, 2002 as a public lecture in the framework the Broad International Series 2002-2003 at Florida State University, and twice in October 2002 at George Mason University, VA, in the framework of a seminar sponsored by the US Department of State for international conflict resolution scholars and practitioners, and in the framework of the Institute of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) Brown Bag Lectures Series. I have included lessons from the stirring and inspiring discussions that followed these presentations in the actual paper.

² “Intractable conflicts are conflicts that stubbornly seem to elude resolution, even when the best available techniques are applied”. (Intractable Conflict Knowledge website, 2002).

³ This concept was suggested by Burton (1986) as a way of addressing prevention of conflicts by working with their sources in transformative ways. Destructive conflicts are prevented when their deep and direct causes disappear or are not influential any more..

⁴ Framing is a psychological trait and a cognitive process that enables us to receive and organize information in patterns, which resemble cognitive maps. New information is sorted and interpreted while using these frames.

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⁵. In this paper I use the phrase reframing in its neutral connotation - a significant change of frames.

⁶. I adopt Mitchell's (2002) doubts with regard to a presumed wide gap between the de-valuated "conflict resolution" phrase and the more recently introduced "conflict transformation" phrase, as well as his distinction between these: "Conflict transformation clearly assumes that major structural changes will always and inevitably be necessary conditions for any successful effort to deal with the conflict.... Relationships have to be replaced and rebuilt through deliberate and directed efforts, and reconciliation can only take place as a result of these efforts...." (p.24)

⁷. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is now in charge with the protection of an estimated 20 million uprooted people. Since its establishment in 1951, this agency has helped an estimated 50 million people. Another UN agency, UNRWA, assists now close to four million Palestinian refugees.

⁸. Following research on many projects the World Bank was involved in during the last quarter of century, Michael M. Cernea and associates have developed and tested a model of impoverishment risks and reconstruction. This model includes eight interconnected components : landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property assets, and community disarticulation. (Cernea and McDowell, 2000).

⁹. "In the Kossou Resettlement Project in The Cote d'Ivoire, evacuees were informed two years before the lake was impounded. All local chiefs were called to a meeting held in Yamoussoubro by President Houphouet Boigny, who personally led the campaign. The oustees were consulted about where they wished to be resettled, and their demands were taken in account" (Lassailly-Jacob, 2000, p.114).

¹⁰. Between 9 and 11 April 1948, over 100 Arab townspeople were massacred by ysh paramilitaries in Deir Yassin near Jerusalem in the British Mandate of Palestine. Seems that Deir Yassin massacre was in a way an incident within a former revenge cycle. According to Hogan (2001), during the 1948 conflict, Deir Yassin was studiously honoring a Haganah (the Jewish community's forces which boasted many professionally trained and experienced soldiers) -sponsored agreement to refrain from hostilities with neighboring Jewish areas in exchange for protection from Jewish attack. Nevertheless the village was urged as a target by Yehoshua Goldshmidt the operations chief of the Irgun (Irgun Z'vai Leumi - National Military Organization one of two small right-wing Jewish forces, which operated as independent guerillas and were referred. by the Jewish Agency as "dissidents"). Goldshmidt, raised in Givat Shaul a Jewish Jerusalem's suburb, had been sworn by his father to avenge armed attacks emanating from Deir Yassin against Givat Shaul during Arab-Jewish-British strife of the 1920s and 1930s.

¹¹. Sharq al-Adna (Arabic Radio), 20 May 1948, 11:00 A.M., Foreign Broadcast Information Branch, Central Intelligence Agency, Daily Report, Foreign Radio Broadcasts, 21 May 1948, European Section, Near and Middle East-North African Transmitters, II 3 (Cited by Hogan, 2001).

¹². Kriesberg, L. (1995, March). Intractable conflicts. Paper presented at the conference organized by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel-Aviv University,. cited by. Bar-Tal (1998).

¹³. One typical habit in conflict is to give very high priority to defending one's own interests. If Cain's interests clash with Abel's, Cain is inclined to ignore Abel's interests or actively to damage them... but this is not the only possible response... [The] fifth alternative implies strong assertion of one's own interest, but equal awareness of the aspirations and needs of the other, generating energy to search for a creative problem solving outcome" (Miall et al, 1999,. p. 5).

¹⁴. For example, Edward W. Said, Palestinian scholar, criticized the peace process since its first phases. In "The mirage of peace" (1995, p. 413) he wrote: "Those of us who fought for Palestine before Oslo fought for a cause that we believed would spur the emergence of a just order. Never

has this ideal been further from realization than today. Arafat is corrupt. Hamas and Islamic Jihad are no alternative. And most Palestinian intellectuals have been too anxious to bolster their own case... I do not pretend to have any quick solutions for the situation now referred to as 'the peace process', but I do know that for the vast majority of Palestinian refugees, day laborers, peasants and town and camp dwellers, those who cannot make a quick deal and those whose voices are never heard, for them the process has made matters far worse. Above all, they may have lost hope... "

^{15.} Focusing on the peace leaders' discourse Jamal (2000) claims that changes in the traditional narrative would threaten Israeli society's self-perception, and therefore the old frames sustain. This statement is consistent with the definition and characteristics of intractability this paper elaborates on, but does not exclude reconciliation and transformation. Yet, Jamal (p. 36) reminds us that "Based on the biblical belief that God gave the land of historic Palestine to the Jews, the official Zionist narrative has at its core the divine bond between the Jewish people and the 'Land of Israel' and concludes that "This being the case, the existence of other peoples on that land, from the Zionist perspective, must have been temporary". I would link this statement with the "actual return" query. and suggest that the "divine bond" to ALL the "Land of Israel" and the "right of return" be reframed into complementary myths, as opposed to actual desires, claims, aims and plans.

^{16.} Muhi 'Abd al-Hadi and Jan de Jong (2001) proposed an extension of the Palestinian territories to include the Galilee and some areas of the Negev in order to absorb portions of refugee populations, without denying the remainder's ROR. This solution aimed also to resolve the Israeli fear of altering the character of the Jewish state.

^{17.} I adopt the inclusive way Lederach (1997) comprehends "peace-building" as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform a conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships.

^{18.} "The key is understanding that failure is how we improve. You do this not by ignoring the failure, but by recognizing it, examining it thoroughly ... Companies, government agencies and even entire professions can learn from failure in the same way. Civil engineers, for example, have analyzed catastrophes and integrated lessons learned over time into the design and construction of future projects" (Michael D'Antonio, 2000, reporting on an interview with Henry Petroski of Duke University).

^{19.} According to Argyris and Schon (1978) Double-loop learning occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives.

^{20.} Cohen Ben-Ami (2002) relays on some of these experiences and on insights from development induced displacement and resettlement for another Middle Eastern displacement case – Pre-planning an evacuation of the Jewish population of the Golan Heights in the context of the signing of peace treaties with Syria.

^{21.} See also in Arzt (1997) solutions that engage the Arab countries in solving the Palestinian Refugees mega-problem.

^{22.} Arzt (1997) also addressed components of permanent regional absorption of the Palestinian refugees, Palestinian population absorption target for the different areas of the Middle East, as well as compensation concerns and options for international permanent absorption.

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