

An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies

**The Experience of Palestinian Children Facing Traumatic
Events The Case of a Village under Military Occupation:
A Descriptive Phenomenological Study**

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Palestine.**

2016

**The Experience of Palestinian Children Facing Traumatic Events
The Case of a Village under Military Occupation: A Descriptive
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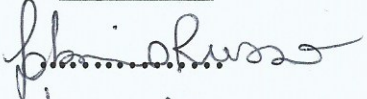
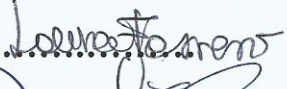
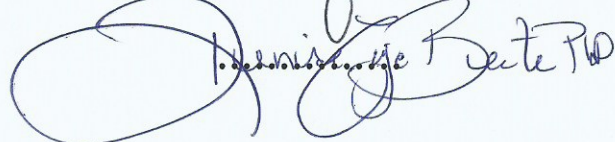
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Signature

لكل من اصر على مواجهة صعوبات الحياة بلا هوادة.....

“It means freedom for my country and feeling safe in it, with peace and justice with no occupation; a country like all countries with no occupation, where children can live like all the children in the world”.

Words of a child, 9 years old.

الشكر والتقدير

لمن ألهمت الألهام نفسه... فكيف بإلهام البشر...

لمن مازال عطائها ينبض بالامل... وهي الامل نفسه

الإقرار

أنا الموقع أدناه مقدم الرسالة التي تحمل العنوان:

**The Experience of Palestinian Children Facing Traumatic Events. The
case of a village under military occupation: A descriptive
phenomenological study**

أقر بأن ما اشتملت عليه هذه الرسالة إنما هي نتاج جهدي الخاص، باستثناء ما تمت الإشارة إليه
حيثما ورد، وأن هذه الرسالة ككل، أو أي جزء منها لم يقدم لنيل أية درجة أو لقب علمي أو بحثي
لدى أية مؤسسة تعليمية أو بحثية أخرى.

Declaration

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the
researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other
degree or qualification.

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The Experience of Palestinian Children Facing Traumatic Events. The case of a village under military occupation: A descriptive phenomenological study

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Abstract

Introduction: The objective of this research is to provide an overview of the effects of war and living in a conflict zone on children; to capture their lived experience facing traumatic events and to explore the phenomenological experience of those children who live in a village nearby an Israeli settlement and separation wall, under a daily struggle against the Israeli occupation. The research seeks to understand the effect of trauma on children who live in a violent environment in order to understand the impact of such traumatic events on them, and to explore their feelings and thoughts.

Aim: The aim of this study is to investigate and describe the experience of Palestinian children facing daily traumatic events. It is also our concern to understand how these children are psychologically affected by their experience. Military occupation poses a challenge for the mental health of children in Palestine, and it is influenced by a set of complex and interactive individual, social, cultural, and economic factors. Lack of studies in such issues makes it difficult to understand the phenomena in relation to the special cultural and social aspects in Palestine. Understanding these factors is critical in provision of effective and

culturally appropriate care. We will employ a qualitative approach in order to create a rich and deep understanding of this important issue.

Design: The design used is a qualitative phenomenological descriptive design. This design is used to study and to explore the lived experience of the Palestinian children who face traumatic events by describing the aspect of this experience and by focusing on what exists.

Sample: Purposive sampling was used; 15 children who lived in a Palestinian village under military occupation and experiencing settler attacks.

Setting: Interviews were conducted in a private room in the respondent's house.

Data Analysis: The data was analyzed by using Giorgi's phenomenological psychology method (1985).

Results: Three major themes emerged from the children's interviews and ten sub-themes; (1) *Exposure to Traumatic Events* (Life threatening, witnessing violence, direct violence, deprivation of freedom, lack of safety and fear); (2) *Normalization* (1Role playing the traumatic events, Underestimation of danger); (3) *Resilience* (self-efficacy, 2Awareness and belonging, and trust in adults).

Conclusion: The findings of the study demonstrate the importance of understanding the experience of the Palestinian children facing traumatic

events. It reflects how these children face the traumatic events regarding the military and settler actions in their village, how they react to these events, and the degree to which they are affected. The children normalized the events through role playing the trauma and acting out violence and underestimation of danger, but then demonstrated resiliency that allowed them to increase their courage to continue.

Key words: Phenomenology, trauma, children, war

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

For many years, the Middle East has been the site of numerous armed conflicts and wars. Many of these conflicts have extended for multiple years and even decades. Children and youth have thus been affected by the trauma and its consequences. For these children and youth, exposure to traumatic events can result in mental, behavioral and emotional problems (L. Dimitry, 2012).

In 1990, more than half of the 20 million children displaced because of war had suffered psychological trauma to varying extents. When not addressed, childhood experiences of trauma can manifest themselves later as psychological conditions such as depression, personality disorders, or PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) as well as through maladaptive behavior. Adolescents and young adults are often the most affected in comparison to younger children. They often show PTSD symptoms such as depressive behavior, heightened fears, nightmares and restlessness, psychosomatic symptoms, aggressiveness, and a feeling of helplessness (Burke S, 2006).

In cases of political armed conflict, children are affected various ways. Parents and caregivers' reactions to the conflict and trauma directly impact the emotional well-being of children. Intervention programs with the aim of addressing this issue have previously target schools as well as

community actors in tandem with seeking to identify children with a more urgent need for psychiatric treatment (Thabet, Vostanis. P, 2000).

Palestinian children have been the subjects of traumatizing experiences to which they are still exposed: loss of personal freedom and movement, injuries, humiliation, detention or arrest, tear gas inhalation, beatings, home demolitions, and death are all examples of the kind of trauma Palestinian children face. A child's reaction to a trauma or a life-threatening event can vary depending on a number of factors, such as age, prior experience, and available support systems. However, common responses are anxiety, fear, and loss of self-esteem. Some children respond by withdrawing and denying the event. All of these responses serve the purpose of protecting the child; however, when a child isolates him/herself from family, school and community, he/she is more vulnerable to developing emotional problems. Another response that children who have experienced a trauma may display is to develop angry and hostile behavior. Although less tangible than physical injury, emotional problems are no less serious, and Palestine, is fertile ground for psychological trauma, both immediate and long-term (Russo, 2014).

Exposure to stress and recurring traumatic events in Palestine are part of the daily life of the Palestinian people. Traumatic events might come from natural disasters or human action, but the chronic traumatic events in Palestine have been transferred from generation to generation as a result of war, occupation and conflict since 1948. Palestinian children are

used to facing daily trauma; they are still exposed to sudden and unexpected events and continuous damage to their psychological stability and the social structures which support them (Qouta & El-Sarraj, 2004; Thabet & Vostanis, 2000).

Palestinian children have been exposed to daily trauma which has resulted in mental and social distress that not only damages them psychologically, but has actually made them lose their childhood. Several studies revealed that children and youth who have had to cope with traumatic events are more likely to develop mental health problems and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Widom, 1999; Yule, 2001; Wayment, 2004).

Children who live under circumstances of violence and armed conflict have been forced by their reality to grow up too quickly. They take on large responsibilities and must become tough, hence losing a child's right to carefree play (Boothby et al, 1992).

In a survey conducted by Espié et al. (2009) in Gaza and the West Bank, 25.8% of child participants were considered as having PTSD. Witnessing a murder or torture, being threatened, and experiencing the destruction of their property were found to be the main contributing factors to the existence of PTSD in the child respondents (Espié E., Gaboulaud V et al, 2009).

A study conducted in 1999 in Palestine by Mousa T. Found that there were high incidents of post-traumatic stress responses in primary

school children who had experienced some act of conflict or war. 73±2% of child respondents had PTSD reactions of at least mild severity, while 39% of children surveyed reported moderate to severe reactions (Mousa T. 1999). The children that were most likely to indicate PTSD reaction were those from the group of refugee camps north of Gaza City. Qouta et al. (2004) found that the Palestinian refugee population may experience mediating adversities to a greater extent, such as relocation and disruption of school life or peer relationships. This population may also have more exposure to life-changing events such as house demolition (Qouta, Punamaki, & El Sarraj, 2004).

The Vermont CUPS Handbook (2005) defines trauma as “a physical or psychological threat or assault to a child’s physical integrity, sense of self, safety or survival, or to the physical safety of another person significant to the child” (Vermont CUPS Handbook, 2005).

Psychological trauma may occur acutely, as the result of a lone traumatic event, or chronically, resulting from multiple, repeated exposures to extreme stress (Terr, 1992).

Acute stress disorder (ASD) is a psychological state in which the symptom remains after the traumatic event has ended, continuing to affect the child and his or her ability to function. When the threat and trauma have ended, and the child has survived, if overwhelming stress continues and the child’s neurophysiologic responses remain aroused, then the term post-

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is used to describe the child's enduring symptoms (DSMV, 2013).

The invasive feeling of fear, to which children living in these areas are constantly subjected, is out of their cognitive management, and so it floods directly into the body. It is for this reason that children manifest the 'symptoms' of trauma mainly on the physical level (nocturnal enuresis, panic, hyperactivity). Additionally, if more subtly, the child's thoughts can be fixed on the same 'images' and the expression of anger can be evident in his/her behavior. The first signs of psychological trauma observed in children since the outbreak of the second Intifada were nightmares and other sleep disturbances, bedwetting, speech difficulties, poor concentration, repressive behavior and death thoughts (Russo, 2014).

Despite the difficult circumstances of their lives, Palestinian children continue to express resilience. Resilience is a term that indicates an ability to cope with problems and setbacks. Resilient people are able to utilize their skills and strengths to cope and recover from problems and challenges. Many factors contribute to the rise of resilience in one's life, such as social involvement in the life of the community, which increases feelings of self-efficacy, which itself is intricately related to resilience (Russo, 2014).

1.2 Aims of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate and describe the experience of the Palestinian children facing daily traumatic events. It is also our concern to understand how these children are psychologically affected by their experience. Military occupation poses a challenge to the mental health of children in Palestine, and it is influenced by a set of complex and interactive individual, social, cultural, and economic factors. A lack of studies in such issues makes it difficult to understand the phenomena in relation to the special cultural and social aspects in Palestine. Understanding these factors is critical to the provision of effective and culturally appropriate care. We will employ a qualitative approach in order to create a rich and deep understanding of this important issue.

1.3 Problem statements

There is a lack of understanding of the manifestations of trauma among children living in a protracted conflict situation: the current research will permit to uncover some of the real experiences about coping with stressful events in an overwhelming environment.

Our interest is also to understand the construct of resilience in its complexity and different meanings.

Findings will help to address the problems of the Palestinian children who face traumatic events, especially those who are living near the separation wall, who witness and participate in daily demonstrations

against the Israeli army and those who experience daily attacks on their villages, especially during the night.

Research Questions:

- 1) What is the experience of children living in a Palestinian village under occupation?
- 2) What are the feelings and thoughts that accompany the daily life of these children?
- 3) What risks lies in the experience of living in a protracted traumatic environment?
- 4) How does the daily violence affect the psychology and social life of children in the village?
- 5) To what extent can these children be considered in need of psychological support?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will explore the phenomenological experience of those children who live in a village nearby a settlement and the separation wall, under a daily struggle against the Israeli occupation.

As such, this research will enhance the understanding of the effect of trauma on children who live in a violent environment, to understand the impact of such traumatic events on their daily life, and to explore their

feelings and thoughts in order to help these children to have an insight into what is going on in their lives and as a desirable consequence, to reduce any post-trauma complications, like PTSD.

Talking about their experience will help to move the children from a less-empowered position to one in which their own experiences and words are the expert and generative force behind the practitioner's understanding of this phenomenon.

The results of this research will fill the gap in evidence and data related to the phenomena of living under protracted traumatic experiences, such as the military occupation in the Palestinian community and to what extent it affects the health and life of Palestinian children.

1.5 Historical Background

Until 1948, Palestine indicated the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans, Byzantines, and Ottomans have ruled this geographic area at some point in its history. Palestine became under the control of the U.K. after WWI and was considered a British Mandate. Before 1948 the British relinquished control of Palestine, the land was partitioned for the Palestinians and the newly-created state of Israel, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was born.

The Partition Plan was created by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 181 in 1947, which noted the coming end to the British Mandate of Palestine, and divided the area into a Jewish and an

Arab state with Jerusalem turned over to UN control. Specific and detailed borders were demarcated for each state in the resolution, as was a deadline for the termination of British control and the establishment of the two new states (Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, 2014).

First Arab-Israeli War (1948)

Based on the UN Resolution 181, Israel declared independence on the boundaries set out in the Partition Plan. Arab leaders had previously rejected this plan on the basis that it jeopardized Palestinians' national rights. Upon Israeli declaration of independence, Arab countries declared war on the newly-established state, beginning the war of 1948, which is deemed by the Palestinians as the 'Nakba', or catastrophe.

In 1949, after tens of thousands of Palestinians had fled their homes to other areas of Palestine as well as neighboring countries, an armistice agreement was signed. Israel ended with control over Jewish areas of the Partition Plan as well as many areas designated for the Arab state. Jordan (named Transjordan at the time) took over control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem while Egypt administered the Gaza Strip (Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, 2014).

The Six Day War

After almost twenty years of the status quo, the Six Day War occurred in June of 1967 in which Israel took control of and occupied the Gaza Strip, the Sinai, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan

Heights from neighboring countries. UN Resolution 242 was drafted that called for Israel to withdraw from the areas it had occupied in exchange for a cessation of all hostilities. Israel did not adhere to the resolution and remained the occupying power of the territories mentioned (Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, 2014).

The 1973 War

In October 1973 hostilities resumed between Egypt and Israel in the Sinai and Syria and Israel in the Golan Heights. UN Resolution 339 was enacted as a ceasefire that called for Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai, although the Golan Heights remains under Israeli control to this day, and UN peacekeeping forces remain deployed there (Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, 2014).

The Intifada (1987 to 1993)

After twenty years of military occupation, and almost forty years since the 'catastrophe' and ensuing refugee crisis, a Palestinian 'Intifada' or uprising began. The First Intifada lasted from 1987 to 1993, during which period over 1,000 Palestinians were killed and many more injured, arrested, imprisoned, or deported. The six years of violence ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords that called for gradual transition of control of the West Bank and Gaza from the Israeli occupying power to the newly-established Palestinian National Authority (Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, 2014).

Second Intifada (2001)

Eight years after the signing of the Oslo Accords, and little change being seen on the ground in terms of expansion of control and freedom for the Palestinians, Israeli politician Ariel Sharon visited the Muslim holy site of Al-Aqsa Mosque, which lays atop the Jewish Temple Mount. This action, coupled with the failure of the final status negotiations of Camp David just two months earlier drove the Palestinians to instigate the Second Intifada.

The Second Intifada began with demonstrations by Palestinians at the Al-Aqsa compound and throughout the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli military often responded to stone-throwing by using live ammunition. According to B'tselem, an Israeli human rights group, by the end of 2001 "at least 275 Palestinians had been killed and thousands had been wounded, along with 19 members of the Israeli security forces and five Israeli civilians." What had begun as a popular protest movement quickly turned into widespread violence and organized warfare. Fighting reached a high in April of 2002 when Israel launched the operation 'Defensive Shield' in which the military invaded the West Bank in masse and resulted in approximately 500 Palestinian deaths and 6,000 arrests, according to a report by the UN secretary general. In Jenin Refugee Camp, when Israeli ground troops were unable to enter the area due to intense resistance by Palestinian fighters, they enacted multiple air strikes on the

camp and bulldozed much of its area, leaving many dead, and 4,000 persons homeless (Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, 2014).

Palestinians lived during the Second Intifada a very difficult situation. Barriers and check points were set, daily and night raids of houses in cities and villages occurred, and then the Separation Wall was built to emphasize the suffering of the people and the arrogance of the occupation. This 3-meter wall was built to separate the Palestinian territories from the state of Israel, although in many areas it has been built inside the 'green line' that demarcates borders based on territory occupied in 1967, effectively annexing much of the West Bank lands to be included in Israeli territory. The UN attempted to pass a resolution that declared these sections of the wall illegal and to be destroyed, although the resolution was vetoed by the US in October 2003. Later that year, an emergency special session was held in the UN, resulting in Resolution ES-10/14 that deemed the Separation Wall illegal under international law.

Palestinian villages, despite the end of the Second Intifada, are still struggling against land confiscations due to the separation wall and abusive Israeli settlements. Several villages are engaged in weekly demonstrations; the village of our study, located in the central West Bank, is one of them.

The residents of the village of the study have hosted weekly demonstrations for five years in protest of the confiscation of the village's lands and the takeover of their water spring by the nearby Israeli settlement. The Israeli army continuously attempts to terminate the protests

and disperse crowds using sound grenades, teargas, skunk water, rubber bullets and other methods. Palestinian youth participating in the demonstrations often throw stones at the Israeli army in response. Other methods employed by the Israeli military to discourage residents from protests and non-violent resistance, which are not as widely published in the media as are the weekly protests, are night incursions in which soldiers target the homes of alleged stone throwers and arrest them. The conditions in the village of our study, therefore, can be defined as continuous trauma, in that trauma has become a fact of daily life for the residents (Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, 2014).

The village in which the current study took place is located 20 kilometers north-west of Ramallah, in the West Bank, with 600 inhabitants; at the opposite side of the village, up to the hills, is located a settlement, built in 1976 on land that still belongs to the residents.

Since 2009 when the settlers took control of nearby natural water spring and the lands which surrounds the village, Palestinians have been prevented from accessing the spring and only receive 12 hours of running water a week. This is what sparked the popular resistance in December 2009, when the first weekly march was held in protest at the confiscation of lands and the seizure of their nearby water spring.

Since then, the villagers, sometimes joined by other activists, have hosted peaceful demonstrations from the mosque down the main road every

Friday after prayer. Peaceful, that is, until they meet the Israeli soldiers who stop them, and then the clashes begin.

“They start shooting rubber bullets, gas canisters, sound grenades and live bullets, and also spray houses and water tanks with skunk water [which smells like feces, can provoke vomiting and remains for weeks],” According to her figures, since the demonstrations started in 2009, there have been 500 injuries (200 children and around 80 women) and 180 detainees, 16 of them women (MSF, 2015).

When the demonstration begun only parents used to participate in it while their children were kept in one safe house away from clashes

In this period children appeared to be scared and restless from the sound of the bullets and the smell of the tear gas bomb. Changes in their behaviors, night mares and constant fear were noticed by their parents. Although, keeping their children far from the clashes seemed to the parents the most safety choice, after few accidents, they decide to bring them to the Friday demonstrations.

1.6 Psychological Definitions

Traumatic Event: a traumatic event is defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health, fifth edition, as “an event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.” (DSM V, 2013).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):

PTSD was included in a new chapter in DSM-5 on Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders. This move from DSM-IV, which had defined PTSD as an anxiety disorder, is among several changes in understanding of this condition that is increasingly at the center of public and professional debate.

In DSM-5, disorders which are precipitated by specific stressful and potentially traumatic events are included in a new diagnostic category, “Trauma and Stress-Related Disorders,” which includes PTSD (DSMV, 2013). Friedman and his colleagues (Friedman, 2011) assert that there is a heuristic value in grouping this set of disorders in a specific stress-related category as it enables clinicians to differentiate between normal (non-pathological) distress, from acute, diffuse clinically elevated stress reactions, to more severe and chronic psychopathology (including PTSD).

Criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

“A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following have been present:

(1) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others (2) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

Note: In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behaviour.

B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:

(1) Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions.

Note: In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed.

(2) Recurrent distressing dreams of the event.

Note: In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content.

(3) Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur upon awakening or when intoxicated).

Note: In young children, trauma-specific re-enactment may occur.

(4) Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

(5) Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

(1) Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma

(2) Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma

(3) Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma

(4) Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities

(5) Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others

(6) Restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)

(7) Sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span)

D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two (or more) of the following:

(1) Difficulty falling or staying asleep

(2) Irritability or outbursts of anger

(3) Difficulty concentrating

(4) Hyper vigilance

(5) Exaggerated startle response

E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, and D) is more than one month.

F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. Specify if:

Acute: if duration of symptoms is less than 3 months

Chronic: if duration of symptoms is 3 months or more Specify if: With

Delayed Onset: if onset of symptoms is at least 6 months after the stressor”

(DSM V, 2013).

Acute Stress Disorder

The American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), lists 5 specific diagnostic criteria for ASD:

The primary difference between ASD and PTSD is the duration of the symptoms and the former’s emphasis on dissociative reactions to the trauma. ASD refers to symptoms manifested during the period from 2 days to 4 weeks post trauma, whereas PTSD can only be diagnosed from 4 weeks. In terms of dissociation, the diagnosis of ASD requires that the individual has at least three of the following: (a) a subjective sense of numbing or detachment, (b) reduced awareness of one’s surroundings, (c) derealisation, (d) depersonalization, or (e) dissociative amnesia. There are other additional, albeit minor, differences, which mainly involve less

stringent requirements to meet ASD avoidance and arousal clusters relative to PTSD. Whereas PTSD requires three avoidance or numbing symptoms and two arousal symptoms, the ASD criteria require “marked” avoidance and arousal. Accordingly, it is possible for an individual to satisfy criteria for ASD and to not satisfy PTSD diagnostic criteria after 1 month has transpired, even if the symptomatology has remained unchanged. For example, an individual may have satisfied ASD diagnosis by displaying marked avoidance and arousal symptoms but may not have met. (Bryant, Friedman, 2010).

Because trauma affects the child’s ability to self-regulate, both physically and emotionally, posttraumatic symptoms in infants and young children may encompass one or more of a broad range of behaviors, including the following:

- 1) Difficulty sleeping, eating, digesting, eliminating, breathing or focusing
- 2) A heightened startle response and hyper alertness
- 3) Agitation and over arousal, or under arousal, withdrawal or dissociation
- 4) Avoidance of eye contact and/or physical contact
- 5) Terrified responses to sights, sounds or other sensory input that remind the child of the traumatic experience(s), (for example, a dog, police siren or the smell of alcohol on a person’s breath).

6) Preoccupation with or reenactment of the traumatic experience (for example, a child's play may take on an urgent, rigid quality and be dominated by people shooting each other with police cars and ambulances arriving at the scene (Kathleen J. Moroz, 2005).

Children can be profoundly affected by a traumatic event due to intense stimuli of their senses, such as a loud noise, violent movements, or other sensations that put their sense of safety in jeopardy. These images and sounds often are repeated for the child in nightmares, other new fears, and through imaginative play. Because children have active imaginations and lack a full understanding of cause and effect, they may think that their feelings, thoughts, and hopes can become a reality. Children are also less able to understand and predict danger, and thus are not always capable of protecting their own safety (Stress.N, 2010).

Psychiatric and psychological literature in the last 40 years went through the hard work of analyzing, defining and categorizing the tragic effects of traumatic events.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Traumatic events, such as accidents, death, war, and natural disasters can affect children and adults alike. A traumatic event is understood to be shocking and unexpected, or sudden, and is often characterized by being threatening to one's life or bodily integrity. The subsequent feelings of intense fear, terror, or helplessness are also included in the definition of a traumatic event.

(American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Cohen, Mannarino, & Deblinger, 2006). It has been established that children can be impaired, often severely and in the long-term due to their experience of a traumatic event (Yule, 2001). When investigating children's reactions to traumatic events, most re- search focuses on posttraumatic stress or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). As discussed above, PTSD involves the re-experiencing the traumatic event, avoidance of stimuli and emotions connected to the traumatic event and hyper-arousal (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Research by Terr et al. (1983) showed that children, as well as adults, can suffer from PTSD. Theory development about trauma and PTSD in children is not as progressed as research on PTSD in adults. Thus, the existing theories are not automatically being applicable to children. Children have different cognitive abilities that allow them to process traumatic events than adults (Salmon & Bryant, 2002). They are in a different developmental stage, with fewer or different capabilities to understand the trauma. Similar to

adults, however, not all children who experience a traumatic event develop PTSD (Ozer, Best, Lipsey, & Weiss, 2003), although the risk and protective factors for children's development of PTSD are still not clear. A number of theories about children and PTSD have been proposed (La Greca, Silverman, Vernberg, & Prinstein, 1996; Pynoos, Steinberg, & Piacentini, 1999), however, this topic is in need of further research and theory generation.

Qualitative research provides a strong basis for theory building, and its methods are developed for that aim. Qualitative methods are well suited to understanding children's experience and method of processing trauma. The sensitive nature of the topic, and the children's experience with trauma requires the need for research methods that provide children with the opportunity to recall their experiences using their own words and expressions, as opposed to responding to questions in a survey questionnaire that would serve the purposes of a quantitative research. A summary of qualitative studies conducted is presented in order to have an overview on the topic (Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Jones, Young, & Sutton, 2005; Pope, Mays, & Popay, 2007).

In a qualitative study conducted in Iraq during the US military operation, the researcher investigated Iraqi children's experiences of the war. "The "Shock and Awe" campaign of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" began on March 22nd and delivered 320 Tomahawk missiles on its first day" (Duffy, 2003, p. A1). Although the war was widely publicized, little

attention was paid to the psychological impact of the offensive on Iraqi children. The majority of the children interviewed were living in the city of Mosul at the time of the US campaign, and all had been exposed to missile fire and subsequent violence. The children interviewed ranged in age from 9 to 13 years, with a 1:1 male to female ratio. In addition to the trauma experienced of the war, children reported death of family members due to natural causes as well as the war, injuries of family members, and being forced to temporarily move out of their homes to live with relatives as other difficult and disruptive life events.

Even seven months after the end of the war in Iraq, as officially announced, the majority of children interviewed continued to display high levels of distress. Many children had strong visualizations and memories of the traumatic events, intense flashbacks and nightmares, a fear of death, and recalled the traumatic events as extremely frightening.

In terms of coping with the trauma, many children remained close to their parent, which was found to have reduced fears and provided a sense of security for the child. Children interviewed were also likely to use adult political speech to describe the events that had occurred rather than discussing the feelings that they invoked.

A distressing finding of the study was that many participant children did not have hopes and aspirations for the future as other children do. Rather than discussing potential career or educational aspirations, the majority of

children expressed their wish to fight the American occupying power or die as martyrs. (Kasim Al-Mashat, Norman E. Amundson et al, 2006).

Another similar study was conducted in the Congo in 2001, two years after the start of the on-going conflict in the area. 88 children participated in semi-structured interviews in Butembo city in North-Kivu, which was one of the areas most affected by the conflict and characterized by its instability and insecurity. 73% of the children interviewed had lost a member of their family during the fighting, and 95.5% had been shot at. 83.6% of the children participants reported an 'imminent armed attack' as the most pressing threat they felt to their safety, while 17.4% cited 'massive military presence in the city' as the most prominent threat to them 80% of participants of the study reported feeling unsafe (Mambo T Masinda, Muhindo Muhesi, 2004).

When asked how they had responded to a shooting attack, 40.5% had felt terrorized, while 51.1% tried to escape to safety. The conclusions of this study were that children and adolescents alike are traumatized by traumatic events related to war and violent conflict, and the effects can be seen in both direct reaction to the trauma, and indirect such as in declining academic performance. (Mambo T Masinda, Muhindo Muhesi, 2004).

In 2002 a study was done in Bosnia Herzegovina in two cities with the aim to understand the political violence and psychological well-being of children through qualitative means, The youth interviewed had experienced a protracted conflict in which they had little participation, and

suffered from long periods of anxiety in which they worried about the safety of loved ones who were fighting (Lynne Jones, 2002).

The study found that similar numbers of children from both Serb and non-Serb communities displayed psychological issues two years after the end of the conflict. Interestingly, disengagement, presented by disinterest in the causes and explanations for the war, was linked with greater psychological well-being and feelings of security. Attempting to search for a meaning for the conflict was associated with feelings of insecurity and less psychological well-being. These relationships depended on the specific contexts in which the participants lived (Lynne Jones, 2002).

A relevant qualitative study was done in Palestine at the beginning of the First Intifada in December 1987. All Palestinian children were touched directly or indirectly by the ongoing violence associated with the uprising. During this study, which took place during the first two years of the Intifada, 159 children and youth under the age of 16 were killed, and more than 50,000 were injured.

Under the difficult nature of the political and security situation at that time, interviews with 20 children and their mothers were done to evaluate the consequences and behavioral changes of these children.

As shown in the results there were many traumatic events in the children's experiences: shooting, beating, house demolition, prison and educational deprivation. As the children stated, there was a constant danger of being tear-gassed, their house being raided, being directly threatened by

soldiers, being detained by soldiers, beaten, terrorized by settlers, or imprisoned. Behavioral and personality changes occurred: children suffered sleeping disturbances, bed-wetting, anxiety, aggressive behaviors, and withdrawal symptoms. Fears related to going to school also appeared because of the harassment of soldiers of the children on their way (Kathleen Kostelny , James Garbarino, 1994).

Another relevant study was conducted in the Gaza Strip by Altawil, M. et al. in 2008. 1,137 children ranging in age from 10 to 18 years were selected randomly from all areas of Gaza to participate in a survey that aimed to gather information and perspectives on the long-term effects of conflict and occupation on Palestinian children. All participants of the study had been exposed to a minimum of three traumatic events, the majority of which were humiliation of oneself or a family member (99% of respondents), the sound of explosions (97%), witnessing of the funeral of a martyr (85%), and seeing attacks by tanks or military planes (84%). According to the survey results, 41% of children suffered from PTSD, displayed through cognitive symptoms in 25% of children (restlessness, constant thinking of the trauma, or feeling insecure); emotional symptoms in 22% (nightmares, bed wetting, feeling lonely, sad or fearful, or being tense and angry); social symptoms in 22% (aggressive or rude behavior, rejection of authority figures, or difficulty playing games); somatic symptoms in 14% (headaches, stomachaches, hypochondriasis, or somatization); and academic symptoms in 17% (difficulty paying attention at school, lower grades, or disruptive behavior in the classroom).

In 2005, UNICEF EAPRO initiated a regional study on “Children Caught in Conflicts: Assessing the impact of armed conflict on children in East Asia and the Pacific.” The study had three objectives: firstly, to increase available knowledge about children who have experienced or lived through armed conflict; secondly, to develop protection strategies for such children, especially those living in low-intensity conflict situations; and thirdly, to promote a participatory approach in which children and youth are involved in the creation of the strategies. Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand were the three target countries of the study discuss the results of a study on the psychosocial impact of armed conflict on children and families in the Philippines using a multi-method inquiry on the topic. Fear was the main factor that dictated how children and families made decisions. The results of the study show that when violence had become the norm for the participants, an atmosphere of fear and mistrust was created.

Another study was held in Kurdistan, Northern Iraq in 2004 that sought to understand the effects on children of trauma from experiencing massacres, mass deportations, and attempted ethnic cleansing of the Kurdish people by the Iraqi government;153 Kurdish boys and girls with an average age of approximately 12 years participated in the study. The aims of the research were three-fold; firstly, to investigate behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social coping mechanisms for traumatic and stressful situations as lived by the Kurdish children; secondly, to identify the relationship between the severity of traumatic events and coping responses; and thirdly, to discover the level of effectiveness of coping dimensions in

terms of their ability to safeguard children's mental health from negative trauma effects.

The study found that five coping mechanisms were prevalent among the target group: Reconstruction, Active Affiliation, Passiveness, and Denial.

"The nature of traumatic events determined their impact on coping strategies. Family-related hardships were associated with low Reconstructing, and economic hardships with low Active Affiliation, while military violence was not associated with coping dimensions. The effectiveness of coping dimensions was symptom specific. Active Affiliation moderated between exposure to traumatic events and posttraumatic symptoms and sleeping difficulties, and Denial between exposure to traumatic events and aggressive symptoms" (Raija-Leena Punama[~]ki, et al, 2004).

In 2010 a study was conducted about distressed children having lived in a conflict situation in northern Uganda; the research is based on a one-year ethnographic study (2004-2005) with children ranging in age from 9 to 16 years. The war in Uganda was characterized by direct loss of life, poverty, a lack of adequate health care, deterioration of the Ugandan social fabric, and neglect and abuse of children.

The study collected children's stories in order to shed light on the nature, severity and expression of children's symptoms of distress. The research also seeks to understand children's recognition of emotional

suffering, as well as the coping mechanisms they used. The findings of the researched showed high levels of emotional distress among children due to their exposure to extremely stressful events, such as death, abductions, disease, and gender-based violence (Grace Akello, et al, 2010).

“Urman et al. (2001) conducted a study entitled “Children's Experiences of Traumatic Events: The Negotiation of Normalcy and Difference”. They investigated the experience of childhood trauma through examining children's trauma narratives, and how the children told their stories.

Six children participated in the study ranging in age from 9–13 years; the child participants had experienced a traumatic event within the past two years before the study, and a semi-structured interview was used.

"Children’s experience of trauma can be thought of as proceeding through the following stages: (i) normalcy before the trauma, (ii) an interruption of this normalcy as the trauma enters the child’s world, (iii) the traumatic event, (iv) the end of the traumatic event, and (v) the child’s current outlook”

Participants of the study followed this process, expressing everyday thoughts in the first phase, and subsequently negotiating between acceptance that the trauma is actually happening or has happened, which is manifested in feelings of anger, fear, shock and sadness, and denial, which is manifested in confusion and avoidance.

A 2003 study conducted in the West Bank, Palestine by Ahmed M. Baker and Hana M. Kanan attempted to assess the psychological effect of military violence on children as a function of distance from traumatic event.

Study participants were Palestinian children from the West Bank between 5 and 16 years old who were from areas that were subject to aerial bombardment from the Israeli military. The sample was categorized by distance of the living dwelling of the participants from the site of the bombing.

The results showed that although children's living in areas distant enough from the site of the bombing that their physical well-being was not in jeopardy, their psychological security was nonetheless threatened. Psychological distance from a traumatic event must be taken into consideration in tandem with physical proximity.

A qualitative children interview studies shows that interviewing children, however, gives opportunities to gain information about their subjective experiences for these children. A consideration of literature dealing with the principles of child interviewing shows that there is surprisingly little guidance available on conversational methods involving children. The empirical and conceptual foundation for child interviewing is not very clear. Novice researchers especially may need recommendations about how to conduct a qualitative child interview. The method must suit both the purpose and the context of the study (Kortessluoma RL, 2003).

Another article found that interviews with children, especially around distressing events, requires researchers to understand the development of narrative competence in children and to appraise the overall developmental Age of the children who will participate in their studies (Sharron Docherty, Margarete Sandelowski, 1999).

Table.1: Articles Matrix- Literatures of the research:

Title of the Study	Author/s, Year	Aim of the Study	Results of the Study
“Iraqi Children’s War Experiences: The Psychological Impact of “Operation Iraqi Freedom”	Kasim Al-Mashat, 1, 2 Norman E. Amundson et al, 2006).	A qualitative study that investigated Iraqi children’s experiences of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” and the meaning it had for them given their cultural context	"Results indicate a high level of distress amongst the majority of the children." "A number of themes emerged that pertained to the children’s war experiences, the meaning it had for them, how they coped, and their future hopes."
Children and adolescents' exposure to traumatic war stressors in the Democratic Republic of Congo	Mambo T asinda & Muhindo Muhesi 2009.	This study focuses on post-traumatic reactions of children and adolescents in the Democratic Republic of Congo	Results show that children and adolescents are traumatized by conflict-related traumatic events including shooting and loss of family members, indicated by high levels of insecurity.
Adolescent understandings of political violence and psychological well-being: a qualitative study	Lynne Jones, 2002	The Harvard Trauma Questionnaire and Hopkins Symptoms Checklist (HSCL-25) were given to 337 13–15 year olds who had lived through the recent war in	Relationship was found between the degree to which adolescents seek the meaning of political violence and their

from Bosnia Herzegovina		Bosnia Herzegovina to explore their understandings of the war and their subjective perceptions of their psychological well-being	psychological well-being
Coping with The Consequences of Living in Danger: the case of Palestinian Children and Youth	Kathleen Kostelny and James Garbarino, 1994).	A qualitative study done in Palestine at the beginning of the first Intifada in December 1987. The study investigated the relationship of being under war conflict and the reactions of these children, evaluating the consequences and behavioral changes for these children.	"There were many threatening events the children's experiences: shooting, beating, house demolition, prison and educational deprivation. As the children said there was a constant danger of being tear-gassed, house raided, directly threatened by soldiers, detained by soldiers, beaten, terrorized by settlers, and imprisoned."
The Effects of Chronic War Trauma among Palestinian Children	Altawil, M. et al (2008)	To explore the long-term effects of war and occupation on Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip	"Exposure to chronic traumatic experiences led to an increase in the Symptoms of PTSD among Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip. The most prevalent types of PTSD were: cognitive symptoms, emotional symptoms social behavioral disorders, academic behavioral disorders,somatic symptoms.",

<p>Children Caught in Conflicts: Assessing the Psychosocial Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in the Philippines</p>	<p>Elizabeth De Castro, et al (2012)</p>	<p>"To discuss the results of a study on the psychosocial impact of armed conflict on children and families in the Philippines"</p>	<p>Results were that fear affected the children and their families and was integral in most of their choices and decisions.</p>
<p>Impact of traumatic events on coping strategies and their effectiveness among Kurdish children</p>	<p>Raija-Leena Punama`ki, et al.(2004)</p>	<p>This study focuses on Kurdish children, who are survivors of the atrocities targeted towards their people. It aimed to learn about their coping responses.</p>	<p>"The nature of traumatic events determined their impact on coping strategies. Family-related hardships were associated with low Reconstructing, and economic hardships with low Active Affiliation, Active Affiliation moderated between exposure to traumatic events and post traumatic symptoms and sleeping difficulties, and Denial between exposure to traumatic events."</p>
<p>Silencing distressed children in the context of war in northern Uganda :An analysis of its dynamics and its health consequences</p>	<p>Grace Akello, et al, 2010</p>	<p>"To trace the reasons for the silencing of their distress. Which provide insight in to the nature, severity and expression of children`s symptoms of distress. And to describes children`s recognition of emotional suffering and their views on coping strategies."</p>	<p>It was found that the children's lives were characterized by "high rates of exposure to extreme events, such as deaths, child abductions, disease epidemics, gender-based violence and poverty. Their level of</p>

			emotional distress was high."
Children's Experiences of Traumatic Events: The Negotiation of Normalcy and Difference	Michelle L. Urman, et al, 2001	"To examine the experience of childhood trauma. Aspects addressed were the children's 'trauma narratives', and their current outlook after the trauma."	Child participants Used a process of 'negotiation', in which they vacillated between acceptance that the trauma was occurring or had occurred, and denial of the trauma.
Psychological impact of military violence on children as a function of distance from traumatic event: the Palestinian case	Ahmed M. Baker, Hana M. Kanan, 2003	The psychological well-being of 114 Palestinian children aged 5-16 was assessed with Questionnaires.	"that the well-being of Palestinian children was negatively affected by the military and political violence and psychological security is as crucial as physical security to the wellbeing of children."

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative based research approach, which allows the researcher to get at the core of an individual's lived experience of a particular phenomenon. The goal of this type of research is to provide a chance for children to describe their own personal experience and to understand how these experiences attribute to the events.

This study will explore the phenomenological experience of those Palestinian children facing daily traumatic events.

Descriptive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, J.A. & Osborn, M, 2003) will be used because it fits the stated goals and purposes of this study. As a qualitative methodological approach, it seeks to understand how children's experiences attribute meaning to the events of their lives. It also recognizes the active role of the researcher in the investigation process, specifically the subjectivity and personal biases that she or he will invariably bring to the study.

3.1 Design

The design to be used is a qualitative phenomenological descriptive design. This design used to study the lived experience of the people by describing the aspect of this experience by focusing on what exists; however, this design doesn't focus on interpretation of the experience, but

it will rather be indicator for the people's thoughts and feelings (Giorgi A, Giorgi B, 2003).

"The fundamental principle of the phenomenological approach is that the researcher must remain true to the facts and how they reveal themselves (Husserl E, 1960). To help achieve this, Giorgi, (1975) created his own phenomenological method to aid analysis of data. "Both inside, and to a greater extent, outside, the world of social science, the lack of structure to the phenomenological approach has been of concern since rigor is not always demonstrated." This is particularly evident in the professions of psychology and nursing (Omery, 1983).

As a result, a range of frameworks has been formulated by psychologists such as VanKaam (1966), Giorgi (1970) and Colaizzi (1978). Many scholars and professionals believe that these frameworks give added rigor to a study (Lynch-Sauer, 1985; Hilton, 1988; Morse, 1990) and have been used by a range of nurses who have adopted a phenomenological approach (Benner, 1985; Haase, 1987; Koch, 1993).

3.1.1 Giorgi – Phenomenological Psychology

The method used in this research study is descriptive phenomenological human science, which was developed by Giorgi in 1985). The aim of phenomenological psychology is to produce "accurate descriptions of human experience." For this reason, phenomenologists working using this method mainly use descriptions provided by others, as gathered through interviews (Giorgi, 1985).

Purpose of Giorgi's phenomenological research is "to capture as closely as possible the way in which the phenomenon is experienced" (Giorgi, & Giorgi, 2003). In Giorgi's work, phenomenology is used to search for psychological meanings that make up the events in the participants' life. The concept is to study how individuals live, or specifically their behavior and way of experiencing situations (Giorgi, 1985). Their descriptions are based on their experiences within the context in which the experience is taking place. Central to this research is the lived context of the individual. The meaning of the phenomenon such as the experience of the Palestinian children facing traumatic events can only be revealed in its totality and its relationships with its particulars and therefore essences can only be seen in every constituent of the meaning. The role of the phenomenological analysis is to discern the psychological essence of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1985).

The process of research in phenomenology starts with the description of a situation as experienced in daily life (Giorgi, 1985).

In trying to obtain these descriptions, a researcher sets aside any prior thoughts or judgment about the phenomenon under study. In so doing, the researcher brackets the phenomenon. The bracketing or the epoch is primarily undertaken in order to reveal the personal reality of the individual for whom the phenomenon under study appears (Ashworth, 2006). What needs to be bracketed are those presuppositions that have to do with claims made from objective science or other authoritative sources (Giorgi, 1985).

Phenomenology attempts to offer insightful descriptions of the way the world is experienced perfectly rather than the way it is conceptualized, categorized or reflected (van Manen, 1990). In this context, the children facing traumatic events are at the center of the inquiry.

3.1.2 Position of the investigator:

The observer is more part of the phenomenon being studied, because in order to understand personal meanings and subjective experiences one has to be involved with the lives of the people being studied.(Jane .R,Jane.L,2003).

In quantitative research precise measuring instruments and strictly defined variables somehow limit the inquiry within the demarcations of the instruments and the definitions. Self-expression by the subjects becomes external to the inquiry. Thus qualitative research is a form of open-ended inquiry which utilizes the in-depth case study approach, and requires the investigator's direct involvement in the lives of the informants with direct observation as a primary data-gathering device (Wyatt, Adams, 2014).

Therefore, like all studies qualitative studies must also face the challenge of external and internal validity. In my case, as the main investigator, I have been challenged by the deep sympathy toward the sample of the research, their struggle against the occupation. Being Palestinian, in my case, could facilitate identification between my own feelings of being oppressed by the Israeli Occupiers and those of the respondents.

To avoid bias in the results interpretation I have prolonged the period of study to minimize distortion and I have asked the subjects if the observations concerning them were correct and reflective of their experiences.

3.2 Study Participants

The participants sample was 15 children between 6 to 14 years from a village nearby an Israeli settlement and the Separation Wall. The village is exposed to daily military incursions and night raids. As a protest to the confiscation of their lands, the citizens are demonstrating each Friday. The sample was purposive in order to achieve the study goals.

3.3 Sample size

Purposeful sampling was used for the recruitment of participants for this study. Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative research. It involves selecting research participants according to the needs of the study (Glaser, 1967). In that, researchers choose participants who give a richness of information that is suitable for detailed research (Patton, 1980).

The sample for this study is a purposive sample. We have, through contacts and acquaintances, found the 15 participants who can give their and their family's consent to participate in the study. According to the Giorgi method, three interviews are sufficient to achieve the purpose of the study (Giorgi, 1985). Semi-structured interviews were conducted.

Inclusion criteria:

- * Children between 6-14 years of age.

Exclusion criteria:

- * Children with developmental disorders.

3.4 Setting

Data was collected from the participants inside their houses in the village, in a private room.

3.5 Selection of the Study Instruments

The interview process was done using a semi-structured interview guide with different themes and underlying issues designed from the study purpose and research questions. The interview guide acted as a support to ensure that the important issues were not forgotten during the interview. It also served to organize the discussion by designating the order in which different themes were addressed. The interview guide was used as a checklist to ensure that all the themes were addressed instead of letting the interview questions guide the conversation. This allowed the interviewees to generally feel relaxed and natural, rather than formal.

3.6 Data collection

The interviews were held in a private room in the house of every child. For each informant that was interviewed, a consent form from the

parents was obtained, and an information form about the aim of the research and the rights of the participants was delivered. Collection of data was done through recorded interviews after taking the permission from the participants and their families.

The informed consent documentation provided was explained in detail. It included a description of the study, and the purposes, risks, and confidentiality issues associated with this study (see Appendix A).

A demographic questionnaire was provided (see Appendix B) which requested information regarding name, address, telephone number and/or email address, gender identification, age, and level of education.

Each interview took between 45 and 60 minutes, although shorter narratives exist. The interview began with a question and the informant was allowed to speak freely. The questions were open -ended and free of judgments to the extent possible in order not to include the researcher's own assumptions. The interviewer has avoided asking leading questions, but rather sought concrete descriptions of events, feelings, etc. (Robinson, 2007) (See Annex C).

Sound quality was good on all recorded interviews, which allowed the interviews to be easily transcribed without noise. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and all identifying features were removed to ensure anonymity. All interviews were first listened to, and then printed out. Finally, they were summarized similarly to what is called a meaningful merger operation. Some quotes were saved in their original form.

Trustworthiness of the data can be ensured by appropriate sample selection to ensure credibility, by showing the logic flow of the data collection and analysis, and by verifying the findings with the informants to demonstrate fittingness, or transferability of the findings (Holloway, 2002). The interviews conducted for this study focused on information about children's lived experience in facing daily life under the threat of oppressive and often violence military occupation policies in a very sensitive situation as described previously.

3.7 Data Analysis

Phenomenological psychologists analyze their data by using a systematic and rigorous process. Data analysis consists of four consecutive steps that must be undertaken in their order (Robinson, 2007). Prior to the analysis, each interview was transcribed verbatim. All steps in the analysis were performed within the phenomenological reduction (Giorgi, 1997).

In order to present the study in writing, the method, purpose, and research questions were considered as coherent and not as separate parts. The analysis of the material began from the time of the beginning of the data collection. The understanding of how to analyze the collected material has been evident to the researcher since making the choice to utilize a qualitative method. The interview guide has been designed as a breakdown of the various themes in addition to background information.

All steps in the analysis were performed within the phenomenological reduction (Robinson & Englander 2007; Giorgi, 1985, 1997).

"Step 1: Getting the sense of the whole statement by reading the entire description.

Step 2: Discriminating meaning units within a psychological perspective.

Step 3: Transforming the subject's every day expressions into psychological language.

Step 4: Synthesizing transformed meaning units into a consistent statement of the structure of the phenomenon".

3.8 Pilot study

The above method was tested in the pilot study. The pilot study involved one informant. In the current study, it was a child from the village who was excluded from the final data collection of the study. The interviewer contacted the family of the child and informed them about the study orally and submitted in writing the information about the research, and consent was given at the moment of the interview. The interview was recorded and analyzed.

A few modifications occurred after the pilot study and resulted in the revision of the original guide. Namely, the first few questions were directed at the experiences of the children during weekly demonstrations, night

raids, and settler attacks. We realized that this directed the child to speak as an adult, making a chronicle of events with very little space for emotional bonds. After a confrontation with other specialists in qualitative researches and trauma related to childhood, it was agreed to start the interview with the child's description of his/her daily routine and play time. All of the questions were also changed to be in an easier language in order to fit the mentality and mood of the children. One question was omitted, which was: "What has this situation changed in your life?"

In fact, it was also acknowledged that the age group of our study was born during the struggle of their village; thus, they never had a 'before the struggle' and have not yet had an 'after the struggle'.

3.9 Credibility and dependability

Matters relating to the implementation of interviews and analysis can indicate the survey's reliability. Prior to the interviews, the researcher wrote what findings were expected from the survey in order to be conscious of how the researcher's background might color the survey. The author could thus greater curb his expectations (Robson, 2002). Researchers may, by making themselves aware of their own attitudes, become better listeners who attempt to put themselves aside and take the dialogue of the participant seriously. All interviews were recorded on a tape and transcribed verbatim. This raises the level of credibility compared to a solely note-taking method (Robson, 2002).

Credibility of the data is also based on the level of truth the participants relate to the researcher. (Malterud, 2003). In this study the experiences of children facing traumatic events in the daily demonstrations were sought, and it was assumed that an experience is subjective and thus true for the one who tells it.

It is important that the analysis and presentation of findings is made in a credible manner. The study will follow the analysis model of Giorgi (1985) as described above and will endeavor to be true to the stories of children. A phenomenological approach to the theme was selected for this study, which will give the researcher more dimensions to the findings. Using a developed analytical model will give opportunity to test the analysis that will be done (Robinson, 2007; Robson, 2002).

3.10 Evaluating the Quality of Phenomenological Research

In phenomenological research, "value is established by honoring concrete individual instances and demonstrating some fidelity to the phenomenon" (Wertz, 2005). Often, readers are invited to judge the soundness of the analysis of the data by including respondents exact words and other raw data into the presentation of findings.

"The quality of any phenomenological study can be judged in its relative power to draw the reader into the researcher's discoveries allowing the reader to see the worlds of others in new and deeper ways"(Polkinghorne, 1983).

Polkinghorne (1983) presents four qualities that are aimed at aiding the reader in evaluating the credibility of phenomenological findings, which are: vividness, accuracy, richness and elegance. This presentation of the study findings, thus, attempts to generate a sense of reality that draws the reader in, to provide the reader with a recognizable phenomenon, to invoke the reader's emotions, and to describe the circumstances gracefully and clearly.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

This study was approved by An-Najah National University's Research Ethics Board. Consent was obtained from informants to take part in the study. The informants who attended were informed by the interviewer, both verbally and in writing, about the purpose of the interview and study, and consent was taken at the time of the interview. The participants were informed that the interview will be conducted in a private room in which only the informant and one of his/her parents were present with the interviewer and that the interview will be recorded by tape recorder and that no individuals can be identified after text processing. The informants and their parents were also informed of the voluntary nature to participate in the study and that at any time they can withdraw from the interview. They were informed that the data would be stored until the investigation was completed. All the material from the interviews would then be destroyed.

On the information sheet there were telephone numbers for the interviewer and supervisor in the case that any issues would arise and if the informant felt the need for further discussion.

These considerations are based on the Helsinki Agreement of the World Medical Association (Helsinki, 1964) on ethical guidelines for nursing research on volunteerism, to withdraw from the project, potential risks or discomfort, anonymity, confidentiality and contacts for any information needed.

Phenomenological studies are always retrospective (Hedelin, 2001a). The children told their stories about being in the demonstrations and how they lived through them. To construct the stories seemed to be a natural human process that assisted the children in understanding their experiences and themselves (Pennebaker, 2000).

Confidentiality of the records and information were mentioned in the beginning of interview. The informants' identities were protected fully. No names or other information that may reveal informants' identities was reported.

Chapter 4

Results

The current study explored the experience of Palestinian children facing traumatic events through the case of a village under military occupation; the methodology adopted was a qualitative descriptive method.

Interviews results:

15 respondents were interviewed, ranging in age from 6 to 14 years old, male and female; the analysis of the data is based on Giorgi's phenomenological methodology.

Table 2. Demographic data of the respondents at the time of the interview:

No	Name code	Age	Gender	Grade
1	R1	9 years	Female	3 rd class
2	R2	11 years	Female	5 th class
3	R3	9 years	Male	3 rd class
4	R4	8 years	Male	2 nd class
5	R5	14 years	Female	9 th class
6	R6	14 years	Female	8 th class
7	R7	9 years	Male	3 rd class
8	R8	12 years	Male	6 th class
9	R9	9 years	Male	4 th class
10	R10	9 years	Female	3 rd class
11	R11	7 years	Female	1 st class
12	R12	10 years	male	4 th class
13	R13	7 years	male	1 st class
14	R14	9 years	male	3 rd class
15	R15	9 years	Female	3 rd class

From the analysis of the interviews, major themes and subthemes emerged as summarized in the table below.

Table 3. Themes and sub themes that emerged from the children's interviews

1. Exposure to Traumatic Events	1.1. Life threatening 1.2 Witnessing violence 1.3 Direct violence 1.4 Lack of safety 1.5 Fear
2. Normalization	2.1 Role playing the traumatic events 2.2 Underestimation of danger
3. Resilience	3.1 Self-efficacy 3.2 Awareness and belonging. 3.3 Trust in adult

1ST theme (Exposure to Traumatic Events):

Exposure to Traumatic Events is the major theme emerging from the experiences of the children; in fact all of the respondents related having been exposed to several traumatic events reported as subthemes, such as life threats, direct violence, witnessing violence, deprivation of freedom, and lack of safety.

Respondents expressed their experiences as follows:

“We started to run away from the gas so we didn't suffocate, and they tried to arrest us and wounded us”. R1

Children of the sample experienced traumatic events during Friday demonstration, in night raids, and direct or witnessed exposure to arrests, injuries and killing.

“I was scared because it hurts my eyes; I couldn’t see, and if I ran, maybe I would fall down and something bad would happen”. R2

1-1 Life threatening:

A life threat is situation in which a person has the chance of dying. Facing life-threatening events can harm people physically and psychologically.

The children of our sample all spoke of dangerous situations for themselves or others, which led them to believe that they might die.

A 9 year-old respondent reflects on this theme as follows:

“I remember once in the past we went to my grandpa's house; the army start to fire tear gas and we went away from the windows; some of the curtains burned and the gas bottle in the stairs exploded; we couldn’t escape so they took us down from the windows.” R3

This event was reported by the majority of the respondents as an experience of deep fear and disappointment.

1-2 Witnessing Violence:

Research has shown that children that are not being the direct targets of violence have nevertheless been affected by it. Indeed, research on negative results of being exposed to violence has grown in the past years (J.Davis and E. Briggs, 2000).

Most of the research in this area suggests that children exposed to violence are at increased risk for emotional, behavior, academic, and social problems (Kolbo, Blakely, & Engelman, 1996; Pfouts et. al., 1982).

The entire samples of respondents in this study have witnessed violence against friends and family members, either during weekly demonstrations or night raids.

“When the army entered the village and started to search the house, sometimes they would take my dad and my brother, and I would be afraid. Once they took my father on Friday and they left him at night; they tied him up and hit him on his feet; he was without shoes”. R10

Often, children witnessing violence may experience long-term problems with anxiety, depression, anger, self-esteem, aggression and interpersonal relationships (Carlson, 1990; Jouriles, Murphy, O. Leary, 1989; Silvern, et al., 1995; Sternberg, et al., 1993).

Many different episodes about aggressions were reported by the children; few of them perceived the violence as an anticipation of something worst it might happened to them.

The quotation below is expressing this fear:

"Sometimes we would all be sitting around together and the kids and I would hide from the soldiers while the young men would be in the front throwing stones, and we would feel like something bad was going to

happen. Once my cousin got injured in his finger and it had to be amputated." R4

1-3 Direct Violence:

In the village of our sample, direct violence is visible; many of the respondents were victims of physical and psychological abuses from the soldiers.

Some of the respondents stated the following:

"The first time I went to the demonstrations I was in the 4th grade. I started to chant and I was afraid. We started chanting in demonstration and the soldiers told us we have 5 minutes to finish the demonstration. When we arrived to the house closest to the army, the five minutes had finished and they started to beat us." R2

Another child reported the violent event as following:

"The army starts to enter the village from all places; they surround the village, and when we go to the demonstration and reach the army, they start to fire. This Friday they arrested three female demonstrators; they throw tear gas at us from a close distance, and they shot one of us with tutu bullets" R8.

'Tutu' bullets are 0.22 caliber bullets that were outlawed by Israeli courts in 2001 as crowd dispersal methods. Neither adults nor children were

excluded from brutality; all have been under the threat of violence, and sometimes direct harm, as one of the respondents said:

“We faced them and they started to throw tear gas, and shoot rubber bullets and so on. A lot of youth and children were present, but the soldiers didn't care what the age of the children was, or whether there were women, elderly or solidarity foreigners there. They don't care about anything, and they continued to throw tear gas until we started to suffocate, and then they tried to target us with rubber bullets.” R1

These children have come to be known as the silent or invisible victims.

Everyone responds differently to terror. Like adults, some children are naturally resilient. Others can suffer scars that, untreated, last well into adulthood. Among the repercussions most commonly endured by children exposed to violence are: post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, attachment issues, difficulty concentrating, sleep disorders, suicidal thoughts, alcohol and substance abuse and delinquent behavior.

1.4 Lack of Safety:

Safety is the basic need for survival, such as food and shelter; a lack of safety for a child may result in serious impairment of his growth.

There shall be peace on earth, but not until all children daily live in peace and are safe. A child need not live such a life as the one under occupation in the village of study. Childhood can and must be preserved. Children

have the right to survive, develop, and be protected and safe. Respondents express this theme:

“They enter the village at night and raid the houses usually; they throw tear gas and noisy sounds bombs, and sometimes they use the jeep speaker to be loud and make people afraid; they irritate me and I am afraid”.R17

“When they throw tear gas I close my eyes, and then I go home and close windows because the army fires on the houses, then I hide in the sleeping room, and if they come to the house they search everywhere. Once, while I was sleeping, the army came with the dogs I was scared when heard the dog, and I said I must go to sleep because I am afraid”.R11

To feel insecure even inside your home is very harmful and distressful for the children. One of the respondents stated:

“I remember once in the past we went to my grandpa's house; the army start to fire tear gas and we went away from the windows; some of the curtains burned and the gas bottle in the stairs exploded; we couldn't escape so they took us down from the windows.” R3

Another issue is related to the restriction of the rights of people in several ways, like to moving freely or to move outside your home. This is expressed from one of the respondents as follows:

“I go with general transportation from here to Ramallah. Sometimes there is a checkpoint with soldiers that has closed the road so we can't go to school, so we miss our lessons”. R1

“The army continues to invade the village and occupy our land”.R8

The theme of safety is also expressed as follows:

“Sometimes they enter the houses; they raid our house and they ask if we know anyone who threw rocks at them. We tell them that we don't know. Once I was woken up in my room and confused; suddenly I left the room I was surprised that they were in our home. I was scared”. R14

1.5 Fear:

Fear is a vital response to physical and emotional danger—if we didn't feel it, we cannot protect ourselves from legitimate threats. However, we often fear situations that not life-threatening. Traumas or bad experiences can trigger a fear response within us that is hard to keep down.

Ethologists define fear as "a motivational state aroused by specific stimuli that give rise to defensive behavior or escape" (McFarland D, 1987 as cited in Steimer, 2002).

Children of our sample were found to be usually in an ambivalent position about admitting their fears.

They used to act as little adults; they are shown by local and international media as heroes facing alone the entirety of the struggle.

So, they might express their strength more easily than their weakness, although a few respondents did express it as:

“Last Friday the army fired a kind of gas that I don't know that was an orange color. I became a little afraid, and then I went back to avoid suffocation”. R9

“Yeah, the army enters a lot of times, but more in the night; the day before yesterday they entered and I kept sleeping; when the army started to shoot I kept sleeping, even though my brothers went out, I kept sleeping because I was afraid”. R10

2nd Theme (Normalization):

Normalization refers to a social process through which ideas and actions come to be seen as 'normal' and become taken-for-granted or 'natural' in everyday life.

The literature describes the normalizing of horrific events in to the expectations of the individual as a maladaptive coping mechanism.

A causal model is formulated for this thesis that in children exposed to high levels of violence, "cognitions that normalize violence mitigate affective effects of exposure while increasing risk for violent behavior, thus perpetuating violence in the very process of adapting to it psychologically".(Mark, 2010)

Although in the case of our sample we questions if normalizing might be a protective factor as well.

Our respondent merges completely the violence, the danger, and the fear into their daily life.

Respondents express this theme as follow:

“the problem that during I speak my eyes like I laughing, sometimes I went to the mountain or to the valley, we gathered in the village and go down near the gas station, start to sing, sometimes when arrived down we closed the area to prevent them to enter the village if they tried to...they stopped. Sometimes we do joke on them.”R4

Another respondent said:

“We go home set with the family we had our launch and take a rest”.R6

For the children of our sample life is fighting and resisting, with all of its components. All of them was born during the existing struggle, they never experienced anything different from being under siege.

Respondents express this theme as follow:

“The problem is that while I speak, even of something bad, my eyes are laughing. Sometimes I went to the mountain or to the valley; we would gather in the village and go down near the gas station, start to sing, and sometimes when arrived, we closed the area to prevent the army from

entering the village if they were going to try to, and they stopped. Sometimes we make fun of them.” R4

Another respondent said:

“We went home, sat with the family, had our lunch, and took a rest”. R6

2. 1 Role Playing the Traumatic Events:

Play serves crucial functions for the children. It enables children to practice new and more advanced behaviours. It teaches them to anticipate the future. At the same time, play allows for the discharge of a child's emotions. Under extreme stresses, children turn their play effort to very specific purposes. They use their play to try to master their fears and anticipated future. Using the tricks of imagination, stressed children create monotonously grim scenes and characters, which are often repeated. Children of our sample are playing the occupation, dividing themselves into soldiers and protestors, simply to master the trauma.

Role play or dramatic play can be very useful to defuse these feelings and deal with them, relieve stress and reduce anxiety reactions. As they are encouraged to project their anxieties and insecurities through their roles and play, they learn to externalize them, which would be extremely difficult to achieve by using words, because of their young age and the severity of psychological injury.

This theme was expressed as following:

“There was the army and the kids built the tower, and we were the Arabs, and started to throw rocks. If any one of us was injured by small stones, the army took him, the army would start to fire, then we would escape to hide in some place not in the neighborhood; yeah, we escaped”. R3

Another respondent said that the kids play:

“Komser (a hide and seek game), Arab and army, and sometimes when we play Arab and army in the presence of the youth who demonstrate, the real army would come and we would have to stop the game”. R4

“Arab and army game, and hide and seek game”. R8

2-2 Underestimation of danger:

Underestimating danger usually implicates a lack of self-protections.

Negative life events, such as the traumatic events lived by the children of the research, are inevitably distressing and disruptive. Coping with and recovering from such events generally requires a variety of personal and social resources.

Perception of danger differs from person to person and it has to be analyzed in the frame of its cultural and actual environment.

In fact, for our respondent the baseline of fear and related perception of danger it results to be very different from what is expected.

For these children it became normal to face daily threats, their topics conversation are the kinds of bullets that will be used in the next demonstration, whom will might be arrested during the night and the direction of the wind to avoid being poisoned by the gas.

A respondent said:

“When we begin to demonstrate, the army is located below the village, and we go down and we start to quarrel with them. The first time I went to the demonstrations I was in the 4th grade. I started to chant and I was afraid. We started chanting in demonstration and the soldiers told us we have 5 minutes to finish the demonstration. When we arrived to the house closest to the army, the five minutes had finished and they started to beat us. We immediately ran away to the house because it is more safe than any other place”.R2

“We were here in the back because we made plans for how we will reach the house, and when the army was not alert to us we moved around my grandpa's house and they were near the gas station. I tried to break down the barrier of fear. They come from countries I don't know, like Britain, and they claim that it's their homeland.” R2

“The problem is that while I speak, even of something bad, my eyes are laughing. Sometimes I went to the mountain or to the valley; we would gather in the village and go down near the gas station, start to sing, and sometimes when arrived, we closed the area to prevent the army from

entering the village if they were going to try to, and they stopped. Sometimes we make fun of them.” R4

3rd Theme (Resilience):

Resilience is the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens; resilience is that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes. This theme expressed as follows:

“That our hard work will not be in vain. We will try to liberate Palestine until the last day of our life, and Palestine will have its freedom and there will be no existence for Israel, and we will have peace with safety”. R1

What emerged from our study is that resilience is developed by facing trauma and feeling it, rather than avoiding it. Similarly, the children who had participated in pacific resistance had a real sense of power and control, and, in this way, could resist victimization.

3-1 Self-efficacy:

Self-efficacy is the capability to control events to make prevision to know what will happen next. This creates a belief in one's ability to succeed in a particular situation, and contributes to beliefs about capabilities that will produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect our lives; this sub-theme expressed as follows:

“I start to move from one window to the other to see them (the army that enters the village) around the house”. R1

Adaptation to tragic events gave them a strength to cope with the event itself, and the confidence to step forward it.

“When someone is martyred, it is my nature that I don’t let anything get to me; most of the time I smile even there is something bad, like when they arrested mom or someone else, I even started to play with my little brother and make him smile”. R5

“When we met, we made a beautiful plan to retrieve the land that the army took”. R10

Finding solutions during an emergency situation, it is also considered a sign of self-efficacy:

“Gas...it looks like the army added something to it because it caused more tearing. So I couldn't run. I brought a scarf with me, and I put it around my face and despite this, there was still a reaction to the gas”.R2

3-2 Awareness and belonging:

The feeling of belonging, also called belongingness, is the human emotional need to be an accepted member of a group. Whether it is family, friends, co-workers, or a sports team, humans have an inherent desire to belong and be an important part of something greater than themselves. This implies a relationship that is greater than simple acquaintance or

familiarity. The need to belong is the need to give and receive affection from others.

For the children of our sample, feeling belonging to their land, community and family results in a strong protective factor.

“I would like to be a tourist guide....so when people come here from outside I can introduce to them the history of Palestine and my village”.

R6

“I would like to be a lawyer, if I defend a Palestinian I can get him out of prison and also the other prisoners...” R2

A new study finds that when social relationships provide an all-important sense of belonging, people feel that life has more meaning (Lambert et al., 2013).

So, belonging to a group provided meaning over and above the value of others or the help they could provide.

Belonging is more than just bonding; it is really feeling like you fit in with others, which is associated with higher levels of meaningfulness.

Children of the sample have a clear idea of the political situation, they know about their rights:

“It means freedom for my country and feeling safe in it, with peace and justice with no occupation; a country like all countries with no occupation, where children can live like all the children in the world” R1.

Feeling that they have the right to resist give them the power to break the fear:

“I tried to break down the barrier of fear. They come from countries I don’t know, like Britain, and they claim that it’s their homeland.” R2

Anything happens in the village is explained to the children to arise their awareness and their active participation.

This enhances their capacity to deal with the events and also to predict them.

One of the respondent, 9 years old, explain the strategic plan of the Israeli soldiers during night raids:

“There were many young men and the soldiers raided our house and they searched and destroyed everything; they arrested youth and tortured them; they took a picture so they could make a map for the whole village with the pictures of members of each house and numbers for all the houses. For example, this house is No. 5 and belongs to this youth and this one, and so on, so that they know where to go whenever they come to arrest this youth”.R1

3-3 Trust in Adults:

The importance of a child’s close relationship with a caregiver cannot be overestimated. Through relationships with important attachment figures, children learn to trust others, regulate their emotions, and interact with the

world; they develop a sense of the world as safe or unsafe, and come to understand their own value as individuals.

Our ability to develop healthy, supportive relationships with friends and significant others depends on our having first developed those kinds of relationships in our families.

In our study the entire sample of respondents was reassured by the presence of their parents, when responding to the question: “Where and with whom do you feel safe?” They generally addressed no importance to the place, but being with their mother or father was clearly important.

This is expressed as follows:

“During the demonstrations we went to the nearest house, or I would go with adults like my uncle or my father; I would go with anyone knows what to do.”.R6

“To be with Daddy near the soldiers where he took a photo”.R3

Table 4: Analysis of children interviews:

Meaningful Units	Condensation	Sub-theme	Theme
<p>“When I demonstrate I face the army face-to-face, then the army starts to throw tear gas, and I get suffocated. I pick up flags and pictures of someone like Malak and so we start to run away from the gas because of suffocation and they try to arrest us and wound us” R1.</p> <p>“I ran away and I had a difficult time breathing. Once we were in the mountain in area called Al A’ain, and we were just children with no adult. The soldiers followed us and started to throw tear gas. I was with my cousin and we suffocated and had difficulty breathing” R1.</p> <p>“once my brother was about 4 years old, and he was in front of us. One of the tear gas canisters was beside him. He suffocated they escaped and no children except him were there” R2.</p> <p>“They gathered then they went to Friday prayers; then they went to demonstrate below; they started to resist; the army started to shoot and there was a sound of screaming; they threw tear gas and followed the youth and I felt scared” R15.</p> <p>“I was scared because it hurts my eyes; I couldn't see, and I thought if I run I might fall down and something bad would happened” R2.</p> <p>“The army started to shoot live bullets and tear gas and rubber bullets, and we got suffocated” R14.</p>	Suffering from tear gas	Life threats	Exposure to Traumatic events

<p>“And they used tutu live bullets, but I don’t know what they look like” R7.</p> <p>“And they shot one of us by (tutu) live bullets” R8.</p> <p>“They fired live bullets (domdom)” R4.</p> <p>“The clashes are stronger on other days than on Fridays; the army uses live bullets” R5.</p>			
<p>“When we arrived to the house that the army was nearby, the five minutes had finished and they immediately started to beat us” R2.</p> <p>“Suddenly, when the settlers came, the soldiers started hit us; they became more hostile when the settlers come closer to us” R5.</p> <p>“When we reach the army they suppress us, sometimes the army isn’t ready yet so, we reach them. First they start to hit us so all of us turn back except the youth, they stay in the front” R5.</p> <p>“When they started firing, I said, this Friday is bad; it’s better if we don’t go to the demonstration” R7.</p> <p><i>“Once they took my father on Friday and they left him at night; they tied him up and hit him on his feet; he was without shoes. Our uncle came to us. My father was without shoes and feeling cold”. R10</i></p> <p>“This Friday they arrested three female demonstrators; they threw tear gas from a close distance at us, and they shot one of us by tutu bullets” R8.</p>	<p>Beatings from soldiers</p> <p>Witnessing violence and injury of a family member</p>	<p>Witnessing violence</p>	

<p>"Sometimes we would all be sitting around together and the kids and I would hide from the soldiers while the young men would be in the front throwing stones, and we would feel like something bad was going to happen. Once my cousin got injured in his finger and it had to be amputated." R4</p> <p>“When my mom got injured I was on the mountain down near the street. The army Jeeps were there, and my mother went to the street, but before that I told my friend that I feel that something bad will happen. She told me recite Quran and perhaps my fear would be dissolved; I started to recite and before I finished mom fell on the ground, injured and I ran to her. I was scared and started crying” R5.</p> <p>“Sometimes my female cousins don't go to the demonstrations because their families won't let them because they worry about them. We go down with my dad and mom. They will start to shoot at us. Once my brother was about 4 years old, and he was in front of us. One of the tear gas canisters was thrown beside him. He suffocated and they escaped and no children except him were there”R2.</p> <p>“Sometimes one person from the village is injured from bullets with no sound; all the shrapnel hits him They use tutu and dum dum) bullets” R2.</p>			
<p>“Sometimes the army enters the village at night; that night they arrested my cousins and my uncle, but they released him later; I felt scared and tense” R9.</p>	<p>Witnessing a family member arrested</p>		

<p><i>“When the army entered the village and started to search the house, sometimes they would take my dad and my brother, and I would be afraid. Once they took my father on Friday and they left him at night; they tied him up and hit him on his feet; he was without shoes. My uncle came to us. My father was with no shoes and feeling cold”. R10</i></p> <p><i>Most of the time I smile even there is something bad, like when they arrested mom or someone else, I even started to play with my little brother and make him smile”. R5</i></p> <p>“In the village street the army stay near the tower; the youth take one side and we take the other; sometimes the youth are in the front and we are in the back to avoid the soldiers from hitting us; if the army tries to arrest someone we try to help him” R6.</p> <p>“The army enters the village at night and takes youth” R12.</p>			
<p>“The time my uncle was murdered, I was in the mountain; there were demonstrations in solidarity with Gaza, and he was with them; The soldiers began shooting live bullets; when he was injured the youth told us to take him back from the army; and all the women there want to take him; the youth were now in the back and I was in the front and there was a lot of shooting. I went to reach him, and they shot at me and I started to cry. I didn’t reach him; when they left him I became close to him; it was a difficult day” R6.</p>	<p>Witnessing family member murdered</p>		

<p>“The army doesn't only come on Fridays; they came most of the week's days. When my uncle was murdered it was Saturday, not Friday. We heard the sound of shooting and my uncle was with the youth on the mountain. They</p> <p>were throwing rocks at the soldiers. Then the soldiers started to shoot live bullets” R1.</p> <p>I witnessed my family member killed. My uncle was injured in his flank; it did not appear that his situations was dangerous, but then he was transferred to hospital where they identified his condition as serious. Before he entered the operation room, he died” R1.</p> <p>“Yeah, when we went to the mountain there was danger. My brother was injured there, and my uncle was martyred there too, and maybe I will get injured too with live or rubber bullets, or I will be close to the army” R2.</p>			
<p>“Then we went down to the demonstration. When we went down, the army started to shoot at us; we didn't start, they did; started to fire tear gas to prevent us from reaching them; and they used tutu bullets. I don't know what they look like; I mean, I was afraid of this situation” R7.</p> <p>“We were near a boy's house and the soldier in the Jeep started to fire tear gas. There were people who went to them and others escaped to the back” R7.</p> <p>“Like all people; it's normal, I do like them; I always close my nose and mouth and try not to</p>		Direct violence	

<p>smell anything; sometimes I hold my breath until the gas disappears; I sit down in my place and according to the air movements I run; then after a while I go back” R6.</p> <p>“They gathered up in the village center; they went down to the army; then the army start to shoot; sometimes there were injuries and sometimes not. When the army started to shoot I ran away to my home and became scared; then I went to the roof of my grandpa's and watch the events; then the army left, and so the children went to sleep” R10.</p> <p><i>“The army starts to enter the village from all places; they surround the village, and when we go to the demonstration and reach the army, they start to fire. This Friday they arrested three female demonstrators; they throw tear gas at us from a close distance, and they shot one of us with tutu bullets” R8.</i></p> <p>“Once I was sleeping and suddenly I woke up; the army was in front of me; they took everything in the house and the computer that we have; then I went to my grandpa's house because it's close to us” R8.</p> <p>“Not with me; with the other kids when they catch the tear gas and bombs the army sometimes prepares to explode, it can hurt their hands, but I can manage these kind of bombs” R8.</p> <p>“When they reach one of the houses of the village we throw rocks, and they fire bullets (domdom). We suffocated from</p>			
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<p>tear gas, then I went home; not my home because I couldn't see down the road." R4.</p> <p>"We started our demonstrations, and when we arrived to the army they started firing tear gas; we suffocated and ran so that the gas didn't reach us" R3.</p> <p>"They started to throw tear gas, and fire rubber bullets" R1.</p> <p>"We go down and we start to quarrel with them. The first time I went to the demonstrations I was in the 4th grade. I started to chant and I was afraid. We started chanting in demonstration and the soldiers told us we have 5 minutes to finish the demonstration. When we arrived to the house closest to the army, the five minutes had finished and they started to beat us."R2.</p> <p>"Like when we demonstrate, there are some youth on the mountain, and the army Jeep started to shoot them with the tear gas" R2.</p> <p>"The army start to shoot and there was a sound of screaming; they threw tear gas and followed the youth and I felt scared" R15.</p> <p>"They enter the village at night and raid the houses and destroy everything inside. One time they entered our house and I was scared and became angry" R15.</p> <p>"Yes, a lot of invasions- most nights they do invade" R1.</p> <p>"Yeah, during the night the army enters and they take the youth and even in the day time" R4.</p>	<p>Night invasion, threats, and arresting</p>		
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<p>“And in the night they came and destroyed the houses in order to arrest” R5.</p> <p>“The army enters the village at night - they shoot and arrest people” R7.</p> <p>“Once I was sleeping and suddenly I woke up; the army was in front of me; they took everything in the house and the computer that we have; then I went to my grandpa's house because it's close to us” R8.</p> <p>“Sometimes they enter the village at night; that night they arrested two of my cousins and my uncle, but they released him later; I felt scared and tense” R9.</p> <p>“Yeah, a lot of time in the night more; and perhaps before yesterday they enter I keep myself sleeping; when the army start shoot I kept sleeping and I was afraid”R10.</p> <p><i>“I was afraid because there were many young men and the soldiers raided our house and they searched and destroyed everything; they arrested youth and tortured them; they took a picture so they could make a map for the whole village with the pictures of members of each house and numbers for all the houses. For example, this house is No. 5 and belongs to this youth and this one, and so on, so that they know where to go whenever they come to arrest this youth”.R1</i></p>			
<p><i>“I go with general transportation from here to Ramallah. Sometimes there is a checkpoint with soldiers that</i></p>	<p>Deprivation of freedom, transportation limitation</p>		

<p><i>has closed the road so we can't go to school, so we miss our lessons". R1</i></p> <p>“We decide to go down to the valley and the army prevents us and they close the main road, but after that we reached it anyway” R6.</p> <p>“The army continues to invade the village and they occupied our land” R8.</p>			
<p>“The army enters the village at night; they shoot and arrest people” R7.</p> <p>“The soldiers may any time hide back in the trees or any corner or the settlers come with their cars and hit us, or when we are play in the backyard soldiers or settlers may come and kidnap any one of us” R1.</p> <p><i>“We faced them and they started to throw tear gas, and shoot rubber bullets and so on. A lot of youth and children were present, but the soldiers didn't care what the age of the children was, or whether there were women, elderly or solidarity foreigners there. They don't care about anything, and they contined to throw tear gas until we started to suffocate, and then they tried to target us with rubber bullets.” R1</i></p> <p>“I ran away and I had a difficult time breathing. Once we were in the mountain in area called Al A'ain, and we were just children with no adult. The soldiers followed us and started to throw tear gas. I was with my cousin and we suffocated and had difficulty breathing” R1.</p>	<p>Lack of self-protections</p> <p>Direct self-threats</p>	<p>Lack of safety</p>	

<p><i>“I remember once in the past we went to my grandpa's house; the army start to fire tear gas and we went away from the windows; some of the curtains burned and the gas bottle in the stairs exploded; we couldn't escape so they took us down from the windows.” R3</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, the army enters a lot of times, but more in the night; the day before yesterday they entered and I ketpt sleeping; when the army started to shoot I kept sleeping, even though my brothers went out, I kept sleeping because I was afraid”. R10</i></p>			
<p>“Sure I feel afraid for the people in the village and that something bad will happen to them” R5.</p> <p>"Sometimes we would all be sitting around together and the kids and I would hide from the soldiers while the young men would be in the front throwing stones, and we would feel like something bad was going to happen. Once my cousin got injured in his finger and it had to be amputated." R4</p> <p>“The thing I am most afraid of happening is that someone will be arrested or be martyred. ” R5.</p>	<p>Indirect self-threats</p>		
<p>“When we reach the army they suppress us, sometimes the army isn't ready yet so, we reach them. First they start to hit us so all of us turn back except the youth, they stay in the front” R5.</p> <p>“When we arrived to the house that the army was nearby, the five minute had finished and they immediately started to beat us” R2.</p>	<p>Physical threats</p>		

<p>“The first time I went to the demonstrations I was in the 4th grade. I started to chant and I was afraid. We started chanting in demonstration and the soldiers told us we have 5 minutes to finish the demonstration. ”R2.</p> <p><i>Once, while I was sleeping, the army came with the dogs; I was scared when heard the dog, and I said I must go to sleep because I am afraid”.R11</i></p>	Psychological threats		
<p>“The army enters the village at night; they shoot and arrest people” R7.</p> <p><i>“Last Friday the army fired a kind of gas that I don't know that was an orange color. I became a little afraid, and then I went back to avoid suffocation”. R9</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, the army enters a lot of times, but more in the night; the day before yesterday they entered and I kept sleeping; when the army started to shoot I kept sleeping, even though my brothers went out, I kept sleeping because I was afraid”. R10</i></p> <p>“The children go down and start to throw rocks at the army and at night the army raids the houses and arrests someone either from here or from Biet Rima or Qarawa” R8.</p> <p><i>Yeah, the army enters a lot of times, but more in the night; the day before yesterday they entered and I kept sleeping; when the army started to shoot I kept sleeping, even though my brothers went out, I kept sleeping because I was afraid”. R10</i></p>		Fear	

<p>“Sometimes the army enters the village at night; that night they arrested my cousins and my uncle, but they released him later; I felt scared and tense” R9.</p> <p>“The children go down and start to throw rocks at the army and at night the army raids the houses and arrests someone either from here or from Biet Rima or Qarawa” R8.</p> <p>“Once I was sleeping and suddenly I woke up; the army was in front of me; they took everything in the house and the computer that we have; then I went to my grandpa's house because it's close to us” R8.</p> <p>““The thing I am most afraid of happening is that someone will be arrested or be martyred.” R5.</p> <p><i>“I remember once in the past we went to my grandpa's house; the army start to fire tear gas and we went away from the windows; some of the curtains burned and the gas bottle in the stairs exploded; we couldn't escape so they took us down from the windows.” R3</i></p> <p>“A lot of youth and children are present; the soldiers don't care if there are children, women, elderly, or solidarity foreigners - they don't care about anything” R1.</p> <p>“Our family was down in the mountain and there were no ambulances” R1.</p> <p>“I worry about the army coming to arrest us and settlers kidnapping us” R1.</p>			
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<p><i>“When they throw tear gas I close my eyes, and then I go home and close windows because the army fires on the houses, then I hide in the sleeping room, and if they come to the house they search everywhere. Once, while I was sleeping, the army came with the dogs I was scared when heard the dog, and I said I must go to sleep because I am afraid”.R11</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes they enter the houses; they raid our house and they ask if we know anyone who threw rocks at them. We tell them that we don’t know. Once I was woken up in my room and confused; suddenly I left the room I was surprised that they were in our home. I was scared”. R14</i></p>			
<p>“Arab and army game, we divide our self to two groups -one represents the Arabs and the other represents the Israeli army” R8.</p> <p>“we play Arabs and army and a hide and seek game” R11.</p> <p><i>“There was the army and the kids built the tower, and we were the Arabs, and started to throw rocks. If any one of us was injured by small stones, the army took him, the army would start to fire, then we would escape to hide in some place not in the neighborhood; yeah, we escaped”. R3</i></p> <p><i>"Arab and army, and sometimes when we play Arab and army in the presence of the youth who demonstrate, the real army would come and we would have to stop the game”. R4</i></p>		<p>Role playing the trauma</p>	<p>Normalization</p>

<p><i>“The problem is that while I speak, even of something bad, my eyes are laughing. Sometimes I went to the mountain or to the valley; we would gather in the village and go down near the gas station, start to sing.” R4</i></p> <p><i>“sometimes when arrived, we closed the area to prevent the army from entering the village if they were going to try to, and they stopped. Sometimes we make fun of them.” R4</i></p> <p>“Yeah, when we reached our land in the mountain we started singing and shouting; the children started to make a lot of jokes in front of the soldiers” R5.</p>			
<p><i>“There was the army and the kids built the tower, and we were the Arabs, and started to throw rocks. If any one of us was injured by small stones, the army took him, the army would start to fire, then we would escape to hide in some place not in the neighborhood; yeah, we escaped”. R3</i></p> <p><i>“Komser (hide and seek); Arab and army, and sometimes when we play Arab and army in the presence of the youth who demonstrate, the real army would come and we would have to stop the game”. R4</i></p> <p>“Komser and playing on computer - action and war games, like counterstrike” R12.</p> <p>“Sports, komser, and playing on the computer - shooting games” R14.</p>	<p>Acting out violence using games</p>		

<p>“In the afternoon we move stones from one place to another; when finished, the army came. We do this to help youth to jump on the wall to make it easy to escape from the soldiers” R14.</p> <p>“The youth throw rocks at the army” R13.</p>			
<p>“Like all people; it’s normal, I do like them; I always close my nose and mouth and try not to smell anything; sometimes I hold my breath until the gas disappears; I sit down in my place and according to the air movements I run; then after a while I go back” R6.</p> <p>“In the afternoon we move stones from one place to another; when finished, the army came. We do this to help youth to jump on the wall to make it easy to escape from the soldiers” R14.</p> <p>“When they started firing, I said, this Friday is bad; it’s better if we don’t go to the demonstration, but we went and faced them. We were near a house and the soldier in the Jeep started to fire tear gas; there were people who went to them and others who escaped to the back. Of course, the young men are always in the front, not in the back.” R7.</p> <p>“Our family was down in the mountain and there were no ambulances; me and the other kids went to my cousin's house where we took a rest and got something to decrease the effect of the gas, like wet tissues. The gas effect start to decreased and then we returned in front of the army jeeps” R1.</p>		Underestimation of danger	

<p>“When we begin to demonstrate the army was located down from the village; we went down and we started to quarrel with them.</p> <p>The first time I went to the demonstrations I was in the 4th grade. I started to chant and I was afraid. We started chanting in demonstration and the soldiers told us we have 5 minutes to finish the demonstration. When we arrived to the house closest to the army, the five minutes had finished and they started to beat us. and immediately we ran away to the house because it's safer than any other place”. R2</p> <p><i>“We were here in the back because we made plans for how we will reach the house, and when the army was not alert to us we moved around my grandpa's house and they were near the gas station. I tried to break down the barrier of fear. They come from countries I don't know, like Britain, and they claim that it's their homeland.” R2</i></p> <p><i>“The problem is that while I speak, even of something bad, my eyes are laughing. Sometimes I went to the mountain or to the valley; we would gather in the village and go down near the gas station, start to sing, and sometimes when arrived, we closed the area to prevent the army from entering the village if they were going to try to, and they stopped. Sometimes we make fun of them.” R4</i></p> <p>“We return home after the demonstration, and all of us start to make a kind of feedback. But the problem is if anyone gets</p>			
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<p>injured, we stay with him in hospital” R5.</p> <p>“When there is tear gas, because I can’t run, I bring with me a scarf, and I put it around my face. Despite this there is a reaction to the gas” R5.</p> <p>“We go to the demonstration, but first I wake up, have breakfast, then go down with a flag, and we go down to the army, then they start to throw tear gas and shoot live bullets and I return home” R11.</p>			
<p><i>“That our hard work will not be in vain. We will try to liberate Palestine until the last day of our life, and Palestine will have its freedom and there will be no existence for Israel, and we will have peace with safety”. R1</i></p> <p>“In the village street the army stay near the tower; the youth take one side and we take the other; sometimes the youth are in the front and we are in the back to avoid the soldiers from hitting us; if the army tries to arrest someone we try to help him” R6.</p> <p><i>“When we met, we made a beautiful plan to retrieve the land that the army took”. R10</i></p> <p><i>“It is my nature that I don’t let anything get to me; most of the time I smile even there is something bad, like when they arrested mom or someone else, I even started to play with my little brother and make him smile”. R5</i></p> <p>“The soldiers came in front of us, and, as we are used to demonstrate every week, we faced them” R1.</p>		Self-efficacy	Resilience

<p><i>“I start to move from one window to the other to see them (the army that enters the village) around the house”. R1</i></p> <p>“Because in street if they throw gas, you know where you can hide, wherever you want, but in the home they can break the window, and the tear gas can get inside the house; they can arrest you, and you can’t hide from them in any place inside; they will search everywhere” R1.</p> <p>“My role is as a journalist and to make reports to cover the events” R1.</p>			
<p>“The thing I liked most on a Friday was when we decided to go down into the valley and the army prevented us and they closed the main road, but after that we reached it anyway; all of us became happy because we did it” R6.</p> <p>“Of course all of us are afraid, but I recite Quran and get courage, and when I see the people around me I get courage, too” R6.</p> <p>“Assistance Tourism; it’s like when people come here; the first thing I study is language; people come from outside and they want an introduction to the history of Palestine or any village and if they want to know about its families and how they live, I can help them and translate for them” R6.</p> <p>“To be a doctor; to treat and help people, and if mom and dad became sick I can help them or other people” R10.</p> <p><i>“I would like to be a lawyer, if I defend a Palestinian I can get</i></p>	<p>Feeling belonging</p>	<p>Awareness and belonging.</p>	

him out of prison and also the other prisoners...” R2

“To be a lawyer; to defend the innocent people that the army charges” R8.

“We got ourselves ready, then went together up to the village after the prayer time.

To start the demonstration, we go down shouting for the prisoners and the martyred and for the land, and we sing popular songs” R5.

“And when the youth reach the army they start to throw rocks at them and I feel proud because we still have struggle while others have stopped” R5.

“As a female I feel my role is important when I go to a demonstration; I give encouragement; we give power to the young boys. I encourage the youth; and if I find one of the soldiers hiding and he wants to shoot I notify the youth.

All the girls give encourage to the youths to let them hit the soldiers and get warmed up” R5.

“A lawyer; when they arrest someone from the village I will defend him” R5.

“I would like to send my message to Palestine through my reports and to make Palestine free through the demonstrations, so the army will stop attacking us and raiding our houses” R1.

“I love to be a journalist and to cover the demonstrations, and make Palestine free, and study Press and Media and to reach the best universities in the world like

<p>Harvard to take my message and the message of Palestinian children to everyone in the world to let them know what happens in Palestine and which is the original country and who has occupied it” R1.</p> <p><i>“I would like to be a lawyer, if I defend a Palestinian I can get him out of prison and also the other prisoners...” R2</i></p>			
<p>“I would like people to play and study and of course in the struggle to face the army and fight them” R8.</p> <p><i>“It means freedom for my country and feeling safe in it, with peace and justice with no occupation; a country like all countries with no occupation, where children can live like all the children in the world” R1.</i></p> <p><i>“There were many young men and the soldiers raided our house and they searched and destroyed everything; they arrested youth and tortured them; they took a picture so they could make a map for the whole village with the pictures of members of each house and numbers for all the houses. For example, this house is No. 5 and belongs to this youth and this one, and so on, so that they know where to go whenever they come to arrest this youth”.R1</i></p> <p>“Suddenly, when the settlers came, the soldiers started hit us; they became more hostile when the settlers come closer to us. They want to protect them; they think of us as terrorists” R5.</p> <p>“The clashes that happen during the week are stronger than on</p>	<p>Awareness of political situations.</p>		

<p>Friday - the army uses live bullets. As said, on Friday there is a lot of press, so the army afraid from embarrassment and the whole world knowing about what they are doing. But on other days besides Friday there is only one camera with my uncle, so the army takes it all out on us.” R5.</p> <p><i>“It means freedom for my country and feeling safe in it, with peace and justice with no occupation; a country like all countries with no occupation, where children can live like all the children in the world” R1.</i></p> <p><i>“That our hard work will not be in vain. We will try to liberate Palestine until the last day of our life, and Palestine will have its freedom and there will be no existence for Israel, and we will have peace with safety”. R1</i></p> <p>“The people arrive at our home in the mornings; we watch the videos of previous demonstrations, then we go down to the demonstrations” R2.</p> <p><i>“They come from countries I don’t know, like Britain, and they claim that it’s their homeland.” R2</i></p>			
<p><i>“During the demonstrations we went to the nearest house, or I would go with adults like my uncle or my father; I would go with anyone knows what to do.”.R6</i></p> <p>“To be safe with Mom and Dad in my home and to go to a country that has no army in it and doesn’t fight” R10.</p> <p>“To be at home with my brothers and my friends” R8.</p>		Trust in adults	

<p>“In the village no place is safe, but with my friends and mom I feel safe” R5.</p> <p>“I feel safe with my dad; sometimes on the mountain or the valley, not near the army, and sometimes with grandpa and mom” R4.</p> <p>“I am safe with my father; he always knows the directions of the gas, he goes to the safe places” R2.</p> <p>“I go to my room alone; and to be with father and mother I feel safe” R14.</p> <p>“I go home with mom and dad feeling safe” R13.</p> <p>“I feel safe with dad and mom in the home” R12.</p> <p>“With my family at home I feel safe” R15.</p>			
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Chapter 5

Discussion

“This study focused on the experience of Palestinian children facing traumatic events and how they act and deal with trauma.

It was important to understand the lived experience of these children and the effect of being under occupation, as in this village there are nightly raids and military actions as well as settlers’ attacks; the unique situation here in our study is the continuity of the struggle in this village. We used a qualitative descriptive phenomenological approach to pick up the specific life experiences of these children. Phenomenology is a project of sober reflection on the lived experience of human existence, in the sense that reflecting on experience must be thoughtful, and as much as possible, free from theoretical, prejudicial and suppositional intoxications. But, phenomenology is also a project that is driven by fascination: being swept up in a spell of wonder, a fascination with meaning. The rewards phenomenology offers are the moments of seeing meaning or "in-seeing" into "the heart of things", as Rilke so felicitously express it. Not unlike the poet, the phenomenologist directs the gaze toward the regions where meaning originates, wells up, percolates through the porous membranes of past sedimentations—and then infuses us, permeates us, infects us, touches us, stirs us, exercises a formative affect” (Max van Manen, 2007).

This research used the phenomenological descriptive design to understand the experience of the children who are facing the traumatic events in their village. This approach allows for exploring the participants' lived experiences and formulating them into psychologically understood language that is the essence of phenomenological design. To achieve the goals of the study, face-to-face deep interviews with respondents were conducted and the interviews were tape recorded to not miss any information. All interviews were transcribed in order to be prepared for analysis. Our analysis was based on Giorgi phenomenological psychological analysis that transforms the lived experience of ideas to words that can be easily understood (Giorgi, 1985). The role of the phenomenological analysis in this respect is to discern the psychological essence of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1985, 1989).

Our investigation on experiences of Palestinian children results in three major themes and ten sub-themes analyzed in the following way.

The first theme (Exposure to Traumatic events):

Actually, this theme appears to be the main theme that all respondents shared during the interviews. Many children have experienced stressful events as they grow up. They are faced with painful situations, such as parental divorce or the death of a beloved elderly relative, as well as sudden or unexpected events. The shocking nature of such events - death or threat to life or bodily integrity results in the subjective feeling of intense terror, horror, or helplessness (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

It is important to mention that all studies and articles related to this study have the same result about this theme; and it was the main common theme in their results. Therefore, our respondents in our study suffered from various reasons regarding their daily struggle in their village from the military and settler actions; they faced daily and weekly life threats, witnessing violence, and political violence.

All the children mentioned in their interview these threats; one of them said:

“I ran away and I had difficult time breathing. Once we were in the mountain in area called Al A’ain, and we were just children with no adult. The soldiers followed us and started to throw tear gas. I was with my cousin and we suffocated and had difficulty breathing” R1.

In a qualitative study held in Iraq during the American military operation, four out of twelve children reported knowing someone from their family who was physically injured from the war; war to these children meant a number of things: killing, death, bombing, suffering, aggression, hostility, a lack of security, constant fears, and occupation. War to them also meant feeling like they were going to die (Kasim Al-Mashat, 1, 2 Norman E. Amundson et al, 2006).

One of our respondents expresses this feeling like Iraqi children:

“Yeah, when we went to the mountain there was danger. My brother was injured there, and my uncle was martyred there too, and maybe I will get injured too with live or rubber bullets, or I will be close to the army” R2.

If the youth want to carry me maybe they will be arrested and I will be a martyr” R2.

War is war in any place, no one expects to gain positive things or to have an easy life during it; killing and destroying are the main topic of war, and feeling the threat and insecurity is only a result. In the Democratic Republic of Congo during the ongoing war that started on 2 August 1999, the results of war showed that both children and adolescents, as well as school teachers were traumatized by war-related traumatic events such as shooting, loss of family members, and forced recruitment into the armed forces. For example, 72.59% children and adolescents said they had lost a family member, 95.45% had experienced shooting, and 75% reported high levels of insecurity (Mambo T Masinda & Muhindo Muhesi, 2009).

In a study that was conducted in 1994 by Kathleen Kostelny and James Garbarino about Palestinian children and youth coping with the consequences of living in danger, it was reported that 85% of the sample of children aged from 12-15 years old had been beaten, shot, tear gassed, or had other direct experiences with violence, and, in addition to personal experience to violence, 95% of the same sample had either witnessed violence or had a relative or friend who was a victim to violence, or had their house raided, were threatened by soldiers, or terrorized by settlers.

In a qualitative synthesis study about the trauma experience of children that was published in 2011 by the American Psychological Association (APA), they extracted the findings of many articles and they coded them in regards to the findings; where trauma impact was the first concept that was mentioned in all articles reviewed. Then they talk about the children suffering because of the threat of a traumatic event or a secondary trauma, as well as about the changes in the children's perspective and behavior. Traumatized children experience a disruption of daily life.

However, this appears in our study in that the respondents witnessed violence on themselves or on their relatives or friends; to be a witness to an event is no less important than if it had happened to you; most of the children expressed this sub-theme as follows:

“When my mom got injured I was on the mountain down near the street. The army Jeeps were there, and my mother went to the street, but before that I told my friend that I feel that something bad will happen. She told me recite Quran and perhaps my fear would be dissolved; I started to recite and before I finished mom fell on the ground, injured, and I ran to her. I was scared and started crying” R5.

Witnessing a loved one getting hurt or being shot or injured is not less important than an injury to ourselves.

Finally, it appeared that there was a kind of deprivation of freedom from the respondents they were frustrated to be limited in their travelling in their

area or they were anxious about the military actions during night and day, *and this is expressed as follows:*

“I go with general transportation from here to Ramallah; sometimes there is a checkpoint with soldiers who have closed the road so we can’t go to school, so we miss our lessons and so on... Sometimes the roads are open” R1.

“Yeah, during the night the army enters; they take the youth and even in the day time it happens” R4.

“The army continues to invade the village and they occupied our land” R8.

Armed conflicts leave a very wide effect on people, especially on children, and the worst effect on them and is on their psychological status; when we mentioned the word 'child' we directly connect it with happy and positive power for playing, and enjoyment in life - that there is nothing more than the moment that the child thinks to live in or to play. But war and armed conflicts come and destroy all their dreams, at least those of playing or being safe.

Safety means a lot to children; it motivates them to live their life in a very beautiful way. It’s like the fuel of the engine that helps it to start again, no matter if there was no breakfast at that day, or no money to go to the supermarket. It is important for him/her to feel safe to play even in those moments.

In study a conducted in Butembo, Congo between April 2001 and May 2001 during the ongoing war that started on 2 August 1999, the participants were asked to report their traumatic experiences such as witnessing shootings, feelings of insecurity, losing family members and students were asked about their security; 80% felt that they were not safe (Mambo T Masinda* and Muhindo Muhesi, 2004).

In their web site, <http://www.warchildholland.org/>, war child magazine said:

War Child is committed to the protection of children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence,” as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 19; 1989). A Child Safety Policy ensures that War Child’s staff is aware of child protection concerns and engages in behavior that prevents abuse. The policy also ensures that staff knows how to respond in case abuse does happen. The Child Safety Policy is signed by and applies to all staff, volunteers, partner organizations, board members, ambassadors and representatives of War Child. We make sure all children and young people who come into contact with War Child understand our commitment to keeping children safe, and know how to report any cases or suspicions of any form of abuse.

Not less important is the concern of the children in our study regarding their safety; as one of the respondents said:

“They enter the village at night and raid the houses usually; they throw tear gas and noisy sounds bombs, and sometimes they use the jeep speaker to be loud and make people afraid; they irritate me and I am afraid” R17.

Most children in our study claim that they feel safe only in their home; Nonetheless, all of them suffer from the night raids and the demolition of the army to their house which means that the only place they feel safe is unsafe, as they reported in the interview:

“When the army entered the village and started to search the house, sometimes they would take my dad and my brother, and I would be afraid. Once they took my father on Friday and they left him at night; they tied him up and hit him on his feet; he was without shoes.

“Our uncle Najeh came to us; my father was with no shoes and feeling cold; when he came I felt like sleeping and slept well” R10.

“I remember once in the past we went to my grandpa's house; the army start to fire tear gas and we went away from the windows; some of the curtains burned and the gas bottle in the stairs exploded; we couldn't escape so they took us down from the windows.” R3

“Yeah; they enter the village at night and raid the houses and destroy everything inside. One time they entered our house I got scared and became angry” R15.

The second theme (Normalization):

In its abstract definition, normalization refers to social processes through which ideas and actions come to be seen as "normal" and become taken-for-granted or 'natural' in everyday life.

In his definition of normalization Wolfensberger (1972) said that providing an environment which is as culturally normal as possible in order to establish or maintain personal behaviors and characteristics viewed by the culture as normal.

Also Knafl & Deatrck (1986) said that normalization is a cognitive and behavioral adaptation process involving the use of coping techniques which minimize the impact of disease, enable the individual to engage in normal activities, and result in the manifestation of a normal appearance to others.

A qualitative study was conducted exploring the construct of resilience by Palestinian youth in the 10th to 12th grades at school living in and around Ramallah in the West Bank (Nguyen-Gillham, Giacaman, Naser, Boyce, 2008). Focus groups were conducted with 321 male and female Palestinian students in 15 schools in Ramallah and the surrounding villages. This study presents findings that are consistent with previous research on the value of supportive relationships such as families and friends. Political participation and education are vital to a sense of identity and political resistance. However, a key finding reveals the normalization of everyday life in fostering resiliency within abnormal living conditions.

Palestinian youth, nonetheless, paint a picture of resilience that reveals contradictions and tensions.

This study, like the current one, underlines the fluid and dynamic nature of resilience; feelings of desperation are intermingled with optimism.

In our study the children born with the presence of military actions in their village and night raids with settlers' attacks; they have lived day by day the events and its hard consequences; this has given these children identification of the trauma and the events itself which they lived; also, they role play the trauma in their games as children. Even in telling a story or in speaking about general subjects they talk about their experience in their village with the events that happened with the military and settler actions.

One of respondents expresses this as:

“There was the army and the kids built the tower, and we were the Arabs, and started to throw rocks. If any one of us was injured by small stones, the army took him, the army would start to fire, then we would escape to hide in some place not in the neighborhood; yeah, we escaped”. R3

“Komser (hide and seek), Arab and army; sometimes when we play Arab and army in the presence of the youth, the real army comes and we have to stop the game” R4.

A core narrative theme focuses on the practice of normality within everyday life. Despite political instability, the data revealed a marked

degree of normality informing daily life. Within the dominant sites of home and school, adolescents perform a range of routines and rituals to establish structure and stability. Their afterschool hours are dominated by homework and domestic chores, especially for girls in the villages. In common with young people all over the world, Palestinian adolescents spend considerable time watching television after school. Other typical activities include reading, listening to music, visiting relatives or grandparents and hanging out with friends.

The third theme (Resilience):

Life can be challenging and may include many stressful situations. Parents and children can feel overwhelmed by different things at different times; sudden changes, serious challenges, relationship difficulties and discriminations are examples of stressful situations. Resilience is the ability to steer through serious life challenges and find ways to bounce back and to thrive (Best Start: Ontario's Maternal).

In their book, Judith A. Cohen, Anthony P. Mannarino and Esther Deblinger (2006) claim that after experiencing such traumatic events, many children are resilient and don't develop enduring trauma symptoms. Several factors, including developmental level, inherent or learned resiliency, and external sources of support are relevant.

In a study that was conducted in 2003 by Ahmed M. Baker & Hana M. Kanan, it was found that Palestinian society, being a collective society, can draw upon the cohesiveness of extended family members to mediate if

not ameliorate threats. During the first Intifada, Baker (1990) (as cited in Ahmed M. Baker & Hana M. Kanan, 2003) found that the psychological well-being of Palestinian children was highly correlated with the 'perceived' well-being of their mothers. Mothers who were able to cope with the stresses of military occupation were able to 'buffer' their children against adverse pathological effects. Children of mothers who were able to maintain a daily routine, and to provide psychological support through stories, activities, and explanations of how the family could protect itself, tended not to develop grave psychological symptoms when exposed to stresses associated with occupation.

Other studies, therefore, indicated that the meaning of violence is more important than the amount of violence directly experienced. For example, there is evidence from South Africa, the Philippines and Palestine that shows that active engagement in or ideological commitment to political struggle can increase resilience (Dawes & DeVilliers, 1987; Protacio-Marcelino, 1989; Punamaki, 1996); (as cited in Altawil, M. et al 2008).

In other studies of adolescents living through and participating in the Intifada in the Gaza Strip, it was found that there is a complex interaction between exposure to traumatic events, active participation, and beliefs (Punamaki & Suleiman, 1990; Qouta, Punamaki, & El-Sarraj, 1995).

In a qualitative study that explores the construct of resilience by Palestinian youth in the 10th to 12th grades at school living in and around

Ramallah in the West Bank, it was found that families play a pivotal role in providing safety and emotional support. In the words of one young man, 'no matter how intense the problem is, we would ultimately go back to normal relations with our families because the family is all we have.'

The adaptive capacity of Palestinian adolescents is nurtured through a system of multi sectorial communal care. Social capital in the form of a cohesive network of clan, family, friends, caring adults as well as support through schools and neighborhood clubs provide sustenance (Viet Nguyen-Gillham et al, 2007).

“The youth threw stones at the army, then they went to the protests, and I don’t go with them; I stayed at home; we had lunch with family, I heard the sounds of bullets and smelled the tear gas; I stayed at home with mom” R13.

Trust in Adults:

During their threats and the daily struggle that the children faced, they trust in adults to be with them and to feel safe with; as it appears in their expressions:

“[I feel safe] with my dad sometimes on the mountain or the valley, not near the army, and sometimes with grandpa and mom” R4.

“With my family at home I feel safe” R15.

“[I feel safe] with my father; he always knows the directions of the gas, he goes to the safe places; if we stay at home they hit the windows and we suffocate” R2.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion:

However you looked, and wherever you moved away and however you think about it... War is war; and its content murder, destruction and negative consequences that was for adults or young...but for children the story is too long and hope start to be weaken ..in their eyes you find life ... find hope ... find paradise and its dreams; you find the power to adhere to better life despite the conditions in which they live and, despite the suffering imposed on them by war.

This is the war as a whole and with its consequences is not beautiful...

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has spread to more than seventy years and including loads of carries from the scourge and groans for adults and kids alike ... this war transferred between generations and handed down the children from generation to generation ... There is no doubt that this conflict and the occupation is one of the longest events, wars and global sweeps ..

All the peoples of the earth, big ones and small have gained their freedom and their children are now living in peace and security and what they suffered became story for young to told children about.

But here in Palestine you are old or young you wake up and sleep on terror, murder and terrorism of the settlers, you do not find even an hour a day devoid of painful events, especially for the young...

That dream, bringing to how little sleep tonight or those without hearing the voices of the shooting or the jeeps patrolling the place uncaring time or place....

This child forgot or pretended to forget the most basic rights to play in peace.

Who among us does not wait for the weekend and in respect of the plans has secretly or dreams alertness try to apply it with all our strength with family or friends or mates ... until this vacation came to this child to take on the meanings of pain and confrontations, injuries and tear gas, but these plans changed to devote his effort to understand the equation and the relationship between gas and between the direction of the air and the relationship between them, and between discrimination kinds of bullets to avoid them In the house or outside is not a safe place..... But at a glance of their eyes find them hope and love and compassion and renewable Spirit Despite the circumstances.

Glitter eyes outlined the most comprehensive and bewilderment that he would one day to breathe a sigh of relief and live like the rest of the world's children.

These children want only their freedom to play freely in their village, to feel secure at night with absence of the jeeps sounds and the sounds of the bombs and tear gas, each one of them has his dreams as a child no more, no less.

“It means freedom for my country and feeling safe in it, with peace and justice with no occupation; a country like all countries with no occupation, where children can live like all the children in the world” R1.

During this study we investigate the experience of Palestinian children facing traumatic events and how they cope with it. Three major themes, Exposure to Traumatic Events, Normalization and Resilience and ten subthemes emerged from our study.

Children are the best sources of information about themselves. As we mentioned the sample was purposive and the researchers put a special attention on gathering respondents from different backgrounds and ages to reflect as possible an exhaustive mirror of the situation of the village. Between the respondents were children that usually join the demonstration and those who didn't. Furthermore, not all the parents of children interviewed were activists. This helped us to capture the diversity able to answer our research questions.

When someone read any articles related to trauma and children I think first issues that came to his mind about the sequences of this trauma in children and what might happened to these vulnerable members of the society.

Yes children who have exposed or live in an armed conflicts area have big chance to develop psychological reactions, and this was clear from our literature review and a lot of articles mentioned the sequences of being in armed conflicts as children.

And else we have similar founding like what literature says about trauma and children. Surprisingly we found and added something else is what called normalization and resiliency.

Children of our study shows a big resilient especially when parents allow them to be part of nonviolent resistance where happened in their village weekly.

At the beginning of demonstrations the parents preferred to put children in homes and with time they found many of psychological problems, night mares, bed wetting and hyper arousal...etc.

When they decide to take them to the demonstrations the found these behavioral symptoms became decreased and disappeared. And this match our result in resiliency and normalization.

Finally, the results of the current study shows the complexity of coping mechanism within an extremely stress situation. Children integrate the terrific events which are exposing to in to their daily life through normalization. A dynamic that it might be the only way to survive in an situation, the Israeli Occupation to the Palestinian land, that does not seems to be resolved in a short time.

Facing constantly the danger not as victims but actively, along with their trusted parents, allow them to develop a great sense of self efficacy, it strengthen feelings of belonging to their community. This was translated by the authors as resilience.

Resilience is the biggest source of protection from being overwhelmed by the traumatic events.

When dealing with mass trauma of whole populations, breaking the cycle of violence can be done by fostering non-violent resistance towards the system of injustice and its perpetrators as a positive way to address feelings of anger and pain that have resulted from the continuous trauma. When peaceful resistance includes all members of the society, it can not only contribute to the end of injustice, violence and trauma, but it can also begin to heal the wounds of the society that has been victim to this trauma by fostering resilience, participation and self-efficacy in place of violence, revenge and aggression.

6.2 Recommendations:

Despite the fact that this research has many results that are all in need of being followed and carried out for investigations or solutions, each research has its result and recommendations.

Some issues in life need to be followed according to their needs; here in this research the findings cannot tolerate waiting, despite what these

children have shown in terms of their resiliency. Children need to live like the rest of the world's children.

First of all, the idea of integrating these children in the weekly events may be fairly good, and it is clear from the results of this study.

- Taking into account the physical safety of these children.
- Taking into account any psychological changes by qualified persons.

Second parenting approach...Strengthening parenting skills including:

- Increase Communication with children to enhance the children's self-confidence and to decrease, as much as possible, any psychological problem related to the struggle in their village is a priority.
- Developing and strengthening awareness regards relationships and partnerships between and among various providers who come for any interventions issues.

Third for policy makers

- Strengthened trust and confidence between local authorities and community member.
- Existence of governmental sector related to follow such as people and children who are at risk of political traumatic events.
- Developing preventive measures, counseling, rehabilitation and therapeutic programs which should be readily available and easy to access for Palestinian children and their families in case of any psychological problem.

- Increasing the awareness toward the psychological interventional programs of NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) that target these children to address any needs or help is also necessary.

As these are children, we must put in consideration to their needs for recreational programs, locally and nationally.

6.3 Limitations of the study:

The children of the current study are participating actively to the weekly demonstration; they often appear on the media nationally and internationally. The tendency is to identify them as little heroes which have the specific role to resist in the struggle against the Israeli occupation.

We identify as limitation the fact that, somehow, the author of the thesis could be affected by this image.

In Fact, the subtheme “fear” emerged as last, after several revision of the contents of the interviews. For this reason a special time was asset to revise eventual bias.

Translations for qualitative researches are always one of the limitations to be considered.

Bringing the data (the interviews) from auditory to written in Arabic and then to English, might contribute to loss of meanings, but this limitation was taken seriously and minimized by translation and back-translation of the texts by the research team.

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Thank you,

Farid

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Appendices

Annexes 1

Interview guide questions

1. What is your daily life routine?
2. What's your favorite game?
3. What the things that makes you happy the most?
4. What's Friday like here?
5. There's any other time bad things happened?
6. Do you ever feel something bad will happened to you?
7. What does make you to be sad?
8. If you want to feel safe and nothing to happen to you, where how and with whom?
9. What do you think is your role in the community?
10. What would you like to become in the future?

الاسئلة التي ستطرح في المقابلات:

- (1) ايش بتعمل كل يوم من اول ما تصحى لما تنام ؟
- (2) شو اكثر الالعاب اللي بتحبها؟
- (3) ايش اللي بتعمله وبخليك كثير مبسوط؟
- (4) نيجي ليوم الجمعه ممكن تحكي لي كيف بكون ؟
- (5) غير يوم الجمعه ايمتى وشو بصير عندكم بالبلد ؟
- (6) عمرك شعرت انه في شىء سيئ ممكن يصير معك ؟
- (7) ايش اللي بخليك زعلان ؟
- (8) اذا بدك تشعر انك بامان وما راح يصير لك شىء مش منيح وين بتروح وكيف ومع مين .
- (9) في المجتمع المحيط فيك ايش هو دورك ؟
- (10) شو بدك تصير لما تكبر ؟

Consent Form

The undersigned _____, residency _____

Confirms to have been explained requests to participate in research project on **Experience of Palestinian Children Facing Traumatic Event. The case of a village under military occupation: a descriptive phenomenological study.**

I have been given a copy of your request / project orientation and are willing to participate in the project. I have received both verbal and written information about the study, and I'm aware that my participation is voluntary. I am informed that at any time, without having to explain it might withdraw from study if I wish. If needed I can be contacted for a new interview or clarification.

AddressTelephone number

.....

EmailAcademic level

.....

The undersigned confirms that he / she provided information about the project and has handed over the above a copy of the request/ project orientation and consent to participation.

Date.....

Signature of informant

Signature of the project leader

(Signature of informant)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

An-Najah National University
Faculty of Graduate Studies



جامعة النجاح الوطنية
كلية الدراسات العليا

نموذج موافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة:

الاسم:

لقد تلقيت المعلومات المكتوبة والكلامية حول الدراسة التي ستكون حول تجربة الاطفال في مواجهة الاحداث اليومية والاسبوعية عندكم بالبلدة وما يترتب على على مشاركتهم. ووافق على مشاركة طفلي في هذه الدراسة بشكل طوعي, وقد تم ابلاغي انه بإمكانني ان اسحب طفلي من هذه الدراسة في اي وقت قبل وخلال الدراسة بدون اعطاء اي اسباب.

التاريخ

التوقيع



معلومات للمشاركة بالدراسة:

عنوان الدراسة: تجربة الاطفال الفلسطينيين في مواجهة الاحداث الصادمة حالة قرية تحت الاحتلال العسكري دراسة وصفية للظواهر.

انا فريد ابوليل طالب في برنامج ماجستير الصحة النفسية من جامعة النجاح الوطنية, اقوم بعمل بحث من اجل الأطروحة للماستير بعنوان: تجربة الاطفال الفلسطينيين في مواجهة الاحداث الصادمة حالة قرية تحت الاحتلال العسكري دراسة وصفية للظواهر. وذلك باشراف الدكتورة

سابرينا روسوز

هدف الدراسة:

هذه الدراسة سوف تقوم باستكشاف خبرة وتعامل وردة فعل الاطفال في القرى بجانب الجدار والذين يعانون من الهجمات ودخول الجيش والمستوطنين الى البلدة.

ما هو المتوقع عمله:

سوف اقوم بعمل مقابلات مع اطفال البلدة, بعد موافقة الاهل على ذلك, وخلالها سوف يتم تسجيل هذه المقابلات على جهاز تسجيل صوتي, مع العلم ان المقابلة ستدوم لمدة ثلاثون الى اربعون دقيقة وذلك في بيت اهل الطفل في مكان مناسب يختاره الطفل والاهل.

الخصوصية:

كل المعلومات التي سيتم اخذها خلال المقابلة هي لغرض البحث العلمي, وسيتم حفظها في مكان امن لحين انتهاء الدراسة, وسيتم التخلص من هذه المعلومات في حال انتهاء الدراسة, لن يتم ذكر اسماء وانما سيتم وضع رموز لاسماء المشاركين في نهاية البحث.

الحق في المشاركة والانسحاب :

لا يوجد أي التزام عليكم للمشاركة في الدراسة، يمكنكم رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب من الدراسة في أي وقت حتى من دون إبداء الأسباب.

الاضرار المتوقعة:

لا ضرر سوف يأتي لكم من المشاركة، ولن يتم أبدا ذكر اسمك لأحد. ونحن نقدر مشاركتكم.

لا تترددوا قبل وبعد المقابلة في الاستفسار عن اي شيء للتوضيح

Participant's information sheet

Information to the family

Title of the study: Experience of Palestinian Children Facing Traumatic Event. The case of a village under military occupation: a descriptive phenomenological study.

Introduction: I'm Farid Salih Abu Liel, student of community mental health nursing master program at An-Najah National University, My supervisor is Dr. Sabrina Russo.

What is the study about: I will conduct a research for my master thesis on Experience of Palestinian Children facing traumatic event, special those children who residency is near the separation wall, and they had daily demonstration facing the Israeli soldiers.

The purpose of this study: The study will explore experiences of the child contributes to the achievement of the plan of understanding how the children facing the occupation, react with, deal with.

What you expected to do:

I will conduct interviews with your child, if they are willing to attend the interview it will be recorded and it is expected to last 30 to 40 minutes and it will be implemented in your home as an appropriate time for you.

Privacy: All data is recorded only for the study purpose, and will remain stored in a locked cabinet during the study and destroyed after the study is complete. No real names will be mentioned in the study and you will be identified by codes.

Refusal to participate \ withdraws from the study: There is no obligation on you to participate in the study, you can refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, even without giving reasons and this will have negative effects on you or your child.

Harm: No harm will come to you from participating, and your name will never be mentioned to anyone. We appreciate your participation If after the

interview still has something to convey, we are ready for more clarifications. Should you not hesitate contact us at the following telephone number.

Dr. Sabrina Russo /Farid Abu Liel 0599877789 -An-Najah National University -Nablus

جامعة النجاح الوطنية
كلية الدراسات العليا

تجربة الاطفال الفلسطينيين في مواجهة الاحداث الصادمة، حالة قرية
تحت الاحتلال العسكري دراسة وصفية للظواهر

إعداد

فريد أبو ليل

إشراف

د. سابرينا روسو

قدمت هذه الاطروحة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير لتخصص ترميض
الصحة النفسية المجتمعية، في كلية الدراسات العليا في جامعة النجاح الوطنية- فلسطين.

2016

ب

تجربة الاطفال الفلسطينيين في مواجهة الاحداث الصادمة, حالة قرية تحت الاحتلال العسكري
دراسة وصفية للظواهر

اعداد

فريد ابوليل

اشراف

د.سابرينا روسو

الملخص

لعمود سابقة كان الشرق الاوسط وما زال مسرحا للحروب والنزاعات, حيث ان الاطفال والشباب لم يكونوا بمنأى عن التبعات السلبية لهذه الحروب والنزاعات, ان التعرض والعيش في مثل هذه الظروف له نتائج تعكس على الصح النفسية والجسدية وتصرفات هؤلاء الشريحة من المجتمع.

اما في فلسطين حيث تعاني من اخر واطول احتلال في العالم, كان للاطفال فيها نصيب كبير من التجارب القاسية من التعرض للاحداث الصادمة نتيجة وجود هذا الاحتلال, ففقدان الشخصية, والحركة والتواصل بين البشر والمدن, الاهانات الشخصية واقتحام البيوت واستنشاق الغاز والاعتقالات الليلية وما يصاحبها من عنف كل هذا وذاك يحث تقريبا كل يوم .

تم استخدام المنهج الوصفي للتعرف واستكشاف خبرات هؤلاء الاطفال في مواجهة ما يتعرضون له من الاحداث الصادمة في قرينتهم. وعمل مقابلات وجها لوجه مع الاطفال.

لتحقيق اهداف الدراسة تم استخدام عينه هادفة, حيث تم اختيار خمسة عشر طفلا تراوحت اعمارهم ما بين سن السادسة والرابعة عشر, وتمت مقابلتهم في بيوتهم .

اما بالنسبة الى التحليل فقد اعتمدت طريقة جورجي (وهي طريقة تستخدم Giorgi method) .

لتحليل الاسلوب النوعي الوصفي للظواهر،

Phenomenological qualitative descriptive design

لقد برز من خلال النتائج ثلاث مواضيع رئيسية واثنى عشر موضوعا فرعيا لها وهي :

- 1) التعرض لاحداث مؤلمة: تهديد للحياة, مشاهدة احداث عنيفة, تهديد مباشر, حرمان من الحرية, انعدام الامان
- 2) اخذ الاحداث المؤلمة بشكل طبيعي: اداء الالعب لتجنب الصدمة, التقليل من شان الخطر, التصرف بدافع الصدمة.
- 3) الممانعة والتحصن: الثقة بالنفس, الوعي من الاحداث المحيطة, الشعور بالانتماء, والثقة بالكبار.

الخلاصة:

هذه هي الحرب بمجملها وتفصيلها هي غير جميلة ...

ان الصراع الاسرائيلي الفلسطيني امتد لاكثر من خمسين سنة وبما يحمل من طياته من ويلات واهات للكبار والصغار على حد سواء...تتاقلته اجيال وتوارثته الاطفال من جيل الى جيل...ولا شك ان هذا الصراع والاحتلال هو من اطول الاحداث والحروب والاحتلالات العالمية.

فجميع شعوب الارض الكبيرة منها والصغيرة قد نالت حريتها واطفالها الان يعيشون بامان وسلام وقد اصبح ما عانوه وعاشوه من الماضي يتحدث بها الكبار للصغار فقط.

ان نتائج هذه الدراسة قد ساهمت كثيرا بالوقوف ما وراء ما يشعر به هؤلاء الاطفال وما يحملوه من مخاوف والام وامل في حياتهم, واعتقد انها كشفت عن سر معيشة الاطفال في تلك الظروف ولطالما كان للاهل والنسق الاجتماعي الجيد الاثر في نفسية وتصرفات الاطفال في تلك القرية.

كلمات دلالية: المنهج الوصفي, الاحداث الصادمة, الاطفال, الحرب.