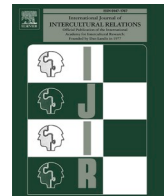




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Intercultural Relations

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijintrel

University students' attitudes toward the stalled peace process and normalization with the Israeli occupation

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Armed resistance
Normalization
Peace process
Popular resistance
Security coordination

ABSTRACT

Despite the persistent animosity between Palestinians and Israelis, the portrayal of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has undergone significant changes over time. The concept of normalization, integral to the peace process, has gained increasing prominence. Nevertheless, this concept has acted as a divisive force within the Palestinian political landscape in the West Bank, creating a clear divide between advocates and opponents. Employing a rigorously validated 19-item factorial questionnaire, the present mixed-method study endeavors to elucidate the perspectives of Palestinian university students regarding the stagnated peace process, the normalization of relations, and the security coordination with Israel. The findings of this study shed light on several intricate associations among the examined variables. They underscore that economic, political, and security considerations serve as pivotal factors contributing to the stance of Palestinian youth, wherein they show support for armed resistance and concurrently express opposition towards both normalization and security coordination with Israel. Ultimately, the study's culmination underscores a discernible pattern – that Palestinians could potentially embrace the prospect of normalizing relations with Israel and embarking on the path of peaceful coexistence, provided Israel acknowledges their rights and facilitates the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Introduction

Numerous tussles and polarities have accompanied the Palestinian cause throughout its history. Furthermore, Palestinian collective consciousness is dominated by a variety of intellectual, political, institutional, and geographical ideologies (Brown, 2010). More than 30 years have passed since the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel first started talking peace, but the Middle East still lacks peace as a result of these negotiations. This has led to a state of frustration among Palestinians, particularly the young, who are now less likely to believe in the peace process and all international commitments, tries, initiatives, and attempts to bring about peace (UNFPA, 2017). Instead, they have lost faith in the negotiations themselves due to Israel's continued occupation, theft, and looting of Palestinian land, as well as Israel's denial of Palestinian rights (Habashi, 2017).

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Received 20 December 2023; Received in revised form 15 May 2024; Accepted 30 May 2024

Available online 19 June 2024

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Though Israelis and Palestinians remain at odds, the way in which the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is represented among Palestinians has changed over time. Many Palestinians see the 1993 Oslo Accords as an important step toward the establishment of a Palestinian state and peaceful relations with Israel (Maoz, 2004). In 2005, mutual recognition was established between Palestinians and Israelis when Israel recognized the (PLO), and Palestinians recognized Israel as a state (Shlaim, 2005). As part of the peace and reconciliation process, normalization has become increasingly important (Awad, Salem, & Obeed, 2007). As a condition for this process, the PLO had to reject denounce and reject violence and recognize Israelis' right to peace and security. With a long-term goal of ending the conflict, several policies including, but not limited to, security coordination, civilian, diplomatic, economic, and political relations) were introduced to normalize relations between Palestinians and Israelis (Albzour et al., 2019). By supporting and implementing such policies under the banner of nation-state building, the PA has demonstrated to the international community Palestinians' genuine desire to live in peace, and to get Palestine recognized under international law (Ash, 2009). The change in policy has prompted civil society organizations from both sides to participate in joint activities and dialogue to spread the culture of peace and reconciliation.

The Palestinian-Israeli relationship tends to be characterized by enduring, lingering malice, hostility, and stagnation; the apparent presence of the Israeli security apparatus represented by checkpoints and the separation wall, the expansion of Israeli settlements, the segregation policies, and the fragmentation of Palestinian territory after the Oslo Accords, have all contributed to continuous Palestinian human rights violations during this peace process (Jabali, 2022; Hajjar, 2001). Accordingly, Palestinians view normalizing relations between Israel and Palestine as perpetuating the oppressive colonial regime while dismantling revolutionary resistance (Samarah, 2011). It has become increasingly common in the Palestinian territories for people to use normalization as an excuse to condemn and stigmatize most interpersonal, social, economic, and political interactions with Israel; this is, particularly, the case among those who are active in anti-normalization movements (Pundak, 2012).

Normalization in the context of Palestine and Israel refers to the process of establishing and normalizing relations between the two parties, particularly at the political, economic, social, and cultural levels (Pundak, 2012). It often entails recognizing each other's legitimacy, engaging in diplomatic and economic cooperation, and fostering mutual understanding. However, the concept of normalization is deeply contested within the Palestinian context (Shemer-Kunz, 2023).

Normalization encompasses two main dimensions within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Primarily, it denotes the establishment of conventional diplomatic and economic ties between the State of Israel and its Arab countries (El Kurd, 2023). Conversely, it can be critically interpreted as the inclination of Palestinians and Israelis, at both individual and collective levels, to engage in activities or dialogue that simulate a state of normalcy, thus perpetuating the status quo of the occupation. Particularly contentious is the notion of normalization occurring prior to the realization of a Palestinian state and the cessation of the occupation, which is widely perceived by Palestinians and their advocates as a departure from the struggle for self-determination (Ghanem & Bavly, 2015).

While some view it as a pathway to peace and coexistence, others perceive it as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause, arguing that it legitimizes the Israeli occupation and oppression of Palestinians (Farsakh, 2021). The debate over normalization reflects broader tensions and complexities in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, highlighting the challenges of pursuing reconciliation while addressing deep-rooted grievances and disparities (Ghanem & Bavly, 2015).

Numerous scholarly works and analyses delve into the concept of normalization and its implications for Palestine and Israel. Studies by Albzour et al. (2019) and Hitman & Kertcher (2018) explore the duality of acceptance and rejection within the context of normalization, shedding light on the complexities and controversies surrounding the issue. Additionally, Salem (2005) discusses the anti-normalization discourse and its role in peacebuilding efforts, emphasizing the challenges of fostering dialogue and cooperation amidst deep-seated mistrust and conflict.

As a result of normalization, the Palestinian political sphere in the West Bank has been divided between proponents and opponents (Albzour, 2019). On the one hand, those who support it, particularly the ruling Palestinian Authority (PA), emphasize that normalizing relations with Israel is a critical step toward international recognition of Palestine as a state; on the other hand, critics of normalization portray it as a way to thwart social change and resistance against occupation and its settler colonial policies (Albzour et al., 2019).

The PLO is a political umbrella for Palestinian groups aiming to establish a Palestinian state, initially seeking the eradication of Israel but later endorsing a two-state solution (Britannica, 2024). The PA, established in 1994, administers territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, operating a postal service and issuing stamps within restrictions imposed by Israel. The PA aims to enhance its political legitimacy, international alliances, and seek recognition as a state amidst power asymmetries and diplomatic challenges (Britannica, 2024). It serves as the interim self-government for the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The PA is responsible for various administrative functions, including governance, security, and provision of services to Palestinian residents. Its establishment was intended as a transitional measure towards the eventual creation of an independent Palestinian state (Britannica, 2024). However, The Palestinian Authority's inclination towards coordination with Israel often leads to the neglect of actions that could contribute to the development of Palestine while simultaneously making Palestinian lives more difficult. This preference for coordination can result in the overlooking of opportunities for autonomous development and reliance on Israeli assistance, which may not always align with Palestinian interests.

The coordination between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israeli state apparatus is a complex facet of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, established through the Oslo Accords in the 1990s. While this relationship has evolved over time, it oscillates between cooperation and conflict. Notably, security coordination is prominent, involving intelligence sharing, joint patrols, and counterterrorism efforts to maintain stability in the West Bank (Pundak, 2012; Podeh, 2019). In regions classified as Area C, where Israel has full civil and security control, the PA collaborates on civil matters like infrastructure and administrative issues (Peskin, 2019). Despite political tensions, economic cooperation persists, encompassing trade, labor, and joint development projects aimed at bolstering the Palestinian economy (Shlaim, 2005). Additionally, coordination extends to movement and access, including permits and access to holy

sites (Blit-Cohen & Jaber, 2015). While diplomatic efforts aim to resolve the conflict, criticisms arise regarding perceived collaboration and compromises on Palestinian interests (Albzour et al., 2019). Overall, coordination varies based on political dynamics, security considerations, and broader regional developments, spanning sectors such as education, health, civil society, and politics (Dajani & Baskin, 2006; Andoni, 2003; Mi'ari, 1999).

While the present article does not settle the ideological debate, it contributes to the argument by bringing Palestinian youth to the forefront. A wide range of forms of normalization between Arab states and Israel have been studied in the literature, such as political, economic, social, educational, and cultural (Elmessiri, 1999; Mi'ari, 1999; Andoni, 2003; Yaqeen, 2003; Herzog & Hai, 2005; Salem, 2005; Dajani & Baskin, 2006; Awad et al., 2007; Kahanoff et al., 2007; Hitman & Kertcher, 2018; Hitman & Zwilling, 2021). Despite its importance, Palestinian youth's attitudes toward peace and normalization are understudied.

Theoretical framework

Nicole Stephens' work on cultural-experiential socialization emphasizes the dynamic interplay between cultural factors and personal experiences, highlighting how individuals navigate and negotiate their cultural identities within diverse social environments (Stephens, Hamedani, & Destin, 2014). A cultural psychological approach is useful for understanding how university students feel about the stalled peace process and normalization with the Israeli occupation, especially when taking into account their socio-demographic backgrounds, where interactions are consistently influenced by race (Carey et al., 2022). Cultural psychology emphasizes the influence of cultural backgrounds, socialization experiences, and collective identities on individual beliefs and behaviors (Stephens, Hamedani, & Destin, 2014).

In the context of this study, Cultural psychology can help elucidate how students' cultural backgrounds, including their gender, study year, faculty, and place of residence, shape their attitudes (Carey & Markus, 2017) toward the peace process and normalization with the Israeli occupation. For example, Cultural psychology suggests that students from different faculties or study years may have distinct cultural norms and values that influence their perceptions of political issues (Stephens, Markus & Fryberg, 2012). Similarly, students residing in different locations, such as cities, villages, refugee camps, or areas near the Green Line, may have varied experiences and perspectives shaped by their socio-political contexts (Stephens, Hamedani & Townsend, 2019).

Furthermore, Cultural psychology highlights the role of socialization processes in shaping individuals' attitudes and beliefs. Understanding how students are socialized within their cultural contexts can provide insights into why certain groups may hold specific attitudes toward the peace process and normalization efforts (Stephens, Markus & Fryberg, 2012). For instance, Cultural psychology may reveal how familial, educational, and community influences contribute to the formation of students' attitudes (Stephens, Hamedani & Townsend, 2019) toward political issues related to the Israeli occupation.

According to Nicole Stephens' framework of cultural psychology, the violence Palestinian students witness during Israeli occupation has a substantial impact on their attitudes toward normalization and conflict resolution. This underscores the high probability that cultural contexts will have an impact on these attitudes.

Palestinian students' experiences with violence exerted by the Israeli occupation are influenced by their geographical location, socio-economic status, and proximity to conflict zones (Jabali, 2022). Students in areas directly affected by conflict, such as Gaza or the West Bank, are more likely to experience violence firsthand. Students near Israeli settlements or checkpoints may face increased exposure to violence, harassment, and restrictions on their movement (Jabali, Ayyoub & Jabali, 2024). Military occupation and security measures, such as arbitrary arrests, home demolitions, night raids, and tear gas use, can also impact the well-being and safety of Palestinian students (Jabali, 2022). Socio-economic disparities, such as unemployment, poverty, and inadequate infrastructure, can also increase vulnerability to violence. Regardless of their specific experiences, Palestinian students are likely to be affected by the trauma and psychological stress associated with living in a protracted conflict environment, which can have long-term effects on their mental health and well-being (Jabali, Khalili & Jabali, 2024).

Importance of the Study

The importance of this study lies in the close ties it makes to political consciousness, students' perceptions of the peace process, and students' attitudes toward normalizing relations with Israel (Ayer et al., 2017; Sheikh et al., 2013). In light of the diminishing opportunities for peace as well as the tensions and conflicts that plague the Arab region in general and suffocate the Palestinians in particular, it also discusses the role of Israeli provocative incursions against Palestinian cities and current Palestinian Revolution youth resistance against these incursions in tearing apart and undermining the social fabric of Palestinian society (Halper, 2015; Roy, 2012). The student body has also grown disgruntled with the exhaustive repetition of Israeli military operations and incursions against Palestinian territories, represented by assassinating activists in Nablus and Jenin (Ghanem & Bavly, 2015). Put simply, the researchers meant to explain how the feigned presence of a peace process has persisted and the increasing pace of normalization with Israel has continued despite the dreadful failures and dwindling prospects for peace and coexistence.

The article centers on two fundamental questions: How do Palestinian university students view the stalled peace process, the normalization of relations, and security coordination with the Israeli occupation? Are there statistically significant differences in university students' attitudes toward the stalled peace process, normalization, and security coordination with Israel based on gender, year of study, faculty, and place of residence? Sub-questions may arise such as: Do Palestinian youth trust international initiatives to achieve this peace? Which strategic options do they support and recommend following in the struggle with the occupation? What is the solution to the crisis from the point of view of Palestinian youth? In other words, how could they get rid of the occupation and restore Palestinian rights? And how do they see the future of the relationship with Israel?

Review of literature

Belief in peace and support for normalization among Palestinian youth

During the years 1993–1999, PLO-Israeli agreements paved the way for normalization and established the foundations for legitimate normalization between the two sides. In the aftermath of the Oslo Accords, the (PA) was given responsibility for administering Palestinians' education, health, tourism, taxes, and social welfare (Shlaim, 2005, p. 246). Various forms of coordination (e.g., civil and security) between the (PA) and the Israeli government take place (Pundak, 2012).

Even in times of tension and crisis, Israel and the PA were keen to maintain their security and intelligence cooperation (Podeh, 2019). However, there are others who support collaborating or normalization with the Israelis as long as it involves removing the settler colonial structure from the region (Albzour et al., 2019). The PA continues to cooperate with Israel on economic matters (Peskin, 2019), especially before the outbreak of the second intifada in "education, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism" (Shlaim, 2005, p. 246), health, and medical affairs (Blit-Cohen & Jaber, 2015), civil society (Dajani & Baskin, 2006; Andoni, 2003), and politics (Mi'ari, 1999). An intifada is a popular uprising or resistance movement, typically against repressive occupations or regimes. The term "intifada" has been linked to two major events in the Palestinian context: the First Intifada, which mostly consisted of nonviolent resistance against Israeli occupation from 1987 to the early 1990s, and the Second Intifada, also called the al-Aqsa Intifada, which began in 2000 in response to the political climate in Gaza and the West Bank. The Arabic word for "intifada" means shaking off or violent resistance (Nasrallah, 2013).

On the other hand, the anti-normalization movement has advocated for a complete ban on any contact with Israelis; the "Palestinians should not talk or cooperate with Israelis until the end of occupation" (Pundak, 2012, pp. 46–53). Consequently, "many Palestinians developed a negative attitude toward cooperation with Israel" (Podeh, 2019, p. 68). Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) was founded to exert pressure on organizations and members that cooperated with Israel; the emergence of Palestinian rejectionist movements (e.g., Hamas and Islamic Jihad) significantly reduced Palestinian normalization (Lim, 2012) to the extent that normalizers are stigmatized and depicted as collaborators with colonial powers (Samarah, 2011). For a just solution to the Palestinian problem to be achieved, continued cooperation with Israel must end (Andoni, 2003). Therefore, civil cooperation, mainly education cooperation, has largely been discontinued (Kahanoff et al., 2007; Herzog & Hai, 2005; Salem, 2005), and efforts are being made to resolve humanitarian problems between the two sides, including food, water, and electricity (Bar, 2005).

Palestinian youth trust in international initiatives to achieve peace

The Oslo process failed to bring about a permanent resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Further attempts followed, including the Camp David negotiations in 2000, aiming to build confidence between the parties and reach a conflict-ending agreement that would resolve all the core issues at a single summit meeting; the Arab Peace Initiative (2002–2007) aimed to go beyond a purely bilateral agreement with the Palestinians (Kostiner, 2009); the Roadmap to Peace (2002) aimed to spell out a two-state solution (Karmi, 2011); the Gaza disengagement (2005) aimed to manage the conflict rather than make peace (Lewin, 2015); the Annapolis conference (2007) (Migdalovitz, 2007) and subsequent Abbas–Olmert talks (2008) aimed to revive peace talks within the framework of the Roadmap (Lehrs, 2016; Migdalovitz, 2007); the Kerry initiative of (2013–2014) aimed to facilitate a Final Status Agreement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Schiff, 2018); the Paris conference (2017) aimed for a two-state solution (Mekelberg and Shapland, 2018).

Since the early 1990s, various approaches have been taken to resolve the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. However, Palestinian youth have largely lost their faith and trust in these endeavors. The peace process has failed, resulting in a crippled Palestinian economy, a significant increase in the number of Israeli settlers in illegal settlements, and an entrenchment of occupation with no real prospects for peace (Mekelberg and Shapland, 2018). Since the 1990s, the Palestinian leadership has always favored peaceful resolution and believed in political action at an international level, acknowledging that militancy has its limitations (Black, 2017). In contrast, the Israeli leadership has spent considerable time and effort promoting the Israeli cause internationally (Medzini, 2012). Along with cultivating close relationships with influential political figures in the United States and Europe, Israel's ties with these figures have made the international community hesitant to push Israel too far into compromises that could leave Israel more vulnerable to terrorist attacks (McManus, 2022). However, Palestinian younger generations considerably reject such a perspective as they suffer politically, economically, and socially while Israel enjoys relative peace (Black, 2017).

Solution of the Palestinian problem from the point of view of Palestinian youth

Every day, young Palestinians are confronted with a plethora of reasons to oppose the Israeli occupation and resist it. This situation has had a significant impact on young people and adolescents, both internally and externally. The forces of occupation that impose restrictions on people's freedom of movement, human rights, economic development, and political freedoms have a detrimental effect on all population groups, especially the young. Young people have always played an important role in the Palestinian resistance movement. Nonetheless, since the intensity of the second intifada has waned, youth participation in resistance has shifted to a nonviolent focus due to a lack of leadership, subservience to Israel's rule, and Palestinian division about the best way to resist (Leech, 2009). Palestinian youth are subjected to repression, restriction, fragmentation, and containment, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in addition to the repression of the Israeli occupation.

Many events over the last few decades have contributed to a lack of genuine consensus on the national project and goals of the

Palestinian people's struggle (Dajani & Rock, 2022). These events are represented by the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, the emergence of political forces outside the PLO that controlled an important part of the Palestinian political field, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the outbreak of the division in 2007, the submission of some Palestinian political elites to the influence of programs and agendas that often do not serve the national project, and the perversion of the Zionist project in return for the weakness of the Palestinian national movement. Consequently, a number of solutions have been proposed to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, including an all-Arab state, an all-Jewish state, a binational state, and a two-state solution (Stine, 2002).

Palestinians and Israelis hold significantly different views on the resolution of the conflict (Havlová & Pavlík, 2021). Most Palestinians want an independent all-Arab state; Zionists, on the other hand, would have preferred a one-state solution in which Israel is exclusively for Jews (Stine, 2002). However, violent outbursts haven't contributed much to a lasting solution that is acceptable to both sides (Roy, 2012), to the extent that the initial spirit of resistance among Palestinian youth was gradually replaced by depression and desperation (Kostelny and Garbarino, 1994). Most Palestinians, especially the young, reject the dominant narrative that portrays them as violent criminals or offenders because, from their perspective, the will to survive cannot be separated from political opposition (Barber 2001) and resistance.

The Palestinian youth resists the Israeli occupation in many ways; some argue that they go to schools and universities "every day because it is a challenge against occupation" (Nguyen-Gillham et al., 2008). Music, dance, and performing have been extremely effective tools for Palestinians living under occupation to build their nation and resist Israeli expansionism, power, and hegemony (McDonald's, 2006). The latest Palestinian resistance tools are balloons, graffiti, sports, and economic power (Hassoneh, 2021). After the Palestinian people suffered significant losses as a result of choosing the option of armed struggle, a new option—that of popular resistance, protests, and legal resistance—began to play out in the Palestinian arena between the years 2000 and 2005 (Dayyeh & Banat, 2017). "Strategic nonviolence is gaining powerful momentum in Palestine, and the loose coalition of actors advocating civil resistance is growing" (Gallagher, 2012).

Palestinian youth and support for revolutionary resistance

For many, normalization is seen as changing relations from rejection and revolutionary resistance to accepting asymmetrical relations among two or more rivaling countries. However, the various policies of colonial segregation exerted by Israel against the Palestinians shift the course of things in the opposite direction, especially among the Oslo generation. After the decline of the momentum of the second Palestinian intifada and the diminishing role of the traditional political system, independent youth movements (e.g., BDS in 2009, People Want to End the Division in 2011, Refuse, Your People Protect You in 2014, etc.) emerged.

There has been a general Palestinian national trend of resistance that aimed at self-determination and sovereignty over Palestine. To achieve this goal, Palestinians committed themselves to different types of resistance. The Palestinian armed resistance emerged in the late 1950s, and armed groups of various political orientations began to emerge and fight under the banner of the "liberation of Palestine" (Hroub, 2008: 63). Alongside conversations and efforts to negotiate political accords with Israel, diplomatic resistance also emerged (Al-bzour et al., 2019). Internationalized resistance, or channeling the fight through external channels in the international arena, is another form of resistance action. It centers on a unilateral approach using international institutions, particularly the UN, as a platform for advancing political ambitions instead of direct or indirect engagement with Israel (Ahm, 2020; Valassopoulos, 2014). This strategy is often perceived as confrontational. Palestinian participation in international organizations and agreements enables them to bring charges against Israeli military and diplomatic officials and demand personal accountability for their actions (Bron & Oded, 2011). Propaganda is also employed by Palestinians as a form of resistance to help Palestinian organizations utilize delegitimization through local and global propaganda, international media, and other means (Ahm, 2020). Their aim is to undermine Israel's legitimacy, isolate it from the rest of the world, and limit its ability to defend itself by criticizing its self-defense efforts. Popular resistance is another form of conflict that involves relatively unorganized mass participation in Intifadas or uprisings, or peaceful opposition such as mass protests and demonstrations (Carpenter, 2020).

The popular resistance that emerged with the outbreak of the first Intifada in December 1987 did not supplant armed struggle as a form of resistance; armed struggle has started to come to the forefront as a way of life:

preaching absolute sacrifice (martyrdom); demonstrating determination and persistence in the struggle; targeting Israel as the central focus of the struggle and defining the conflict with Israel as an all-out war where no compromise is possible; working towards gaining worldwide sympathy and support while overcoming the aversion resulting from any particular government's narrow political interests (Valensi, 2016, 227).

Materials and methods

Ethical consideration

The Institutional Review Board at An-Najah National University in Nablus/Palestine approved this study for ethical reasons. The research adhered to "the Declaration of Helsinki (DOH)." All ethical considerations for medical research involving human subjects were strictly adhered to. Throughout the study, the confidentiality and rights of human subjects were protected. Each participant was given written informed consent, which was handed to them. The form detailed the study procedure, duration, benefit, and lack of any malicious intent. Furthermore, the form stated that all data collected would be used solely for research purposes, and that any information related to the participant would be kept confidential from all parties other than the research investigators. The participants were fully informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that no penalties would be imposed.

Study sample

An-Najah National University students' attitudes toward the peace process and normalization with the Israeli occupation were investigated in a cross-sectional study. This study included a convenient random available sample. The sample size was calculated using the Jekel et al. equation. This study's population included all university students at An-Najah National University. However, a small but representative sample of students ($n = 356$) responded to the survey. Data were collected during the first semester of the 2022/2023 study year.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The study included university students who are enrolled at the university during the first semester of the 2022–2023 study year.

Study Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire in Arabic was used for data collection and was distributed to the study population. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. First, demographic factors including gender, study year, faculty, and place of residence. The second section contains twenty-four items that relate to students' attitudes toward the peace process and normalization with the Israeli occupation. The (24) agreement items were measured using a five-point Likert Scale with Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Uncertain (3), Disagree (4), and Strongly Disagree (5).

The questionnaire was eventually distributed to university students via the internet; it was written in the students' native language (Arabic) to ensure that all respondents fully understood the survey items. The study instrument was given to six experts in education, politics, and international relations to ensure its validity. They were all in agreement on the content of the questionnaire. Before data collection, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach Alpha values (0.946).

To condense the data into a more manageable set of summary variables and to look into the underlying theoretical underpinnings of the respondents' attitudes toward normalization, the researchers used the exploratory factor analysis. It produced 19 items that describe 57.5 % of variance among respondents which were divided into five main domains: Attitude to normalization and security coordination (5 items), Armed resistance as an alternative to normalization (5 items), Reasons for Israel's strength (3 items), Attitude to the liberation of Palestine and the end of the occupation (3 items), and Popular resistance as an alternative to the occupation (3 items) as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Factorial validity of the study tool.

Pattern Matrix							
Loadings	Component						
Attitude to normalization and security coordination	1	2	3	4	5	Variance	Item
I support normalization between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel.	0.958					24.717	1
I support normalization between Arab countries and Israel.	0.915						2
Palestinian normalization with Israel serves the Palestinian cause and has many benefits.	0.853						3
Normalization with Israel will achieve peace for the Palestinian and Israeli sides.	0.889						4
I support security coordination between the (PA) and Israel.	0.392						19
Armed resistance as an alternative to normalization							
The alternative to normalization with Israel is resistance.		0.593				13.078	5
The best model for resistance with occupation is armed resistance.		0.461					7
The best model for resisting the occupation is the comprehensive model (cultural, popular, political, armed, economic).		0.532					8
Israel is an intransigent occupying power and does not accept peace in any form.		0.927					9
The peace that Israel wants is a peace of servility and submission, not a just, equal peace that restores rights.		0.896					10
Reasons for Israel's strength							
The whole world is complicit with the Israeli occupation and strongly supports it.			0.693			8.335	15
Arab weakness is the reason for Israel's strength.			0.825				16
The division and fragmentation of the Palestinian position is the reason for Israel's strength and the Palestinians' weakness.			0.701				17
Attitude to the liberation of Palestine and the end of the occupation							
Arab normalization with Israel is a betrayal of the Palestinian cause and a stab in the back.				0.704		6.321	12
I am hopeful and certain that the end of the occupation will soon be over and Palestine will be liberated.				0.919			13
I despair of liberation because Israel is a strong country that cannot be broken or defeated.				-0.677			14
Popular resistance as an alternative to the occupation							
The best model for resistance with occupation is the popular resistance					0.828	5.028	6
Popular resistance is just a sedative that has no real impact on the occupation.					-0.793		22
Negotiations with Israel are a waste of time and have no real impact on achieving peace, restoring rights, or discouraging the occupation from its crimes.					-0.419		23
Total						57.479	

To capture different insights about Palestinian youth attitudes toward the failed peace process and normalization with the Israeli occupation, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews and asked (36) students six open-ended questions to explore any pertinent ideas that may come up during the interviews. The interviewees represented both genders and had various academic levels or years of study. Four students from each faculty were chosen, given the fact that each one represents a different place of residence. The questions were raised in Arabic to help respondents express themselves freely and adequately; they included:

1. How do you view the security coordination between the (PA) and Israel?
2. What is the most accurate description of security coordination between the (PA) and Israel?
3. What does Israel represent to you?
4. How do you view the Oslo peace agreement between the PLO and Israel?
5. If you were a decision-maker in the (PA), what would be the first strategic choice you would make regarding the conflict with the occupation?
6. In your opinion, what is the best solution to the conflict with the Israeli occupation?

Pilot study

Two pilot studies were conducted. First, 30 students were chosen at random to assess the questionnaire's wording, formatting, response completeness, choice clarity, statement relevance, and time required to complete the form. The researchers chose 80 students for the factor analysis in the second study. Based on the findings, the questionnaire was updated and made available to students online.

Statistical analysis

All statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 26. Assumption analysis was performed on the data. To determine the levels of questionnaire domains, One Sample t-tests were used and Multiple Regressions were used to determine the effect of demographic elemental scores on questionnaire domains.

Results

Qualitative results

The researchers decided to use thematic analysis that involves searching across the data set for common patterns and analyzing them to identify critical themes while permitting interpretation along the way (Kiger & Varpio, 2020, p. 2; Braun and Clarke, 2006).

When asked what they thought about the security cooperation between Israel and the (PA), students gave a variety of answers that showed how complicated the Israeli-Palestinian relationship is. Proponents of increased collaboration contend that it is necessary to uphold security, deter terrorism, and create an atmosphere that is favorable to dialogue and, eventually, peace. They stress that this kind of cooperation benefits both Israeli and Palestinian people by fostering mutual trust and addressing shared security problems. Students referred to coordination as:

"Security coordination demonstrates a commitment to peace and cooperation, fostering trust and goodwill between the two parties." (student A).

"The security coordination ensures that both Israelis and Palestinians can live without constant fear of violence, fostering an environment conducive to negotiations and eventual peace." (student K).

"Without security coordination, there would be increased risks of terrorism and instability, threatening the safety of both Israeli and Palestinian civilians." (student F).

"The (PA)'s willingness to engage in security coordination reflects a recognition of shared security concerns and a commitment to combating extremism." (student Y).

However, more than 50 % stressed that it is unpatriotic behavior harmful to the Palestinians and their cause, as it primarily preserves the security of the Israeli occupation and manages arrangements and requirements of Palestinian life, such as travel and foreign trade. Many students see security cooperation as an oppressive tool that helps maintain Israeli rule and quell Palestinian resistance. They contend that it impedes the chances for true peace and self-determination by undermining Palestinian sovereignty and upholding an unfair status quo.

"The security coordination between the (PA) and Israel is a tool of oppression, serving to enforce Israeli occupation and suppress Palestinian resistance." (students B).

"Security coordination is a betrayal of Palestinian interests, allowing the (PA) to collaborate with an occupying force against its own people." (students E).

"Security coordination undermines Palestinian sovereignty and perpetuates the status quo of Israeli domination, hindering any prospects for genuine peace." (students H).

"Security coordination serves Israeli interests, not Palestinian ones, by quelling resistance and perpetuating the occupation under the guise of cooperation." (students J).

"Security coordination legitimizes Israeli control over Palestinian territories and undermines the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, perpetuating an unjust status quo." (students C).

To gain a deeper insight into the precise dynamics of security coordination, a more detailed question, "What is the most accurate

description of security coordination between the (PA) and Israel?" was raised. Over 58 % of the interviewed students claimed that it is meant to pursue Palestinian militants and assist the occupation in capturing and arresting them. Around 21.1 % described it as useless and frivolous behavior. Some students argued that.

"Security coordination between the (PA) and Israel is primarily a means for Israel to exert control over Palestinian territories and suppress dissent." (student O).

"Security coordination serves as a facade for the (PA) to maintain its power and legitimacy, while ultimately serving Israeli security interests." (student I).

"Security coordination is a necessary evil, fraught with distrust and ulterior motives on both sides, but indispensable for preventing widespread violence." (student H).

"While officially aimed at maintaining peace and stability, security coordination often leads to the targeting and suppression of Palestinian dissent, fueling further resentment and conflict." (student G).

On the other hand, about 16 % argued that its aim is to prevent armed friction between the Palestinian security services and the Israeli occupation army by coordinating the movements of both sides. For example,

"The most accurate description of security coordination is a collaborative effort aimed at ensuring the safety and stability of both Israeli and Palestinian communities." (student N).

"It is a delicate balance of mutual interests where both parties share intelligence and resources to prevent extremist attacks and maintain a semblance of order." (student L).

"The reality is that security coordination is often one-sided, with Israel benefiting more in terms of intelligence gathering and preemptive measures against potential threats." (student B).

"From a Palestinian perspective, security coordination undermines their aspirations for sovereignty and independence, perpetuating their status as a subjugated population." (student Z).

Regarding the third question, "What does Israel represent to you?" the majority of respondents (95 %) asserted that Israel is a contentious entity that must be taken out of the picture. A lot of students look suspiciously at Israel believing that:

"Israel symbolizes a long-standing oppressor, responsible for blockades, restrictions, and military actions that have profoundly affected our lives." (student Z).

"Israel represents a constant threat and source of fear." (student R).

"For me, Israel embodies a barrier to freedom and self-determination, as we face limited access to resources, travel restrictions, and territorial encroachments." (student Q).

"Israel is the occupying force that controls borders, airspace, and maritime access, imposing restrictions on trade, movement, and daily life." (student P).

"Israel represents the root cause of displacement and dispossession, as generations have experienced the loss of homes, land, and livelihoods due to conflict and occupation." (student Z).

"Israel is perceived as an entity that perpetuates the cycle of violence and instability, with ongoing military operations and siege tactics contributing to the humanitarian crisis in the region." (student C).

Meanwhile, 5 % of respondents were pessimistic about Israel's demise, viewing it as a *fait accompli*. Some students believe that:

"Israel's military strength and support from Western countries, particularly the United States, which provides military aid and political backing, reinforce perceptions of Israel's stability and longevity, making its demise seem less likely." (student A).

"The Arab world's perceived divisions and weaknesses, including political fragmentation and regional issues, hinder efforts to challenge Israel's dominance and contribute to skepticism about the Arab world's ability to change the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." (student F).

When asked to evaluate the Oslo peace agreement between the PLO and Israel, about 72 % agreed that it is a historic mistake and a national disaster that has harmed the Palestinian cause for ages. For some students,

"The Oslo agreement led to the fragmentation of Palestinian territories, with the establishment of separate administrative zones (Areas A, B, and C), which hindered the prospects of a contiguous Palestinian state." (student L).

"It allowed for the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, contravening international law and further entrenching Israeli control over Palestinian land." (student U).

"Oslo failed to address crucial issues such as the right of return for Palestinian refugees, leaving millions in a state of displacement and dispossession, exacerbating their suffering." (student V).

On the other hand, 21 % argued that the PLO was forced to resort to this option, offering concessions after concessions to Israel. Some respondents argued that:

"The PLO entered into negotiations under immense pressure, with limited leverage and facing a significantly stronger Israeli negotiating position." (student F).

"The concessions made by the PLO, including recognition of Israel's right to exist and renunciation of violence, were seen as necessary compromises to secure limited gains for Palestinians." (student J).

"Israel's insistence on maintaining control over key aspects such as security and borders marginalized Palestinian sovereignty and undermined the potential for a genuine two-state solution." (student K).

The remaining respondents stated that it is essential for achieving peace and restoring Palestinian rights. For example,

"Despite its flaws, the Oslo agreement represented a significant step towards diplomatic recognition and peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians." (student A).

"By engaging in negotiations, the Palestinian leadership demonstrated a commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, fostering hope for a better future." (student T).

"Oslo laid the groundwork for subsequent peace efforts and diplomatic initiatives, providing a framework for future negotiations aimed at achieving Palestinian statehood and self-determination." (student R).

Moving to the fifth question, "If you were a decision-maker in the (PA), what would be the first strategic choice you would make regarding the conflict with the occupation?" the interviewees were divided into two groups. The first group called for unifying the Palestinian factions and movements and promoting national reconciliation.

"I think there is an urgent need to unify Palestinian factions and movements, recognizing that national reconciliation is essential for presenting a unified front against the occupation." (student I).

"I advocate for initiatives aimed at healing internal divisions and grievances within Palestinian society, viewing national cohesion as vital in confronting not only the Israeli occupation but also external challenges." (student E).

The second group advocated resorting to the international community and returning to the Arab incubator, while activating their role to pressure Israel to end the occupation.

"I believe that a unified Palestinian stance strengthens our position in diplomatic negotiations." (student K).

"I advocate for leveraging the support of the international community, recognizing the potential of international pressure to compel Israel to end the occupation." (student G).

"I call for re-engagement with the Arab world, international actors, and diplomatic channels to advance the Palestinian cause and activate Arab states' role in pressuring Israel and providing support for Palestinian rights." (student D).

"I emphasize the significance of international legal mechanisms and institutions in holding Israel accountable for its violations of international law and human rights." (student C).

Concerning the last question, "In your opinion, what is the best solution to the conflict with the Israeli occupation?" respondents most frequently suggested (unleashing all forms of resistance, including armed resistance, negotiations and peace agreements, unifying the Palestinian factions and movements and promoting national reconciliation, reliance on the international community and trust in global efforts to achieve peace and restore rights, and returning to the Arab incubator and activating its role in putting pressure on the occupation and its supporters.

"I believe that unleashing all forms of resistance, including armed resistance, is the best solution to the conflict with the Israeli occupation. We must fight back against oppression and defend our rights by any means necessary." (student N).

"Negotiations and peace agreements offer the best path towards resolving the conflict with the Israeli occupation. Through diplomacy and compromise, we can work towards a just and lasting peace for both Palestinians and Israelis." (student M).

"In my opinion, unifying the Palestinian factions and movements and promoting national reconciliation is crucial for addressing the challenges posed by the Israeli occupation. By coming together as a united front, we can better confront external pressures and advance our cause." (student L).

"I firmly believe that reliance on the international community and trust in global efforts to achieve peace and restore rights is the most effective solution to the conflict with the Israeli occupation. International support and solidarity are essential in holding Israel accountable and achieving justice for Palestinians." (student J).

"Returning to the Arab incubator and activating its role in putting pressure on the occupation and its supporters is the key to resolving the conflict with the Israeli occupation. Arab solidarity and collective action can strengthen our position and advance our rights on the regional and international stage." (student H).

Quantitative Results

Demographic characteristics and attitudes to normalization with Israel

Table 2 presents the demographic and other characteristics of study participants (N = 356). The table demonstrates that there are

Table 2
Participants' basic characteristics and attributes.

Variable		Count	Percentage %
Gender	Male	86	24.3 %
	Female	268	75.7 %
Study year	First year	32	9.1 %
	Second year	112	31.7 %
	Third year	97	27.5 %
	Fourth year and above	112	31.7 %
Faculty	Medicine and Health Sciences	210	60.3 %
	Engineering and Information Technology	42	12.1 %
	Sciences	18	5.2 %
	Humanities	5	1.4 %
	Economics and Social Sciences	5	1.4 %
	Fine Arts	48	13.8 %
	Law	9	2.6 %
	Pharmacy	5	1.4 %
Place of residence	City	124	35.0 %
	Village	182	51.4 %
	Refugee camp	25	7.1 %
	Green Line area	23	6.5 %

three times as many females as males, and more than half the respondents (60.3 %) come from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Second-year students make up roughly one-third of the study participants, while fourth-year students make up (31.7 %). More than half of the study participants (51 %) reside in villages, followed by a third in cities, and the remaining participants live in either refugee camps or the Green Line region.

Results of the first question

The first question, "What is the degree of your agreement with the questionnaire items" was meant to explore the Palestinian youth's attitudes toward normalization and security coordination with Israel.

The One sample t-test (Table 3) results revealed that the students' responses to the first domain (my position on normalization and security coordination) had meager arithmetic means (1.58) which was statistically significant less than (1.8) indicating that most students disagreed with the questionnaire items stating that they oppose normalization with the occupation. Regarding the second domain (armed resistance as an alternative to normalization), it was very high (arithmetic mean = 4.46), which was statistically significant more than (4.2), indicating that most students favor using armed resistance as an alternative to normalization.

The arithmetic means were high for the remaining domains (the third domain, the causes of Israel's power, the fourth domain, my position on liberating Palestine and ending the occupation, and the fifth domain, popular resistance as a countermeasure to occupation). In other words, many students concur with the statements about these topics.

To elucidate the intricate interrelationships inherent in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the researchers employed a correlation analysis across the five pivotal domains. Table 4 below unveils statistically significant correlations between attitudes, perceptions, and strategic paradigms, thereby illuminating nuanced dimensions within the conflict's multifaceted landscape.

The correlations in the data reveal interesting insights into the attitudes and strategies related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Firstly, there is a negative correlation between attitudes towards normalization and security coordination (DIR1) and armed resistance as an alternative to normalization (DIR2), indicating that as support for normalization increases, the inclination towards armed resistance decreases. Conversely, positive correlations exist between armed resistance (DIR2) and perceptions of Israel's strength (DIR3), as well as attitudes towards the liberation of Palestine (DIR4), suggesting that stronger perceptions of Israel's strength correspond with a greater inclination towards armed resistance and support for Palestinian liberation. Additionally, there's a positive correlation between armed resistance (DIR2) and popular resistance as an alternative to the occupation (DIR5), indicating that as support for armed resistance increases, so does support for popular resistance. Furthermore, perceptions of Israel's strength (DIR3) positively correlate with both attitudes towards the liberation of Palestine (DIR4) and popular resistance (DIR5), highlighting a link between perceptions of strength and support for Palestinian liberation and popular resistance. Lastly, attitudes towards the liberation of Palestine (DIR4) positively correlate with popular resistance (DIR5), indicating that more positive attitudes towards Palestinian liberation are associated with greater support for popular resistance. These correlations shed light on the complex interplay between perceptions, attitudes, and strategies within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Results of the second question

Second question (Are there statistically significant differences in university students' attitudes toward the stalled peace process, normalization, and security coordination with Israel based on gender, year of study, faculty, and place of residence?)

Study hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences in university students' attitudes toward the stalled peace process, normalization, and security coordination with Israel based on gender, year of study, academic faculty, and place of residence."

The Enter-Method Multiple Regression was used to test the study hypothesis and find out the effect of demographic variables (gender, study year, faculty, and place of residence) on the five domains (Table 5).

The study findings demonstrated that the demographic variables did not have an impact on the first, third, and fifth domains at all because ($F = 1.83, 1.4$ and $.86, p > .05, R^2 = .02, .02$ and $.01$). However, the enter method revealed that the variables of the faculty and the student's place of residence impacted the second field "Armed resistance as an alternative to normalization" only ($F = 3.1, p < .05, R^2 = .04$). On the one hand, the student's choice of faculty impacted whether or not he approved of the survey items related to the use of the armed resistance option ($\text{Beta} = -.03, \text{SE} = .01, p < .05$). The study respondents came from the following faculties: Medicine, Engineering, Sciences, Arts (Faculty of Humanities), Economics and Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Law, and Pharmacy. The study findings showed that more medical students than students from the other faculties expressed their approval of the questionnaire items. The last faculty had the highest level of disapproval, followed by the one before.

Concerning the place of residence (a city, a village, a camp, the Green Line area), city students expressed their agreement to the items more than students from villages, camps, and the Green Line area ($\text{Beta} = -.11, \text{SE} = .04, p < .05$).

Table 3

One sample t-test results.

Test Value				4.2		3.4		2.6		1.8	
Direction	M	SD	df	t	P	t	P	t	P	t	P
Attitude to normalization and security coordination	1.58	0.66	355	-74.35	0.00	-51.64	0.00	-28.93	0.00	-6.22	0.00
Armed resistance as an alternative to normalization	4.46	0.63	355	7.84	0.00						
Reasons for Israel's strength	3.89	0.82	353	-7.05	0.00	11.27	0.00				
Attitude to the liberation of Palestine and the end of the occupation	3.55	0.56	355	-22.13	0.00	5.01	0.00				
Popular resistance as an alternative to occupation.	3.45	0.60	355	-23.57	0.00	1.71	0.09				

Table 4
Correlations Among the Five Key Domains.

	DIR1	DIR2	DIR3	DIR4	DIR5
DIR1	1	-.362**	-.032	.036	.084
DIR2	-.362**	1	.384**	.366**	.345**
DIR3	-.032	.384**	1	.342**	.383**
DIR4	.036	.366**	.342**	1	.306**
DIR5	.084	.345**	.383**	.306**	1

* *. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5
Enter-method Multiple Regression of the impact of independent variables.

Domain	Independent variable	Gender	Study year	Faculty	Place of residence	Constant
Attitude to normalization and security coordination	Coefficient	-0.15 (0.08)	0.04 (0.04)	0.02 (0.01)	0.04 (0.04)	1.83
	R ²	.02				
	F	1.83				
Armed resistance as an alternative to normalization	Coefficient	-.03 (.08)	.00 (.04)	-.03 (.01)*	-.11 (.04)*	4.8
	R ²	.04				
	F	3.1 *				
Reasons for Israel's strength	Coefficient	-.14 (.10)	.08 (.05)	-.003 (.02)	-.001 (.06)	3.91
	R ²	.02				
	F	1.4				
Attitude to the liberation of Palestine and the end of the occupation	Coefficient	.18 (.07)*	0.04 (0.03)	-.03 (.01)*	0.03 (0.04)	3.13
	R ²	.04				
	F	3.4 *				
Popular resistance as an alternative to occupation.	Coefficient	-0.07 (0.08)	0.03 (0.03)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.05 (0.04)	3.58
	R ²	.01				
	F	0.86				

According to the enter method, gender (Beta=.18, SE=.07, $p < .05$) and faculty (Beta= -.03, SE=.01, $p < .05$) were found to significantly contribute to the variance in the value of the fourth domain, i.e. Attitude to the liberation of Palestine and the end of the occupation ($F = 3.4$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .04$).

Discussion

According to the study findings, the students preferred using armed resistance as a countermeasure to normalization and security coordination with the Israeli occupation. The researchers contend that political, economic, and security factors explain why Palestinian youth support the option of armed resistance against the Israeli occupation and reject normalization with it. This is consistent with Black (2017), who argued that Palestinian younger generations suffer politically, economically, and socially while Israel settles down in peace.

The political horizon is obscured for Palestinian youth, who are worn out from living under occupation to the extent that the majority of Palestinians now view Israeli cooperation negatively (Podeh, 2019). The expansion of Israeli settlements, segregation policies, and the fragmentation of Palestinian territory following the Oslo Accords, along with the apparent presence of the Israeli security apparatus symbolized by checkpoints and the separation wall, have all contributed to obscuring the political horizon of the Palestinians (Hajjar, 2001). As a result, Palestinians believe that normalizing relations with Israel would only serve to strengthen the colonial oppression and weaken revolutionary resistance (Albzour et al., 2019; Andoni, 2003; Samarah, 2011). The prospect of finding a political solution and bringing peace to the Middle East is now nonexistent, and consequently Palestinian youth have lost faith in the international community as well as Arab Initiatives and are dissatisfied with their efforts to bring about peace, end the occupation, and restore Palestinian rights because these initiatives have failed and have produced no results up to this point. Additionally, the international community has not been able to persuade Israel to recognize Palestinian rights, put an end to the occupation, or create a sovereign Palestinian state. A disappointing position for the Palestinians is the widespread perception among Palestinian youth that the international community is complicit and biased in favor of the Israeli occupation. Therefore, less than 12 % of the respondents trusted the international community to help the Palestinians get free. These results are in line with Black (2017) and McManus (2022), who maintained that the international community is unwilling to push Israel too far into compromises that could make Israel more vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

Due to the occupation's ongoing atrocities against the Palestinian people and its frequent incursions into their holy sites, residences, cities, and villages, Palestinian youth live in constant fear. The Palestinian citizen does not feel safe in their country or home and feels constantly threatened by Israel (Jabali, 2022). They could be the victim of an assassination attempt, arrest, or home

demolition at any time, according to data from the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners (Jabali, Khalili & Jabali, 2024). Since 1967, about a million Palestinians have been arrested by the Israeli occupation (PCBS, 2016).

The Israeli occupation's systematic destruction of the Palestinian economy and its policies that make the Palestinian economy dependent on Israel have made Palestinian youth realize that the high cost of living and high unemployment rates among them are caused by the occupation and lack of Palestinian sovereignty (Wafa, 2022).

Given that the (PA)'s only peaceful options are insufficient to protect them, Palestinian citizens may see taking up arms as their only remaining and forced opportunity to rebel against the harsh reality in which they live. They may have rebelled against the occupation and the peaceful solution the (PA) put forth. For all these reasons, it was also not surprising that, according to one survey question, 73.5 % of students viewed Israel as a contentious entity that must be overlooked via all possible types of resistance including armed resistance (Hroub, 2008), diplomatic resistance (Al-bzour et al., 2019), internationalized resistance (Ahm, 2020; Bron & Oded, 2011; Valassopoulos, 2014), popular resistance (Carpenter, 2020; Valensi, 2016), attending schools (Nguyen-Gillham et al., 2008), playing music, dancing and performing (McDonalds, 2006), and finally strategic nonviolence using tools such as balloons, graffiti, sports, and economic power (Gallagher, 2012; Hassoneh, 2021).

When asked about possible strategic options in the fight against the occupation, only about 5 % of respondents indicated that they would be open to normalizing relations with Israel and coexisting, as violence hasn't helped find a lasting, mutually beneficial solution (Roy, 2012). Furthermore, Palestinians, especially the young, disagree with the dominant narrative that depicts them as violent offenders or criminals (Barber 2001).

Perhaps some Palestinian youth realized that normalization and security coordination with Israel is a betrayal of the Palestinian people and a betrayal of their cause. They may argue that such cooperation perpetuates the status quo of occupation and serves to legitimize Israel's control over Palestinian territories. These students may view the PA's actions as capitulation to Israeli demands and a betrayal of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and independence. These perceptions could stem from the PA's repeated claims of seeking peace with Israel since the Oslo Accords in 1993 (Čiuladienė & Katkonienė, 2017). The Israeli occupation is the true and essentially the only beneficiary of security coordination, while the Palestinians receive no benefit from these enormous efforts given to the occupation at no cost.

Opposition to coordination between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel stems from various perspectives within Palestinians. Some argue that it undermines sovereignty and self-determination, legitimizing Israel's occupation and perpetuating Palestinian subjugation (Farsakh, 2021). Others view it as normalization, normalizing Israel's oppressive policies and violations of Palestinian rights (Pundak, 2012; Podeh, 2019). Critics also highlight Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians, such as settlement expansion, home demolitions, and restrictions on movement and access (Jabali, 2022). They argue that cooperating with Israeli authorities condones these violations and undermines efforts to hold Israel accountable. Some Palestinians view coordination as fostering dependency on Israel, compromising Palestinian autonomy and perpetuating unequal power dynamics (Farsakh, 2021). Advocates of popular resistance reject coordination as ineffective, advocating for grassroots movements and civil disobedience. Finally, criticism of coordination is often linked to dissatisfaction with the Palestinian leadership, who some Palestinians view as disconnected from the needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people, leading to calls for reform and accountability within the PA.

One of the critical manifestations of security coordination is the (PA)'s pursuit of Palestinian militants and resistance fighters who attack Israeli soldiers and settlers. They may be detained, turned over to Israel, or given information about them, and Israel does not reciprocate with anything comparable (Farsakh, 2021). Israel does not turn over settlers to the (PA) or divulge information about their criminal activity if they decide to attack Palestinians, shoot them, or burn their homes and vehicles. The Palestinian youth's decision to reject the possibility of normalizing relations with the occupation or coordinating security with it may be motivated by this factor above all others. Most of the young students (70 %) expressed their rejection of security coordination clearly. (41 %) of them considered it unpatriotic behavior and harmful to the Palestinian cause, and more than (32 %) of them believed that it only serves the occupation and maintains its security.

The study results also showed that the student's choice of faculty impacted whether or not they approved of the survey items related to using the armed resistance option. The study respondents came from the following faculties: Medicine, Engineering, Sciences, Pharmacy, Arts, Economics, Law, and Fine Arts. The study findings showed that more medical students than students from the other faculties expressed their approval of the questionnaire items. The last faculty had the highest level of disapproval, followed by the one before.

In Palestine, it is customary for the most intelligent and hardworking students to major in medicine and health sciences, followed by engineering of all kinds and branches, then various science specializations. In contrast, the less intelligent and hardworking students typically choose to study other literary and social disciplines, such as law, media, politics, and literature. Elite students (or student elites) support the option of armed resistance against the Israeli occupation, which is the option that Hamas and Islamic Jihad primarily adopt, and reject the possibility of appeasement, normalization, or coordination with the occupation. While the less talented students frequently select the exact opposite course, which is one of the peace negotiations, normalization with Israel, and security cooperation with it, suggesting that they are less interested in the option of an armed establishment. The Fatah movement, which is in charge of the (PA) and is led by President Mahmoud Abbas, has decided to follow this path.

Regarding how gender and college variables affected the fourth domain, the findings revealed that women are more supportive than men in terms of ending the occupation and freeing Palestine (they have higher hopes than males for the imminent end of the occupation and the liberation of Palestine).

This may be explained by the fact that, whether measured in terms of the number of martyrs, wounded, or detainees, men make up most of the direct victims of the Israeli occupation in Palestinian society. In addition, and in accordance with Palestinian culture, men are responsible for providing for the family, building homes, and making purchases for the family, wife, and kids.

Males are under more significant economic, security, and financial pressure than females because male unemployment is significantly worse than that of females. The percentage of frustration among them may therefore be higher, which may account for their low hopes for the eventual end of the occupation and the establishment of the Palestinian state. Eventually, they are more capable of evaluating and appreciating reality than their female counterparts because they have more life experience.

Anti-normalization unquestionably prevents Palestinian advancement in a number of socioeconomic and educational fields, separates Palestinians from potential allies, and restricts academic freedom. The only way the Palestinians will normalize relations with Israel, put an end to the conflict, and start down the path to a more peaceful coexistence is if Israel recognizes their rights and permits them to establish their independent state within the 1967 borders.

Conclusion

This study aims to clarify Palestinian university students' viewpoints on the stalled peace process, the normalization of relations, and the cooperation with Israel on security matters. The results of this investigation illuminate a number of complex relationships between the variables under investigation. They emphasize that security, political, and economic elements are crucial in shaping the perspective of the Palestinian youth, who advocate for violent resistance while also expressing opposed to Israel's security cooperation and normalization. The study's conclusion ultimately highlights a pattern: if Israel recognizes Palestinian rights and helps to create an independent Palestinian state, then Palestinians may welcome the idea of restoring relations with their country and moving toward a peaceful coexistence.

Palestinian youth prefer armed resistance as a countermeasure to normalization and security coordination with the Israeli occupation due to political, economic, and security factors. They view Israeli cooperation negatively due to expansion, segregation policies, and fragmentation of Palestinian territory. The international community has failed to persuade Israel to recognize Palestinian rights, end the occupation, or create a sovereign Palestinian state. The dominant narrative portrays Palestinian youth as violent offenders, and security coordination is seen as a key manifestation of the PA's pursuit of militants. Faculty choice and gender also influence students' approval of armed resistance.

The results of this study assume greater significance in light of the events that followed October 7th, the ongoing humanitarian situation, and Israel's aggression against Palestinians. The Palestinian youth's rejection of normalization and cooperation with the occupying authority becomes more pertinent and urgent as Israel keeps up its harsh measures, such as bombs, airstrikes, and settler brutality. The study's understanding of Palestinian students' motives and viewpoints—especially with regard to armed resistance and aversion to working with Israel—sheds light on the attitudes that motivate Palestinian resistance activities. It becomes imperative to comprehend the views of Palestinian youth in order to guide international responses and solidarity initiatives in the face of growing violence and violations of human rights. By making Palestinian students' opinions heard, who oppose normalization and promote resistance against oppression.

Further research should be done in other universities and within other large gatherings, such as syndicates and unions, to see how far the findings of the current study are relevant and can be generalized. Factorial validity indicates that our research tool is suitable for use in other studies as well. Prospective researchers may use various demographic variables to conduct research that illustrates different views of specific types of normalization (e.g., academic, economic, medical, etc.) between Palestine and Israel. This study could involve administering surveys or conducting interviews with students from diverse disciplines to assess their levels of political consciousness, engagement with peace initiatives, and perspectives on regional conflicts. A longitudinal study on Palestinian youth could also examine their political, economic, and social experiences over time, examining changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to peace and normalization with Israel, aiming to understand their challenges and opportunities.

Despite the fact that we used a fairly sizable and representative sample of students, the study's biggest limitation is its geographic scope; participants came from the same university. Additionally, the views of the students were surveyed in exceptional circumstances in which the wave of Israeli assassinations of Palestinian activists increased in West Bank cities of Nablus and Jenin. The study also faced limitations due to logistical challenges, academic repression, and threats to safety. Limited access to key areas, reliable data sources, and coordination with local researchers hindered its scope and depth. Furthermore, the ongoing academic repression during the genocide and war presented significant obstacles.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Islam Halayqa: Writing – original draft, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Oqab Jabali:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Abdul Karim Ayyoub:** Validation, Methodology, Formal analysis.

Declaration of Competing Interest

We, the authors, declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr. Allam Ibraheem for revising the statistical analysis of data.

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