Developing a context based framework for understanding interpersonal resilience

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Abstract

(402 words)

Taking a pragmatic approach, this research has developed a context based framework to understand how people effectively cope with each other in their relationships at times of stress. Contexts of intractable conflicts – such as Israel and the West Bank region - are fertile ground for such inquiry because the sources of tension on people's relationships are numerous and accentuated, making any resilient cases worthy of attention. Besides, there is an urgent need for expertise to manage interpersonal relationships effectively and efficiently as the reviewed literature has underlined.

A conceptual framework was developed to provide a methodologically robust and philosophically coherent basis for the investigation and analyses were grounded in contemporary literature using a trans-disciplinary approach. From there, a three-tiered analytical framework was built to allow understanding of the emergence of resilience in dyadic co-worker relationships in episodes of tension. The analytical lens employed, grounded in the Maussian gift theory, has allowed for a multi-level and multi-dimensional analysis, thus moving from an individualistic to a relational approach, much advocated for and yet sparsely studied in the literature.

The field research was conducted over a phased period of three years in three small-scale enterprises. Following an exploratory phase, data was gathered using semi-structured interviews with individuals close to the businesses and their day-to-day operations. Conversations focused on the stories of how

participants dealt with circumstances of stress in their work-life relationships with each other. Findings were then fed back to participants through group interviews which allowed a refinement of the primary work, and further deepened the research findings. Analyses of the three cases revealed three complementary drivers of resilient relationships: 1) A motivated willingness to maintain the relationship; 2) the existence of a physical and emotional space for communication; and 3) a space of recognition, underpinned by feelings of being listened to and understood. All three drivers brought a feeling of belonging to the relationship which further maintained and strengthened the bonds.

The analytical framework developed, and methodological approach employed, have proved useful in understanding how interpersonal resilience of co-workers is initiated and maintained in the specific contexts. While focusing at the micro-level, the research has also shed a different light on designing research in intractable conflict environments. Instead of focusing on individual traits or socio-economic factors, the contextualised socio-cognitive approach put forward here opens the gateway to more complex thinking and better understanding of human relationships and the drivers nurturing and maintaining them.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed …   …… Date …17/08/2018…………………….

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Developing a context based framework for understanding interpersonal resilience

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Part I Conceptual Framework

Chapter One Introduction

1   Rationale for the study

"Surely much of what makes life worth living comes down to our feelings of well-being— our happiness and sense of fulfilment. And good-quality relationships are one of the strongest sources of such feelings." *(Goleman 2007: epilogue).*

"We are wired to be social" (Lieberman 2013: ix).

What makes a 'good quality relationship' that forms a cornerstone of our well-being? The answer is subjective. This research assumes that a good quality relationship lies, in part, in its ability to adapt effectively when faced with tension that threatens its positive constructiveness for parties involved - its resilience. Over the last decade, much scientific research has been published on the interrelations between human well-being and the quality of their social relationships. Neurobiology and recent social cognitive research have suggested similar findings and can be pictured in Goleman's following words: "nourishing relationships have a beneficial impact on our health, while toxic ones can act like slow poison in our bodies" (Goleman, 2007:4-5). Researchers working on the edge of brain science, psychology and the social sciences suggest that interpersonal relationships are fundamental to human and social health (Lieberman 2013; Siegel 2007; Siegel 2010c). Positive - socially secure and constructive - relationships are beneficial to human beings

at the social, psychological and biological level. In 2014, the UNDP's Human Development Report envisioned that strengthening people's ability to cope in the face of adversity – to be resilient - is in line with reducing their vulnerabilities and is essential for sustaining human development in contexts of on-going setbacks such as conflict, economic crisis and climate change (Malik 2014). Each of these statements offers a snapshot of the significance of relationships in our well-being and, taken together, point to the pressing need for understanding interpersonal resilience better. This is especially pertinent given the fact that the global population is now over 7.5 billionand still counting. On a planet with limited resources and subject to so many social conflicts which are often intractable (Atran 2016; Burgess and Burgess 2006) in nature. Factors accentuating social fractures indicate a need to better understand how people can connect with each other constructively. With the growing frequency and flows of migration due to this ever-increasing climate of insecurity across the globe, it is timely to develop efficient and effective ways of understanding the social dynamics of relationships with 'others', often perceived as different and untrustworthy.

However, nowadays, even with these clear recommendations backed up by scientific knowledge, in practice interpersonal relationships seem to be under pressure across the globe. Societies, North and South, East and West, are all facing profound social crises to a scale that no previous generations have had to face before. Terrorists' attacks are on the rise, and in Europe and North America, anti-immigration campaigns are flourishing. In the Middle Eastern and North African countries, while populations are fleeing wars and dire poverty, the news reports terror groups hijacking public spaces and people's

lives, brandishing "anti-western" sentiments. On the face of it, it might appear as though the world is being plunged into a speechless dialogue, with a deafening sound of misunderstanding, deepening social fractures incrementally, despite institutional or macro-political efforts to change the dynamics. Across the globe the social world is a patchwork of *intractable conflicts*. The dynamic and complex nature of some social conflicts engage multiple dimensions, they change over time and vary with the different adversary groups involved (Kriesberg 2003). This intractability – in other words, the persistence despite efforts to end or transform the source of the problem - makes these conflicts extremely difficult to deal with, manage and live in (Burgess and Burgess 2006; 2015; Kahn *et al.* 2016). As Bar-Tal (2007) underlines, intractable conflicts "threaten the well-being of the peoples involved and the international community"; and "are accompanied by intense socio-psychological dynamics, making it especially difficult to resolve them" (Bar-Tal 2007: 1430).

The macro socio-political strategies we use as societies to adapt to conflicts are not always effective. Bar-Tal (2007) argues that the socio-psychological infrastructure, resulting from extensive sharing of societal beliefs of collective memory and a certain ethos of conflict enables societies to face conflict by adapting to the conflict conditions, especially at times of peak violence. At the same time, these societal beliefs maintain and protract the conflict (Bar-Tal 2007: 1446). This, according to Bar-Tal (2007) is because it leads to selective collection of information. Such biased information processing, he explains, in line with Maoz *et al.* (2002), "leads to such phenomena as double standards, fundamental attribution error, reactive evaluation, perception of self-

uniqueness, self-focus, false consensus, and adisregard of empathy for the rival" (Bar-Tal 2007: 1445). Recent research (Halperin *et al.* 2012; Kahn *et al.* 2016; Tagar *et al.* 2011) has studied negative intergroup feelings to examine the role of emotions in intractable conflicts.

Indeed, as Cohen-Chen *et al.* (2014) note, in line with Bar-Tal (2007), "one of the barriers to resolving intractable conflicts is the perception that such conflicts are inherently unchangeable" (Cohen-Chen *et al.* 2014: 6). They further note that: "this perception leads people to apathy and indifference, resulting in its perpetuation and continuation" (Cohen-Chen *et al.* 2014: 6). They argue in line with Halperin and Gross (2011) that "hope has been found to lead to cognitive flexibility, creativity and risk taking" (Cohen-Chen *et al.* 2014: 1). These authors found that promoting societal beliefs about the malleability of the conflict – by inducing hope – is an alternative mechanism for peace-building in such context. Although insightful in terms of driving research towards understanding more constructive experiences within such contexts, this route, focussing on emotions and mainly developed in the field of social psychology, remains oriented towards the individual, rather than the relationship. Thus within the field of sociology the interpersonal aspect remains largely unaddressed.

Indeed, much sociological research in this area has focused on the consequences of conflict rather than its determinants or on the coping mechanisms around it (Anicich *et al.* 2015; De Wit *et al.* 2012). Few studies have chosen interpersonal relationships as a locus of study, which is perhaps understandable given that dyadic relationships are not easily studied and less so when these have undergone tension, conflict or been subject to external

stressors. In line with De Wit *et al.* (2012), Anicich *et al.* (2015) have noted that "Interpersonal conflict emerges often when there are perceived incompatibilities or differences among group members" (Anicich *et al.* 2015: 3). Pointing out that increasing conflict may potentially harm individual and organisational performance, the authors suggest that understanding the determinants of interpersonal conflict involves moving from a "person-based explanation" to a more "structural, role-based account that focuses on role holders' experiences and relative abilities to act on their internal states" (Anicich *et al.* 2015: 3). Although going down this route is interesting, given its core discipline, the present research seeks to understand the sociological drivers of interpersonal resilience. Current assumptions about resilience rely on personality-based factors, keeping the locus at the individual level. The relational factors - the dynamics of social interactions which are at play when there is a tension - have received much less attention in a sociological context.

At the same time, although academic research on resilience has progressed considerably over the past few decades discussing the concept at the individual (Shoshani and Slone 2016) or organisational level, little research has focused on the interpersonal level. For instance, Halperin *et al.* (2013) have noted among Israeli research participants that viewing a conflict situation in a detached and analytical manner can reduce support for aggressive reaction to Palestinian violence. At the organisational level, especially in the workplace, much attention has been given to the significance of different conflict handling approaches. These strategies, as Gilin Oore *et al.* (2015) noted, building on Thomas (1974), can vary:

> *"For example, unimportant matters are often beneficially handled with avoidance, emergency matters call for a forceful or competing approach, and accommodation may make sense when one has no power in a situation"* (Gilin Oore et al. 2015: 9).

Research focused on evaluating individual strategies like Coleman and Kugler (2014) have developed with their measure of managerial conflict adaptability answers a lacuna in the field of resilience in the workplace, still focus on individual perspectives in controlled in-lab experiments. Research still needs to go beyond the focus and evaluation of types of individual strategies. Conflict responses are unpredictable and, given the variety of dyad-idiosyncratic processes, can vary (Elfenbein *et al.* 2008). As Gilin Oore *et al.* (2015) have summarised: "people experience and act on conflict in importantly different ways across different partners" (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015: 8); underlining that the "capacity to thrive despite challenging organisational conflict" is an area of research that requires further theoretical and empirical work (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015: 12).

However, it is context which shapes social judgement and real life stories. Although more complex to investigate, stories offer other insightful dynamics to look into. Put differently, learning from people's actual experiences in dealing with lived circumstances of social tension will add value to understanding how these strategies come about, and what relational factors drive effective adaptive pathways in social relationships under tension.

Thus even though it is crucial to understand the intricacies of adaptive pathways leading to interpersonal resilience, much work still needs to be done

in both theoretical and methodological terms to make progress in this direction. This research deliberately takes a pragmatic perspective employing an abductive reasoning approach (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009) to develop an analytical framework which concords with the subjective and context-specific nature of interpersonal resilience, as well as a methodological framework which enhances the quality of the research experience for the sake of robustness and reliability of the empirical findings. Further elaboration is given below.

1.1 Paving the way to developing a context-based analytical framework

What is it that enables people to cope with each other in their relationships? What drives them to cope with (internal and external) tensions and maintain the relationship rather than severing it? How do the choices of attitudes and behaviours of people in a dyadic dialog articulate to drive an effective adaptation to the circumstances of tension in a context of long-running conflict? These are the social questions from which this inquiry takes its roots. Although, the question is broad and can be applied in different social settings subject to conflict or social tension - the workplace, the family, public or private organisations for instance - inquiring about interpersonal resilience involves people's intimacy and private positions which are sensitive issues not easily divulged to strangers. That said, given the time (four years in a part-time capacity) and resources allocated (see the budget and timeline in Annexe

Two) to this study, a feasible study had to be designed to achieve the aims. So the rationale of this study is twofold - both epistemological and practical.

Epistemologically, conducting research on a sensitive issue is challenging. Understanding is not "an isolated activity of human beings but a basic structure of our experience of life. We are always taking 'something as something'. That is the primordial givenness of our world orientation, and we cannot reduce it to anything simpler or more intermediate" (Schwandt 2000:194). This statement defines part of the ontological positioning of this study and, for the sociologist, makes a case to learn from actual real life examples of how people experience their relationships from their own perspectives. However, such an enterprise involving sensitive information can be time-consuming, cumbersome to set up and costly to achieve if undertaken without precise methods and relevant reasoning. This research has therefore sought to develop a practical and cost-effective approach, especially compared with conventional ethnographic approaches which are time and effort intensive (Burke and Kirk 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2011).

In practical terms, the social questions outlined above can be distilled down to a more specific research question: how can the drivers of interpersonal resilience - of co-workers operating in small enterprises operating in regions of long-running and persisting socio-political conflict - be understood? It could be argued that any context may have been suitable to enquire about how people cope with situations of tension in relationships. Interpersonal relationships, and the related sources of stress that impinge on them, exist at every level of society, from households to the workplace to leisure environments. However, for the sake of methodological robustness, the

research question was intentionally devised to enquire about relationships evolving within a social background of an intractable conflict environment. The reason for choosing a context of intractable conflict is based, firstly, on the working assumption that the sources of stress on the relationships will be more diverse and exacerbated than in a relatively 'peaceful' context as might be found in the UK or other parts of Europe. Secondly, this research also assumes that stories of interpersonal resilience, despite prevailing resentments resulting from historical and persisting negative experiences, will be helpful in enhancing the understanding of the processes of decision-making under stress – a lacuna observed and underlined by researchers in conflict management (Vindevogel 2017a; 2017b; Williams *et al.* 2017).

The geo-political tensions that have prevailed in the Middle Eastern region over the past six decades are well known. The Israeli and West Bank region - a confluence of heterogeneous populations in terms of ethnic origin, belief systems, religious background, socioeconomic status and political positioning - has been experiencing low to medium socio-political conflict with unpredictable peaks of violence since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Of all the contemporary armed conflicts indexed by the international agencies International SOS and Control Risks[1], the Israeli-Palestinian conflict[2] is the longest running in contemporary human history.

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[1] Formed in April 2008, provides clients with a complete suite of assistance and travel risk mitigation support services with a unique footprint of travel security and medical resources that spans five continents.
[2] Conflict tracking websites (accessed regurlarly over the period of the research 2013-2017): https://www.travelsecurity.com/Page.aspx?pg=15178
http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/
http://acd.iiss.org/en

Although historically, the Israeli and West Bank territories have been home to pluralistic societies, the wars and ongoing sociopolitical conflict have nurtured several competing collective narratives, beliefs and value systems, building a marked differential amongst the perceptions of members of the community residing in this area. Ethnic and place-based categorisations such as Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs and Palestinian Arabs living in the West Bank territories are commonly used in academic as well as political and policy discourses. For instance, the State of Israel self-proclaims as a Jewish Democratic state while recognising the right of the minority, the Arab citizens. In the West Bank territories, Palestinian communities have lived under Jordanian rule and then under Israeli military occupation, and in some parts (Area A) now under Palestinian authority (Mana *et al.* 2015). If we remain at a relatively macro-level, it can be argued, in line with Canetti et al. (2017), that cross-cultural perceptions impinged by unsettled and competing traumatic collective memories do not help in building trust in the other nor encourage the building of intercultural relationships between the different groups already distanced by asymmetrical power relations (Maoz, 2011). In such a context any cross, inter or intra-cultural relationships which are transformed under tension have been deemed insightful to study.

It is clear that although culture is an umbrella concept referring to language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviours and even material objects passed on from one generation to another, it cannot be overlooked in the process of seeking to understand the dynamics of interpersonal resilience in such a culturally diverse and complex region. Instead of a cultural approach which would require unpacking and presume that participants are part of a pre-determined

cultural group or ethnicity, in this research I have opted for a contextual approach for two main reasons. First, context refers to those circumstances that form the setting for an event, an idea, or a statement and in terms of which the latter can be understood. In other words, a contextual approach examines the situation within which something exists or happens may help to deconstruct and explain it. This does includes a cultural element, alongside a social, economic, cognitive or indeed any other factor of influence - without presuming that any one is more prominent than another. This is an important aspect of the developed framework, which seeks to understand the dynamic pathways towards interpersonal resilience.

Second, this study is seeking to develop understanding of micro and meso-level dynamics in any relationship under tension from the perspective of the persons involved in the dyad. While inter-cultural relationships can be as insightful as intra-cultural ones, focusing only on one or the other has not been the priority of the thesis. In fact, in collecting the data, it was preferred that the participants defined their own socio-cultural belongings in order to have a more nuanced understanding of how their cultural identities play out, or not, in the dynamics of resilience in the relationships.

The social complexities at play in this region of the world and the relative ease of **access** and security to foreigners (when compared to other conflict areas of the world) made this intractable conflict environment (Bar-Tal 2007; Burgess and Burgess 2006; Cohen-Chen *et al.* 2014; Coleman and Kugler 2014) an obvious choice to research interpersonal resilience. Nevertheless, conducting the research in a volatile environment involved several challenges requiring a practice-driven methodology, which in turn has added pragmatic as well as

intellectual value to research practice in contexts of intractable conflict environments.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the study

Overall, this study subscribes to a pragmatic approach to conducting research, balancing purpose with efficiency in order to better understand how people cope in their relationships in situations of endogenous and/or exogenous sources of tension. Learning from the complexity of real-life stories will add value to building this understanding for academia and practitioners since complexity: a) provides the opportunity to refine the analytical and methodological frameworks; and b) offers insightful empirical findings, albeit incidental given the limited number of cases studied. Furthermore, it enhances the knowledge of relational drivers which catalyse adaptive pathways in circumstances of tension.

The aims of this study are as follows:

- Conceptually - to develop a theoretically informed and refined context-based analytical framework for better understanding the adaptive pathways that drive interpersonal resilience;
- Methodologically - to develop a reflexive, robust and efficient methodological framework which allows for data gathering and analysing the in real-life contexts of an intractable conflict environments; and

- Empirically - to enhance understanding of the emergent, and hence complex nature of what drives adaptive pathways in circumstances of tension in relationships.

To achieve these aims, the following set of conceptual, methodological and analytical objectives had to be met:

Conceptual:

1) To critically review the literature and debates around the concept of resilience which will inform the conceptual framework of the study and derive knowledge on the potential drivers of interpersonal resilience of co-workers in contexts of conflict;

2) To critically assess theories which are relevant to the study of interpersonal resilience;

3) To devise an analytical framework which is coherent with the deductions made from the literature review and serves the purpose of the study;

Methodological:

4) To develop a method for selecting a context for feasible field research and a set of instrumental cases which allow in-depth enquiry of interpersonal resilience;

5) To define a temporal interview schedule which will allow for an immersive as well as efficient method of data gathering in the different field settings of each case; and reflect the available temporal and financial resources.

Analytical:

6) To describe in detail the story of each case selected to allow the reader to better understand the social and subjective contexts; and to explain the types of relationships studied and their evolution through the locus of reported circumstances of tension;

7) To analyse the dyads in each case using the analytical framework developed, focusing on the reported episodes of stress or tension on the relationships;

8) To explore the mechanisms underlying the drivers of interpersonal resilience identified in relation to the theoretical and philosophical constructs of the analytical framework, drawing out elements of adaptation as well as common drivers of effective adaption through a cross-analysis of all cases studied.

9) To develop an understanding of the mechanisms underlying the drivers of interpersonal resilience identified in relation to the literature and to the theoretical and philosophical constructs that helped shape the analytical framework.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured around seven chapters, including this introductory chapter. Figure 1 represents the research 'route map' and translates the iterative process of which this thesis is the resultant product. Chapter Two defines interpersonal resilience as an emergent process which enables a relationship to adapt effectively to sources of stress which risk to severe it. Through a literature review of the debates around the concept of resilience, the Chapter then sets out the implications of researching interpersonal resilience: namely the context specificity, multidimensionality and emergent characteristics of the concept. Further review of the literature around the potential drivers of interpersonal resilience shows the need for empirical research on resilience, while also supporting a more relational perspective which factors in multidimensional considerations. Subsequent focus on the context of small enterprises operating within a setting of long-running socio-political conflict context show that few qualitative and empirical studies have been conducted at the relational level, with most approaching resilience from an individual or socio-economic angle. This chapter therefore sets out the *raison d'être* of the study and informs the theoretical framework to be detailed in Chapter Three.

The devised theoretical framework grounds the study in an abductive reasoning in line with the pragmatic philosophy applied. This serves the purpose of combining two main bodies of theory to produce a unique sociological lens of analysis for interpersonal resilience. Uniquely, it demonstrates how contemporary theories of Interpersonal Neurobiology

(IPNB) and the sociologically grounded Maussian-gift theory (MGT) belong to the same paradigm when explained in terms of symbolically laden energy flows. Chapter Three will discuss how this similitude is significant in building a consilient framework for interpreting reported subjective narratives in the social sciences.

Chapter Four then sets out the logic underlying the chosen contexts and methods to conduct the research. It elaborates on the research design and the methodological framework in line with the contextual challenges, as well as the literature review findings. The emergent nature of the concept and contextual dynamics support the presentation of the research findings through case stories to convey a better contextual understanding of the researcher's interpretations.

Chapter Five provides a complete analytical account of the first case studied. It demonstrates how the different partners of the relationships studied adapted to varying sources of stress through a story-based approach. The added value of this form of presentation addresses a need for contextualization identified in the literature and allows the reader to see the layers of analytical stages involved which build towards the understanding of existing adaptive strategies.

Chapter Six presents the analysis of the two subsequent cases studied, focusing primarily on the adaptive strategies for brevity, the detailed story-based analytical stages being located in Annexes Ten and Eleven. This chapter also provides a cross-analysis of the three cases and discusses the research findings in relation to recent literature. Drivers of interpersonal

resilience identified in each case are compared and contrasted and the underlying mechanisms are outlined.

The final chapter contains a detailed discussion of the findings and draws out the headline conclusions, along with the conceptual, methodological and empirical contributions to the sociological literature. It first recaps the key objectives of each chapter and sums up how they all relate to the core argument of the thesis. It also acknowledges the limitations and suggests future avenues for research to develop the understanding of interpersonal resilience further.
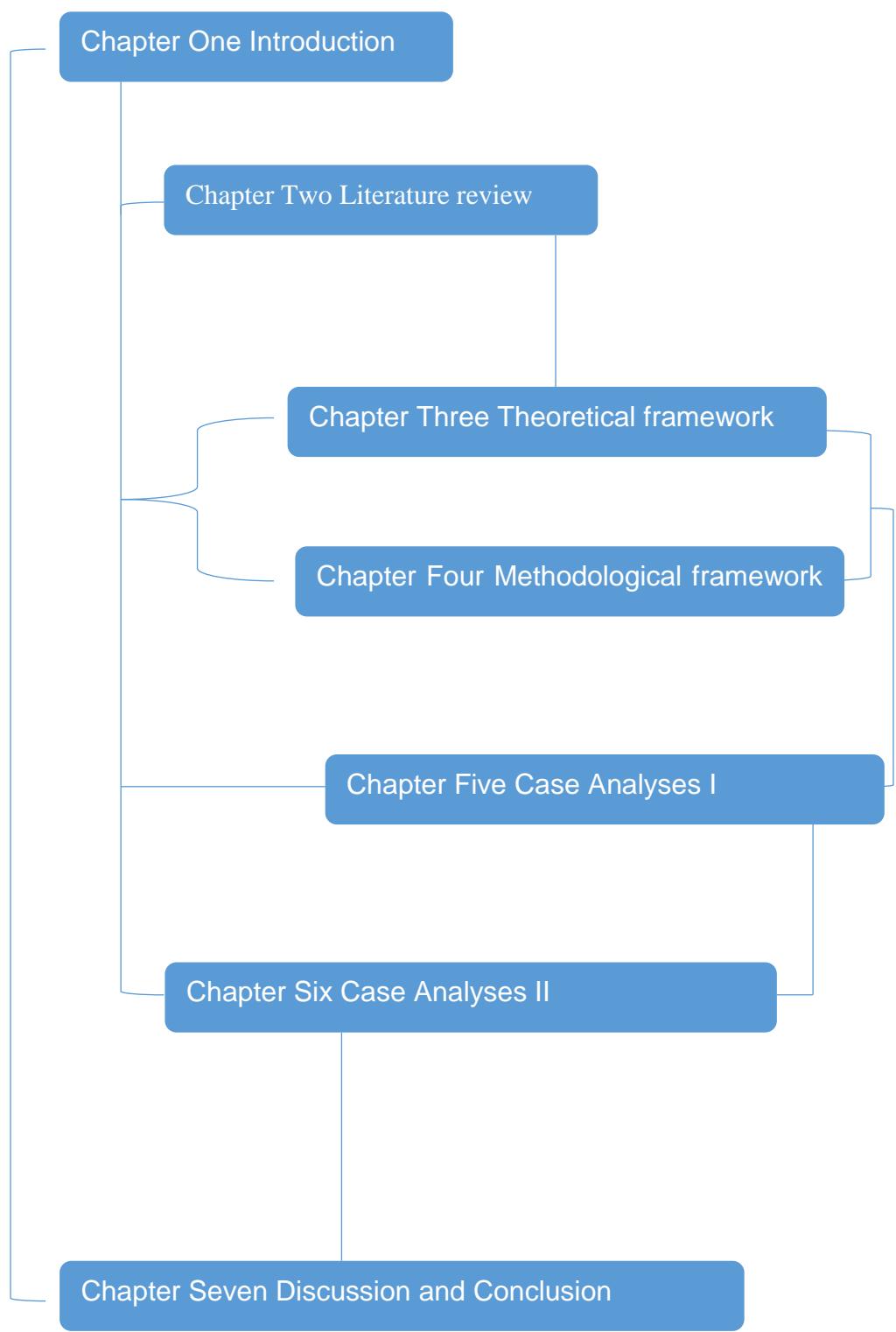
Figure 1 The weaving of the thesis structure

Part I Conceptual Framework

Chapter Two Literature review

2 Introduction

Resilience is a term prodigiously used in the literature but with diverse epistemologies across and within a variety of disciplines. A logical place to start is to pose the question of the resilience of *whom* and *to what*. While in the main, the 'to what' is often defined as a source of stress of whichever kind, the literature is more divergent with respect to resilience 'of whom': for instance, the focus in ecology has been on the natural environment; in engineering on materials; and in psychology on individuals. So, a sociological perspective would be expected to focus on the resilience of social relationships within any sets (dyads, groups, communities, societies, for example) comprising individual persons.

Etymologically, resilience comes from the Latin verb *resilire*, to spring back or to jump back (Stevenson 2010). This idea of going back to an original state is present in many definitions of resilience, most notably in the material sciences and engineering but also in other social sciences. While this is unproblematic in the former it is not necessarily the case in the latter. In the material sciences, most variables are observable, quantifiable and measurable. In the case of human subjects, complexity is more significant. For instance, who decides

which state to go back to? And how is subjectivity or the incremental change in human lives which are shaped by so many forces and contexts dealt with effectively? Such questions bring to light the necessity of transparency in definitions.

Indeed, the disparities in understanding are diverse and Bhamra et al's. (2011) review paper sets the tone: "it is essential to understand whether resilience is: a measure, a feature, a philosophy or just a capability? Perhaps more specifically, is being resilient a tangible capability or an intangible capability?" (Bhamra *et al.* 2011:5389). Another question to address is whether resilience is a positive and desirable outcome in all circumstances. Most researchers from psychology to human geography concur that resilience as a concept is assumed to be a positive and desirable outcome. However, some argue that it is not necessarily the case and that further empirical and context based research is required (Bhamra *et al.* 2011; Brian *et al.* 2004; Burnard and Bhamra 2011; Cumming *et al.* 2005; Theron 2012; Walker *et al.* 2004b; Weichselgartner and Kelman 2014; Welsh 2014). In the absence of consensus on the definition of resilience, clarity as to which epistemologies are being applied may help to avoid confusions.

In this chapter the attention is focused on identifying the drivers of resilience (defined as the conditions which initiate and maintain) at the interpersonal level, primarily between co-workers of small enterprises operating within an intractable conflict environment. The analysis presented here is the result of a multi-level review of literature distilled through a series of four scoping questions, framed here in terms of the following four objectives: 1) to assess the conceptual elements and issues related to the term 'resilience' in order to

address the confusions noted above and define interpersonal resilience; 2) to examine the different epistemological approaches to resilience and; 3) to identify those drivers of resilience which apply to co-workers' relationships in small-scale enterprises operating within areas of intractable conflict. This logical system of review was essential as the literature on resilience is wide-ranging, which would have made an exhaustive review counter-productive in this particular project where the research question is specific.

2.1 Issues around resilience and their implications

The review of the conceptual elements of resilience and related issues revealed three fundamental findings which help form a backdrop for critical and constructive discussion around the term. First, in definitional terms, and across disciplines, it was found that at least two components form the basis of the term resilience: adaptability and the existence of a source of stress. Second, if considered as a context-specific construct, resilience has to be researched through more in-depth empirical research. Third, resilience carries multi-dimensionality meaning that the locus of the study has to be clearly specified. In other words, the level (intrapersonal, interpersonal, micro, meso and macro levels for instance) that the research is being conducted and the dimensions (social, economic and ecological for example) under study require careful consideration. In the following sections, these issues are examined in more detail and their implications discussed.

2.1.1 Issues with conceptual implications

It is no surprise that there exists a variety of definitions of resilience. However, as mentioned previously, some commonalities can be observed across disciplines: the idea of adaptability of an entity and the existence of a source of stress (Allen and Holling 2010; Bhamra *et al.* 2011; Brian *et al.* 2004; Burnard and Bhamra 2011; Fletcher and Sarkar 2013; Luthar *et al.* 2000; Luthar *et al.* 2014; Norris *et al.* 2008; Rotarangi and Stephenson 2014). Instead of reviewing all existing definitions from all the fields, it was more purposeful to reflect on the epistemologies of the original definitions from physics, ecology and social sciences – the main disciplines where resilience has been discussed as a concept over the past four decades. As this section shows, going back to the roots has helped construct an enhanced understanding the concept today by clarifying potential sources of divergences and identifying commonalities across the different disciplines employing the concept. Figure 2 represents the subtle differences in the conceptualization of resilience in these different fields.
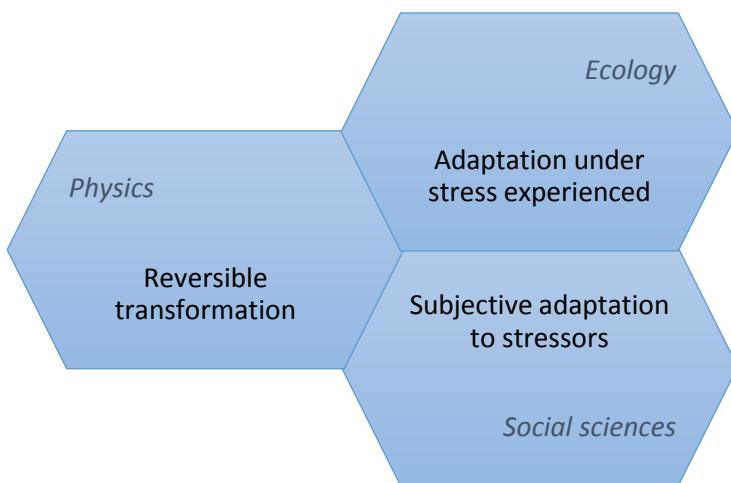
Figure 2 Differences in conceptualising resilience in Physics, Ecology and Social Sciences

Convergence: Adaptability and a source of stress

From a Physics perspective, resilience is the ability of a material to absorb energy when it is deformed elastically, and release that energy when the source causing the deformation is released. Resilience – and more specifically proof resilience - is thus defined as the maximum energy that can be absorbed within an elastic limit, without creating a permanent distortion to the material. So in this context resilience is the ability of a system to withstand an external force within the limits of a permanent distortion, and maintain its functional capacity. Any force exerted which goes beyond the absorption limit of the material will cause it to be permanently changed or deformed. In other words, in materials, resilience involves a *reversible transformation.*

In the early seventies, the concept was introduced into the Ecological Sciences, applying it to natural ecosystems. In this field, more attention is given to the ability of an ecosystem to be transformed within certain limits. According to Holling (1973), the first to introduce the concept in ecology,

> *"Resilience determines the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables, and parameters and, still persist"* *(Holling 1973: 17).*

Over time, this ability to absorb the changes has been translated into a form of adaptability (Walker *et al.* 2004b) of the system. As a matter of fact, ecosystems deal with biodiversity and the concern is more than just a material deformation. Of more interest is the ability of an ecosystem to adapt to

pressures exerted on it. This adds another layer of complexity within the conceptualisation of resilience: adaptation under stress experienced.

In the Social Sciences, the concept of resilience (although originally not termed as such) can be traced back to psychological research in the 1960s and 1970s (Luthar *et al.* 2014) where studies focused on the behavioural patterns of children with schizophrenic parents. Although these children were considered to be at high risk for psychopathology, a subset of them still showed healthy behaviours (Anthony 1974; Garmezy 1974; Garmezy and Streitman 1974). Back then, such findings opened up avenues for research on the ability of subjects considered to be vulnerable to high-risk but able to show positive behaviours instead of the expected negative behaviours. As Luthar *et al.* (2014) note, although not termed as resilience at first, researchers started using this particular word to denote the potential fluctuations in expected behaviour, thus specifying that resilience is an ability that is not necessarily absolute and/or uniform over time and in different contexts. More recently, in psychology, resilience has been defined as "a phenomenon or process reflecting relatively positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma" (Luthar *et al.* 2014:126). In the main, researchers concur that two elements exist: the existence of a source of "adversity"- in other words a source of stress – and "a positive adaptation" (Fletcher and Sarkar 2013), or circumstantial tension to be more specific. More subtly though, there is an implication of subjectivity and uncertainty attached to the concept.

Interpersonal neurobiology takes a more consilient intellectual approach (Siegel 2012b), defining resilience as "the quality of being able to effectively adapt to stressors" (Siegel 2012b: 209). By incorporating terms such as

'quality' and 'effectively' this definition more explicitly acknowledges the subjective nature of the concept as each of these terms are dependent on personal experience. But perhaps more importantly, it also re-frames the concept as being fundamentally related to the *qualities* of an entity to adapt to stressors, and the varying degrees to which this may or may not occur.

Debating the desirability of resilience

It is clear from the literature that resilience has become a goal for policy-makers and is often assumed to be positive and desirable (Weichselgartner and Kelman 2014). Some authors, from psychology to human geography, however, question this blind desirability of resilience. They ask for instance if resilience were the ability to go back to a state of equilibrium, should it be considered as a necessarily positive outcome or beneficial process? In fact, some argue that in certain cases, change is preferable to adaptation resulting simply in a status quo (MacKinnon and Derickson 2013; Theron 2012; Walker *et al.* 2004b). From an individual or societal perspective, these are legitimate since human beings, with a brain system distinct from all other known species, demonstrate a specific ability to make complex decisions (Goleman 2007). Besides, humans are very unlikely to ever return to the exact same overall state of being due to the evolving nature of our lives, minds, environment or feelings, to name but a few of these complex and interconnected contexts that social life implies. As Weichselgartner and Kelman (2014) argue, in line with Dovers and Handmer (1992):

> *"it is detrimental and inaccurate to downplay significant structural*
> *social-political processes while bypassing the major difference between*

ecosystems and societies, namely the human capacity for anticipation and learning" (Weichselgartner and Kelman 2014:4).

Several authors have argued that importing a rigid definition of resilience from engineering or ecological sciences into social sciences without taking into consideration the intrinsic nature of societies can be problematic (Adger 2000; Cumming *et al.* 2005; Porter and Davoudi 2012; Weichselgartner and Kelman 2014; Welsh 2014).

The critique and analysis of the literature has identified a confusion over the adaptability component of *resilience* with a form of *stability*. This confusion was further deepened when the concept migrated across the social sciences without a clear distinction made between ecosystems and human beings which are fundamentally different (Dovers and Handmer 1992; Weichselgartner and Kelman 2014).

As a matter of fact, this confusion of resilience with stability is not recent. Holling (1973) himself had underlined this and attempted a clarification between resilience and stability, specifying that while resilience concerns an 'ability to absorb a disturbance', stability is "the ability of a system to return to an equilibrium state after a temporary disturbance" (Holling, 1972, p.17). So resilience is an 'ability to transform' in relation to a disturbance (Walker *et al.* 2004a) rather than only an ability to go back to a state of equilibrium. Transforming under a stressor does not necessarily involve going back to a more stable state. Besides, a system able to show stability may not necessarily show resilience. One way of interpreting this is that resilience translates a transformative ability whichever the disturbance – temporary or not – while

stability does not involve transformation. From this perspective, resilience and stability are linked but remain distinct concepts.

Investigating resilience in human societies makes this clarification all the more crucial. In short, there is a clear need for a definition of resilience that coheres with the complexities of social contexts. That said, resilience in social systems can clearly be regarded as a subjective construct, which brings us to considering the second conceptual element which is the context-specificity of this construct.

2.1.2. Issues and methodological implications

Context specificity

Resilience, researchers across disciplines argue, is context-specific (Luthar *et al.* 2000; Luthar *et al.* 2014; Obrist *et al.* 2010) due to the intrinsic heterogeneity of social systems and has to be researched as such. Even the Social Ecology literature has evolved from a focus on systematic modelling of resilient behaviours towards a growing acknowledgement that resilience is an emergent process (Kaufmann 2013; Patterson 2002). This suggests a necessity for more in-depth empirical research and echoes critiques from across disciplines to understand the contextual dynamics of resilience.

Social scientists concur that resilience is a construct and that it represents the values and goals of those who define it. As Obrist *et al.* (2010:287) note:

> *"Social scientists agree and emphasise that researchers have to be sensitive not only to their own representations of resilience, but also to*

the representations of those they study, especially in milieu and societies that the researcher is not familiar with" (Obrist et al. 2010:287).

Consequently, the need to integrate normative aspects (Crane 2010; Rotarangi and Stephenson 2014) together with the descriptive and the technical is gaining more attention. Research in organizational studies expresses the need for a contextual understanding of resilience using appropriate methodologies. For example, through a review of the literature Bhamra *et al.* (2011) found that research on resilience within small and medium enterprises has focussed mainly on theory and that definitions of resilience "are lacking in empirically proving the theories" (Bhamra *et al.* 2011:5388). In a similar fashion, researchers working in youth and community resilience also argue for more clarity in definitions and ethical responsibility from researchers. Theron (2012), for instance, has underlined that future research needs to engage in evidence-based practice and also integrate the role of culture and other contextual norms that influence resilience.

Taking a more macro-level approach, Kaufmann (2013) takes forward a different angle to understanding security and resilience within a complexity paradigm.

"In line with the conception of society as an ever-emerging and evolving system, resilience does not only seek to survive and retain a status quo after disruption, but it also introduces a notion of change" (Kaufmann 2013: p.68).

Following Folke (2006), she defines resilience as "'capacity of a system to absorb disturbance, undergo change, and retain the same essential functions, structure, identity and feedbacks', whereas the system in question 'reorganise in the absence of direction" (Kaufmann 2013: p.68). She distinguishes the capacity of the system from the organisation or structure of the system. This systemic approach resonates with regarding resilience as a continuous process of adaptation within contextual factors which influence the ability to re-organise.

Most research on resilience in contexts of conflict tend to take individualistic approaches but in the recent years a growing number of studies, notably in social psychology and conflict, have been drawing attention to the importance of contextuality in understanding resilience. Interconnectedness (Kaufmann 2013) of the individual, social, institutional factors along with the significance of contingencies are being brought to the fore. For instance, more recently, researchers have been highlighting the links between entrepreneurship and economic resilience (Williams and Vorley 2014) with emphasis on the necessity to consider the embeddedness of small scale businesses in livelihood strategies (Dahles and Susilowati 2015) and the contribution of rural enterprise to local resilience (Steiner and Atterton 2015).

From this discussion, it can be deduced that defined as a context-specific construct and an emergent process, resilience needs to be studied with transparent assumptions for the sake of scientific rigor, replicability and efficacy. This in turn implies a need for clarity in the locus of studies which takes us to the third element identified in literature: the multi-dimensionality of the concept.

Multi-dimensional concept

Already the number of disciplines discussing resilience suggests the multidimensionality of the concept. This in turn makes it difficult to investigate in practice (Cumming *et al.* 2005; Obrist *et al.* 2010) and even more if a prior clarification of the point of entry to the investigation and the context in which it is being studied are not made. To begin with, practices - that of the researcher and the participants alike - are embedded in social, political, economic, cultural and ecological contexts which presumably have a certain degree of direct or indirect influence on the data and interpretations they produce.

In social processes, individuals' actions and behaviours are influenced by a wide variety of parameters which are not always observable, measurable and quantifiable. Resilience, being a subjective concept, calls for understanding of these intangible dynamics. The question then is how to study the concept? Answering this raises further questions, namely how to define the concept? Will it be considered as a necessarily positive outcome or process, or will it be considered as an ability to overcome a stressor? And if so, what kind of tension are we talking about - social, economic, cultural or ecological? Again, the nature of tensions can be so varied, and the pathways for adaptations so numerous, that it is important to clearly specify the type of resilience under investigation.

Fundamentally the heterogeneity of social systems calls for specification of the locus of study of the concept. Luthar *et al.* (2014) note that recognising the importance of heterogeneity in resilience research has led researchers to use more circumspect terms such as *ecological resilience* (Adger 2000), community resilience (Norris *et al.* 2008; Plough *et al.* 2013), *organisational*

resilience (Burnard and Bhamra 2011) and *cultural resilience* (Crane 2010; Rotarangi and Stephenson 2014). In contrast, Obrist *et al.* (2010) in line with Glavovic *et al.* (2003) frame social resilience as a multi-layered concept.

In this particular research, the focus is on the resilience of interpersonal relationships in small enterprises and will be termed as interpersonal resilience in other words resilience at the interpersonal level which captures the dynamics initiating and driving the adaptive pathways that a relationship undergoing tension may experience. This, as noted earlier, broadly echoes with Siegel's definition of resilience within the theses of interpersonal neurobiology. The present research, taking a sociological approach as opposed to Siegel's psychological position, is interested in the circumstances initiating, catalysing, promoting or *driving* interpersonal resilience. And the locus of analysis is at the interpersonal level. This is further described in section 2.3.

Summary and conclusion

The definitional and methodological elements of resilience research are summarised in Figure 3.
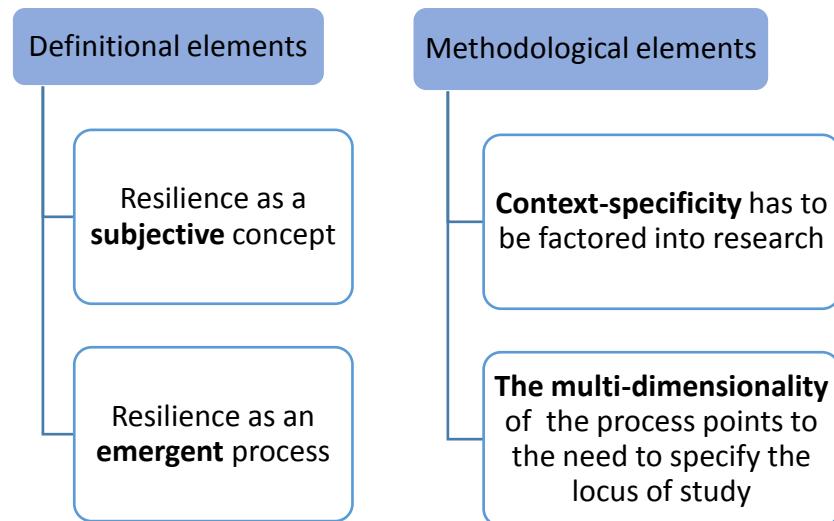
Figure 3 Summary of the definitional and methodological implications of researching resilience as a concept

Acknowledging that adaptability and the existence of a source of stress form the two basic components of resilience common across disciplines is a first step towards consilience in building a meaningful definition of resilience. The subjective aspect entails more in-depth empirical research and transparency around epistemological and ontological assumptions, all of which are crucial elements for scientific rigor, replicability and efficacy. Equally important are the elements of context-specificity and multi-dimensionality of the concept. These call for clarity of purpose, definition of context and specificity of the loci of the study. All these aspects taken together support the thesis that resilience involves an emergent process. In other words, it is not necessarily absolute and/or uniform over time and in different contexts. Assimilating these aspects

drawn from the preceding analysis and critique of the literature leads to the following definition of Interpersonal resilience for the purposes of this study:

Interpersonal Resilience: An emergent process enabling effective adaptation to circumstances of tension in an interpersonal relationship.

Having defined interpersonal resilience, the following section moves on to consider the rationale for understanding what might drive it.

2.2 Drivers of interpersonal resilience

The literature review has suggested the emergent character of resilience at the interpersonal level. This in turn has called for understanding thoroughly how and why adaptive strategies come to being. The aim of the present research is to contribute to this understanding by building a context-based framework which integrates the decision-making processes which lead to adaptive pathways to interpersonal resilience.

While co-worker relationships in small scale enterprises operating in contexts of intractable conflict may represent a specific set of people, they provide a versatile platform to develop a context-based framework. Besides, given the number of evidence-based research underlining the growing beneficial socio-economic impact expected from small and medium enterprises in the world's economy – developing and developed countries alike - (Arroio and Scerri 2014; Maksimov *et al.* 2017; Ratten 2014), understanding co-worker relationships in the face of tension and conflict is timely.

Now, as Bullough *et al.* (2014) have noted: "little is known about the drivers of entrepreneurial decisions during war" (Bullough *et al.* 2014: p.478). So there is here a need for empirical as well as conceptual research. And judging by the literature reviewed in this research, this need is most acute in the specific context of entrepreneurs operating within areas of intractable conflict. This section, through a thorough literature review, explains the rationale for developing an efficient conceptual and methodological framework that may increase awareness of how to avoid destructive interpersonal conflict by enhancing the understanding of processes involved in transforming tensions between people working together towards more constructive outcomes.

In order to identify which conditions are suggested as enhancing interpersonal resilience, that is, which drivers, the most recent empirical findings contained in the literature on entrepreneurship, conflict and resilience were each examined discreetly and as a cross-sectional subset as well following the logic explained in Section 2.1. Table 1 informed by an analytical review of selected literature, presents the identified potential drivers of resilience. Few studies have explicitly considered interpersonal resilience per se, for that reason the studies reported in Table 1 have been selected on the basis that their argumentation or approach was context sensitive and/or they have underlined the necessity for more context specific research. This selection was important for the sake of efficacy in serving the purpose of the research aims. Also, it builds on from the first review of literature which indicated that resilience is a context-specific concept. The studies are presented in terms of their: 1) level of focus (individual, interpersonal, social, national, for example) and; 2) the

epistemological approach (strategic, capital-based, individual-focused) or frameworks and the potential drivers of resilience they suggest.

The following sections subsequently discuss each of these analytical constructs in the aim of devising a set of potential drivers of interpersonal resilience.

Authors (year)	Focus level	Potential drivers of resilience	Strategic	Capital	Individual
Ayala and Manzano (2014); Windle *et al.* (2011)	Individual	hardiness, resourcefulness and optimism			Yes
Benight and Bandura (2004); Bullough *et al.* (2014); Savolainen *et al.* (2016); Tolentino *et al.* (2014)	Individual	self-efficacy			Yes
Mowbray (2011)	Individual	self-awareness, determination, vision, self-confidence, organisation, problem solving			Yes
Bullough *et al.* (2014)	Individual, social	Intentions, Positive emotions, acceptance of reality, sense of purpose			Yes
Bar-Tal (1998);Ben-Dor *et al.* (2002)	National, social	Societal beliefs			Yes
Friedland (2005)	Social	Personal willingness			Yes
Bullough *et al.* (2014)	Social	Exogenous factors; entrepreneurs intentions and perceptions			Yes
Obrist *et al.* (2010); Glavovic *et al.* (2003)	Social	Nature of threats	Yes		
Behailu (2014); Nelson *et al.* (2007); Walker *et al.* (2002)	Socio-ecological	Learn from past experiences; self-organization; on-going process of communication, deliberation about management problems and solutions	Yes		Yes
Buang (2012)	Organisational	psychological capital in form of capabilities; perseverance, human capital and resources; social capital: networking and relationships		Yes	Yes
Zou *et al.* (2015)	Interpersonal and Organisational	Psychological capital : self-efficacy; hope; willpower and waypower; Optimism; proactivity and cooperative approach	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baron and Markman (2000); Moffit (2015);	Individual, interpersonal and social	social skills; interaction and relationships; and coping behaviours to manage emotions	Yes		Yes

Authors (year)	Focus level	Potential drivers of resilience	Strategic	Capital	Individual
Corzine *et al.* (2017)		a strong sense of purpose, importance of being connected to others and individual characteristics			
Larson (1992)	Interpersonal and Organisational	Establishing relationships that go beyond economic gain; reputation, trust; reciprocity and mutual interdependence	Yes		Yes
Ates and Bititci (2011)	Organisational	Change management capability: -positive effect from: characteristics and behaviour of the organisation; capability leverage; -negative effect from: inadequate planning, lack of external orientation; limited attention to people, cultural and organisational aspects	Yes		Yes
Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2011)	Interpersonal and Organisational	Performance expectations, problem solving techniques and reflective thinking; contextual conditions by: developing interpersonal connections, efficient resource supply lines and sharing of information, knowledge and decision-making	Yes		Yes

Table 1 Analytical review of the literature

2.2.1 Considering levels of focus

In the literature covering entrepreneurship and conflict, resilience at the interpersonal level has received little attention compared to the individual level (personality traits); micro-social level (social skills); and the macro-level (societal beliefs, economic dimensions). Commonly mentioned personality traits pertaining to resilience are hardiness, resourcefulness and optimism (Ayala and Manzano 2014; Windle *et al.* 2011); self-efficacy (Benight and Bandura 2004; Bullough *et al.* 2014; Savolainen *et al.* 2016; Tolentino *et al.* 2014); and self-awareness, determination, vision, self-confidence, organisation, and problem solving (Mowbray 2011).

According to Windle *et al.* (2011), positive attitudes – combining creativity and optimism - in entrepreneurial activity ease facing uncertainty. In line with Fredrickson *et al.* (2003), Bullough *et al.* (2014) argue that positive emotions after a tragedy may help people against depression and thrive even in crisis. Focused on the individual, they further underline, following Coutu (2002), the "acceptance of reality, a deep belief that life is meaningful, and a remarkable ability to improvise" (Bullough *et al.* 2014: p.478) as key traits for resilience. Their research in a context of war showed that resilient individuals who have a strong self-belief in their abilities to develop an entrepreneurial intention crucial to their decision-making. This reference to self-representation is important as it indicates the subjective character of decision-making and personal resilience. It has however has received little attention in research.

The social angle, although still sparsely employed in researching resilience, has recently received some attention in Savolainen *et al.* (2016) work, for

example, where they begin to hint at the importance of social support in building resilience, discussing how it encourages people to start their own business. The authors however revert back to an individual-oriented approach insisting on the idea of self-efficacy prominent in their discussion as they point to the importance of self-belief that entrepreneurs build when they feel trusted by others. It would have been insightful if they had provided further analysis of how feeling trusted influenced resilience.

The idea of belief has been discussed at the macro-social level as well. Taking the example of Israel, Bar-Tal (1998) notes the salience of societal beliefs as being influential on people's adaptive strategies. He describes these societal beliefs as those:

> *"beliefs about the justness of one's own goals, beliefs about security, beliefs of delegitimizing the opponent, beliefs of positive self-image, beliefs about patriotism, beliefs about unity and beliefs about peace"* *(Bar-Tal 1998: 22)*

The insight from these findings on beliefs – whether individual or group oriented – points to a discussion around values and since beliefs are underpinned by values. For instance, rather than beliefs per se Ben-Dor *et al.* (2002) note the importance of fear and trust as being relevant factors of national resilience - namely fear of terror, militancy, patriotism and trust in government authorities. If we go to the core of the question of beliefs, personal or societal, we are in fact dealing with perceptual representations (Siegel 2012b: p.484) which in Siegel's terms represent constructed information synthesized from a combination of present sensory experience with past

memory and generalizations contained and experientially derived within the mind. In other words, our perceptions – symbolic representations we have of others, ideas and situations for example – are shaped by our past experiences. This discussion underlines the importance of understanding the cognitive as well as social dynamics involved in resilience building notably at the interpersonal level which is the smallest unit of society since a dyad is the smallest social group.

However, overall, in the literature reviewed, social aspects are mentioned but are discussed to a lesser degree. For instance, social skills (Baron and Markman 2000); interaction and relationships (Mowbray 2011); and coping behaviours to manage overwhelming emotions in cases of stress are highlighted as being an element of resilience building but no further qualitative explanation is given on how this plays out in real case scenarios or how it is achieved.

Taken together, most of the research reviewed points to social and cognitive drivers to be considered while studying resilience at the organisational, social and interpersonal level. Despite this, little attention has been given to the question of how the cognitive and behavioural choices of people in a dyadic dialogue articulate to drive effective adaptation in circumstances of tension (Branzei and Abdelnour 2010; Bullough *et al.* 2014). For this reason, the present research, aimed at studying the dynamics involved in reported lived experiences of resilience at the interpersonal level, is valuable at least in addressing this gap in understanding.

Besides limiting reflection within monolithic realms, individualistic and mono-dimensional approaches fail to provide any real contextual substance to the data gathered. This is problematic as an analysis without appropriate context may lead to truncated interpretations (Pooley and Cohen 2010; Vindevogel 2017a). Consequently, the risk is that research ends up promoting public and private perceptions which do not take into account the complexities on the ground and end up producing ineffective and inefficient policies and practices, especially in conflict-ridden areas (Brück *et al.* 2011; Rettberg *et al.* 2011; Vindevogel 2017a; 2017b). For this reason, reviewing the literature on the different potential solutions to overcome this conceptual and methodological problem became significant, hence the choice of sorting the studies in terms of their epistemological approaches.

In order to move away from binary approaches and avoid a truncated understanding of resilience, arguments in favour of taking a more relational perspective and factoring in multidimensional considerations are increasingly being made in interdisciplinary literature. A growing consensus in the social sciences that at least part of the conceptualisation of resilience – whether outcome or process driven – is based around the interaction between psychological characteristics and contextual stressors (Fletcher and Sarkar 2013; Friedland 2005; Norris *et al.* 2008). However, as Kimhi (2016) has pointed out, there remains a "limited knowledge regarding the associations among three levels of resilience and the importance of these associations: individual, community, and national" (Kimhi 2016: p.4). Recently, Vindevogel (2017a) looking at youth resilience in the context of war adversity argued that her findings further point to the role of individual and collective processes in

the construction of resilience, and to the need to take into account the contexts wherein resilience is conceptualised and observed. Masten (2014) reviewing of promotive and protective factors of resilience noted that these "are embedded in the dynamic interactions and organizations of systems that comprise human development in context" (Masten 2014: 1021). This suggestion of contextualisation is echoed amongst researchers in the conflict as well as development literature as discussed earlier.

Corzine *et al.* (2017), studying trauma resilience reported by Israeli experts, have pointed to the importance of multilateral thinking in resilience research when they underline their three categories of axioms - "widely held beliefs that help understand and frame the world around us" (Corzine *et al.* 2017: 4). At the individual level, they pointed out the salience of "a strong sense of purpose, importance of being connected to others and individual characteristics". At the community level, they note "that the community is similar to the individual in that both require feeling a sense of connectedness and trust" (Corzine *et al.* 2017: 9). And last, arguing that there are "issues that did not fall neatly into the individual and community categories", they take the position that both the fact "that cultures are different and need to be taken into account" and the role of the government is salient in trauma resilience research (Corzine *et al.* 2017: 9). Here again, no further explanation nor illustration is provided on how this connectedness and trust play out in effect.

Discussing social resilience in Israel, Friedland (2005) brings another layer of complexity to the table. She subtly pointed to the significance of personal willingness in motivating collective interest and suggested that ""Social resilience" is a societal attribute related to society's ability to withstand

adversity and cope effectively with change" (Friedland 2005: 8). Friedland (2005: 8) argument highlights two important strands in the definition of social resilience. Together with a "person's willingness to mobilise for and to contribute to the common good, to forego or sacrifice, temporarily, individual aspirations, to help the collective achieve its goals", she adds the "ability to cope with actual and potential threats while maintaining a reasonable level of orderly functioning" (Friedland 2005: 8). However, it can be argued that this collective interest is only part of the equation. There is also a personal interest with which it has to be balanced for there to be any willingness to start with. Surely, in some cases, the personal interest is not present but not in all cases. Besides, a co-existence between collective and personal interest is neither impracticable nor unachievable.

Despite this growing consensus of interconnectedness of societal and individual factors, few authors have scrutinized how the multiple-level factors articulate. Behailu (2014) has discussed the processes of social learning and community resilience in line with Folke (2006); Walker *et al.* (2002); Paton (2007) and Nelson *et al.* (2007) that communities learn from past experiences and self-organize to respond to changes (Folke 2006). For Behailu (2014), this can be achieved through "an on-going process of communication, deliberation about management problems and solutions" (Behailu 2014: p.105). This idea of understanding community resilience as 'a process of social learning to deal with changes' (Nelson *et al.* 2007; Walker *et al.* 2002) is not new. However, discussion of how these processes of self-organisation occur at the interpersonal level falls short of any further developments.

Fundamentally, all these empirical studies implicitly or explicitly are drawing attention to the idea of *interconnectedness* of societal and individual factors as being integral to resilience, whilst none of them seek to examine the drivers of that interpersonal resilience from a context based approach which would help integrate this interconnectedness and hence providing a more circumspect understanding of resilience. In short, recent academic literature across social science disciplines depicts a clear need for multi-lateral and context based approach to understand resilience better at the interpersonal level.

2.2.2 Considering different approaches

The literature review suggested that a majority of the studies, especially in psychology and social psychology, have focused on personality traits with an individual-focused approach. This is problematic for the reasons argued till now, notably: 1) the emergent, multi-dimensional and context-specific character of resilience; and 2) the methodological challenges it gives rise to when the findings are theoretically sound but practically inapplicable and/or the methodologies not adapted to the dynamism of social contexts. Also, this research seeks to study interpersonal dynamics so different approaches need to be studied.

The challenge of relational and strategic frameworks is to devise research methodologies which can encompass the multiple dimensions involved and at the same time achieve feasibility and effectiveness in producing practically useful findings. Recently, a number of studies have been pointing to more complex frameworks starting with the idea of embeddedness of human

activities within multi-dimensional circumstances - whether it be psychological, societal, economic, historical, ecological, cultural - to name a few.

Strategic approach

Several studies reviewed took a strategic approach to understand resilience. They shifted the focus to the threats involved instead of the behaviours or actions of the actors. Differentiating between the different sources of threats as well as the opportunities which can be used by the different actors to overcome the threats suggests a strategic framework of analysis. Obrist *et al.* (2010) in line with Glavovic *et al.* (2003), looking at social resilience, have argued that identifying the types of threats may be a relevant entry point to empirical studies alongside a clear specification of the outcomes expected. Their methodological approach provides a more dynamic and situational analysis.

Echoing the embeddedness of entrepreneurial decision-making within conflict zones, Bullough *et al.* (2014) have pointed out how dangers are converted to perceptions, and then intentions. Following social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Krueger, 2000), they have emphasised on the role of entrepreneurs' perceptions and have noted that "exogenous factors influence entrepreneurial intentions through their effect on how individuals think, emphasising the role of entrepreneurs' perceptions" (Bullough *et al.* 2014: 477).

Focusing at the organisational level of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Ates and Bititci (2011) put forward 'change management capability' as an enabler of resilience but equally makes a case for acknowledging the

embeddedness of resilient processes with wider individual, cultural and organisational contexts. They support Lissack and Letiche (2002: 82) proposition that 'resilience depends on the behaviour of a system, due to the structure of its attributes and the interaction between them'. Through their conceptual framework, which aims to understand patterns of behaviour regarding how change is managed and how this impacts on resilience, they found that the 'characteristics and behaviour of the organisation'; 'capability leverage' i.e. the honing of 'internal capabilities for proactive change' have positive impacts while "inadequate planning, lack of external orientation and limited attention to people, cultural and organisational aspects seem to hinder the resilience of SMEs" (Ates and Bititci 2011: 5602).

This research implies decision makers are also embedded in social contexts which they represent to themselves in different subjective ways. And this, according to recent socio-cognitive research (Goleman 2007; Siegel 2012b), does influence adaptive strategies chosen at times of tension or otherwise. However, still now, it is clear, as Friedland (2005) rightly puts it, that "[t]he challenge to social scientists is to refine the definition of "social resilience", to develop methods for its measurement, and to identify and investigate factors and processes that enhance social resilience (Walker *et al.* (2002) or undermine it" (Friedland 2005: 8).

Capital-based approach

Some authors, from the organisational resilience and entrepreneurship literature have offered reflections on a stocks-based or capital-based approach to investigate resilience. According to Buang (2012), p*sychological capital* (in the form of capabilities, perseverance); *human capital resources*

*(*expertise, experience, education, knowledge and skills); and *social capital* (networking and relationships), are factors influencing the successful resilience of entrepreneurial start-ups.

Elaborating further on the enabling effect of psychological capital amongst entrepreneurs to cope with conflicts, Zou *et al.* (2015) study on the critical dyadic relationship between entrepreneurs and venture-capitalists is insightful. They define conflict as "constructive disagreements rather than personal friction" (Zou *et al.* 2015: 4). Building on (Luthans 2002: 702), they argue that resilience refers to "the positive psychological capacity to rebound, to "bounce back" from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility'" (Zou *et al.* 2015: 4). This psychological capital comprises 1) self-efficacy which they define as the "general belief regarding competence to accomplish tasks"; 2) hope which they consider "reflects 'a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)'" (Zou *et al.* 2015: 4). Their contribution to framing understanding of resilience is rooted in this distinction between the first and the second. They term agency as willpower which they define as the:

> *"willingness or motivation to strive for a desired goal", while pathway termed as 'waypower' "reflects the ability to proactively design alternative paths or contingency plans for goals when facing obstacles and blockages" (Zou et al. 2015: 3).*

They support that psychological capital is "positively related to an individual's ability to cope with difficulties" (Zou *et al.* 2015: 4). This attempt to integrate an

individual and a more process-oriented approach is conceptually insightful and entails methodological questions as to how this multi-lateral approach could be analysed.

The authors underline optimism - in Seligman's (2011) terms, that is internalising positive events and externalising negative ones making the first permanent and the second temporary – to subtly refine their analysis considering that a "proactive and cooperative approach when dealing with conflicts", regarding these as "constructive disagreements rather than personal friction" (Zou *et al.* 2015: 4). This opens up inquiry on resilience to a more dynamic approach. The authors developed and discussed four conflict management strategies in line with Yitshaki (2008) and Afzalur Rahim (2002) relevant to their study: 1) competing: I win you lose; 2) collaborating: I win you win; 3) accommodating: I lose you win; and 4) avoiding: I lose you lose. Interestingly, this leads towards an interpersonal approach but the authors situate the work in a cost-benefit framework. The research would arguably have brought in more depth and substance if discussed in terms of the social and psychological processes involved. Although these studies use capital-based approaches, it is clear that given the emergent nature of resilience, a more process-oriented approach is more salient.

A need for multi-lateral process-oriented approaches

The literature review has revealed two elements of progress for this research. First, it was clear that there is a disparity in the locus of analysis of resilience. This, per se, is not problematic since research by definition is varied in approaches. But a growing number of researchers have been recently arguing that there is a lack of understanding of how the different levels (individual,

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social, community or national for instance) associate or articulate with one another. The part of Table 1 shaded in blue show those studies which in their argumentation or approach were not only context sensitive and/or underlined the necessity for more context specific research; but have also attempted to integrate both an individual-focused and a strategic strand in their frameworks. Most notable authors that have considered a multilateral process-oriented approach considering the multi-dimensionality of resilience within interpersonal relationships include Corzine *et al.* (2017), Zou *et al.* (2015), Ates and Bititci (2011), as discussed but also, before them; Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2011) and Larson (1992).

Back in 1992, examining social control through an examination of network structures in entrepreneurial settings, Larson (1992) outlined a process model of network formation between entrepreneurs and brought to the fore the salience of reputation, trust, reciprocity and mutual interdependence. She underlined the significance of "establishing relationships that went beyond immediate economic gain" (Larson 1992: 85). She illustrates this through the story of one of her interviewees:

> *"After the fire, friends and business acquaintances extended credit at favourable terms so that the entrepreneur could rebuild his business. From this experience the individual came to believe in the power of strong relationships, not based solely on short-term economics but economic overlaid thickly with an ethos of friendship and mutual assistance" (Larson 1992: 85).*

Her endeavour to understand the processes involved in mutuality allowed access to a better understanding of how interpersonal relationships could impact the individual facing adversity. Although, her work does not inform on the resilience of the relationships but provide valuable insights on the formation of mutually benefiting relationships. For a relationship to be established, subjective perceptions – such as reputation – and intersubjective dynamics – such as trust, reciprocity and mutual interdependence - come into play.

Staying at the organisational level but with further sophistication, Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2011) underlined performance expectations, problem solving techniques and reflective thinking as enhancers of the capacity for organisational resilience. More analytically, they pointed out that:

> *"The dimensions of a firm's capacity for resilience (cognitive, behavioural, and contextual) work both independently and interactively to support the development of various types of organization capabilities and to promote effective responses to environmental change"* *(Lengnick-Hall et al. 2011: 251).*

This distinctiveness and integrative approach towards the cognitive abilities, behavioural characteristics and contextual conditions adds to the growing consensus on the need for complex thinking in understanding resilience. Elaborating on the link between the individual and the social aspects of organisational life, they note that:

"Employee contributions that create contextual conditions ripe for resilience focus on employee actions and interactions that enrich social and resource networks within and beyond the organisation. Specific, desired employee contributions include: (a) developing interpersonal connections and resource supply lines that lead to the ability to act quickly, (b) sharing information and knowledge widely, and (c) sharing decision making widely" (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2011: 250).

Clearly, interpersonal relationships are the smallest unit of society. Besides a dearth of evidence on the issue and a clear need for research addressing the question of interpersonal resilience in the small scale business environment, most resilience studies have focussed either on personality traits or societal factors. Indeed, the literature reviewed here demonstrates that it is difficult to separate the individual from the societal and if attempted, several conceptual issues and methodological challenges arise.

It would appear that the interpersonal level has to factor in not only individual as well as social aspects of resilience, but also resilience that is co-created through a relationship or dynamic involved in the relationship. This is why the term socio-cognitive is employed. It refers to an integration between the intra-personal; the inter-personal and; the extra-personal or social dimensions. This combined approach of the micro, meso and macro level also overcomes the issues of binary conceptualisations but nevertheless does not solve all the methodological challenges of how to identify the drivers of interpersonal resilience.

These are some notable studies reviewed here that begin to move the debate in this direction, and while they fall short in the present context, do provide some useful insights to inform the development of a new framework. First, Larson (1992) and Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2011) work positioned in the entrepreneurial and business sector, has underlined the importance of: 1) integrating subjective and intersubjective dynamics; 2) effective communication in building good quality relationships. Second, Obrist *et al.* (2010) work on approaching research on resilience from the perspective of threats has noted the importance of multi-dimensionality given that threats or stressors are of different and varied nature and dimensions.

2.2.3 Potential socio-cognitive drivers of interpersonal resilience

Given the limited research on resilience at the interpersonal level, it is difficult to derive socio-cognitive drivers of interpersonal resilience based solely on the literature review. However, the few studies having taken a process-oriented approach at a dyadic level discussed earlier have started to point, broadly, to three categories of drivers of interpersonal resilience: the salience of 1) personal willingness; 2) connectedness and; 3) communication. These three categories were chosen because they relate to the three key aspects of resilience - established from the literature review - pertinent at the interpersonal level from a sociological perspective. These represent the individual aspect (personal willingness); the relational (connectedness); and the dynamic interaction which links the individual with and into the relational.

Personal willingness, a term borrowed from Friedland (2005), collates most of the individual-oriented research findings on drivers of resilience. It refers to understanding the motivated choice of a person taking a decision to adapt. It conjugates 'optimism' from Windle *et al.* (2011), Ayala and Manzano (2014) and Zou *et al.* (2015) findings; 'vision' from Mowbray (2011); 'sense of purpose' and 'intention' from Bullough *et al.* (2014) and Corzine *et al.* (2017) and finally, 'willpower' from Zou *et al.* (2015).

Secondly, connectedness is an umbrella term integrating different concepts found in the literature. As noted earlier, Ates and Bititci (2011) have noted how limited attention to people, cultural and organisational aspects can be detriment to resilience. Larson (1992) underlining 'mutual interdependence' had also noted that establishing relationships that go beyond simple economic interest are crucial to initiate constructive relationships. At the dyadic level, Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2011) pointed out developing interpersonal connections as efficiently activating resilience. And more recently, Corzine *et al.* (2017) noting 'the importance of being connected to others' concur with the idea of 'cooperation' and 'waypower' put forward by Zou *et al.* (2015). All these concepts are fundamentally relating to the idea of connectedness.

Finally, communication referring to the 'sharing of information' (Lengnick-Hall *et al.* 2011) is the third potential driver of resilience at the interpersonal level derived from the literature. The importance of 'the on-going process of communication' has been highlighted by several authors, notably Behailu (2014); Nelson *et al.* (2007); Walker *et al.* (2002) and Ates and Bititci (2011).

In sum, interpersonal drivers of resilience are social and cognitive in character. They are not directly observable nor measureable at once. They are not always predictable given their dynamic character as they emerge out of the interactions of intersubjectivities at play.

Summary

Interpersonal resilience can be defined as an emergent concept enabling effective adaptation to circumstances of tension in interpersonal relationships. Given the complexity of social life, for instance, singling out the individual aspects and considering that all other things are equal or fixed, is not the most relevant way to come up with findings valuable to the public and practitioners who are confronted with real life problems. Research in understanding interpersonal resilience, if conducted appropriately, offer the potential to feed into conflict management research and practice through a bottom-up rather than top-down approaches deplored by researchers and practitioners (Ates and Bititci 2011). It is clear that there is a need to enhance understanding of the conditions affecting co-worker relationships in small-scale enterprises operating within areas of intractable conflict.

From the work conducted in reviewing the state-of art literature, it was also evident that investigating resilience at the interpersonal level will require a unique theoretical framework to facilitate a multi-dimensional and context-specific analysis. Several researches and the literature review interestingly point to drivers of resilience which have a socio-cognitive character. This gives an idea of how indeed understanding conditions driving towards adaptive

pathways calls for a framework integrating the intrapersonal, the interpersonal as well as the micro and macro social. However, these socio-cognitive drivers are rarely discussed as to how they arise or articulate with one another at the interpersonal level because they have not yet been studied in that intention. In seeking to enhance understanding of potential drivers of interpersonal resilience, this thesis therefore builds neatly and logically on the literature that has come before it.

From the literature review conducted, it is clear that a socio-cognitive approach to studying interpersonal resilience is necessary and will in fact add value to the academic literature as there is a manifest need for a sociological context based framework as well. This has several implications for the inquiry: which methods of data collection would be most appropriate? And once this subjective data is gathered how will it be interpreted to avoid further subjectivity and bias? The answer to the first question is dovetailed by the decisions engaging the second. Consequently, the logical next step is to define a theoretical framework which will serve the purpose of conceptually framing the inquiry. This is the aim of the next chapter.

Chapter Three Theoretical Framework

"We need to appreciate the limitations of any branch of research, especially when it comes to understanding a specific individual, the complex ways in which neural systems interact within relationships, and the pervasive and important influences of culture" (Siegel 2012b: 140)

3   Introduction

As we have seen earlier, the literature review has highlighted the need for a theoretical framework which enables both a socio-cognitive perspective and the identification of patterns in the emergence of interpersonal resilience such that the concept may be understood thoroughly. However, most theories applied to research resilience in social sciences have focused on various individualistic approaches centred on the psychology of the actors. Others critiquing this have put forward the non-negligible significance of contextual effects, hence arguing in favour of more relational approaches. At the same time, a number of authors have focussed on a capital based approach, which although useful in cases, still maintains a primary focus on utilitarian advantages of relationships and networks. It is clear that the epistemologies involved are diverse, so a first step towards building a theoretical framework

for the purpose of: 1) understanding the existing concepts and data in a diversity of contexts; and 2) presenting this understanding to the public so as to set out the philosophical underpinnings of the thesis.

This chapter starts with a philosophical discussion which sets the five main assumptions of the research (summarised in Textbox 1and 2). It then presents the core of the theoretical framework devised in coherence with the deductions from the literature review, and serves the purpose of explicating the philosophical grounding of the study. The second part reviews several theories used to study social relationships and demonstrates how the latest theories of interpersonal neurobiology (IPNB) and the anthropology-oriented Maussian-gift theory (MGT) belong to the same paradigm, when explained in terms of patterns of energy and information flows as primary units of analysis. Further, it will be discussed how this is significant in building a consilient theoretical framework for researching subjective experiences around interpersonal resilience. Finally, because the conceptualisation of self and interpersonal relationship is so fundamental to the notion of interpersonal resilience, progressing from these diverse perspectives found in the literature, the last section proposes an analytical framework which will enable the integration of multiple dimensions and the observation of the emergence of interpersonal resilience using the appropriate sociological language.

3.1 Philosophical framework: Being human is being social

Explicating the philosophy of a study involves carrying out a rigorous scoping of the founding assumptions which underlie the research and provides an evaluative analysis of their coherence with the research aim. Put differently, a philosophical discussion provides a platform for an objective expression of a normative position and thus avoids the researcher slipping into dogmatic traps. If we accept that sciences are ways of knowing and that research is fundamentally an iterative process of on-going learning (assumption 1), then we are in line with the American pragmatist school of thought as developed by John Dewey in his ever-green book *Reconstruction in philosophy* (Dewey 1957). This is especially significant to this research conducted in a volatile and complex context with research questions aiming to understand dynamic interpersonal processes of adaptation.

A philosophical grounding in coherence with the dynamic and often unpredictable social processes happening in intractable conflict environments such as those in which this research focuses is a requirement to be able to investigate the research question and achieve the objectives set.

Subjectivity, we have seen, is at the heart of research on interpersonal resilience, so clarifying the meaning of the term is essential. Subjectivity is a concept which describes the different ways of knowing and perceiving based on a given person's experience, understanding and feelings. It is thus related to the ways that an individual perceives, thinks about and comes to decisions

about his/her experiences (Siegel 2012b). As individuals, we interpret information from different perspectives filtered by our own experiences (past and present) and values (that is those standards we have made ours and in which we believe). And, we are constantly subject to flows of information emanating from the contexts we operate in. To these flows we attribute symbolic meanings derived from our experiences. Our subjective experiences modulate and form our understanding of situations and facts. They consequently influence and are influenced by the relationships we have with ourselves and with other people, i.e. other selves (Goleman 2007; Lieberman 2013). This said, no discussion on interpersonal relationships can be rigorous without bringing out the underlying ontologies and epistemologies involved. More specifically, scientific rigour requires to start with the subjectivity of the researcher clearly set out and this begins with spelling out the founding assumptions of the inquiry. It could be argued that the philosophy of the researcher may not necessarily be that of the research. However, in this research, one might postulate that the philosophical positioning of the researcher is that of the research. This is principally due to the fact that the researcher is herself the main instrument of analysis and interpretation. This point will be further discussed in the methodological framework set out in Chapter Four.

Dewey's philosophy sits in the pragmatist school of thought but on its own highlights several founding postulates which will form the basis of this thesis. Firstly, considering individual experience as the primary unit of social life (assumption 2) draws attention to the dynamic processes involved and thus enhances the understanding of patterns. Second, for Dewey, nature and

experience are not dichotomous. Instead, he underlines the organic character of experience and nature, of being an individual in a society.

This nuanced position is important to note because for a time in academia the biological and the social have been considered as distinct and disjointed sciences. Disciplines such as biology, physics and chemistry were meant to be the hard sciences often depicted as positivist and objectivist while social scientists have had a tendency to either imitate or criticise these approaches. Consequently, in practice, a growing fracture has persisted between the different disciplines. This is problematic as it limits the mutual benefits and enrichment which could otherwise have ensued.

The strength of Dewey's philosophical approach holds in embracing the complexity and continuous dynamism in learning and understanding. This posits the complexity of subjective human experience (assumption 3). To begin with, Dewey advocates for, as some would call it, a naturalist or empiricist pragmatism. To understand this logical thinking, it is helpful to see how he views nature as a variegated and interconnected system where diverse transactions (exchanges) happen continuously. He groups these transactions in three evolutionary plateaux or levels: 1) the physicochemical (chemical reactions in the brain are an example); 2) the psychophysical (the feeling of pain because of a broken rib, for example) and; 3) the human experience (which is the very centre of subjectivity). These transactions, although interconnected, are distinct in terms of their patterns of behaviours and consequences. The methods of getting to understand how they work are numerous. This beginning of consilient-thinking through such an anthropological-biological orientation, together with the founding hypothesis of

the Pragmatist school that argues that human beings are constantly involved in various transactions with and within nature, widens the frame of inquiry. This allows for a more refined understanding of conceptualisations and actions.

In line with this idea of dynamic interconnectedness underlined here, is the dialogical relationship between individuals and societies at large, thus departing from dichotomous or simplistic views. In fact, atomistic or individualistic approaches, with starting assumptions such as considering individuals as separate entities to the socio-economic contexts they live, in may serve the purpose of a research question. But they do not necessarily refine understanding of complex realities. Also, limiting the unit of analysis for all implications of social life to individuals regarded as equal and rational becomes problematic if one wants to understand interpersonal resilience which is a context-dependent, subjective and an emergent concept. Conceding that all individuals are the same and society is an aggregate of similar interchangeable individuals defeats the purpose of asking the question of subjective experiences in the first place as it refutes the uniqueness of individuals (Wolgast 1987). So taking a dynamic view of socialization[3] is essential to the inquiry's feasibility, as social experience shows that individual needs, circumstances and aspirations are not necessarily the same for everyone everywhere and at all times.

As Chanial (2011) notes, the pragmatists - Dewey, Mead and Cooley - move away from a dualistic approach opposing the individual and society and favour

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[3]Socialization is defined as "a continuing process whereby an individual acquires a personal identity and learns the norms, values, behaviour, and social skills appropriate to his or her social position". Socialization. (n.d.). *Dictionary.com Unabridged.* Retrieved May 11, 2017 from Dictionary.com website http://www.dictionary.com/browse/socialization

a more process-oriented approach (Chanial 2011:p. 100). Cooley, in the same line of thought as Dewey's idea of transactions, underscores the making of the social fabric through processes of mutual relationships (Cooley 1992). In this respect, they conceptualise individuality - as being an individual, a person, a human being - and sociality - as the process that makes societies. In essence, the mutual exchanges that make people feel that they belong to one social group or another are co-extensive processes (assumption 4). This outlook breaks from the commonly assumed position that society is an aggregate of individuals. Considering that a group is only the sum of its parts may work mechanically in theory but with complex human beings in actual changing contexts it does not. People form relationships with each other and learn from each other either constructively, destructively or both. The exchanges happening create mutual relationships which have to be accounted for in understanding what a group or society is about. The relationship is an entity[4] in itself as is each individual who is part of it.

In *Human nature and the social order* originally published in 1902 but reprinted several times (Cooley 1992), Charles Cooley puts forward an ontological positioning which acknowledges the biological inheritance as well as the social nature of being human. The principal difference between the two, according to his argument, is that what is biologically inherited may be regarded as permanent while the social nature is perpetually changing. This changing and unpredictable aspect is underscored by Cooley's idea that humanity - being human - is characterised by the essential human faculties of: a. intelligence;

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[4] An entity is defined as "being or existence, especially when considered as distinct, independent, or self-contained". Entity. (n.d.). *Dictionary.com Unabridged.* Retrieved May 11, 2017 from Dictionary.com website http://www.dictionary.com/browse/entity

b. sympathy; and c. imitation; which together implies the plasticity of human nature (Chanial 2011). Put differently, the ability of a person to think, share an emotion and identify with another's behaviour, attitude or discourse shows the social nature of being a person. This social nature, often unpredictable in complex contexts, in turn underlines the inherent flexibility of human choices and decision-making. Cooley (1992) thus moves away from rigid individualisms and determinisms and does so without playing down the importance of biological aspects which may contribute to characterising behaviours.

The latest research in social cognitive neuroscience in stating, with empirical evidencing, that: "we are wired to connect" (Lieberman 2013: ix) supports the pragmatists' philosophical positions. Furthermore, the assumption that individuals are rational beings only concerned with their self-interest is clearly refuted by the latest scientific research. As Lieberman (2013) notes in the preface of his book, *Social: Why our brains are wired to connect*:

> *"We are naturally curious about what is going on in the minds of other people. And our identities are formed by the values lent to us from the groups we call our own. These connections lead to strange behaviors that violate our expectation of rational self-interest and make sense only if our social nature is taken as a starting point for who we are."* *(Lieberman 2013: ix)*

He brings out another crucial element of clarification by underlining the misleading assumption that individuals are solely concerned by their self-interest. It is clear that how the individual is defined in research will definitely

have implications on the way data is interpreted. Positing that the individual is by nature a social being (assumption 5) is no longer only a philosophical positioning, but a scientific fact validated by empirical evidence.

To sum up, from now on within the context of this research and the research question, the following assumptions will be held as valid throughout this thesis:

1) research is fundamentally an **iterative process** of on-going learning;

2) individual **experience** is a primary unit of social life;

3) individuals are **subjective** beings;

4) Individuation and socialisation are **co-extensive** processes; and

5) Individuals are **social** beings.

Textbox 1 Summary of some the first assumptions of this thesis

What is fundamentally achievable within the pragmatic philosophy of research, as presented here, is an open non-deterministic epistemology which moves away from potentially dogmatic traps and keeps the sciences 'on their toes' with a continuous re-evaluation of existing understandings in the light of cutting edge findings.

3.2. Critical review of theoretical frameworks

Now that the first philosophical underpinnings have been spelled out, the next step is to formulate a coherent sociological language that will enable the understanding of existing concepts and identify and interpret others in the data gathered. These analyses aim to identify the drivers of interpersonal resilience and formulate an understanding of how they articulate at the relational level, that is, in a dyad. A targeted review of literature has revealed that several logics have been employed to study social relationships and resilience, both distinctively and concurrently. The following criteria were set to choose from the variety of existing theories: 1) philosophical coherence; 2) applicability to dyadic (interpersonal) relationships; 3) applicability to a context of intercultural relationships; 4) applicability to contexts of work in intractable conflict areas. Before using any theory, the first step is to understand its founding assumptions and assess its logic and consistency to the reality it is being applied or is referring to. This avoids coming up with irrelevant findings and eventual inappropriate recommendations. If the philosophical coherence exists, the theory still needs to be reviewed in terms of its relevance to the context in which it is being applied. The context of this research carried several specificities such as the intractable conflict and the backdrop of inter-cultural co-worker relationships. In general, social lives are constantly changing. In settings where there are such conflicts, changes are often unpredictable. So

at the very least it has been important to scan for theories which may be able to address such particularities.

In this section, several bodies of the latest theory will be reviewed and their relevance to this inquiry discussed. Starting with the renowned body of theory about social capital and moving on to the lesser known relational-cultural theory, it will be argued that although useful in analytical discussions, these theories actually create new concepts without thoroughly explaining or defining them, thus disserving any potential consilience in research. Moving forward, the theories of Interpersonal Neurobiology and the Maussian gift theory will be discussed in relation to how they concur when defined in the primary terms of patterns of 'energy and information flows'. The section will end with a recap of all the founding assumptions of this thesis and the insights gathered from the critique of the theories reviewed.

3.2.1 Social capital theories

Theories around social capital have gained much attention over the last few decades. What is commonly called Social Capital Theory,(SCT), actually comprises several approaches and has evolved from an economic focus in the work of Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), for instance, to a more macro socio-political view of the benefits of social relations in Putnam's (1995) work. Such theories have not only shown potential to inform relationships but also, in my view, can be informed by resilience research. At the moment, they are, however, relatively limited in researching interpersonal relationships and resilience. Firstly, in terms of clarity in the assumptions made and secondly, as Gedajlovic *et al.* (2013) note:

> *"while social capital research is centrally about understanding the resources embedded within, available through, and derived from social relationships, we know relatively little about how such relationships are developed and managed." (Gedajlovic et al. 2013: 466)*

There is here a clear theoretical lacuna.

Going back to the early theorists, the shortcomings in terms of starting assumptions can be outlined. For Bourdieu (1986), social capital was defined as "*the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition*" *(Bourdieu 1986: 248)* while for Coleman (1990)

> *"Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure'"(Coleman 1990: 302).*

For both, it is clear that social capital is a structured stock of resources from which one can tap benefits. A view of society as an aggregate of resources and networks does not address the specificities of each relationship and less so the dynamics of how the relationships are established and are transformed in the ebb and flow of stressful circumstances.

Coming from a cultural anthropology perspective, Putnam (1995) favoured a macro socio-political angle and defined social capital as those "*features of*

social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit'" (Putnam 1995: 67). Introducing trust explicitly into the definition of social capital, he drew attention to the relational character of social capital using the term 'ties' and 'linkages'. Although, the theory gained in popularity after *Bowling alone: America's declining social capital* (Putnam 1995) was published in 1995, to-date there still are persisting disparities in definitions. No clear conceptualisation and explanation can be found of what this 'social trust' is, what the linkages and ties defined in the literature are or why 'social capital' and 'social network' are used interchangeably. Again, although in practice, we may intuitively understand what trust refers to, the theories of social capital do not yet provide the key to understanding how this trust comes about, or is eroded.

Robison *et al.* (2002) note the conceptual weakness of the concept as also articulated by Castle (1998):

> *"Unless the social capital concept is used with some degree of precision and in a comparable manner, it will come to have little value as an analytical construct." Castle (1998: p. 623) in Robison et al. (2002: p.1).*

They also point out how social scientists have been mixing the applications of social capital with what it is and where it resides (in networks or linkages). So, the work of deconstructing the concept to build further understanding is essential.

It cannot be ignored that the term 'capital' holds an economic connotation and the assumption of early economists that people are motivated by the

maximisation of their individual utility has migrated into the social sciences (Caillé 2009). Robison *et al.* (2002) rightly argue that motives cannot be solely self-centred, noting how:

> *"sociologists and psychologists have emphasised that much behaviour following norms and obligations is not strictly calculated, but is learned in socialization and partly unconscious reinforcement"* (Robison et al. 2002: 5).

Explaining "sympathy as an affinity, association, or relationship between persons or things wherein whatever affects one similarly affects the other" (Robison *et al.* 2002: 6), they define social capital as:

> *"a person's or group's sympathy toward another person or group that may produce a potential benefit, advantage, and preferential treatment for another person or group of persons beyond that expected in an exchange relationship"* (Robison et al. 2002: 6).

There are three points to underline from this. First, thus defined, sympathy is clearly a highly subjective construct intrinsically subject to dynamic change. Second, although there is an acknowledgement of a degree of mutuality (whatever affects one similarly affects the other), the interaction surpasses a simple utility transaction (beyond that expected in a simple exchange relationship). Lastly, this definition integrates individual and interpersonal aspects.

Now, to move away from imprecisions, the authors proposed to distinguish: 1) the motives of social capital from its services and location; 2) the capacity of sympathy from that of commitment and institutions; and 3) the motives derived from sympathy from the motive of "narrow self-enhancement" (Robison *et al.* 2002: 19). This take on social capital is of interest here as it points to a significant change in founding assumptions. However, it is clear that this body of theory carries a significant lacuna in terms of explaining how relationships are developed and managed, thus making it unsuitable *per se* to analyse interpersonal resilience.

Still, with the limitations of this body of theory clearly discussed, this review has allowed the identification of two points of progression which can be used to develop an analytical framework for understanding interpersonal resilience:

➢ first, the importance of acknowledging variegated motives for social action instead of a fixture only on individual utility maximization; and

➢ second, the importance of distinguishing motives of interactions from their resultant benefits.

3.2.2 Relational-cultural theory

The second theory reviewed was Relational-Cultural theory,(RCT), which interestingly underlines the importance of relationships and resilience. With relationships as the cornerstone to personal resilience, RCT claims a clear dissociation from what its theorists call individualistic and western-oriented approaches "which assume that autonomy and independence from others contribute to a sense of competence and esteem" (Lenz 2016: 415). And also, what Lenz (2016) posits is that "individuals' happiness and well-being are a

product of the degree to which they participate in growth-fostering relationships (Jordan, 2008, 2010)" in (Lenz 2016: 415).

In another register, building on Hartling *et al.* (2000), Birrell & Freyd (2006), Gilligan (2001), Hartling, Rosen, Walker and Jordan (2000) Miller & Stiver (1997), Comstock *et al.* (2008) explain that:

> *"RCT is based on the assumption that the experiences of isolation, shame, humiliation, oppression, marginalization, and micro aggressions are relational violations and traumas that are at the core of human suffering and threaten the survival of humankind" (Comstock et al. 2008: 280).*

They further affirm that relationships play a key role in individuals' abilities in being resilient has found empirical support in neurobiological studies that investigated the psychological outcomes of such experiences in Comstock *et al.* (2008). This position is in line with Eisenberger *et al.* (2003); Genero *et al.* (1992); Hartling *et al.* (2000); Liang *et al.* (2002); Schore (2003); Spencer (2000); Taylor (2002).

This "psychodynamic framework" (Lenz 2016) aimed at understanding problems of human experience was originally developed in research to understand women's psychology in marginalised populations in the late seventies (Miller 1976). Integrating subjectivities and acknowledging a normative positioning, this framework has since then been generalised to apply to other social groups by its proponents (Comstock *et al.* 2008; Hartling

2008; Jordan 2006; Jordan 2010; Jordan and Hartling 2008; Lenz 2016; Walker and Rosen 2004).

Now, as pointed out above, RCT is looking at personal resilience and can help in observing the emergence of resilience of the individuals in relationships. Resilience, in this context, is defined as "the ability to connect, reconnect, and resist disconnection in response to hardships, adversities, trauma, and alienating social/cultural practices" (Hartling 2008: 56). RCT has not been developed to observe the emergence of interpersonal resilience (defined as an emergent process enabling effective adaptation to circumstances of tension in an interpersonal relationship). Although intuitively, it may be considered possible that personal resilience contributes to interpersonal resilience, empirical research is still required to understand the latter. Because this is one of the objectives of the present thesis, the RCT framework has been reviewed to gain any potentially useful insights in the building of an analytical framework.

RCT flags up four theoretical constructs: 1) relational authenticity; 2) perceived mutuality; 3) relational connection and; 4) relational empowerment. Mainly applied in human development therapy, these constructs are considered as the building blocks which result in what the theorists call 'growth-fostering relations'. First, *relational authenticity* refers to the "capacity to bring one's real experience, feelings and thoughts into relationship, with sensitivity and awareness to the possible impact on others of one's actions" ((Jordan 2010: 101) cited in Lenz (2016: 416). For Miller *et al.* (2004) this refers to the quality of presence which is "the degree to which individuals acknowledge and represent their actual selves in a relationship" (Lenz 2016:416). *Perceived*

mutuality refers to the "ability to maintain a sense of self, yet be open to the change experiences that emerge from relating to others" (Lenz 2016:416). Observing that the first two concepts are quite self-oriented, the original claims against individualistic approaches could be questioned at this point.

However, the third concept *relational connection* adds a fundamental relational aspect. This construct is characterised by "mutuality, emotional accessibility" (Lenz 2016:416) and "the five good things" (Jordan 2010; Miller 1976) which theyt term as a sense of zest; clarity about oneself, the other and the relationship; a sense of personal worth; the capacity to be creative and productive; and the desire for more connection. From the RCT perspective, it is clear that transforming experiences into connection is essential. For Jordan (2004) connection comes through learning to identify and attenuate disconnections which, she suggests, is often "a sense of being misunderstood, and sometimes a sense of danger, violation, or impasse" (Jordan 2010: 103). Lastly, *relational empowerment,* as described by Jordan (2004) in (Lenz 2016:416), is "the degree to which individuals trust themselves to be different from others while also recognising that growth is a possible outcome of conflict when authentic relating and creative action are present." However, empirical evidencing of the concepts still needs furthering, as Lenz (2016) noted.

This said, the RCT approach integrates multiple dimensions - individual and socio-cultural factors. This conceptualisation of growth-fostering relationships can be useful as a sifting grid for raw data to identify sources of problems which impede the constructive transformations of relationships. It still remains limited in understanding on how interpersonal resilience comes about in the dyad as the focus is on the self rather than the relationship itself.

A fundamental aspect of relational experience seems to be overlooked: dynamics of the relationship. Perceptions of how the self feels and thinks as a result of the relationship are included in the four constructs but perceptions of how the self perceives the other is mentioned only briefly, and does not form the core of the theory. Judging from the latest scientific findings as reported in the IPNB and social cognitive theories, that aspect contributes to one's reactions or actions towards the other. Besides, the role of perception of the other, interpretation of the other's actions, behaviours or attitudes is exacerbated in times of tension. While investigating interpersonal resilience the aspect of how the other is perceived cannot therefore be neglected.

Another point to underline is that establishing these four constructs as a lens prior to fieldwork may potentially lead to the risk of biasing the data collected if used without flexibility. Chapter Four will discuss further the methodological implications in terms of data collection. This said, post-fieldwork these four constructs can contribute in discussing the data gathered.

So, although RCT sheds insightful light on understanding growth-fostering relationships from both an individual and relational angle, the theory does not cover all the potentially influencing aspects of the interpersonal processes of adaptation to circumstances of tension in relationships. However, despite this limitation, this review of the core ideology of RCT has provided another layer of progress which can be used to develop the analytical framework for understanding interpersonal resilience:

➢ First, individual perceptions need to be contextualised in a broader socio-cultural context;

- ➢ Second, personal resilience is embedded in relationships
- ➢ And finally, as a lesson learnt, factoring in how the other is perceived by the individuals is of equal importance to how the self feels and thinks as a result of the relationship.

3.2.3.   Interpersonal neurobiology (IPNB)

"Interpersonal neurobiology is a "consilient" approach that examines the independent fields of knowing to find common principles that emerge to paint a picture of the "larger whole" of human experience and development" (Siegel 2006: 248).

Daniel Siegel founded in the late 1990's the field of Interpersonal Neurobiology building on multidisciplinary research. Although gaining popularity and recognition in psychology, social psychology and neurosciences, the theses have not yet been explored from a sociological theory perspective. Siegel's approach is grounded in consiliencethinking (Wilson 1998) and is based on the definition of concepts in terms of 'energy and information flows'. As he explains: "Energy is a real aspect of the physical world in which we live in" (Siegel 2012b: location 204 in kindle). Although, at the moment, scientists cannot exactly define what energy itself is, its flows and transformations are very much researched, understood and applied across the sciences. This makes the concept of energy flows a useful starting point for building consilience across the diversity of academic disciplines (Siegel 2010c; 2012a; Siegel 2012b).

Following IPNB, energy flows (or transfers) are a primary concept in that it is not, at the current state of art, breakable into a simpler unit - it is a prime (Siegel 2012b: 215). A prime can be defined as "an irreductible aspect of something" (Siegel 2012b: 487). Using a prime as grammar to define concepts holds the advantage of making the concept understandable across disciplines. This potentially creates a common language amongst diverse scientific disciplines - from physics through to anthropology. Employing the concept of energy transfers is practical because, from a scientific perspective to-date, everything – tangible or intangible - is made up of energy stored and transformed in a certain form or another. Energy flows are energy changes over time happening in all systems (Siegel 2012b) and information, for instance, is energy flow with symbolic meaning. Following Siegel (2012a), I concur with the IPNB theses conceptualisation that "mental, neural, and relational processes as involving energy and information flow patterns is a powerful way to blend science with the subjective nature of our human lives." (Siegel 2012a:7-8). This is a plausible statement if "a core aspect of mind is defined as an embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information" (Siegel 2012b: 475); the brain – "the extended nervous system distributed throughout the entire body that is intimately interwoven with the physiology and movements of the body as a whole" – is " referring to the embodied neural mechanism that shapes the flow of energy and information."(Siegel 2012b: 435); and "relationships are the sharing of energy and information flows" (Siegel 2012b: 125). This statement is explained in the next paragraphs.

The concept of subjective experiences - "the personal sensation of lived experience" (Siegel 2012b: 503) - has always been in the core of IPNB and this has been explicated since the earlier times of this body of theory:

> *"The perspective of interpersonal neurobiology is to build a model within which the objective domains of science and the subjective domains of human knowing can find a common home"(Siegel 2001; Siegel 2006: 248).*

Indeed, no discussion on subjectivity may be complete without considering what 'meaning' actually means. This consilient framework with energy and information flows as primary units gives a convincing explanation. "Meaning making in the brain can be seen to involve at least five facets of (a) associations, (b) beliefs, (c) cognitions, (d) developmental periods, and (e) emotional responses" (Siegel 2012b: 356). This said, meaning making is cognitive, neurobiological and relational. This echoes the triangular framework of IPNB which defines the core aspects of the a) mind as "an embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information" (Siegel 2012b: 475); b) brain[5] as "the embodied neural mechanism that shapes the flow of energy and information" (Siegel 2012b: 435); and c) relationships as the "patterns of interaction between two or more people that involve the sharing of energy and information flow" (Siegel 2012b: 492) in one same epistemology. In sum, Siegel (2012b) argues that:

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[5] Siegel extends the definition of the brain from what is commonly understood as the organ in the skull to "the extended nervous system distributed throughout the entire body that is intimately interwoven with the physiology and movements of the body as a whole." (Siegel 2012b: 435)

> *"Subjective experience, awareness, and an embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information are fundamental and interdependent facets of mind." (Siegel 2012b: 1)*

Beyond this rigorous work of consilient definition that Siegel provides in IPBN, the key point of interest for the present research is the relationship angle. Using the analogy of sharing a smile, Siegel illustrates how a relationship exists as an entity and cannot be simply a summation of two entities. More than a just summation, it is actually a resultant of interactions:

> *"Relationships are the way we connect with one another. In many ways, a relationship reveals how the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This is the emergent quality of a prime experience: It cannot be reduced to you or me— the smile is created between us." (Siegel 2012b: 216-217)*

This view of considering the relationship as a system in itself forms the cornerstone of this thesis and accordingly is entirely in line with in the IPNB philosophy.

The strength of the theory of interpersonal neurobiology lies in its consilient framing and sound empirical evidencing. This helps overcome the methodological and ethical hurdles which the other theoretical approaches previously discussed often carry. Consequently the present research, in coherence with its pragmatic philosophy, will employ the concept of 'energy and information flows' as primary building blocks of interactions happening in

and within socialities[6] as well as within individual brains and minds. Three main insights will therefore be carried into the construction of the analytical framework for understanding interpersonal resilience:

1) A consilient approach and energy and information flows;

2) The significance of subjective experiences in the triad of relationships-mind-brain;

3) The definition of a relationship as an entity in itself, in part by the individual subjects that make it but at the same time a prime experience emerged from their interactions (from the flows of energy and information shared).

However, we still need an analytical framework which is able to encompass the multiple dimensions and emergent characteristics of the concept using a sociological language. This is where the Maussian Gift theory can prove to be useful.

3.2.4. Maussian gift theory (MGT)

Understanding the grammar of the MGT, although quite intuitive, is not straightforward, so to avoid confusion it requires some prior explanation. The early work of Jacques Godbout and Alain Caillé (Godbout and Caillé 1992) building on Marcel Mauss'[7] seminal essay, The Gift (Mauss 1925), conceptualised the Maussian Gift theory in what may seem an economic language qualifying the giver as a creditor to the relationship and the receiver

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[6] **sociality** - the tendency to associate with others and to form social groups (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/socialities; accessed on 29th May 2017)

[7] Marcel Mauss was a French anthropologist who pioneered the study of 'gift economies' like those of the Kwakiutl of British Columbia.

as a debtor until he/she gives something in return. At first sight, this terminology may seem to be reducing relationships to a kind of 'bookkeeping of gifts'. But it is not. In fact, the philosophy underlying the MGT developed further by the founders of the *Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales*, or movement for anti-utilitarianism in social sciences (MAUSS[8]) has been providing an intellectual space for critiquing the foundations of the argument that economic theory can be applied to any kind of social behaviour (with the popularisation of Rational Action (choice) theory as put forward by Hayek and Baker in the 1960s). They refute the assumption that the best action is utility maximisation (where 'utility' is defined as the resultant pleasure from an action, in other words, the sum of all pleasure from an action minus the suffering of any party involved in the action). Instead of reducing the understanding of all social actions as determined by utility maximisation, they choose to maintain an empirically-oriented epistemology. In others words, the focus is on social experiences thought and interpreted through their respective contexts and the dynamic nature of social life without downplaying its different aspects.

Early on, Mauss (1925) argued - drawing upon secondary data from different cultural contexts, but more specifically from the *potlatch* of the Pacific Northwest, the Maori concept of the *hau* in Polynesia and the *kula* in Melanesia - that there is more to individual actions than just their self-interest or utility

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[8] MAUSS- Movement for anti-utilitarianism in social sciences- journal was founded in 1981 by a group of French sociologists, economists and anthropologists in opposition to what they viewed as call an "exclusively instrumental vision of democracy and social relationships" in a purely economic language. This critical posture became known as the gift paradigm school of thought in social and political philosophy.

maximisation. In these gift economies what mattered more than the objects exchanged were the relationships created and developed. Graeber (2000), one of the few authors who has written about the Maussian gift theory outside french-speaking academics, writes (2000):

> *"In gift economies, Mauss argued, exchanges do not have the impersonal qualities of the capitalist marketplace: In fact, even when objects of great value change hands, what really matters is the relations between the people; exchange is about creating friendships, or working out rivalries, or obligations, and only incidentally about moving around valuable goods." (Graeber 2000)*

Fundamentally, the theory is based on the social nature of being human (Chanial 2008: 13; Mauss and Fauconnet 1969). This was before the latest scientific developments which recently showed the validity of this assumption. Back in the early 20th century, Mauss was talking about hybridity between nature and the socialisation of being human (Chanial 2008: 13). This joins in with the conceptualisation developed by the American pragmatists, Dewey and Cooley, of being human in society. As Chanial (2008) explains, personal autonomy and social belonging; individual interest and common interest (through generous actions) are not opposed and dissociated, but instead are existing side by side and nurturing each other. Building on this, the process involving gift-giving (and receiving) is viewed as the bedrock of social relationships and hence of society at large. From this point of view, social relationships are based on the exchange of gifts between individuals and groups.

Moving away from dichotomies, this inductive theory nurtures a complementary view of social concepts such as '*obligation et liberté'* that is 'obligation and freedom'; and '*intérêt et désintéressement'*, that is 'self-interest and selflessness'. This level of complexity in conceptualisation may prove helpful in understanding emergent processes which are complex as well since they involve several dynamic elements at once. Instead of opposing these concepts to each other, the MGT places them on the same plane postulating that within an interaction, these can exist in synchronicity as well as diachronically. It seems, and is paradoxical to consider, that both apparently opposing concepts can exist in the same interaction. But this paradoxical epistemology is the very strength of this theory as it permits encompassing the articulation between them. In fact, considering that a gift is always given only for the sake of getting something in return is a determinist standpoint as much as is considering that a gift is necessarily always given selflessly. The gift theory takes a more nuanced approach and this allows brushing a more detailed picture of the exchanges taking place and their resultant effects on the interaction and the relationship.

Refuting determinism and advocating an empirical approach, the MGT provides a lens for scoping and analysing relationships for what they are instead of imposing a rigid filter which then blocks out all those interactions which do not fall into the pre-defined categories of the filter. In truth, one does not need to deviate widely to see that interactions are more than mere calculations for utility maximisation. How often do we give of our time just to help someone we care about just for his or her sake? Can we live in community in abstraction of the basic norms of politeness? It could be argued that one

may follow these norms with the intent of obtaining something in return. Subtleties are critical. There is a fine but distinct line between observing an action and determining its motive.

Gift: resource and process

Although commonly the term 'gift' is understood as something given necessarily freely, etymologically, 'gift' - something that is given - refers to both a 'present' and a 'poison' (Chanial 2008). The tenets of this theory offer a more refined definition – a gift can be any tangible or intangible symbolic exchange that happens in an interaction – which opens up the possibilities of understanding giving and receiving. Instead of characterising the things transferred as necessarily either positive or negative, the theory makes an insightful distinction between a) the gift (as the object, resource exchanged) *per se*; b) the intention with which it was given or received; and c) the impact of the action (of giving and receiving) on the relationship. Indeed as Chanial (2008: 27-28) rightly puts it : "*l'effet ne donne pas a posteriori l'intention*" In English, "The effect does not give *a posteriori* the intention". In other words, one cannot determine an intention from an effect.

The core of the MGT holds in how Mauss (1925) conceptualises the triad of giving, receiving and re-turning (or giving back) as the basis of social relationships (Chanial 2008; 2011). Thus defined the process of gift-giving becomes a 'total social fact' that is "an activity that has implications through society, in the economic, legal, political and religious spheres" (Edgar and Sedgwick 2005). Mauss explicated the concept as follows:

"These phenomena are at once legal, economic, religious, aesthetic, morphological and so on. They are legal in that they concern individual and collective rights, organized and diffuse morality; they may be entirely obligatory, or subject simply to praise or disapproval. They are at once political and domestic, being of interest both to classes and to clans and families. They are religious; they concern true religion, animism, magic and diffuse religious mentality. They are economic, for the notions of value, utility, interest, luxury, wealth, acquisition, accumulation, consumption and liberal and sumptuous expenditure are all present..." (Mauss 1967: 76-77)

Notice the use of the term *phenomena*. Gift in this paradigm is no longer only a resource exchanged but it is also a process happening in the interaction which actually makes and becomes the interaction. This, Chanial (2008: 32) succinctly explains, noting[9] that the gift as the operator and the symbol of the alliance, the relationship, is a force of association, socialisation and individuation. This again echoes how Charles Cooley (Colley 1902; (Cooley 1992)) and Dewey (1925) theorised how both the self and society are constituted and developed within the intersubjective[10] space - the space of the relationship. Understanding social relationships thus becomes central to understanding the becoming of individuals (individuation) as well as that of society (socialisation). Gifts are symbolic exchanges which initiate and

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[9] Chanial (2008: 32) writes in French: *"operateur et symbole de l'alliance, le don est tout a la fois force d'association, de socialisation et d'individuation."*

[10] The intersubjective space is that physico-temporal space where at least two subjectivities overlap in either convergence or divergence to some degree but result in the sharing of something between the two parties. In Siegel's perspective, intersubjectivity "reveals that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (Siegel 2012b: 466).

transform relationships at the individual, relational and social level. This paradigm thus allows for the observation of the ongoing 'intersubjective flux'[11] (Simmel, 1999) which links individuals and groups (Chanial 2008: 32).

With subjectivity and intersubjectivity acknowledged and put forward as key concepts in analysing individual and social actions and behaviours, the MGT scores highly as a tool to study interpersonal resilience, which we have seen earlier is a highly subjective concept. To understand the flows within interactions, careful empirical fieldwork (Chanial 2008) becomes a must. Careful here implies that conscientious attention is required while conducting field research (data gathering and interpretation) in order to stay open and attuned to the meanings given by the subjects of the research and not attribute pre-supposed intentions to the actions observed. This will be further discussed in the methodological framework in Chapter Four.

Normativity

As discussed earlier, the Maussian gift theory's paradigm is normative. Besides assuming the social nature of being human, it refutes a deterministic approach to analysing social behaviour. Instead of presuming that social behaviour is motivated necessarily by self-interest or utility maximisation, it takes a subtler approach. Instead, two norms are deemed to underlie social relationships: 1) generosity and; 2) reciprocity (Chanial 2008). Unlike some authors like Bourdieu who, according to Caillé (1994: 248), came to place the

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[11] Chanial (2008: 32) writes in French: «Le don donne à voir cet « éternel flux et bouillonnement » (Simmel,1999) qui lie les individus et le groupes, les uns aux autres » (Chanial 2008: 32)

focus on reciprocity, Chanial (2008: p. 26) in line with Gouldner (1975)[12], underlines the equal importance of generosity as a norm which governs relationships. Neither are an obligation (Chanial 2008: 28) but instead are norms or principles of behaviour. Both are important, as a society normed only by generosity is unrealistic and one governed only by reciprocity is equally unrealistic. For instance, think how efficient or effective an enterprise would be if the workers only fulfilled the tasks assigned to them without any other form of socialisation with each other. How creative or innovative would such an enterprise be?

Following the norm or principle of reciprocity, when a gift is received, often a return is expected, although not necessarily, by the giver. But the receiver is often in a position of what Godbout and Caillé (1992) would call a 'debt', a relational obligation. This obligation may or may not be coercive. In fact, determining how free the receiver is to give back is often a fair indicator of the nature of the relationship created as a result of the interaction. The moral obligation to give in return, which arises from this norm of reciprocity, catalyses the building of the relationship.

It can be said that there are as many gift forms as there are intentions formulated. Some gifts are given just for the sake of the act of giving and cannot be deemed as seeking reciprocity while others are solely interested gifts. The range is wide but what is more insightful is understanding how relationships are formed and transformed through a gift lens. Figure 5 provides

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[12] This is referring to Gouldner (1975)'s expression - "something for nothing" – discussed by Chanial (2008: 26).

a pictorial illustration as an introduction to understanding the grammar of the gift paradigm. When a gift is given, a cycle of giving is initiated. Once the gift is received, a form of relationship is created as a bond has been now created between the giver and the receiver (Godbout and Caillé 1992; Godbout 2004). When the receiver (or the *donee*) accepts the gift from the donor, a form of symbolic debt is established between them.

The action	Implication of the action	
1.Giving	→ Opens a cycle of giving	
2.Receiving	→ Establishes a form of 'debt' between the giver (donor) and the receiver (donee)	Depending on the intention* of the giver (*or can be called the 'motive')
3.Giving back Or returning	→ Closes a cycle or Opens another cycle	
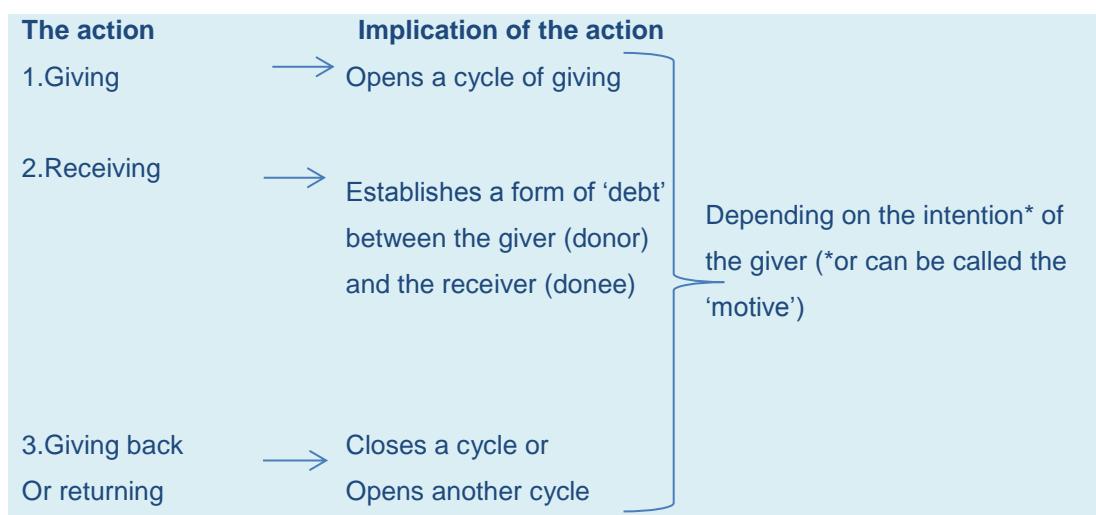
Figure 4 Pictorial introduction to the grammar of the gift paradigm

Say for example that persons A and B see each other for the first time and had no relationship whatsoever before. Person A gives X to person B and person B receives X from person A, where X is any gift. Say X is a smile. A smiles at B and seeing the smile, B decides to smile back. At the moment of the exchange, a relationship is initiated and lasts the time until the smile is reciprocated. Often a smile may welcome another act of giving and a circle of gift-giving and receiving is initiated. Say for instance, A goes to a bakery and asks for a baguette from the baker B. Unless A and B exchange more than the purchase and sale relationship, the link between them lasts until the baguette requested is received and the money required for it paid.

More subtly though, as Chanial (2008: 24) explains: social rapport is built when the gift is given without a pre-condition of a return. When the gift is received, the gift relation happens. If, for example, B walks to A to open a conversation, and A replies positively or negatively, the exchanges continue and the relationship evolves accordingly. It is clear that without contextual and motivational specifications, the nature of the relationships cannot be easily understood.

More precisely, the MGT makes the case that overall what actually informs us of the nature of relationships is not so much what is given but *how* it is given (Chanial 2011). Put differently, the key question to ask in order to define the type of relationships is 'under what condition is the gift given'. In analytical terms, including the motive which accompanies the giving-receiving-giving back interaction in fact deepens the understanding of the nature of the relationship. Chanial's (2008) work on identifying and mapping out these diverse possible conditions provides a robust guiding framework to categorise some types of relationships using this "gift grammar" (Chanial 2008; 2011). Figure 5 is a reproduction of what he terms as a "*boussole*" (Chanial 2008: 569), a compass to understanding types of social relationships. Positing that relationships can be articulated in terms of the norms of generosity and reciprocity, Chanial (2008) developed this frame of reference which can be used to characterise diverse relations in terms of the diverse configurations of the these norms. Each relationship corresponds to a specific articulation and combination of the two norms.

Chanial's compass initiates the reflection of how the other is dealt with by looking at what condition the gift is given, received, returned or even taken.

The two main axes show four concepts: 1) *reciprocity* associated with the act of giving back; 2) *generosity* associated with the act of giving; 3) *power,* associated with the outcome of receiving without being able to give; and finally 3) *violence*, associated with taking. Because exchanges in relationships are never clear-cut or necessarily carrying a single motive, the compass is also divided diagonally into four segments with each defining specific motives more or less driven towards A, where A is any one of the four concepts.
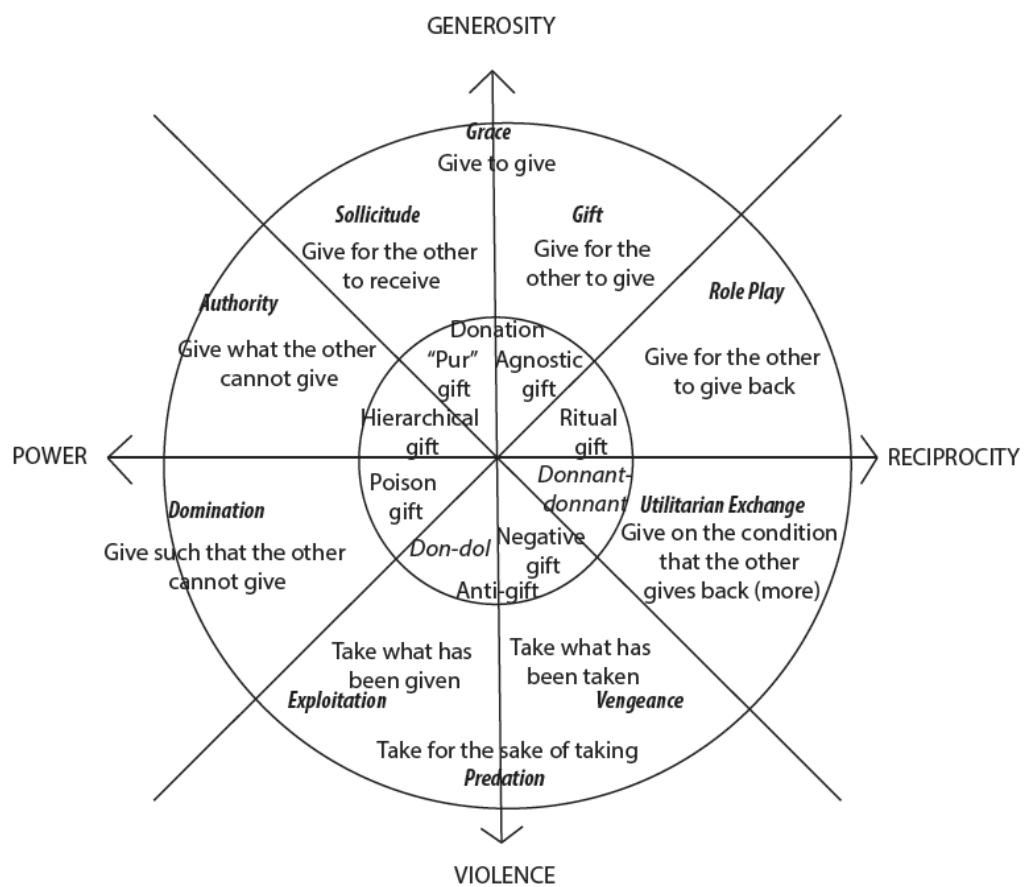
Figure 5 Translated version of Chanial's (2011) compass

The form the relationship takes varies depending on the motive underlying the exchange. The closer we move to the reciprocity direction, the more pronounced is the obligation to give back as the gift is given on the condition of a return. For example, in a utilitarian exchange such as a bank loan, the

debtor is given the amount asked for under the condition that she gives back more in the form of interest. The closer we move towards the power direction, the gift is given in such a way that the receiver cannot give back and ends up in a dominated position. Along the generosity-violence axis, the condition of giving move from giving for the sake of giving (generosity) to taking for the sake of taking (violence).

Chanial explains that the upper hemisphere can be referred to as a regime of trust and peace while the lower hemisphere, that of distrust and war (Chanial, 2012). Because in the MGT a gift calls for a gift, the condition of giving for the other to give (note that it is not giving back to the giver) is by definition the gift relationship and the gift is an agnostic gift. An exploitative relationship is, on the opposite, characterised when something given is taken away. This, Chanial calls a '*don-dol'*, that is, a painful exchange.

Interestingly, this frame of reference provides a starting point to scan the variegated motives of social exchange. This is a step forward in theory building as it departs from the limiting and limited view of considering self-interest and utility maximisation as the ultimate aim of social action. The motives underlying interactions are actually nuanced by how the donor and the donee, the partners in the dyad interpret the interaction (Chanial 2008: 27). Acknowledging this reconciles sociological research with an effective empirical approach based on understanding social facts observed and analysed in concordance with observables, not left to the inclinations or opinions of the researcher.

Also, as discussed earlier in the IPNB theory review, processes happening in the brain and body are interlocking and interrelated with those happening at the relationships' level. This makes the analysis of mutual perception a crucial part of the analytical framework. So, allowing for a layer of analysis which looks at the mutual perception, the perception of the other, how the other is viewed socio-culturally in the understanding of the dyadic partner is important. This layer of depth is all the more relevant that the context is immersed in significant cultural and ethnic elements, as will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

The normative and empirical work (Chanial 2008) of the Maussian Gift theory as refined by Chanial provides several insights which can be used to study interpersonal resilience. First the philosophical underpinnings reconcile sociological research with observable social facts without making reductive and irrelevant assumptions which restrains the scope of understanding social interactions. Second, the focus on symbolic exchanges, gifts, elements which flow in the social interactions, widens the range of perspectives over the types and motives of interactions. This serves a significant purpose as it allows for scrutinising subjectivities through narratives instead of guessing or pre-determining the reasons behind the actions. As a highly subjective concept, interpersonal resilience requires such an approach to be studied, analysed and learned from. Third, the analytical framework in the shape of a compass enables the plurality of motives and types of social interactions to be encompassed using a triple concept of giving-receiving-returning. The process-oriented conceptualisation offers the possibility to study emergent issues in a sociological language. Overall, the MGT offers a starting point for an efficient and effective methodological (both theoretical and practical)

framework to study interpersonal resilience because it defines relationships in terms of the experience emerging from interactions (in other words, from gifts exchanged).

3.2.5. Collating the theoretical insights discussed

Several insights for this research have been uncovered from this critique of the different bodies of theory reviewed mainly on the basis of their: 1) philosophical coherence; 2) applicability to dyadic (interpersonal) relationships; and 3) applicability to a context of intercultural relationships as well as contexts of work in long-running conflict areas. But perhaps the most evident need is that of an analytical framework which can encompass the emergent and subjective aspects of interpersonal resilience. Figure 6 is a pictorial expression of the overlaps, distinctiveness, potential strengths and current limitations of the reviewed theories in their potential application to the present study of interpersonal resilience.

Although widely applied, the body of social capital theories is not focused on dynamics within interpersonal relationships but rather on the benefits derived from relationships and networks. The discussion around the social capital theories has uncovered a conceptually weak body of theory which in turn makes any research applying it debatable as to the interpretations given to the different concepts put forward. Besides, as Robison *et al.* (2002) have argued, motives for social action and behaviour cannot be purely self-centred. And as most sociologists and psychologists have underlined, not all behaviours are calculated but rather are learned through social interactions (Robison *et al.* 2002: p.5; Robison *et al.* 2012). But most importantly, the key lesson learnt in

theorising any social action is the need to distinguish motives from the resultant benefits and not assume that they are necessarily pre-determined. This implies building uncertainty into any analytical framework targeted at studying social action especially in changing and/or volatile contexts. Finally, due to its debatable and debated philosophical assumptions and built-in determinism, this body of theory distinct from the other three bodies of theory will not be utilised any further. Indeed as discussed, findings from latest scientific research (Lieberman 2013: ix) are proving the rational choice and utility maximisation assumptions as invalid.
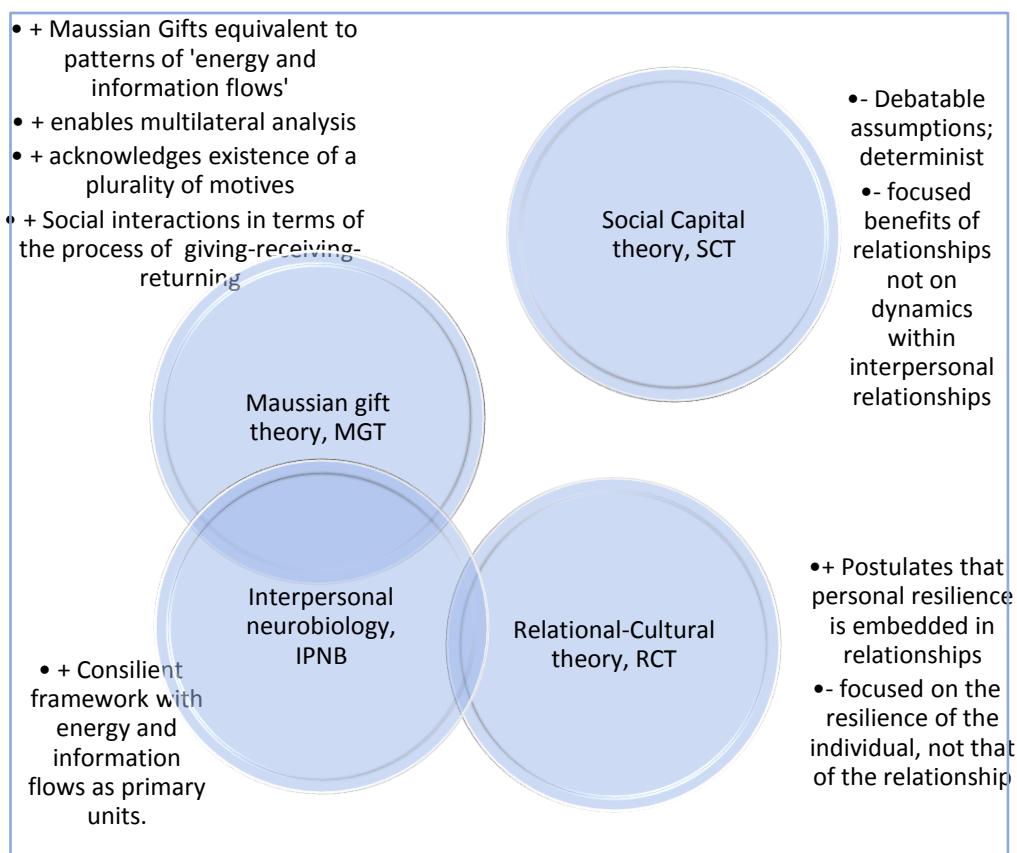
Figure 6 Comparative summary of the different theories applicable to study interpersonal resilience

The strength of relational cultural theory is in its founding assumption: connection comes through learning to identify sources of problems which are barriers to constructive transformation of relationships. Although here resilience is defined in terms of one's ability to connect and resist disconnection in the face of stressors, RCT has not been developed to observe the emergence of interpersonal resilience (defined as an emergent process enabling effective adaptation to circumstances of tension in an interpersonal relationship) but the building of personal resilience. The four constructs of 1) relational authenticity; 2) perceived mutuality; 3) relational connection and; 4) relational empowerment, focus on the perceptions of how the self feels as a result of the relationships she is in, although not on the relationships *per se*. Establishing that personal resilience is embedded in relationships, RCT brings to light the necessity of a psychodynamic framework of analysis in looking at personal resilience. The psychological dimension in understanding interpersonal resilience cannot be neglected since individual perceptions are embedded in broader socio-cultural contexts. For these reasons, this body of theory affords some overlap with IPNB which empirically demonstrates the significance of secure social relationships and the ability to be resilient (Siegel 2012b: 94).

Owing to its consilient framework taking energy and information flows as primary units of conceptualisation, the IPNB field brings in empirical robustness, and this, while acknowledging the subjectivity of being human. This paradigm shift offers social science a ground breaking opportunity to review and refine theoretical assumptions all too often arbitrary, irrelevant, and ambiguous because of the lack of transparency over underlying philosophies.

The IPNB conceptualisation of mental, neural and relational processes as patterns of energy and information flows opens the way to a multilateral and process-oriented epistemology. Based on the triad of mind, brain and relationships, IPNB actually introduces consilience between the sciences and thus provides a strong empirically grounded theoretical basis for application of the Maussian gift theory (MGT) which can in turn be a sociological language of interpreting and understanding social interactions and relationships.

Just as IPBN defines relationships as the "patterns of interaction between two or more people that involve the sharing of energy and information flow" (Siegel 2012b: 492), for the MGT, relationships are interactions formed through the exchange (giving, receiving, taking and giving back) of gifts with certain intentions. The relationship is an entity in itself and the gifts exchanged are defined as anything tangible (for example, money or a book) or intangible (for example, friendship or a feeling, an emotion) carrying symbolic subjective meaning that is given, received, taken or given back social in interactions. Because in effect everything made up of energy flows and information, Maussian gifts are in fact patterns of energy and information flows. Gift in Maussian terms are those patterns of energy and flows which are given, received, taken or given back in social interactions. The focus shifts from the individuals only to the individuals as well as relationships – the prime experiences emerged from interactions (from the flows of energy and information shared). This approach enables multilateral analysis of a plurality of motives and types of social interactions using the triple concept of giving-receiving-returning. In line with Chanial (2008), the Maussian gift theory has demonstrated its robustness as a flexible analytical framework able to scope

different types of social relationships based on what circulates between people and most importantly considering a variety of motives for social action.

The process of gift-giving as a 'total social fact' meaning that 'it has implications throughout societies' economic, legal, political and religious spheres' (Edgar and Sedgwick 2005) places the patterns of energy and information flows or gifts at the core of social interactions. But more importantly in the present context is that this perspective makes a much needed distinction between a) the gift (as the object, resource exchanged) per se; b) the intention with which it was given or received; and c) the impact of the action (of giving and receiving) on the relationship. This alone is a leap forward in refined conceptualisation. For instance, it addresses the conceptual weaknesses identified in the social capital theories for some decades now. The complementary view of social concepts such as 'obligation and freedom'; and 'self-interest and selflessness' in the MGT introduces a level of complexity in the conceptualisation of social actions and behaviours. With the gift defined as both the operator and symbol of any alliance or relationship, the door to studying complex emergent issues synchronically and diachronically in the same sociological language is here opened (Chanial (2008: 32).

Because of the interrelatedness between the social and the cognitive as discussed by Siegel (Siegel 2010b; Siegel 2010c; 2012a; Siegel 2012b), understanding perceptions of the other, of the relationship and of how the other (the dyadic partner) is viewed socio-culturally becomes important. The fact that interpersonal resilience is a subjective concept and more specifically the resultant of an intersubjective experience happening in the dyadic relationship, any analytical attempt needs to integrate these perceptions at play. Although,

the MGT offers a starting point for an efficient and effective methodological (both theoretical and practical) framework to study interpersonal resilience, this critical review of the theories has shown a theoretical lacuna in terms of a sociological analytical framework able to encompass the multiple dimensions and emergent characteristics of interpersonal resilience. Building on the key insights gathered in this section, a three-tiered analytical framework was devised and will be presented in next section.

3.3.   Devised three-tiered analytical framework

Because effectiveness in research implies acting in coherence with the founding principles which echo the empirical facts, choosing the relevant theories to frame the research is a critical stage. The literature review on resilience has depicted an emergent, subjective and contextual concept. This, as discussed in section 3.1, has called for a pragmatic research philosophy which acknowledges the dynamic interconnectedness between individuals and societies at large (Goleman 2007; Lieberman 2013; Siegel 2012a; Siegel 2012b) whereby the individual is not simply assumed to be just a rational actor only seeking to maximise his/her own utility. Individuals are perpetually re-actualising their selves in their relationships, as well as their inner and outer environments.

The critical review of contemporary literature discussing interpersonal relationships has identified two concurring theories - the IPNB and the Maussian gift theory - which together can provide a relevant and scientifically

coherent framework to define and investigate interpersonal relationships. The fact of being human and sharing social relationships involves dynamic processes, which if understood properly, can theoretically help in both conflict management and relationship improvements. This section presents how and why a three tiered analytical framework was developed from these empirically-oriented theories in order to understand the dynamic processes involved in the emergence of interpersonal resilience in circumstances of tension. Each of the following sub-sections elaborates subsequently on 1) the context and sociality; 2) social positioning and 3) pathways of adaptation in interpersonal relationships and discusses their articulation with one another. Taken together these three tiers will help give a refined sociological and socio-cognitive picture of how to conceptualise and analyse interpersonal resilience, especially in circumstances of tension.

3.3.1. Context and sociality

Although most research seems to mention context as being a central factor for understanding social behaviour, few define the boundaries or criteria which makes these contexts. Often, contexts are conceptualised in terms of dimensions – social, economic, environmental or political etc. This is conceptually helpful in many cases but eventually hits a wall when the complexity of life presents mostly cross-dimensional and hybridised contexts. Where does the economic end or where does the social start? A political act can arguably be social, economic or even environmental. But how do we define which is which? Another way to approach the problem is to define spheres in society – market, public policy, non-governmental Organisations

etc. Again these categorisations can be problematic if not clearly defined. First there is no clear single definition of what a sphere represents (Caillé 2009). Second, empirical observations show that boundaries in social life are not clear-cut and impermeable. Most social entities (social groups) are in fact evolving in hybrid environments moving from one 'sphere' to another or operating in multiple 'dimensions' simultaneously. As Caillé (2009) notes, it is difficult to say exactly how many different orders (dimensions, spheres) social actions result from or are impacted on (Caillé 2009: 127). In other words, the complexity of reality makes these categorisations, if undefined, theoretically questionable. For instance, in a start-up company, the team forms a social group operating in the market sphere. One can look at the economic but also the social aspects of the team's behaviours. But the question is how dependent or independent these aspects are from each other. If we consider only the economic factors, are we not missing out on those social or political factors which influence the economic aspects.

Furthermore, using categories pre-defined by the researcher may, depending on the research question, result in biased data. How people perceive their belonging to a social context varies. As Jordan and Hartling (2008) note: "Societal practices of categorizing, stereotyping, and stratifying individuals have an enormous impact on peoples' sense of connection and disconnection" (Jordan and Hartling 2008: 2). Identifying and understanding their perspectives on their role or place becomes a crucial stage in data collection in order to avoid any eventual truncated interpretations. In practice, this calls for a context template flexible enough to encompass this complexity. This

necessitates closer attention to be paid on how the individuals feel about their belonging to a relationship when examining interpersonal resilience.

Undertaking an analysis of interpersonal resilience of dyads embedded in different contexts also presents the need to capture the distinct specificities of these contexts. The dyads studied are mainly evolving in different workplace environments with a socio-politically sensitive background bearing an on-going low-intensity conflict with an unpredictable but permanent risk of upsurge. Investigating in such a terrain requires a flexible approach and more importantly the acknowledgement of complexity. This could suffice as a description of context but the problem is that it is only a vague macro-level description. It carries no explanation for the reader to understand what this workplace environment actually is at the micro-level or what it means to the people. It is does not point out any particularities, similarities or differences between the different workplaces. Besides, identifying people's perceptions of their context brings depth to the researcher's understanding of the interpersonal relationships and thus enhances the analysis of the data collected as the interpretations will be closer to these perceptions. It is therefore necessary to consider these different and variable contextual layers.

In terms of conceptualisation of contexts, Caillé (2009) has proposed a thorough discussion of the matter in Chapters 7 and 8 of his French book entitled '*théorie anti-utilitariste de l'action – fragments d'une sociologie générale*' – translated as 'anti-utilitarian theory of action (AUTA) – fragments of a general sociology'. The core of the AUTA holds three main ideas. First, its ontological positioning refutes the assumption that individuals are necessarily rational and only seek utility maximisation. This is in line with the pragmatic

philosophy applied here and concurs with recent scientific findings as discussed earlier.

Second, Caillé (2009) proposes that politics form the context of contexts as it allows the different spheres and dimensions (what he calls orders) to be discerned and articulated. He distinguishes between two conceptualisations of the term 'politics'. Politics or the political (*le politique*, the masculine version of the term in French) is the relationship of societies with their own indeterminacy (uncertainties and their implications) and the link between the different orders of society. But Caille notes that the political (*la politique,* the feminine verison of the term in French) is also the institutionalised system of power which governs the life of citizens (Caillé 2009: 126). This clarification becomes important as it opens the way to bringing together in one same conceptualisation two distinct schools of thought: structural functionalism and contextualism. A Structural Functionalism framework perceives society as a complex system whose parts work together to encourage solidarity and stability (Macionis and Gerber 2013). Contextualism emphasizes that actions occur in *context* and these actions can only be understood in relation to that context (Price 2008). While the first looks at the world through the lens of orders (spheres and dimensions) considered independent from each other, the second, with a multidimensional approach, acknowledges uncertainties and indeterminacies. Putting politics, thus defined, as the 'context' of contexts, Caille provides a starting point for researchers to combine the methodological advantages of both schools. Now, the question is how this can be operationalsed in a sociological language. And the answer he gives is founded in the Maussian gift paradigm. The gift is considered as both the operator and

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medium of social exchanges. So the gift organizes and embeds social interactions, and in turn becomes the grammar of that sociological language. This clearly translates sociology into a form of political philosophy echoing Chanial's thesis in his seminal book *'La Sociologie comme philosophie politique (et réciproquement)'* (Chanial 2011).

Third, Caillé (2009) in his AUTA, refining Habermas' distinction between the public and private life (Habermas 1997), distinguishes primary socialities from secondary socialities specifying that the second cannot function without the first. Although this does not solve the problem of not being able to map accurately hybrid contexts, it provides a relational definition which can be applied from the perspective of the main stakeholders. The primary sociality refers to the sets of person to person relationships (for example, family, neighborhood, friendships) and the secondary sociality refers to the set of social relationships based on the functions (formal roles as decided by the orders) of the individuals (for example, the market, the State). The argument that primary socialities weave the fabric of society concurs with the latest scientific research supporting the fact that human beings are social beings (Goleman 2007; Lieberman 2013; Siegel 2012a; Siegel 2012b).

Figure 7 sketches a representation of the contextual tier of the analytical framework being developed here. Because the cases studied are stories of real life situations evolving in particular spaces and time, they sit in a hybrid area involving primary and secondary socialities of the partners in the relationship. But it is also important to consider the macro-political background in which the case operates because it adds another layer of context that may have an influence on the socialities, hence on the case. Broken lines have

been used to depict this potential and indeed most probable permeabilibilty. This permeability is perceptible in the interpersonal exchanges (flows of energy and information) happening and make up social life as we experience it.

However, this still does not resolve the difficulty of conceptualising hybrid environments but at least holds the credit of moving interpretation a step closer to the perspective of the participant instead of assuming that the researcher's first perceptions are always valid. In a way, since this approach looks at the individuals' perspections on their belonging to x or y sociality as criteria for discerning the types of contexts, it opens the door to understanding asymmetries in power relations across and in different socialities.
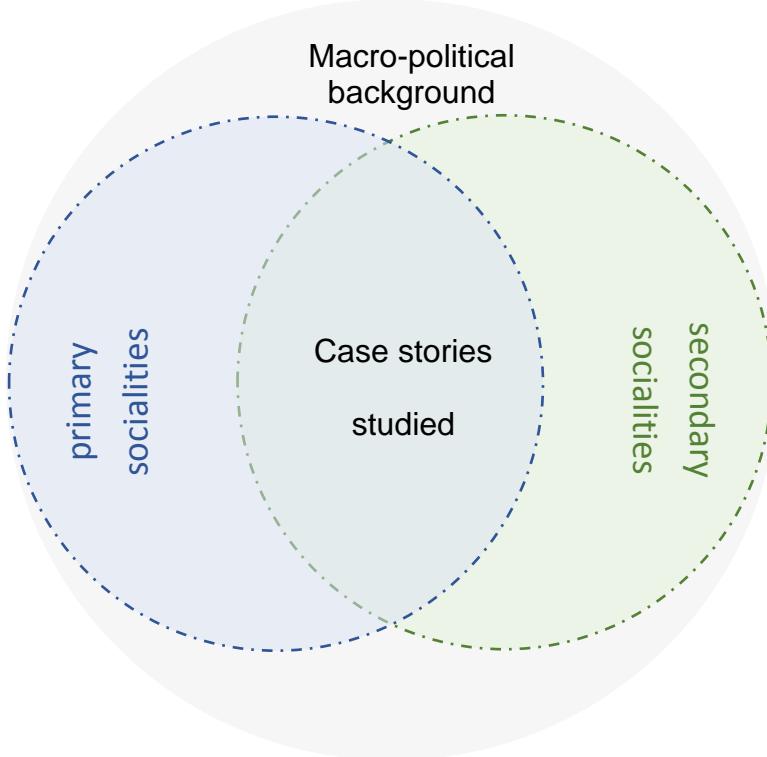
Figure 7 A representation of the first tier of the framework.

Fundamentally as Siegel (2012b) reminds us, context refers to those "factors, internal and external, that are the situational constraints that shape how the mind emerges, moment by moment" (Siegel 2012b: 443). If the context of contexts is politics defined as the relationship of societies with their own indeterminacy (uncertainties and their implications) and the link between the different orders of society, then the framework has to be able to encompass at least to some extent those subjective experiences as reported through the narratives in the stories[13] of each case. The next section elaborates further on this.

3.3.2. Social positioning in terms of perception and action

Relationships are one form of sociality – a process of mutual exchange that makes people feel that they belong to a dyad or group. Zooming into the micro level of dyads, the second tier of this analytical framework maps the positionings of dyadic partners with regard to the narratives of how they perceive each other and how they act and behave with each other. Acknowledging the existence of subjectivities helps in deconstructing irrelevant assumptions about the nature of human behaviour and builds a better understanding of interpersonal resilience. If the mind is the process, then perceptions – "processes by which external stimuli are received and organized within representations of ongoing experience" (Siegel 2012b: 483-484) – are integral elements of this process. Because these "can occur without consciousness but [have] impacts on internal meaning and external behaviors

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[13] Case stories are discussed in further details in Section 4.2.2.

(*sic*)" (Siegel 2012b: 483-484), understanding the participants' perceptions gives an idea of their subjective experiences of the relationship.

Recent research has revealed that

> *"the brain is capable of making neural maps of others' actions that symbolize their intentions. As intention is a mental process, this finding powerfully illustrates how the brain makes an image of the mind of another — even before it can form words or intellectual understanding"* (Siegel 2012b: 132).

Although insightful, it is clear that at the moment, this does not mean that we can accurately establish a predictable mapping of people's subjective experiences in understanding others' intentions. In other words, subjective experiences are not easily accessed. However, narratives can be one accessible way of gaining insights about how people perceive and act in their relationships. And as "narratives entail a focus on action and on the mental states of the individuals of the story, including the self or narrator" (Siegel 2012b: 478), both aspects, action and perception, are important to appreciate any willingness[14] to choose resilient pathways.

Now, as we have seen, mind processes and subjective experiences are highly context-dependent. And, how perception and action articulate is often a complex matter. The intent of whether or not to proceed with a relationship is

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[14] Note that I did not use the term 'ability' but used the term willingness instead. This is deliberate. First, this research is looking at subjectivities and this involves a dimension of choice, thus the term willingness. Second, the nature of the data collected is not relevant to look at the ability of the person to be resilient. Looking at abilities would require an evaluation and this is not the aim of the study.

often influenced not only by how the person perceives her own self in relation to the other but also, how she positions her potential action in relation to the other in the relationship. For instance, although one party may perceive the other as different to herself, she may still decide to act *with* the other. Equally, although one party may identify with the other, she may still decide to act *against* him or her. The consequences of the actions may not be that sought after by the actor. Although this aspect of eventual secondary impacts is beyond the scope of this thesis, the one consequence of interest is how the relationship in the moment of tension is transformed or not. This conceptualisation is a sociological take on Siegel's (2012, p.125) concept of 'relationships and integrative communication'.

> *"Relationships are the sharing of energy and information flow. Integrative communication involves the sharing of energy and information in which each individual's internal world is respected and allowed to be differentiated and then compassionate connection is cultivated. Integrative communication promotes the development of healthy relationships as it honors differentiation and linkage." (Siegel 2012b: 125)*

Social cognitive neuroscientist Matthew Lieberman argues in *Social: Why our brains are wired to connect* that human beings are social beings, as, even at rest, people think about others and themselves in relation to others. In fact, he defines social cognition as "simply another way of describing thinking about other people, oneself, and the relation of oneself to other people" (Lieberman, 2012; p.18). It therefore becomes important to have a sociological framework

which can be used to identify and analyse such relational data. The founding proposal of interpersonal neurobiology is that "integration is the fundamental mechanism of health and well-being" (Siegel 2012b: 109) and that "both differentiation and linkage compose integration" (Siegel 2012b: 112). In terms of interpersonal resilience, which is 'an emergent process enabling effective adaptation to circumstances of tension in an interpersonal relationship', recognising the partners' individual differentiated qualities is an important aspect. Figure 8 presents the second tier of the analytical framework - positioning of the dyadic partners in the relationship particularly in episodes of tension.
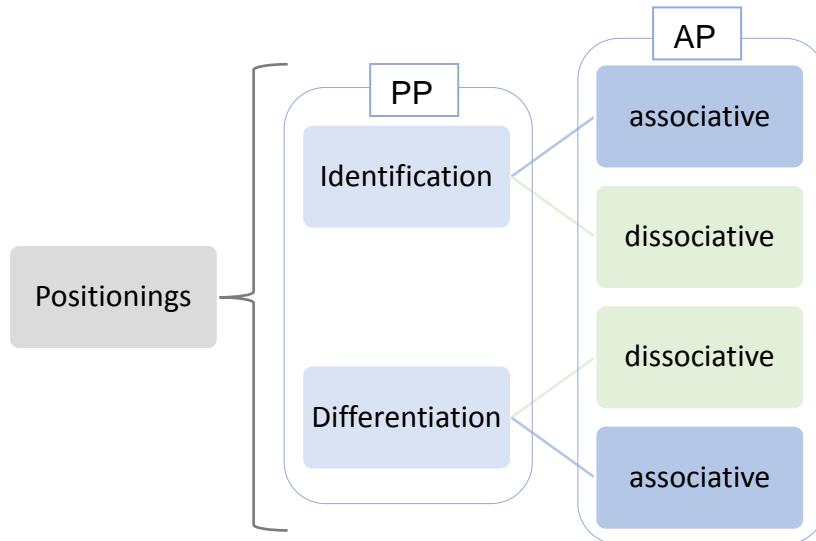
Figure 8 Mapping the positionings of the partners in a dyadic relationship.

In a nut shell, PP (perceptual positioning) is about how one partner feels about the other in terms of how different or similar that other seems to be to him/her. AP (actual positioning) is about how one partner acts towards the other in particular episodes of tension in the relationship.

Positioning as a concept here refers to how one dyadic partner: 1) subjectively perceives the other in the dyad (PP, perceptual positioning) and; 2) acts

towards the other in particular at times of tension (AP, actual positioning). The narratives of the perceptual positioning can further be distilled into conceptual nodes of analysis: i) identification; and ii) differentiation. Identification refers to perceiving those elements of similarity between the other and the self. An example of identification could be that in a narrative, common humanity is emphasised instead of considering cultural or ethnic differences as 'problems'. Differentiation, on the contrary, concerns mainly perceptions tainted by one focusing on the points of dissimilarity between oneself and the other. In short, PP is looking at how one partner perceives the other in terms of how different or similar that other seems to be to him/her. The combination of these two analytical nodes may provide some characterisation of the belonging of the dyadic partners to the relationship they share.

Actual positioning looks at how one partner acts towards the other in particular episodes of stress in the relationship. Actions in a social relationship can be associative (with the other) or dissociative (against the other). It is possible that person X identifies with person Y but still stands against him/her in a particular episode of their relationship. Only in-depth data can inform on the articulation between the different and diverse APs and PPs. Perceiving a common or differentiated ground in the relationship may or may not be prone to association or dissociation in actions and behaviour.

It has to be noted that the framework does not assume any pre-determined or pre-defined relationship between the way the other is perceived and the actions that happen in the relationship. Rather, it is a way of mapping the positionings of the partners in a dyadic relationship. The framework is not

implying any direct impact of mutual perceptions on actions or behaviours. Any causal relationships can only be interpreted from the primary data available. Also, the nodes of analysis are indications of positionings at any given point in a spatio-temporal context. In fact, as subjectivities are not exactly predictable, the likelihood is that the positionings are always evolving into different combinations at different moments. That said, the purpose of the framework is to structure the data collected to help in the process of further analyses. Once the motive underlying the relationship is understood, the dynamics of how the relationship adapts can be studied through the patterns of energy and information flows, or in other words, how the gifts are circulating. This will form the third tier of the analytical framework.

3.3.3. Pathways of adaptation in interpersonal relationships

This relational approach gives an indication of the type of relationship between the two people in the relationship studied. The focus on flows allows different types of relationships to be understood and studied without pre-defining them or considering that the relationship is a sum of the individual personalities. Instead, the relationship is an entity of its own and is actualised as the resultant of the two people's minds and actions towards each other.

If interpersonal resilience is the process enabling an effective adaptation of an interpersonal relationship to a circumstance of tension, then alongside the contextual embeddedness and the social positionings towards each other, the intentions underlying the choices in the relationship have to be understood.

Put differently, those decisional processes driving the relationship to thrive - or die - have to be studied.

If "relationships are the sharing of energy and information flow" (Siegel 2012b: 125), then to understand relationships it becomes imperative to examine what flows and how it flows. As discussed in section 3.2.5, it is now clear that what IPNB calls 'patterns of energy and information flows' (symbolic exchanges), the MGT terms as 'gifts' - these concepts will from now on be used interchangeably. These patterns or gifts have different meanings to different individuals. In other words, they carry subjective meaning. In a dyadic exchange how the gifts are given and received depends on the intention of the giver and perception of the receiver. So the task of trying to understand these subjectivities is complex. This, in particular because subjectivities - "the different ways of knowing about the realities of life" (Siegel 2012b) – are not easily described even by those experiencing them. But understanding *how* gifts flow in the relationship informs on the nature of the relationships. As Siegel (2012b) underlines: "The nature of our relationships is directly shaped by how energy is exchanged and information is created in this sharing of energy and information flow" (Siegel 2012b: 14). For example, moments of tension are often the times when shifts in relationships may happen. The focus in this third tier, presented in Figure 9, is to conceptualise the possible pathways of how these shifts come about.

	Effect on the relationship	Flows in the relationship	
To close the cycle	Discontinuation	Discontinued	No Interpersonal resilience
Intention — To maintain the cycle	Continuation (Buffering)	Status quo	No Interpersonal resilience
To transform the cycle	Continuation (transformative)	Hierarchical / Circular	Interpersonal resilience
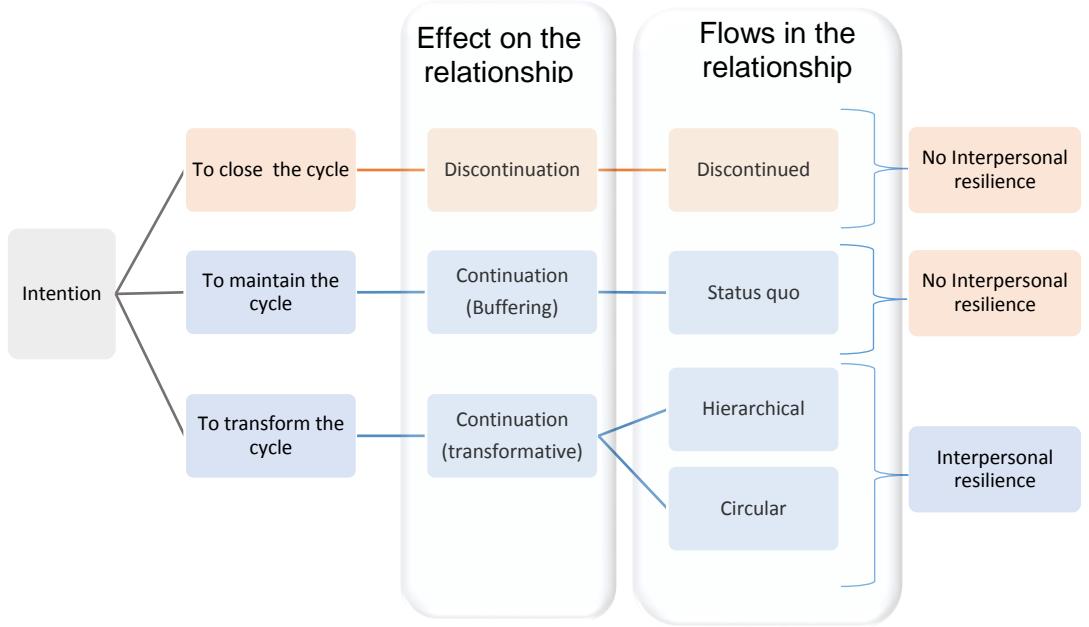
Figure 9 Third tier of the analytical framework

As discussed in section 3.2.4, through Chanial's relational map (Chanial 2008) referencing different types of conditions priming the interactions, looking at the intention accompanying the giving, receiving and giving back process deepens the understanding of the nature of the relationships. Intention is "a mental state that primes the brain to function in a certain way" (Siegel 2012b: 464). The motives of the interactions are nuanced by how the donor (giver) and the *donee* (the receiver) interpret the interaction. A gift given opens a cycle. If the gift is received, a relationship starts. This relationship that emerges is nuanced by the intention of the exchanges and the perception of the receiver. An act of giving may open, maintain, transform or close a cycle of flows initiating a relationship in the one case and maintain, transform or even close it in others. In an episode of tension, each partner may decide to either 1) close; 2) maintain; or 3) transform the relationship. Each of these decisions will entail an effect on the relationship. In short, it will either be discontinued or continued.

If the cycle of giving is stopped, the relationship is discontinued. It dies. This implies no interpersonal resilience.

But in the case of continuation, things are more complex. The first option involves maintenance of the status quo. The exchanges in the interactions remain the same as before the tension. If this highly hypothetical option occurs, there is no interpersonal resilience as there is no adaptation to the tension. Mentally, there may be an effect on the individual but the sociology of it is not apparent. The habitual flows keep circulating as usual. This buffer state is more of a transitional state before a transformative adaptation or a decision to discontinue the relationship occurs.

When the intention is to transform the cycle of flows, hence the relationship, the continuation may take two very different forms resulting from the shifting of the flows. Consequently, either a hierarchical or circular relationship is established. In the first case, one partner acts in dissociation from the other in the dyad while in the second case, he or she acts in association with the other. This links back to the actual positioning of the second tier of the analytical framework, thus, providing a rounded analysis when all three tiers are taken together. The terminology employed here relates to the choices of symbolic exchanges on the particular issue of tension. Choosing to maintain an associative action implies that the 'gifts', symbolic exchanges, circulation is maintained. In other words, the partners keep the communication open and ongoing on the issue of tension. In the case where on that particular episode of tension the dyadic partners decide to prioritise something else and/or agree to disagree, their communication on the issue is different. The flows are more

hierarchical. Either way, the interpersonal dynamics are transformed as the relationship adapts in the face of the tension.

It has to be noted that the focus is on the forms of adaptation, not their effectiveness. Naming the forms of adaptation does not imply that one is more effective than another. The effectiveness depends on the perspective of the people involved in the relationship. Only through their narratives can it be interpreted that such and such form of adaptation was effective in such and such context. The aim is to understand the processes of decision making involved in circumstances of tension, not judging which pathway takes the relationship in a 'better or worse off' state.

Summary

To sum up, from now on in the context of this research, the following assumptions will be held as valid throughout this thesis:

1) Research is fundamentally an iterative process of on-going learning;

2) Individuals are subjective entities living co-extensively with and within their social contexts. Subjective experiences are embedded in multi-level social and cognitive contexts.

3) Individual experience is a primary unit of social life;

4) Patterns of energy and information flows form the primary unit of analysis in the social sciences

5) Interpersonal relationships are emergent processes involving sharing of patterns of symbolic exchanges (gifts in Maussian terms) in the form of energy and information flows.

Textbox 2 Summary of the assumptions of this thesis

The heterogeneity of social relationships and the subjectivity of individuals imply intangible specificities which are difficult to quantify or measure. This in turn makes inquiries about the interpersonal resilience necessarily founded on in-depth and qualitative analysis of personal narratives. In trying to understand how individuals cope in episodes of tension, understanding the actions and behaviours of each partner is as important as understanding how they perceive each other.

Figure 10 presents the three- tiered socio-cognitive analytical framework developed to analyse interpersonal resilience in context. The contextual

embeddedness of each case studied is defined at the macro-level and the micro-level. The macro-political background has to be informed first. The micro-level context involves understanding the socialities (primary and secondary) within which the relationship operates. The interpersonal or relational level is conceptualised through two nodes of analysis – social positionings and the intention motivating the decision-making within the relationship at times of tension. How the adaptation processes enable interpersonal resilience can be understood through the actual positioning (associative or dissociative) of one partner towards another and the transformative intention accompanying the decisional processes at the time of tension. This framework will be used to analyse the cases studied but first, the next Chapter will present and discuss the methodological framework within which the field research was carried out.
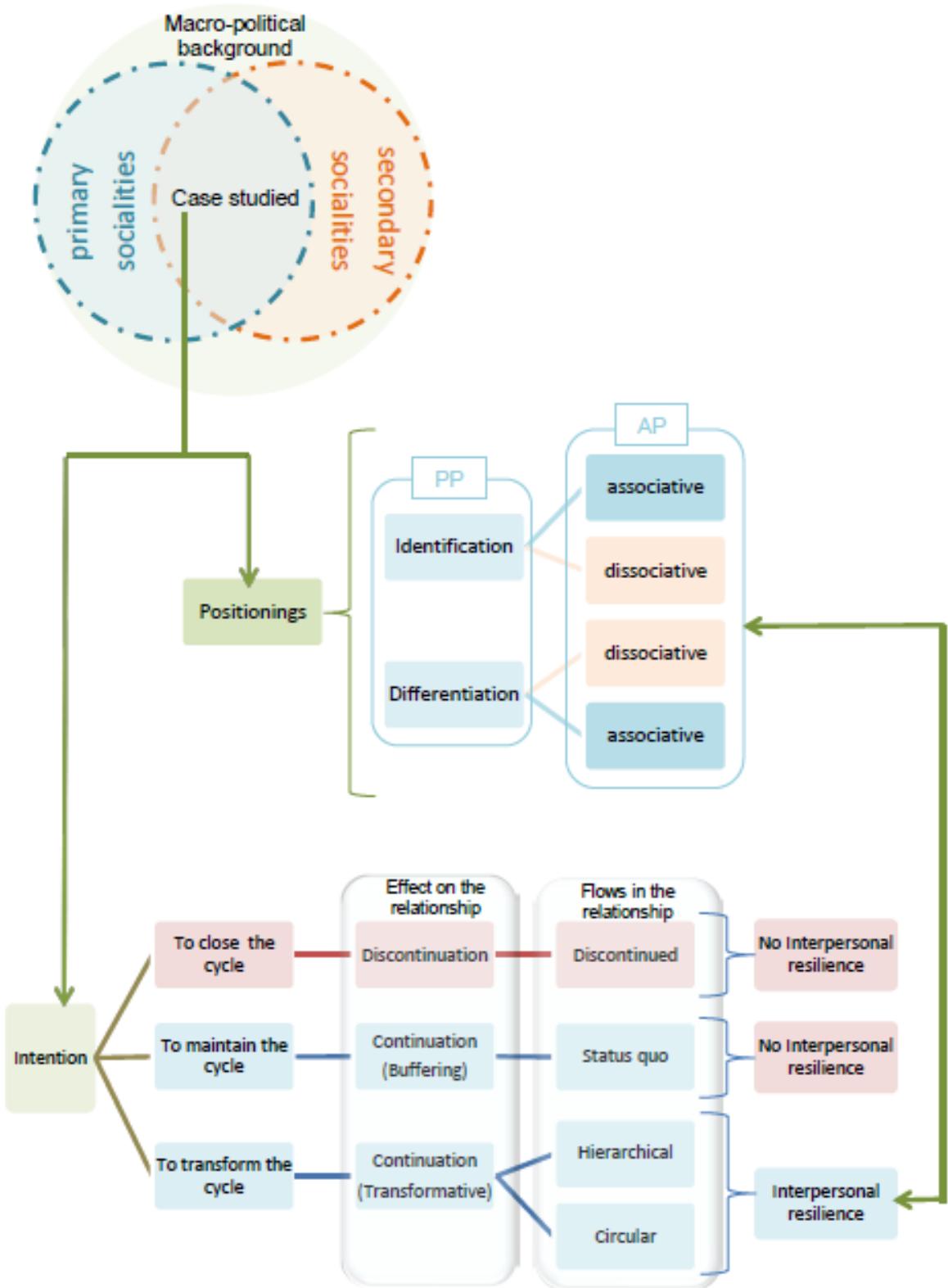
Figure 10 The three tiers of the socio-cognitive analytical framework developed to analyse stories of interpersonal resilience in context of tension.

Part II Methodological Framework

Chapter Four Methodological framework

4   Introduction

Researching interpersonal resilience has required a methodological approach that coheres with the emergent character of the concept. Methodology is the reasoning, the epistemology (Bryman 1984) underlying methods employed. Different methods may produce nuanced data which can be fundamentally different. The validity of a research approach depends on the choices and practice of the methods to collect data in the field. As Fine *et al.* (2000: 119) remind us, "methods are not passive strategies. They differently produce, reveal, and enable the display of different kind of identities" (Fine *et al.* 2000: 119). As discussed in Chapter Two and Three, the heterogeneity of social relationships and the subjectivity of individuals involve intangible specificities which may be difficult to quantify or measure. So in-depth qualitative renditions of personal narratives become a primary source of data for understanding how individuals cope with each other in episodes of relational tension. Also, personal narratives are embedded in social contexts and interpersonal resilience is a context-specific concept (see Chapter Two). In order to achieve this, the field research design, rooted in a pragmatic philosophy (Chapter Three, Section 3.1), had to be tailored to the macro and micro-level context.

The fieldwork chosen has been the area of Israel and the West Bank – an area of intractable conflict with ongoing low to medium level of violence in particular hot spots and unpredictable outbursts violence at times. Cohen-Chen et al. (2014) give a succinct snapshot of the context of the intractable conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East.

"The Israeli–Palestinian conflict is a violent conflict that has been ongoing for over five decades. Major attempts have been made to resolve the conflict, ending with dismay, disappointment, and at times (like the Oslo Accords ending with a Palestinian uprising) escalation of violence on both sides, further perpetuating despair and fear and preventing hope from arising once again" (Cohen-Chen et al. 2014).

It can be argued that any context could have been suitable to enquire about how people cope with situations of tension in relationships. Interpersonal relationships and related sources of stress to their existence exist at every level of society from households to the workplace or leisure environments. However, for the sake of methodological robustness, the research question was intentionally set to be enquiring about relationships evolving with a background of on-going socio-political conflict. The starting assumption was that such a context would potentially provide a larger scale and wider diversity of stressors (sources of tension) to interpersonal relationships than a relatively 'peaceful' context like the Cotswolds (the region in England that is home to the University of Gloucestershire) for instance. This will help in fine-tuning the context-based framework such that it may be applicable in any other type of contexts – conflict-ridden or not. Also, as will be discussed further in this

section, conducting the research in a volatile background has involved several challenges which required a practice-driven methodology. And this will add practical value to research practice in contexts of on-going conflict.

Chapter 4, fundamentally frames the methodological underpinnings of the field research. It describes how a robust and efficient framework which allows for data gathering in the real-life context of an intractable conflict environment was developed. Section 4.1 starts with a brief presentation of the macro socio-political context of the region of Israel and the West Bank and reflects on the implications of conducting research in such an intractable conflict environment. Section 4.2 discusses the abductive reasoning underlying the methodological framework and the suitability of a case story approach in understanding the different narratives of interpersonal resilience. Then, moving to the micro-level, Section 4.3, focuses more on the fieldwork and proceeds with a detailed explanation of the phased research design tailored to the research questions, the context of the field chosen and the resources available to the researcher.

4.1 Macro political context implications

Few are the ones who have not heard about the geo-political tensions prevailing in the region over the past seven decades. The Israeli and West Bank region is a confluence of heterogeneous populations in terms of ethnic origin, system of belief or religious background, socioeconomic status and political positioning. It has also been experiencing low to medium socio-political conflict with unpredictable peaks of violence over about the last 70

years. Of all the contemporary armed conflicts indexed by the joint venture of International SOS and Control Risks[15], the Israeli-Palestinian conflict[16] is the longest running in contemporary human history. The social complexities at play in this region of the world and the relative ease of access and security to foreigners made it a first choice to enquire about interpersonal resilience in a context of on-going socio-political conflict – making it an intractable conflict environment as discussed in Chapter One.

The historical, socio-political and cultural factors prevailing in the area are complex and discussing these is beyond the scope of this research. However, Annexe One gives a succinct and detailed presentation of the macro-political context of the field and provides an explanation of why the region of Israel and the West Bank form a context of intractable conflict. Section 4.1.1 underlines the intricacies of the geographical and ethnic divides in the region to draw out the variety of potential sources of tension on interpersonal relationships which exist but also give the reader an idea of the complexity of the social fractures at play. Section 4.1.2 discusses the implications to the research design. It has been important not to be overwhelmed by this complexity and maintain a clear unbiased position in the field.

To have a visual idea of this complexity, I have here included in Figure 11 and Figure 12 two United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Occupied Palestinian Territories (UN OCHA oPt) maps, borrowed from

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[15] formed in April 2008, provides clients with a complete suite of assistance and travel risk mitigation support services with a unique footprint of travel security and medical resources that spans five continents.
[16] Conflict tracking websites (accessed regularly over the period of the research 2013-2017): https://www.travelsecurity.com/Page.aspx?pg=15178
http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/
http://acd.iiss.org/en

Leuenberger's (2016) published work. The West Bank Barrier's construction between the State of Israel and the West Bank was officially decided in 2002 in order to prevent suicide bombing attacks (Perry *et al.* 2017). Although, as Perry *et al.* (2017) have shown, the Barrier has apparently helped in reducing the number of suicide bombings and achieved its purpose, the existence of the Barrier itself has been and is still highly debated internationally given the political but also the social and economic issues related to it. For instance, Medzini (2016) recently discussed how the perception of safety by Israeli citizens has encouraged business activities with Palestinian residents in the territorial enclaves lying between the Green Line and Barrier. Also as Gelbman (2016) has pointed out, the Barrier is located "in the heart of a tourism region of global interest" (Gelbman 2016: 671), and:

> *"The separation fence constitutes a salient symbol in the physical landscape and in the international media of the geopolitical problems between Israel and the Palestinians and the lack of an agreed upon international border between them" (Gelbman 2016: 679).*

This makes choosing one map to represent the region quite problematic. As Leuenberger (2016) writes:

> *"The map's underlying social and political assumptions, functions, and target audiences not only determine how the Barrier is represented, but also help construct particular spatial orders and ethno-spatial spaces for Israelis and Palestinians, respectively" (Leuenberger 2016: 3)*

That said, the maps in Figure 11 and Figure 12 are to be viewed as an actor's – the UN in this case – perception of the region. As Leuenberger (2016) notes: "Translating between various maps – whether they appeal to universalism or localism – thus always remains a matter of translation, interpretation, and selective appropriation" (Leuenberger 2016: 20).

Figure 11, UN OCHA oPt map of "The Barrier Route in the West Bank July 2011", gives an idea of the positioning of the West Bank in relation to Israel and the Barrier's complex perimeter. Figure 11, UN OCHA oPt map of the "West Bank Access restrictions" September 2014, is interesting in that it shows the archipelago structure of the West Bank. It is to be noted that these maps are a picture at one point in time of the situation in the field. It is not meant to be taken as an accurate depiction of the territorial possession of the land by one party or another. The aim of showing this map is to give the reader an idea of what a mixture of political decisions and other contingencies have resulted: a uniquely complex patched and disputed terrain.

Officially, Area A, accounting for circa 18% of the land in the West Bank and home to 55% of the Palestinian population is under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority. Entry is strictly forbidden to Israeli citizens (with the exception of Arab Israelis). Area B is home to about 440 Palestinian Arab villages and accounts for circa 22% of the land. The area is under civil control of the Palestinian Authority and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control. Area C, circa 60% of the land, is under full control - civil and security wise - of the

Israeli government. For journalist Danny Rubenstein[17] Area C is an annexed territory. He writes:

> *"Area C comprises more than 60 per cent of the West Bank, and includes the Jordan Valley and the Judean Desert, along with Jewish settlements[18], highways and territories under the supervision of the army. In practical terms it is annexed." (Rubenstein 2015)*

Compared to Areas A and B which are overcrowded archipelagoes with controlled access between one another, Area C is contiguous and, according the World Bank report published in 2013, mostly underdeveloped, comprising of most of the area's natural resources (Niksic *et al.* 2014) which again raises debates on the ability of the Palestinian people to move away from their donor-dependent economy (Alon and Bar-Tal 2016:278).

This region's socio-political and geographical complexity calls for mindful preparation in order to avoid any *faux-pas* with the local populations as I travelled from one place to another. As an independent researcher from outside the field without any local contacts at the beginning trying to understand such an unfamiliar context required method and preparation in my approach.

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[17] http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4624580,00.html, 09/02/2015, Accessed March 2017

[18] (Haklai and Loizides 2015)
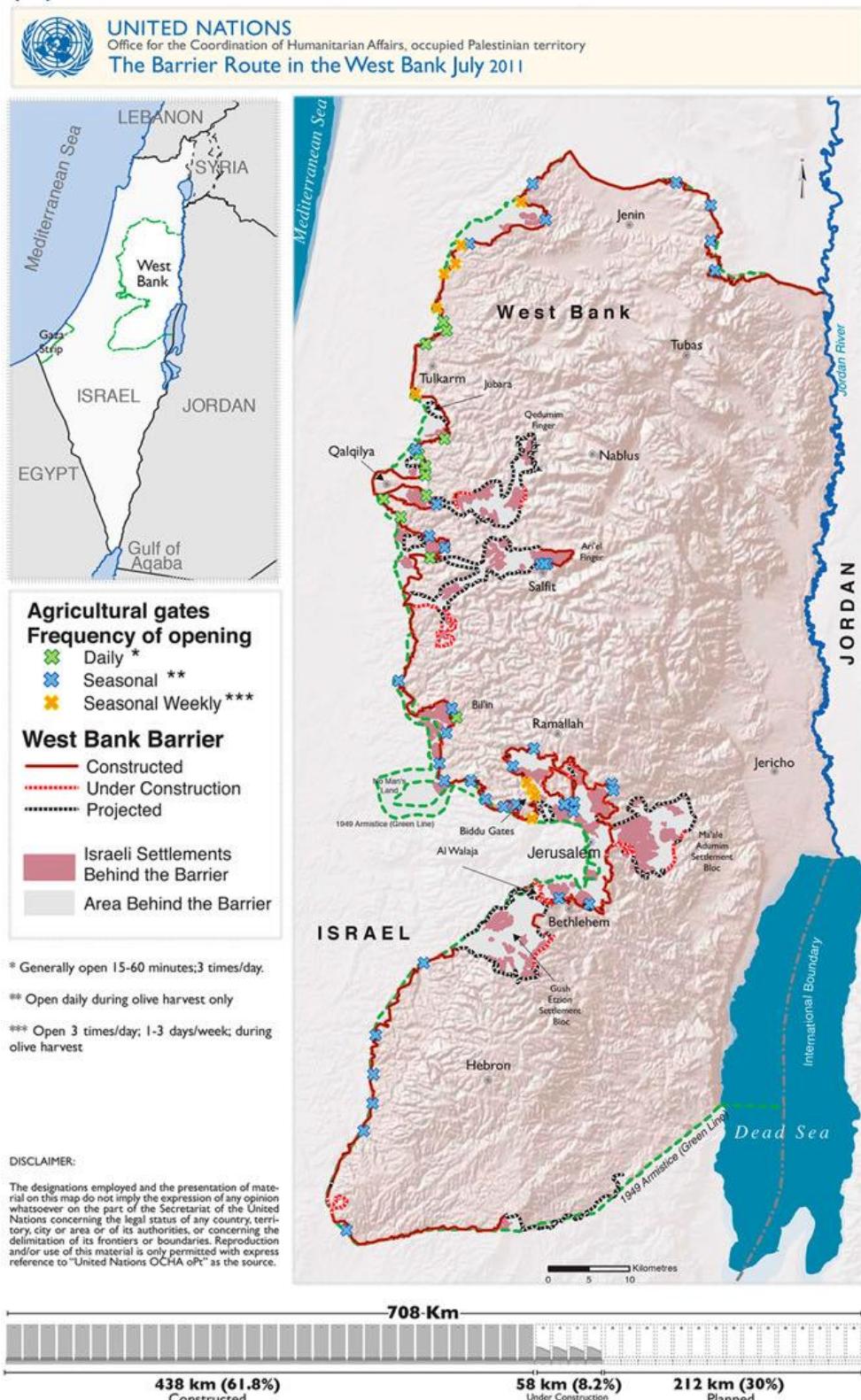
Figure 11 UN OCHA oPt. Source Leuenberger (2016)

(b)
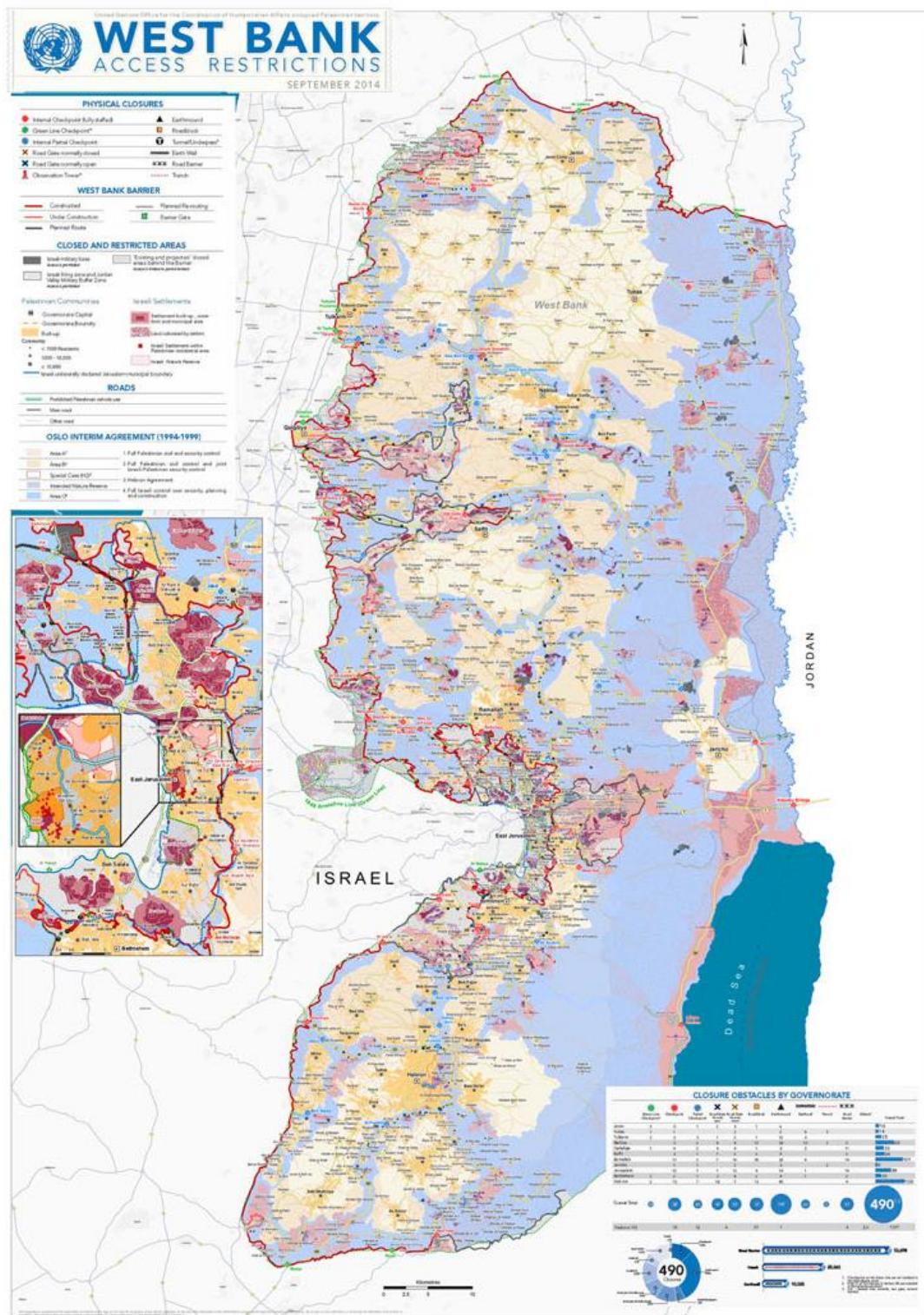
Figure 12   UN OCHA oPt. Source Leuenberger (2016)

4.1.1 Geographical and ethnic divides?

The social fractures exist at different levels in the Israeli and West Bank societies. The most apparent one is the ethnic divide between the Jewish and Arab populations. Within the State of Israel[19], institutionally, this is manifest mainly in the organisation of the educational and military sector. In the West Bank, the separation is evident in territorial and administrative terms. But in the region as a whole, as is often the case across the world, there also exist several social divides between the richer and poorer populations and between the governing bodies and the masses regardless of ethnicity.

Complexity of the West Bank archipelago

The administrative and territorial mechanisms at play contribute to complexity of the persisting conflicts between the Palestinian Arabs[20] and the Israeli settlers living in the West Bank; and the military controlling the accesses. As we have seen earlier, people living in the West Bank do not all have the same socio-political status as they live under different administrations depending on what type of legal identity card they have. This said the most marked difference between the populations is ethnic[21]: settlers and military guards are mainly Jewish Israelis while the Palestinians are Arabs. Almost every week there are

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[19] Following the latest media release from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the population in Israel counts circa 8.522 million residents with 74.8% Jewish (of which Israel-born 75.6%, Europe/America/Oceania-born 16.6%, Africa-born 4.9%, Asia-born 2.9%)[19]; 20.8% Arabs; and 4.4% classified as "others" "referring to non-Arab Christians, members of other religions, and persons not classified by religion in the Ministry of the Interior"(CBS 2016).

[20] According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic, the number of "Palestinians living in State of Palestine at the end of 2015 is 4.75 million: around 2.90 million reside in the West Bank and 1.85 million in Gaza Strip. Palestinian refugees make up 42.8% of the Palestinian population in Palestine: 27.1% of them in the West Bank and 67.3% in Gaza Strip."(PCBS 2015)

[21] Note that we are talking of ethnicity and not religion. Ethnicity is: "the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition" (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/ethnicity)

violent confrontations between Palestinian activists and the military at particular hotspots (zones of potential high risks of outbursts). People on both sides live in a state of constant uncertainty as to an imminent violent outburst disrupting an already unstable daily life punctuated by a low-intensity socio-political conflict ever-present and manifest in the form of checkpoints, barriers and attacks. The National Geographic Society documentary entitled "The Conflict Zone, Understanding both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" (Micalizio 2013) provides a balanced overview of the tensions there.

Arabs living in the Jewish Democratic State of Israel

The Israeli population is comprised of two major ethnic groups, distinguished by their language, religion and culture. The Jewish majority mainly speak Hebrew and the Arab minority speaks Arabic. The Arab population refers to those Palestinians who survived the 1948 war, and stayed after the establishment of the state of Israel, and later became Israeli citizens.

Rekhess (2014:188) provides a succinct picture which helps in understanding the complexity faced by Arabs living in the Jewish Democracy of the State of Israel:

> *"Israel was established, at least according to its self-perception, as an egalitarian democracy, committed to the equality of all its citizens, Jews and Arabs alike, and to the protection of human rights, including individual and collective rights of minorities. These principles were endorsed in Israel's Proclamation of Independence. Nevertheless, while Arabs were offered full citizenship, they were simultaneously*

excluded from the formal definition of Israel's national collective as the state of the Jewish people" (Rekhess 2014:188).

The separate education system and non-compulsory participation of Arabs in the military service as well as the politically out-spoken necessity for a Jewish majority signify, according to scholars, the ethnic divide in the Israeli society itself between the Jewish and non-Jewish citizens.

Concerning the educational sector, in the state of Israel, Bekerman and Zembylas (2014) have explained how the socio-political conflict is reflected in the Israeli educational system, which is divided into separate educational sectors: non-religious Jewish, religious national Jewish, orthodox Jewish and Arab (i.e. Palestinian[22]), all of which are under the umbrella of the Israeli Ministry of Education (Bekerman and Zembylas 2014). There exist some rare initiatives of Arab-Jewish run non-religious schools using both Hebrew and Arabic as language of instruction, but these remain marginal (Bekerman and Zembylas 2014; Feuerverger 2001) compared to the mainstream culture where the populations do not mix (Al-Haj 2005). In Israel, the military service is compulsory on all 18-year old Jewish citizens, but not for Arab citizens. Those who wish to enrol may do so on a voluntary basis but it is not common practice though among the Muslim and Christian Arabs[23].

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[22] Following my experience in the field, I prefer to be more cautious in categorisations than the authors here. Not all Arab citizens living in Israel identify as 'Palestinians'. Many do but many also consider themselves as Arab-Israelis. In that sense, I do not share the authors' position of equating an Arab living in Israel as necessarily a Palestinian.
[23] The Druze have a special regime as based on previous agreements, the military service is compulsory for them as well.

Stereotypical mutual perceptions

First it has to be noted that in what follows I have kept the appellations 'Israeli-Palestinian' as used by the authors whose work I have reviewed. The term refers to Arabs living and/or working in Israel. I prefer the term Israeli-Arab instead of Israeli-Palestinian because the latter may be confusing given the disputed territories and complex identities involved with the term Palestinian. I will thus use the term in italics.

Since the establishment of the state of Israel after the 1948 War (an event referred to as the Nakba — the catastrophe — by most Palestinians), the relationship between Israeli–Jews and Israeli–Palestinians has experienced ups and downs (Kelman 1998). The fragile relations between *Israeli–Palestinians* and Jews are strongly influenced by the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Both Jews and Arabs tend to hold negative views and stereotypes of each other. It is reported that Jews tend to perceive Israeli–Arabs as 'violent, cruel, untrustworthy, primitive, or dirty' (Bar-Tal 1996; 1998)   and unfortunately, these negative stereotypes are formed at an early age (Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005; Brenick *et al.* 2010; Slone *et al.* 2000). *Israeli–Palestinian* stereotyping toward Israeli–Jews has received less attention but the few available studies (Brenick *et al.* 2010; Brenick *et al.* 2007; Smooha 1987) have shown that prejudicial attitudes of Arabs toward Jews are prevalent as well. For example, Smooha (1987) found that a majority of *Israeli–Palestinians* regarded Israeli–Jews as mindless of 'self-respect and family honour, exploitative, untrustworthy and racist'. He notes that these stereotyping tendencies may have a devastating effect on the democratic character of the Israeli state. Polls among the Jewish population have shown their willingness

to support discriminating attitudes against *Israeli–Palestinians*. For example, about ten years ago, citing Wilson, 2006, Berger *et al.* (2016) reports that:

> *"40% believed Israeli–Palestinians should not have the right to vote, over 50% agreed that the State of Israel should encourage emigration of Palestinian citizens to other countries, and 59% considered Palestinian culture "primitive""* (Berger et al. 2016: 59).

More recently, a poll of Israeli–Jewish high school students found that:

> *"49.5% did not think Israeli–Palestinians were entitled to the same rights as Jews in Israel, and 56% thought they should not be elected to the Israeli parliament (Kashti 2010). These alarming findings stress the desperate need for interventions to reduce the hostility between Israeli Jews and Palestinians destined to live together"* (Berger et al. 2016: 59).

In 2014, Hirsch-Hoefler *et al.* (2014) investigated the determinants of civilian attitudes towards peace during ongoing conflict using two original panel datasets representing Israelis (n=996) and Palestinians in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza (n=631) (149 communities in total). Their multi-group estimation analysis showed that:

> *"individual-level exposure to terrorism and political violence makes the subject populations less likely to support peace efforts. The findings also confirm psychological distress and threat perceptions as the*

mechanism that bridges exposure to violence and greater militancy over time" (Hirsch-Hoefler et al. 2014: 1).

Their study is original in showing that:

"individual-level exposure – necessarily accompanied by psychological distress and threat perceptions – is key to understanding civilians' refusal to compromise in prolonged conflict" (Hirsch-Hoefler et al. 2014: 1).

Smooha's studies (Smooha 1987; 2016) surveying opinions of Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel over several decades – 1970s till 2015- have shown blatant difference in people's perception of history. He writes: "Collective memory is apparently the most divisive issue between Arabs and Jews, constantly nourishing the deep distrust between them" (Smooha 2016). He further notes in Alon and Bar-Tal (2016: 287-288) that findings show that, while over three fifths of Jews surveyed in 2015 believed that "Palestinians are Arabs who settled in the Land of Israel that belongs to the Jewish people", and just over half of the Arabs surveyed in 2012 think that the "Jews are alien settlers who usurped the lands from the Arabs". Such a differential social representation of the 'other' raises critical questions as to the levels of trust in the society.

Alon and Bar-Tal (2016) published "*The Role of Trust in Conflict Resolution: The Israeli-Palestinian Case and Beyond*" where the focus is on the concepts of trust and distrust especially between Jews and Palestinians living in conflict

for decades now. The authors see the rampant distrust as significant in causing suffering and bloodshed of Jews and Palestinians alike.

> *"This serious lack of confidence discourages each side to take risk and to make concessions lest the other side would not keep any agreement reached or lest the other side misperceive the compromises as a weakness and exploit them" (Smooha (2016) in (Alon and Bar-Tal 2016: 287).*

During summer 2014, a serious escalation occurred in the Gaza-Israel conflict, which led to an armed confrontation that lasted for almost two months, the longest armed escalation for decades. These violent events resulted in over two thousand Gaza-Palestinian casualties and many more injured, and tens of Israeli losses and hundreds injured. The violent and grieving events between Gaza and Israel were followed by heightened hostility and violence between the *Israeli Palestinians* and Israeli Jews (Berger *et al.* 2016). In short, as Pilecki and Hammack (2014) put it:

> *"Within the Israel-Palestine conflict, the past is not merely prologue … Refugee camps, compulsory military service, checkpoints, and the persistent, underlying fear that whatever has been gained will be ultimately lost, and whatever has been sacrificed will ultimately be in vain, keep the events and the consequences of 1948 fresh in the minds of those born long after their occurrence" (Pilecki and Hammack 2014: 101).*

4.1.2 Implications of intractable conflict for the research design

The fact of this intractable conflict environment has pushed towards careful reflection on the methodological implications of such a field setting. The key for me has been to listen to the different perspectives. Trying to understand the positioning of each person I have listened to has been a strenuous but worthwhile exercise which reaffirmed my positioning as a pragmatist researcher aiming to understand rather than making rushed value judgements on issues far too complex and beyond the scope of this research.

The reflections were built from insights from the literature review presented in the last section 4.1.1 but also from a reflexive[24] approach to the researcher's experience in the field, especially in the first visit. Researchers have not tarried in naming the methodological significance of reflexivity in qualitative research (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009; Berger 2015; Day 2012; Ellis and Bochner 2000; Hibbert *et al.* 2014; Holloway 2011; Mauthner and Doucet 2003; Spencer *et al.* 2003; Takhar-Lail and Chitakunye 2015; Temple and Edwards 2008). Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) rightly insist that:

> *"serious attention is paid to the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written" (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009: 9).*

The role of the researcher is instrumental in gathering data from informants, understanding this data and delivering this understanding to the public

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[24] This will be explained in section 4.2.

(Janesick 2000: 389-390; Lincoln *et al.* 2011:124). This ethical responsibility of the researcher entails continuous critical reflection all along the research process.

Elements of language

Today's ample use of connoted ethno-religious appellations such as Jews, Arabs, Palestinian and Israeli, Arab-Israeli, Palestinian-Israeli, Muslim, Christian, Druze and others which can be overwhelmingly disturbing to an outsider can be understood with regard to the longstanding political history of this area. As Norris (2013: 84) points out, the blending of stereotypes such as "the age-old image of Jews as cross-cultural traders" for instance- and can be traced back to the "theories of racial categorization" popularized in the early 20th Century. Polarisation of the conflict in Arab-Israeli and then in Palestinian-Israeli terms together with the blatant lack of trust between the majority and minorities groups has maintained these perceptions of ethnic divides. However, as Cohrs *et al.* (2015: 4) note, citing Elcheroth and Spini (2012), "researchers should be careful to avoid an "over-simplification of social realities" where the social categories and the conflict itself become reified" (Cohrs *et al.* 2015: 4).

To the outsider, the use of ethnic terms to refer to a population may seem to defy the *politiquement correcte*. It is important thus to clarify some elements of language and appellations commonly used in the region as well as in literature on this area of the world. In Israel and the West Bank, the daily usage of ethnic, religious and cultural categories is common. Appellations such as "Jew", "Muslim", "Christian", "Druze" or "Arab", to cite some, are commonly employed in conversations without anybody being shocked, offended or

uncomfortable about it, with maybe the exception of a foreigner unaccustomed to multi-ethnic contexts.

Less underscored in the literature is the heterogeneity amongst the peoples living in these territories regardless of whether they are Jewish or Arab. In fact, most publications in relation to the Israeli and West Bank region use categories termed as 'Jewish' and 'Arab' with an implication that they are mutually exclusive and antagonistic of each other. Under these socio-demographic constructs highly heterogeneous groups of people are stereotyped as a homogenous category. There is one potential weakness in the indiscriminate use of such categories as entry points. Omitting to point out the constructed nature of such categories becomes problematic as groups of people are depicted and discussed about in terms of their pre-supposed ethnic identities. To counter this weakness, which tends to limit the perspective of debates within ethnic terms, Bekerman and Zembylas (2014: 18), having conducted extensive ethnographic research in conflict-ridden societies such as Israel and Cyprus, argue for "a critical assessment of the ontological position inherent in normative premises upon which knowledge claims are made" (Bekerman and Zembylas 2014: 18). Such complexity begs care not to categorize people in terms of their ethnic belongings, but in terms of their reported social identities. The risk otherwise is to fall into social inaccuracies and consequently unreliability of the research due to lack of rigour.

Furthermore, in order to avoid any kind of confusion here, it is important to underline that the words "Jewish" and "Arab" carry as much a religious and a cultural connotation. For example, in Israel calling a person a "Jew" does not necessarily imply that the person is religious and practicing Judaism. Although

this might have been obvious to me coming from a multi-ethnic background, discussions with peers made me realise that some people outside this region tend to directly associate the term "Jew" with the religion of Judaism and "Arab" with Islam implying often that an Arab is necessarily a Muslim. These preconceptions are not valid on the ground. Amongst the Arabs there are Muslims; Christians; people with other belief systems; as well as non-religious people. In Israel, one may meet an atheist Jew as well as an atheist Arab. People define their identities in very different ways and the societies are far from being homogeneous groups. Besides, Israel and the West Bank having been a land of immigration has made the latter point a fact.

In terms of political categories, I observed that the usage of terms such as 'Israeli' and 'Palestinian' may prove to be problematic depending on which side of the Green Line one is or who is one's interlocutor. In my experience, this was one of the most significant signs of the presence of conflict in the backdrop. For instance, using the term "Israeli" in the West Bank and "Palestinian" in Israel required some care in initial conversations. Not everyone, including myself, is comfortable speaking casually about the conflict in Israel. Opinions diverge greatly and the perception of facts is not the same from one person to another. I have experienced this jarring difference in senses of identity and senses of place that has emerged of a difficult and long history. In the West Bank, although it happened only twice over all my visits, people kindly corrected me when I mentioned that I arrived from 'Israel'- "you mean 'Palestine'" they would say with a smile. Equally I met others who would not have any problem with recognising and accepting naming the land beyond the separation barriers as Israel. In Israel, the language is even more complex.

Some Arab people have no problem calling themselves Palestinians whilst living inside the Israeli borders while others would despise being associated with the people from the West Bank and some others embrace both identities.

The purpose of clarifying these elements of language has been to convey the complexity with which people define their social selves and the forms of socialities to which they belong. Instead of using pre-defined categories to classify the participants, I chose the prism of personal narratives of their reported social identities. The data gathered reflects how the person represents his or her self. This approach not only adds rigour to the exercise of analysis but also respects the participants' words, perceptions and representations reported.

Factoring in risks and 'unknown unknowns'

Besides the elements of language, such a volatile and sensitive context entails preparing for the risks and unknown unknowns which can be encountered in the field. A risk is a probable possibility and an unknown unknown is anything that is unexpected and unpredictable. Table 2 provides a quick summary of the main elements which had to be factored in while designing the field research and the corresponding strategy retained.

Main risks related	Strategy
Accessibility to the region	Choosing the region of Israel and the West Bank
Finding participants	Having a back-up plan
Cultural faux-pas	Travelling as an Independent traveller
Outbreak of high intensity violence	Evacuation plan through travel insurance company
Unknown unknowns	Recognition of the unpredictability to reduce stress

Table 2 Summary of the risks identified and the corresponding answers elaborated

Areas of conflict are not easily accessible. Amongst all the different areas of on-going conflict around the world, Israel and the West Bank seemed the most accessible to me. First, there exists a flourishing tourist industry which facilitated my travelling into the country. Second, Israel is a democracy and also perceived as a relatively safe place to travel to according to the Travel risk consultancy especially for an independent traveller. This was, then, not necessarily the case in other areas of ongoing conflict such as Gaza, Afghanistan, Iraq or Syria. Besides, receiving the university Research Ethics Committee's clearance was a condition of the research in the first place. So choosing a place where the risks for the researcher could be managed and/or mitigated was key.

Once in the area, another risk was the difficult access to a variety of potential cases to study due to unrests, travel blockages, but also due to my own lack of knowledge of the area having no local contact in the beginning. To counter these potential difficulties, I opted to travel as an independent traveller, backpacking around the country with an apolitical tour organiser- the Abraham Tours and Hostels. At the same time, it was important to have the security of a plan B in case of not finding any accessible cases or people willing to participate in the research. The possibility of carrying out the fieldwork in other regions of the world was an integrated option which relieved the stress of any failures in Israel and the West Bank area. At the pre-fieldwork stage, Sierra Leone, although a post-conflict region, was considered as a potential plan B - the reason being that one of the research supervisors had local contacts there. However, this option would have changed the nature of the research from a

context of on-going conflict to one of post-conflict situation. But given the wide variety of sources of tension on relationships, this would still have fulfilled the purpose of refining the framework for applicability in other contexts.

At the beginning being a novice to the region, there was a risk of cultural *faux-pas* - in other words, unknowingly hurting people's feelings due to a lack of socio-cultural awareness. Born in Mauritius, I grew up in a multi-ethnic society, understanding from a young age the crucial importance and value of acknowledging the diversity of value systems that exist in societies. This socio-cultural awareness was further enhanced through my experiences travelling and living in Europe but as well through my inter-disciplinary studies and projects. These personal experiences have contributed to facilitating my adaptation to the context. Also, travelling as a backpacker with the Abraham Tours was an asset in that their philosophy is all about building knowledge sharing experiences. I was perceived as tourist eager to learn, this helped in making people more understanding and accepting towards my lack of knowledge of their everyday environment and realities.

Israel and the West Bank having a context of low-medium intensity of violence with peaks of high intensity increased the risks for me, the researcher, being caught up in an outbreak. In the period between 2014 and 2016, new forms of violence such as random stabbings and vehicle-ramming attacks in public areas were on the rise. And the risk for civilians and foreigners was real. Travel insurance was a must for every visit. With the evacuation plan of the SOS International travel insurance company in case of danger (See Annexe Five), the research gained a significant asset as this helped in the peace of mind of the researcher who could then focus wholly on the research process.

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Finally, recognising the possibility of encountering unknown and unpredictable situations was also part of this mind priming strategy. Given the complexity of the situation, it was important that the researcher's mind was readied for the research experience (Siegel 2008; Siegel 2012a; Siegel 2012b). It was clear that I would encounter unexpected situations and recognising this possibility helped manage the stress when the situations happened and deal with them as efficiently as possible. At several instances things did not go to plan. For example, I fell sick and found myself under time pressure to conduct interviews often with people unavailable for weeks. However, because I had integrated the existence of such contingencies in the overall timetable, I had the security of planning ahead. This flexibility of actions eased the research process in the field.

In sum, Israel and West Bank region is one of long-running and on-going socio-political conflict – an intractable conflict environment. The risk of conflict remains low-medium with unpredictable peaks of violence toppling the whole region and its peoples into a state of heightened fear, mutual distrust and pronounced uncertainty. The aftermath of major politico-historical dynamics is still impacting the socio-politics of this geographical area and the lives of the people living there. In fact, as discussed earlier, the most evident impact has been the social fracture existing between different groups of people living in one but yet divided geographical area. The divides are not only geographical and political but fundamentally social. This social fracture is manifested in the ethnic divisions and discourses of fear and apathy, bordering on indifference towards the other across all groups identified. Such situations are not simple

to manage for businesses, and much less for those concerned with conflict-sensitive businesses such as the tourism sector.

The next sections provide a detailed explanation of the pragmatic field research design which was most suited to the research question and the complex volatile context.

4.2 Field research design

The field research design coheres with the Deweyian philosophy of pragmatism underpinning the whole research process as discussed in Chapter Three. It has been adapted to the volatile and culturally sensitive research context and the research question. And this, in order to gather the necessary data from informants so as to understand how interpersonal resilience comes about when relationships are faced with episodes of tension. This section first clarifies the reasoning which led to choosing a qualitative case story approach through a phased field research. Then it briefly discusses the rationale each of the four phases explicating how each links with the other.

4.2.1 Epistemological foundations of a reflexive design

A pragmatist philosophy entails a fundamentally reflexive paradigm to designing the research process. The aim of any field research design is that it produces valid information which helps in answering the research question. In this case, the endeavour is to further understand the concept of interpersonal resilience in the context of ongoing socio-political conflict. The research locus is at the interpersonal level and calls for a qualitative understanding of how people adapt their interactions to cope with episodes of tension in their relationship. This involves gathering sensitive data about people's lives. This is sensitive information and has to be treated with respect and thus given the time required for things to be digested by the researcher and space for people to choose whether or not they wish to participate and share personal stories to a foreigner, an outsider. So the researcher, as a qualitative social inquirer, has to decide and act in due measure.

According to Schwandt (2000), the three most salient issues:

> *"that every qualitative inquirer must come to terms with" are concerned with "(a) how to define what "understanding" actually means and how to justify claims "to understand"; (b) how to frame the interpretative project, broadly conceived; and (c) how to envision and occupy the ethical space where researchers and researched (subjects, informants, respondents, participants, co-researchers) relate to one another on the socio-temporal occasion or event that is "the research," and, consequently, how to determine the role, status, responsibility and obligations the researcher has in and to the society he or she researches" (Schwandt 2000: 201).*

Building on this, the researcher being the primary instrument of analysis (Guba and Lincoln 1981; Lincoln *et al.* 2011), a reflexive paradigm is the most suitable.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the awareness of, and systematic attending to, the context of knowledge construction at every step of the research process (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009; Haynes 2012). Authors (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009; Berger 2015; Day 2012; Ellis and Bochner 2000; Gemignani 2011; Guba and Lincoln 1981; Haynes 2012; Hibbert *et al.* 2014; Holloway 2011; Latour and Woolgar 2013; Lincoln *et al.* 2011; Malterud 2001; Mauthner and Doucet 2003; Ruby 1980; Spencer *et al.* 2003; Takhar-Lail and Chitakunye 2015; Temple and Edwards 2008) have often mentioned the importance of being critically open to how the research context (issue investigated, the informants and the

personal experiences in the field) and the researcher's own position mutually affect each other. As Malterud (2001) has succinctly put it –

"A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud 2001: 483-484).

Since the brain is reflective –

"In being ever reflective, the researcher is committed to pondering the impressions, deliberating recollections and records - but not necessarily following the conceptualisations of theorists, actors or audiences (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Local meanings are important; foreshadowed meanings are important; and readers' consequential meanings are important" (Stake 2011: 445).

Given these insights, it is clear that a reflective approach adds robustness to the research process and forms a major strategy for quality of productions (Berger 2015) as it is a means to control for the responsibility of the researcher and be transparent over any potential biases.

Reflexivity posits the primacy of interpretation (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009). Data is already a form of interpretation as it is a representation of what the researcher understood from what the informant shared with her. The process of interpretation is ongoing. It happens from the start of the research and

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continues until the writing is completed. Contending with interpretivists that "Understanding is interpretation" (Schwandt 2000: 194), Schwandt (2000) argues that human action carries meaning.

> *"To say that human action is meaningful is to claim either that it has a certain intentional content that indicates the kind of action it is and/or that what an action means can be grasped only in terms of the system of meanings to which it belongs (Fay, 1995; Outhwaite, 1975)"* *(Schwandt 2000: 191).*

So context and intention of the actor are both important in determining meaning of an action. But whether it is possible to achieve interpretive understanding through a process of grasping an actor's intent is widely debated. Schwandt (2000) notes that Geertz (1976/1979) argues for acquiring an "inside" understanding – the actors' definitions of the situation - as a central concept to qualitative social inquiry. This brings us to the pertinence of grasping understanding of subjective experiences through personal narratives as discussed in Chapter Three.

Again, as (Schwandt 2000: 194) notes, citing Gadamer (1970), understanding is not:

> *"an isolated activity of human beings but a basic structure of our experience of life. We are always taking something as something. That is the primordial givenness of our world orientation, and we cannot reduce it to anything simpler or more intermediate." (p.87) (Schwandt 2000: 194).*

Understanding

Philosophical hermeneutics which aims "to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place" (Gadamer 1970; Schwandt 2000: 195) posits that meaning is negotiated, not constructed or assembled. If we define 'understanding' as giving meaning to something that is closest to the meaning the 'thing' gives to itself, then it can only be achieved if the meaning given is checked by the originator. For example, during a conversation when an action is narrated to the researcher by a participant, the researcher has to ask questions such as: "what do you mean?" or "why did you do this?" in order to make sure that she understood what the participant meant. Often, the reasons why we do things are not clear to us in the spur of the moment, but when we reflect back on them we assign meanings to them. The meanings we assign are not necessarily exactly those we assigned at the time of the action. The meanings assigned in retrospection are reviewed in relation to several factors, such as the content of the question we are answering or later events related to or that had had an impact on that particular action or vice versa. Because our anticipatory prejudgements and prejudices are constantly changing over time through the different encounters we experience - our understanding of things, ideas and actions - are also more nuanced and confirmed. Understanding is thus a process, a "practical experience" whereby, as Schwandt puts it, "meaning is negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation; it is not simply discovered" (Schwandt 2000: 195). Lincoln *et al.* (2011), in line with Schwandt (2000); Schwandt (1996), contend that in a pragmatist approach, professional social inquiry becomes a form of practical philosophy characterized by "aesthetic, prudential and moral considerations as well as

more conventionally scientific ones." (Schwandt 1996: 121). As Schwandt (2000) says, the researcher is a "social inquirer-as-practical-philosopher", not an "uninvolved observer".

This said, it is important not to confound interpretation with methods. The first is a continuous process and the second relates the means to help in the process. As Lincoln *et al.* (2011) note: "one of the issues around validity is the conflation between method and interpretation" (Lincoln *et al.* 2011: 120). They argue that positivists would emphasize more on "rigour in application of method" while the interpretivists would look out for rigour "in ascribing salience to one interpretation over another and for framing and bounding an interpretative study itself" (Lincoln *et al.* 2011: 120). The pragmatist approach integrates both criteria of validation and achieves this with abductive reasoning (Aliseda 2005; Anderson 1986; Burks 1946; Fann 1970; Peirce 1998).

Abductive reasoning

Abductive reasoning is different to inductive or deductive reasoning in that it allows inferring an explanation (x) from a body of data (y). This implies that x, the hypothetical argument or explanation as defined by Peirce (1998), is one valid for the case in point but not necessarily the only one. So abductive reasoning is about choosing one particular plausible explanation among many possible ones (Fann 1970: 59). In that sense, as Aliseda (2005) suggests in line with Anderson (1986), abduction is both an act of 'insight and an inference'. Unlike deductive reasoning that implies deriving an explanation from a set of premises which makes the explanation only valid under these premises, abductive reasoning does not mean that the explanation given is a logical consequence of the premises. The difficulty with inductive reasoning

on the other hand, holds in the potential fallacy of the explanation inferred. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009: 3) justify this point clearly as follows:

> *"An inductive approach proceeds from a number of single cases and assumes that a connection that has been observed in all these is also generally valid. This approach thus involves a risky leap from a collection of single facts to a general truth"* (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009: 3)

For instance, observing only white swans does not imply that all swans are white. What happens when you meet a black swan? As Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) remind us, interpretations are not final nor fixed – instead, following a Deweyian philosophy, critical researchers:

> *"are aware that the consciousness and the interpretative frames they bring to their research are historically situated, ever changing and ever evolving in relationship to the cultural and ideological climate"* (Kincheloe and McLaren 2000: p.288).

Although abductive reasoning starts with empirical data, it does not neglect the theoretical concepts. It builds a more refined explanation using insights from both while not avoiding the question of salience of one explanation over another. In that sense, it is more rigorous and adds value to the research process, findings and dissemination. The analysis of empirical data may be combined with theoretical insights from other studies bringing about new patterns which enhance understanding of the subject in question (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009: 4). For instance, several cases can be studied and

overarching patterns in similarities as well as particularities can be identified and analysed in light of pre-existing theoretical concepts. These interpretations can then be further refined through other cases using the same reasoning.

4.2.2 Case stories' approach and implications

"In our human family, telling stories is the universal way that we both communicate with one another and the way we make sense of our internal and external worlds." (Siegel 2012b: 247).

"We are storytelling creatures, and stories are the social glue that binds us to one another. Understanding the structure and function of narrative is therefore a part of understanding what it means to be human. The mind, as a fundamental part of our humanity, is shaped by story. In many ways, the implication of this finding is that we have evolved over the millennia to see the world through narrative eyes. Stories not only shape our inner subjective experience, but they are at the heart of culture that links minds to minds in an expanded self across the boundaries of bodies and of generations." (Siegel 2012b: 248).

These quotes from Daniel Siegel's book set the tone as to why stories, narratives are fundamental when it comes to how we make sense[25] of our perceptions of the world we live in and experience. Narratives shape our perceptions. And understanding each other's narratives help in understanding

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[25] "Making sense can be seen as an integrative process, linking past, present, and potential future in a way that enables these elements of thought, feeling, memory, and imagination to situate us in a social world of experience." (Siegel 2012b: 247)

each other's perceptions. In that sense the story approach of different cases studied has underpinned the methodological framework. Interestingly, Rabinowitz and Abu Baker (2005: 16), citing Jackson (1998) have pointed to the idea that with the rising influence of 'modern science' "authority began to shift from direct testimony and immediate experience to abstract, less personal, panoptic discourses and the essay gradually replaced the story as an authoritative rendering of reality" (Rabinowitz and Abu Baker 2005: 16). They even concede that renditions of personal experience constitute "a form of truth". This can be understandable, as often people perceive their narratives, their way of sequencing the events of their subjective experiences, as their 'personal truth'. They turn their opinions into self-defined facts. The point here is not so much to judge the validity of what they think, but to understand how what they think actually comes to influence the interpersonal resilience of the relationships of which they are a part. Jackson (2013) reminds us of Hanna Arendt's idea that:

> *"insights into the universal impulse to translate our disparate and often overwhelming personal experiences into forms that can be voiced and reworked in the company of other" (Jackson 2013: 13).*

Indeed, stories live and evolve with the people as they are being produced by the people. This story-based approach acknowledges this fluidity and instead of fixing or pre-determining facts, it opens the way to grasping the meanings given by the people. This is where the strength of this approach sits.

However, although the use of stories as a medium of communicating information (or data interpreted) is relevant, care must be taken in not

producing biased stories. Adichie (2009) warns us of the dangers of a single story (that is, from one single perspective) and the importance of reporting the person's perceptions, not the mere opinion or unsubstantiated interpretation of the researcher.

Basically, stories contextualize the data. In line with De Certeau (2002) who underlines the spatial aspect of stories, Rabinowitz and Abu Baker (2005: 16) note how "persons occupy space, inhabit it, and move through it, turning it into place and imbuing it with meaning" (Rabinowitz and Abu Baker 2005: 16). They argue that the value of stories lies in the extent to which they convey these processes of meaning-making with illustrations and in consequence, shape the spaces. Indeed, people's subjective experiences about their relationships can be very different depending on (a) macro-level variables such as populations, socio-economic status and education level; (b) intra-personal variables such as values and belief systems which frame behaviours, attitudes and choices. So, considering these different dimensions becomes important and a story-based approach allows the representation of this complexity at least to some extent.

Apart from a qualitative approach, a survey or laboratory based controlled experiments could have been possible options to carry out this research. While cost-efficient to conduct, a quantitative survey would have yielded a limited depth of information since not all real-life events can be converted into numbers. Admittedly, a qualitative survey can sound out the perceptual and attitudinal dimensions but in this particular research for practical reasons – notably the sensitivity of the data requested - the case approach was preferred to the survey approach. Although, It is indeed useful to understand

participants' behaviours, attitudes and expressed perceptions in controlled laboratory conditions, researchers have been calling for more contextualised approaches in more in real-life situations since limited research has been conducted in such conditions (Bekerman and Zembylas 2014). While the former can be helpful in statistical analyses of generalities and finding trends, the latter allows for subtle and refined understanding of particularities. Besides, the key strength of in-depth qualitative interviews is in the opportunity they offer both the interviewer and the interviewee to have a conversation in which ideas can be exchanged and explored within the boundaries of what both agree to stay in. This is especially important in this research where the nature of the data is about interpersonal relationships and conflict, and thus sensitive and personal.

In sum, three main elements have led to opting for a case story-based approach in a phased field research design: 1) the philosophy of the research; 2) the macro-political context of the field and 3) the research question. Figure 13 gives an overview of the reflexive reasoning underpinning the choice of data collection and presentation methods - that is a story approach.
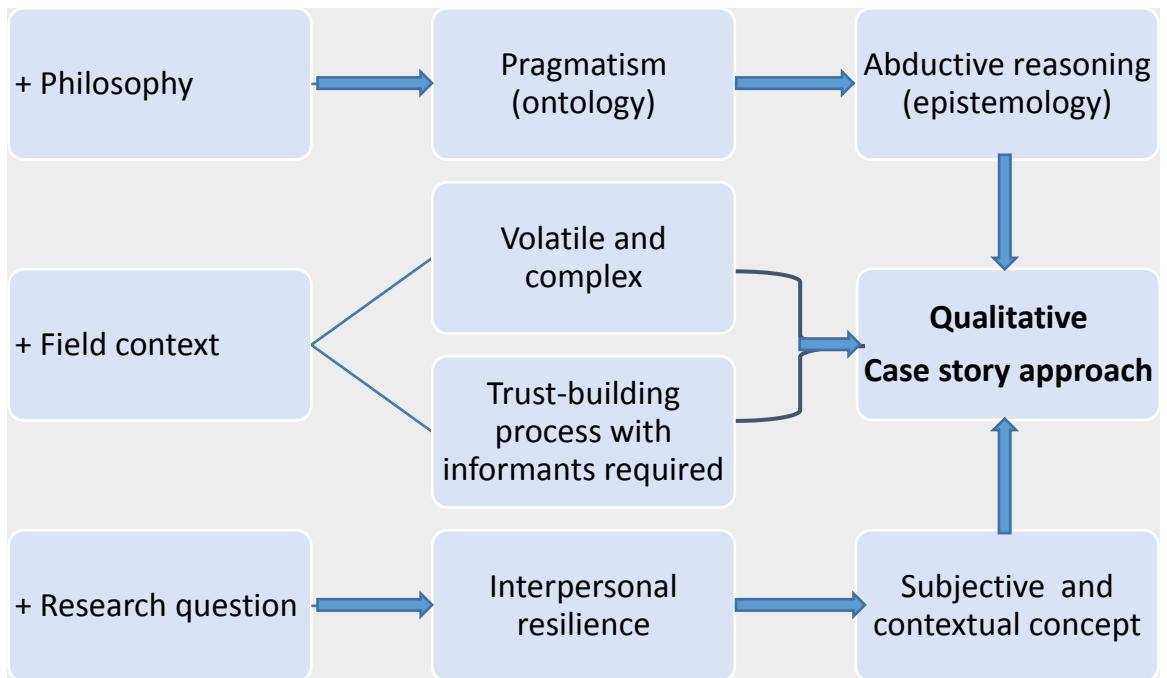
Figure 13 Reflexive reasoning that led to choosing a case story approach through a phased data gathering process

Philosophy

By essence, Deweyian pragmatism assumes that research is a constant iterative cycle of induction and deduction (Dewey 1983). Peirce (1998), by introducing the idea of abductive reasoning, refined this Deweyian approach providing an interpretative frame that is closer to the dynamic and uncertain realities without neglecting the input of theory. An abductive reasoning thus allows the study of several cases, while acknowledging that each case helps refine understanding of the research interest. Also, because it is fundamentally reflexive, the data from the cases have to be gathered from the perspective of the informants while keeping in check the perspective of the research. One way this can be achieved is through thick descriptions as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Denzin (1989) have argued, thick description makes thick interpretation possible.

"The production of such thick descriptions/interpretations follows no step-by-step blueprint or mechanical formula. As with any art form, hermeneutical analysis can be learned only in the Deweyan sense - by doing it. Researchers in the context practice the art by grappling with the text to be understood, telling its story in relation to its contextual dynamics and other texts first to themselves and then to a public audience" (Kincheloe and McLaren 2000: 286).

Therefore, a case story approach of presenting the interpretation of the data gathered from the informants becomes salient.

Field context

The volatility and complexity of the macro-political context adds to the reasons for choosing a case story approach. It was clear that researching subjective experiences or more precisely personal narratives would require in-depth interviews with participants about their relationships. Subjective experiences are personal and quasi-intimate information which are not easily divulged to strangers and much less in such a distrusting context as discussed earlier in Section 4.1. On the other hand, these personal stories had to be treated with all due respect and shared in the most accurate way as possible. The story-based approach with thick description of context has thus been a strategy to convey the specificities of each case studied and to provide readers with a more in-depth sense of the represented reality that the informants shared with the researcher.

Research question

Seeking to understand interpersonal resilience has been a matter of making sense (Siegel 2012b) of how interpersonal interactions bring about effective adaptation to circumstances of tension. Here again, the data gathered had to be thick descriptions of the episodes of tension for the same reasons as forwarded above since resilience is contextual and subjective. Narratives gathered and re-told into a story coherent with what was shared provide a more robust interpretative framing than jumping directly into any conceptual analysis void of contextual depth in the first instance. Besides, as Stake points out –

> *"The utility of case research to practitioners and policy makers is in its extension of experience. The methods of qualitative case study are largely the methods of disciplining personal and particularised experience" (Stake, 2000, p.449).*

Having discussed the reason underlying the methodological choice and the interpretative framing, the question that remains is how to organise the data gathering process in such a complex and unfamiliar context. The next section explores the practical implications of choosing a case story approach and discusses how a phased field research was designed to generate the required data.

4.3 Phased data gathering

Now that the reasoning underpinning the field research is clear, this section presents the rationale of each of the four phases explicating how each links with the other. The exploratory phase, in particular because it impacted the research design the most, will be discussed thoroughly in terms of: 1) its *raison d'être*, that is why it has been fundamental to the field-research design; 2) how it was set up; 3) what were the outcomes and 4) how it has impacted on the subsequent methodological (data gathering methods, analysis and writing up) choices.

Overview of the four-phase design

No research process is linear and monotonous. Figure 14 (not to scale) summarises succinctly the main criteria which have defined the design with its corresponding timeline. It is to be noted that the field research budget, not discussed here, but which played a significant role in seeking efficiency in the design, is detailed in Annexe Two. The design is in line with the pragmatic philosophy and a clearly abductive reasoning. Theoretical insights from the literature and the field-research experience (information gathered from in-field observations, understanding and interpretations from informants and the experience of the researcher) have both nurtured the process across the four different but complementary phases. In fact, the broken lines bounding each phase in the diagram are meant to show the permeability between theory and practice; between insights from past studies reviewed and the new observations, experiences and elements learnt in the field. The sequential design offers a systematic and flexible approach which keeps the research

grounded in the empirical while being fed with the theoretical accordingly. This coheres with the spirit of the pragmatic philosophy. Even if such a process is effort-intensive, it carries the advantage of rigour and efficacy. In other words, the nature of the process results in delivering a research analysis that is at its closest possible between the representations shared by the informants and the interpretations of the researcher. Such systematism implies that the research process be shown in detail and thus scores higher in transparency, hence efficacy (ability of achieving the objectives of the research) and replicability of the process (reproduction of the research in another context for instance). This level of transparency provides a sound basis for reliability in such subjectivity-dependent research.
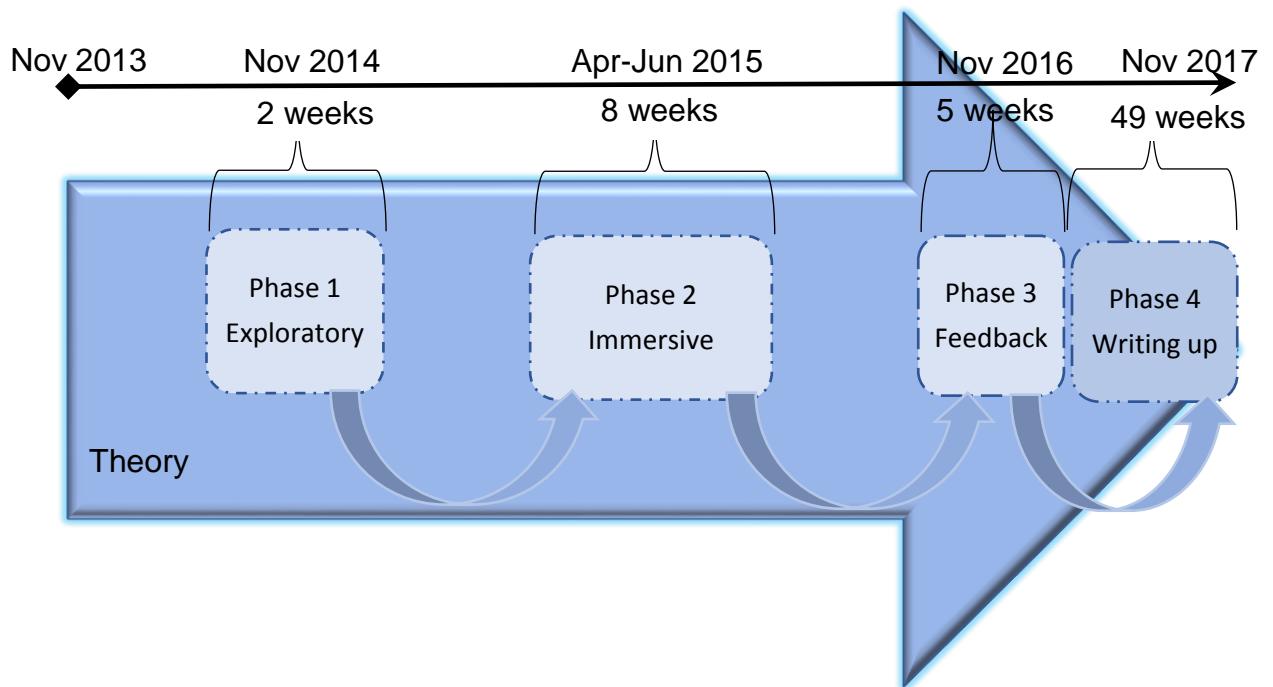
Figure 14 Pictorial representation of the phased research design with the timeline of the overall research process starting November 2013 and ending with a first complete draft in November 2017.

Time-wise, the research was conducted on a part-time[26] basis extended over a period of 4 years between November 2013 and November 2017 (date at which the first draft of the thesis was completed). To begin with, two key elements nuanced the design: the length of physical access to the field and the researcher's unfamiliarity with the region and context. Since I, the researcher, live and work part-time in the UK, a prolonged stay in the field conducting in-depth interviews was not practically possible in terms of time and resources. Besides, visas for Israel are only delivered at the airport and no more than 3 months for EU nationals (as is the case of the researcher). Then, the fact of being a complete novice to the Israeli and West Bank societies imposed a period of exploration whereby potential contacts could be made and cases for research identified. These were the objectives of phase 1. It was, thus, decisive that the selection of an appropriate design involving applicable modes of data gathering, focused on a phased approach in order to initiate, build and maintain a network of social relationships with the potential participants, informants. The immersive period (phase 2) conducted about six months after the exploratory phase aimed at gathering the core of the data necessary and extended over a period of 8 weeks in the field. Finally, phase 3 closed the data gathering period with a period of feedback collection from the informants on the first analytical interpretation that the researcher made of the data gathered in phase 2. The final phase has been the writing up of the thesis presented here.

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[26] The researcher has been working as a research assistant on 0.6 FTE over the period of the research. This was a condition for the PhD studentship she obtained from the research institute.

Spacing the periods spent in the field was deliberate and strategic. Once a first contact with local informants was established in the first phase, the idea was to build a trust relationship with the potential participants even while the researcher was not physically in the field. Trust has been key to accessing sensitive data. After all, without data the research could not happen so nurturing these relationships was critical. In this sense, spreading short-term visits over a long period of time - between 2014 and 2016 - was meant to keep the process of trust-building on-going without the need to spend a long time in-field. The latter situation would have been costly and time-consuming but also potentially invasive towards the personal lives of the informants.

Starting from the end, for flow of argument, I will first discuss phase 4 which has been the crystallization process of the research and rendered in the form of this thesis. Then, focusing on the fieldwork, phases 1, 2 and 3 will be successively discussed.

4.3.1 Phase 4: The writing up phase

The final phase was the writing up period. For a reflexive paradigm this phase has been as crucial as any other since it is communicating the research into a narrative, privileging some interpretations over others (Janesick 2000; Richardson 2000).

In fact, the writing process started before the writing up phase and extended throughout the research period. The regular data keeping mainly in a research diary or journal was systematised into the research process. And these data entries in the form of short notes in the reflexive journal (Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Gemignani 2011), as well as more developed essays have formed the

basis of the reflexive analysis. Also, recording all positive and negative experiences and reflections in a field diary constituted an invaluable data source which complemented interview data and enhanced the researcher's own understanding of the context in which she has been doing fieldwork. This process of reflexive and on-going analysis of the researcher's experience was built on insights from Siegel's book '*The mindful therapist*' (Siegel 2010a) which discusses, amongst others, how the interviewer can carry out the interview with mindsight – that is "The ability to perceive the internal world of the self and others, not just to observe behaviour; to have a perception of the inner world of minds" (Siegel 2012b: 476). The reflexive approach focused on the following three aspects: a) the researcher's intrapersonal experience: thoughts, feelings, observations on her own behaviours and thoughts and emotional patterns; b) the researcher's relationship with the people (co-participants of the study) through the symbolic exchanges which happened during the data collection period and until the thesis is written; c) journey throughout the research and her relationships with the theories with which she engaged.

Methodological decisions - the logistics of the study and reflections on the different experiences (in or outside the field) - were all recorded. The final writing-up phase has been the process of reflecting back critically, pulling together and synthesizing all the elements learned into a coherent, consistent and justifiable whole - the thesis.

As Richardson (2000) argues, far from being merely an act of transcribing, writing - in the form of texts, notes, presentations, and other forms - is also a process of discovery of the author, of the subject. Throughout the research

process in the field, as in writing the piece of research, the researcher is constantly making ethical and analytical decisions[27] (Charmaz 2000: 526). In other words, she is choosing some options over others. This process is subjective as it is based on the perception, analysis and judgement of the researcher who becomes an interpreter of the information she gathers. The end-piece of writing, the thesis, is in that sense one representation of the experience the researcher had of the research. In this research, this experience was constantly reflected upon with intent, in order to reduce bias and enhance my ability to be culturally intelligible of the different contexts I was immersed in.

> *"A good observer can develop the skills of catching cultural meanings as members of the community themselves understand them, but equally important is the skill of writing up the report in such a way 'as to convey the meaning to an interested reader from another culture' (Wolf, 1992, p.5)" (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez 2000: 689)*

This ability to prioritise what story is being told, and how, poses the question of authority and thus the integral question of power relations between researcher- as-author and informants. Tierney notes "The power the author has is the ability to develop a reflexive text" (Tierney, 2000, p.551). This text allows readers to understand the author and the research conducted and; eventually make his/her own opinion, interpretation in the light of his/her personal experience.

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[27] "Every qualitative researcher makes multiple analytic decisions." (Charmaz, 2000, p.526).

Besides the researcher's influence, the research is a confluence of different voices (informants' narratives, authors cited). This said, the choices made by the researcher-as-author while writing up, gives a certain connotation to the final narrative (the thesis). As Charmaz (2000) writes: "Written images portray the tone the writer takes toward the topic and reflect the writer's relationships with his or her respondents" (Charmaz 2000: 528). The aim is not only that the final piece is coherent and intelligible to the reader but it has to be reliable and valid in terms of its interpretation of the data gathered, offered and received. Ellis and Bochner (2000) have put it simply:

> *"The goal is to write meaningfully and evocatively about topics that matter and may make a difference, to include sensory and emotional experience (Shelton, 1995), and to write from an ethic of care and concern (Denzin, 1997; Noddings, 1984; Richardson, 1997)" (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 742).*

This care and concern in the research was balanced between a) the purpose of the research; b) respect of the agreements with the participants; and c) in coherence with the philosophical and methodological framework established. Because this phase was so delicate, it took the longest time to be achieved.

4.3.2 Phase 1: Exploratory in-field research

Exploratory research is defined as the initial research attempting to lay the groundwork for the future research. A theoretical understanding is never complete without an empirical experience. Indeed, experiencing the situation of permanent background conflict helped the researcher to merge the abstract with the empirical. In other words, even if literature review and secondary data

collected about the regional socio-political context confirmed this characteristic of intractable conflict with an on-going socio-political risk in the background, experiencing it on the ground with potential participants brought in another distinctive dimension and insights to the researcher's outlook on the overall context. This exploratory fieldwork was organized and conducted with three objectives in mind: 1) to confirm that the region effectively qualifies as a context of intractable conflict with on-going socio-political conflict through the subjective experience of the researcher; 2) to confirm that a more extensive research will be feasible in this region by identifying potential cases and; 3) finally to start building a local social network.

This process of confirmation that a more extensive research was feasible in this region started with identifying possible barriers early on. This approach reduced risks and uncertainties in the research process and was especially salient because the nature of the context itself was so volatile that several unpredictable events may have occurred and changed the course of the research planned. Now this feasibility carried two main strands. The first strand related to the actual physical accessibility of the researcher into the field (region, the people). The second strand related to the choice of data collection methods to be employed. It is in this trip that the process of trust-building was initiated with potential informants. Also, the preliminary analysis conducted with the data collected after this first stage provided sufficient insights for the development of interview questions for the core data collection trip. For these reasons, this exploratory field trip has formed the basis and starting point of the field design. The two following sub-sections offer an account of the exploratory trip and then reflect on the insights gathered from the experience

and how these have confirmed the choice of a qualitative data gathering methods.

4.3.2.1 Pre-fieldwork priming and preparation

Before travelling into the field, one strategic decision was about filtering in media information concerning the region. This deliberate position was taken in order to avoid pre-conceptions and biases which may result in the mind of the researcher if too exposed with opinionated news. A selective use of media was fundamental to keeping the research focused. In effect, the only sources of information about the situation pre-field trip and on the ground I consulted were the government reports and the quasi-daily reports of the travel security agency. Filtering for only factual information in text form without any voice intonations was a strategic exercise to avoid diffusion of my attention into topics irrelevant to the research subject but at the same time kept me informed about the actual situation on the ground. This kept any potential emotional weight checked. Such a conscious exercise enhanced my ability to be receptive in the field and not unconsciously fall into any biases.

This region was completely new to me, the researcher, so careful planning meant considering a) geographical exploration as well as b) social network-building. Officially the visit was a touristic trip. Such a strategy was adopted because it was indeed a touristic trip in that the researcher planned and participated in several tours; and secondly, it was the easiest way to access the territory for research. Annexe Three provides an overview of the exploratory field trip in the West Bank and Northern Israel between 14th Nov 2015 and 28th Nov 2015. Although, travelling as a tourist is commonly what PhD students do to carry out research in this region, such a behaviour had

several impacts on the research and required additional preparation. One of the impacts was concerned with research ethics and this will be discussed further.

In the field, the "risks can change at short notice during a crisis or evolving situation"[28]. This is a common characteristic of the socio-political climate in this region. Such embedded uncertainty provides a context where the sources of tension pressing on relationships are numerous and this characteristic was favourable to the research intention of seeking to understand interpersonal resilience. However, at the same time, such volatility implied more stringent requirements regarding safety and security of the researcher. And thus, the trip had to be organised accordingly.

Because I was new to the field, I had to look for reliable tour agencies and relevant touring packages which would give sufficient leeway and freedom of movement safely. After some desk-based online search, an Israeli tour agency, Abraham Hostels and Tours, offering accommodation as well as 24-hour assistance was chosen. This hostel-and-tour-operator was chosen for the following reasons. First, for its outspoken political neutrality: "Abraham Tours does not promote a political agenda of any kind. We encourage and assist travelers in seeking as many political opinions as they can in order to effectively formulate their own views" (Abraham tours mission statement: accessed online on 11th Feb 2015: http://abrahamtours.com/about-us/). In such a sensitive context, travelling with an apolitical organisation was

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[28] Extract from an e-mail exchange with one of the Global security centre coordinator of the Control Risks International SOS agency contacted via the University of Gloucestershire's insurance department (dated April 2015).

assumed to decrease the probability of encountering problems which could occur in the presence of activist or religious groups for instance.

Second, international recognition and positive public review was to some extent testimony to the trustworthiness of the organisation. Abraham Hostels received *'The Certificate of Excellence award'*[29]. It was cost-efficient and since designed for backpackers and independent travellers, it was ideal to the budget and needs of a researcher who was travelling as a tourist backpacker. And last and probably most importantly, was for access to a social network. In fact, Abraham Tours work with Israeli as well as Palestinian guides and assures tours in the Palestinian West Bank areas where, officially, Jewish Israelis are legally forbidden to enter. With this tour operator, accessing both sides of the wall was relatively easy because this meant dealing with a single intermediary to access either side. Such a structure was efficient since it proved to be cost-efficient and time-effective.

First field trip

The first half of the journey was spent between Jerusalem and the West Bank. The second half of the time was spent in Northern Israel. For this trip, Jerusalem was my base. I stayed at the backpacker hostel in West Jerusalem 5 mins walk from the Old City and East Jerusalem. I was also in the city when there had been all the unrest because of the stabbings and killings in a synagogue in West Jerusalem. For the purpose of keeping the thesis concise,

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[29] The certificate of excellence award "provides top performing establishments the recognition they deserve, based on feedback from those who matter most – their customers" as Stephen Kaufer, President and CEO, Trip Advisor says. (accessed online on 11th Feb 2015: http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/PressCenter-i6013-c1-Press_Releases.html

the detailed description of the trip has been placed in Annexe Four. Excerpts from this will be used to illustrate arguments in the thesis. Figure 15 shows a map of the region with the places visited. The places (Nazareth, Old City; Jisr az Zarqa in Israel and; Jifna in the West Bank) indicated with a bed icon in yellow are those where cases were selected for the study.
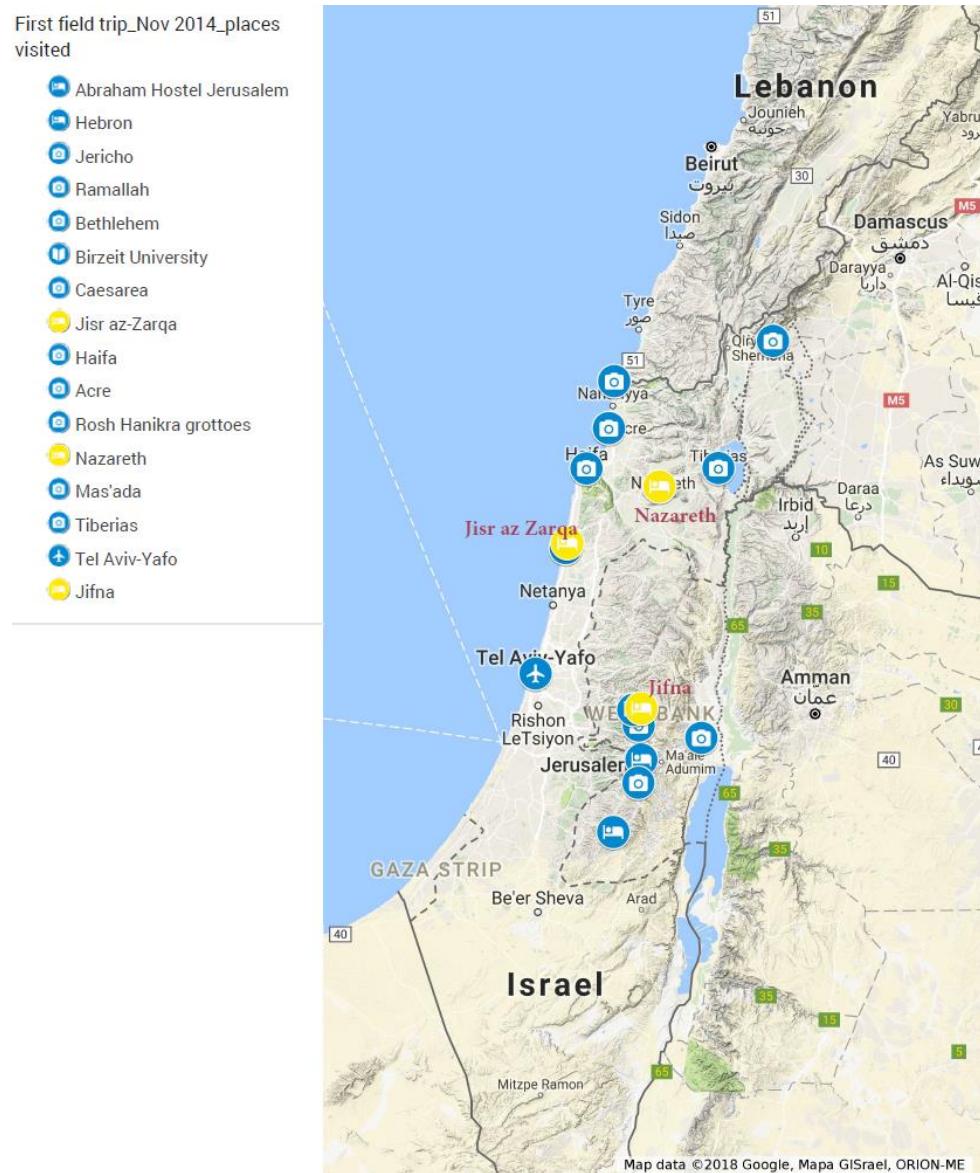
Figure 15 Map of places visited (November 2014)

Criteria for potential cases

With regard to the main objectives of finding participants and building a social network in the field, the trip was planned accordingly with the relevant tours available. The tours were chosen in terms of the geographical coverage, as well as the probability of meeting with people who could be potential participants. For instance, a visit to the small fishing village along the Mediterranean coast, Jisr-ez-Zarqa, was deliberately opted for because not only was it classified as one of the poorest of Israel, it was (and still is) also the only Arab Israeli coastal village of the country and the people there are mostly estranged and secluded from the rest of the population - from Arabs and Jews alike. The particularities of this place made it potentially interesting to study interpersonal resilience with regard to the apparently diverse and varied sources of tension. And this proved rightly so later because it has been home to one of the cases chosen for the research. The focus was on small communities or micro-societies in order to keep the research to a manageable scale. Another criterion was the existence of interpersonal relationships in a business or work place environment. Although at the beginning of the trip, I did not know exactly what type of cases I would end up studying; these were the guiding criteria I used in the design.

4.3.2.2   Implications of the first trip founding the criteria for data gathering methods

Now more familiar with the region and having laid the first grounds for developing a local network in Israel (notably in Nazareth, Jerusalem and Jisr-ez-Zarqa) and the territory of the West Bank, the reflexive analysis of this first field trip confirmed the need for a flexible methodology. Research is often

carried out in contexts with a stable backdrop. The particularity of this research is that it takes place in a region where the socio-political background is highly sensitive and may change unpredictably. Although, this exploratory research was focused on finding potential participants and cases to study and not to provide definite answers to the research question, a key insight had emerged. Conditional to the research taking place was the important process of trust-building between the researcher and the potential participants. In fact, the personal nature of the research question required a trust-relationship between the researcher and the participant for any constructive exchanges to happen. Figure 16 shows the outcome of the first field trip after reflexive analysis of insights from this trip.
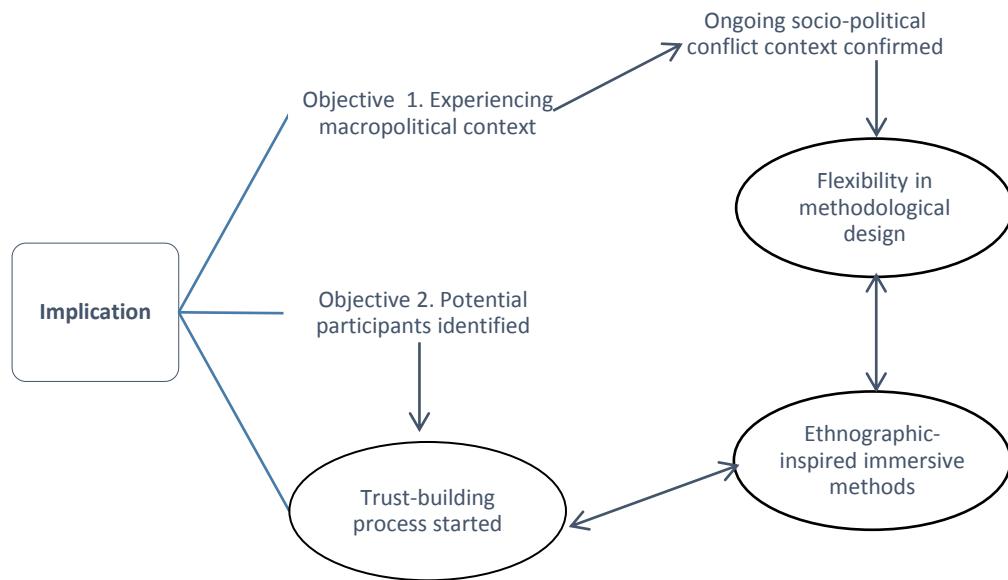
Figure 16 Implications of the first field trip after reflexive analysis of insights from this first field trip.

The two main objectives of the field trip were met. First, experiencing the context of tension prevailing notably in Jerusalem (Israeli territory) and Hebron (West Bank, contested and occupied territory) confirmed the fact of on-going

low-medium intensity conflict with unpredictable peaks of high intensity outbursts. The following excerpt from my field diary shows this:

November 18th 2014 I was in Jerusalem, more precisely travelling to the West Bank with the small group of 5 foreigners in an Israeli matriculated van with a Palestinian guide. The tour to Bethlehem in the area of the wall separating the Israeli form the Palestinian side that day was tense and quickly heightened since, in the morning a "despicable terrorist attack" (UN News Centre, 19 November 2014) had occurred in a synagogue in Jerusalem. This happened in an already tense context after weeks of unrest and high tension ensued after disputes over religious access and political control of the Temple Mount/ Al-Aqsa mosque. The trip was shortened and after a quick lunch we were driven back to the hostel. The journey back was quiet and everyone felt the weight of the news especially when we were passing through Qalindyah – the reputedly hottest checkpoint in the area to go through before getting into Jerusalem from the West Bank.

Textbox 3 Field Diary Excerpt November 2014

Although, it did not end up being an area of my study, the trip to Hebron (see Annexe Four) was insightful in several ways. The experience there – through the dual narrative tour - had allowed me to observe first-hand what could be described as a deep social fracture between two people (Arab Palestinian and Jewish Israeli) rooted in one same region, existing next to each other but yet unable to have a constructive dialogue with each other. This led to confirming the context of on-going socio-political conflict prevailing and more so, inferred

the necessity of allowing for flexibility in the field research in case unpredictable and barring events occurred.

Secondly, besides getting in a local social network, potential participants to the research were identified. And given the sensitive context it was clear that the research happening was conditional on a trust-building process between the researcher and the participants. Indeed, asking people living in a context of on-going conflict with a relatively permanent climate of suspicion to trust an outsider is not an easy task. The very nature of the research question asked for a thorough understanding of people's perceptions. Without a degree of trust established between the researcher and the participant, the data necessary could not be accessed.

Trusting is in itself a risky enterprise for both the potential participant and the researcher. For the latter, failing to nurture a trust relationship risked the simple hindering of the research since without the willingness of participants to share information, the research is not feasible. As for the participant, he/she risked being in a vulnerable position. By letting down his or her guard and giving personal information to the outsider, the participant has no control over eventual disclosures anymore. This is why ethical considerations have been fundamental. The researcher is constantly making ethical choices whilst in the field and has to be careful and alert enough to know when not to interfere, that is, remain an observer and when to empathize without partisanship. This balance has not been easy to strike and has required the researcher to be attuned with her self: her thought patterns, emotions and attitudes. This was where keeping a field diary was critical as a record for further reflexive analysis while writing up.

For these reasons, it was decided that ethnographic-inspired methods with Siegel's mindful approach (Siegel 2008) would be most suitable to conduct the data gathering process. A sincere presence (Carnegie 2010; Siegel 2007; 2008; 2010b; 2012b: 486) and cognitive empathy (Siegel 2012b: 453) on behalf of the researcher-as-an-outsider was, looking back, a premise on which to build constructive relationships especially with those main contacts. Presence is "A way of being open, receptive, and ever emerging in our states of being as we connect with others and with our inner world." (Siegel 2012b: 486). And,

> *"Empathy is described as the ability to see the world through another person's perspective (cognitive empathy) and to feel another person's feelings (emotional empathy). One can imagine what it is like to be another person (empathic imagination) and also to put oneself in another's shoes (empathic identification). These various definitions of empathy can overlap with the use of the term compassion, but they generally are more about understanding and perspective than about being driven to help another reduce suffering." (Siegel 2012b: 453).*

Practicing cognitive empathy (Schwandt 2000) - that "ability to see the world through another person's perspective" (Siegel 2012b: 453) - moved the interactions from being commercial exchanges between a tourist and a host to more personal exchanges between two persons, two minds. When trust builds, a social interaction becomes connection. The basis for this transition to a state of connection is finding a point of attunement (Siegel 2007) between the two interacting parties where "attunement is the way we focus on the flow

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of energy and information in an open and receptive manner." (Siegel 2012b: 171) As illustrated in the following field diary excerpt of the exploratory field trip, this point of attunement – in other words, when engaging in full attention – with another can happen intuitively as well as in a logical and deliberate manner. To be precise, I am using intuition defined as

"A term that denotes the nonlogical knowing that emerges from the processing of the body, especially the parallel distributed processors of the neural networks in the heart and intestines that send their signals upward, through the insula, to regions of the middle prefrontal cortex."(Siegel 2012b: 467)

Reflecting on the factors influencing the trust-building process between the researcher and potential participants (especially those who could become the key local contacts) was a rigorous exercise which eventually helped in deciding on which cases to study or not as will be discussed. The following excerpts from the fieldwork diary gives an idea of the experience of the researcher and paves the way towards understanding how the data recorded reflexively in the diary, the daily journal, formed an important part of the analysis.

Field diary except when staying with the Khouriyeh family in the West Bank, November 2014

"In Jifna I stayed in the Khouriya family guesthouse. The guesthouse is run by Rawda and her husband Isaa. They opened 5 years ago after consultation with their neighbours as Rawda pointed out in one of our conversations. The main aim alongside making a living, for Rawda, formerly a social worker, was to show the reality of Palestinian life. She affirmed: "We want foreigners to come and see what real Palestinian life is about. Not judge us by what they hear on the news. Come and live with us. See for yourself." They do struggle to run this place because of the occupation. That was interesting to observe, they never spoken of "the Israelis" but always "the occupation" …the main barriers they underline are: 1) Water is supplied on a weekly basis; 2) Cancellations of reservations fluctuate with incidents that happen anywhere in Israel. In fact, they thought that I would cancel my reservation given the situation then; and 3) Price of gas and electricity is just unaffordable. It was about 10 degrees during the day and 5-6 during the nights while I was there and there was no heating and no hot water. Whilst Rawda's zeal and energy reminded me of one of my aunties back in Mauritius, for Rawda and Issa, I was like family as well. We were sat at the kitchen table for my second breakfast with the family. I had explained earlier why I was here in the West Bank and they offered and were ready to help without me even asking. Rawda, this outspoken business woman in her mid-forties gave me the gift. She materialised her trust in words and offered me a place in her home. (Extracts from Nov2014 Field diary, Jifna, West Bank)

- "you know the day you came in, I saw your smile and you went directly to the heart", she said this with her right hand on her chest and then reached out to grab her husband's forearm saying "ain't it Issa?" and then looks back at me "you know what I mean, your smile spoke directly to the heart…you are part of us, like our own…". (Extracts from Nov2014 Field diary, Jifna, West Bank)

" I should tell you that for the five years I have been doing this never have I felt so close to a guest. Every time I always give a short presentation of the guesthouse etc… to the people when they first arrive. But with you, I just didn't feel the need. [she smiles] You, you are just like us habibti! " (Extracts from Nov2014 Field diary, Jifna, West Bank)

Picture of Zaatar and olive oil sharing with the Khouriya family

Zaatar a typical middle eastern herb preparation- herbs, salt and sesame seeds. It is a home-made preparation and often the whole neighbourhood is involved in the process of making it. She invited me to share the bread, the olive oil and the zaatar. "sharing like this from the same vessels: it is a mark that you are now family". This really was the culmination point of connection between us. (Extracts from Nov2014 Field diary, Jifna, West Bank)

Weaving oneself into a new social fabric is exhausting. Because as much as one is observing and learning about people around, the people are also interested to know about the observer: "where are you from? Where is Mauritius?"; over 10-15 times a day. It is not passive observation. It is an active all-day and all-time presence. I remember sitting for two hours with a group of women, the Santa Maria association of the church, not understanding a word of what was being said. But keeping a smile and following what they were doing and the body languages and all the excitement for Christmas preparations. So by the end of the four days in the West Bank, I was completely tired, mentally and physically - so much that when I got from Jifna to Jerusalem, I changed my original booking from a bed in a 6-person female dormitory to single room. It cost 5 times more but I needed it. (Extracts from Nov2014 Field diary, Jerusalem, Israel)

In Jisr-ez-Zarqa I met with Neta, Genevieve and Ahmed. Neta is one of the co-founders of this guesthouse and she presents the hostel as "a social enterprise". "Our aim is to help the local economy and take the people out of social isolation." So this guesthouse opened 1 year ago. It is a joint initiative of Neta, a Jewish lady and Ahmed an Arab Israeli. Genevieve is a university student who volunteers at the hostel and also helps Neta and Ahmed run the social projects such as cultural workshops and English classes. Genevieve is an important actor as well because she glues Ahmed and Neta together. As was she telling me, she facilitates the emotional exchanges between the two. (Extracts from Nov2014 Field diary, Jisr ez Zarqa, Israel)

> Here, the trust-building process was gradual. The point of connection with Genevieve was our spirituality. The fact being both French had certainly eased the interaction but being from two sister islands - she is from Reunion Island and me from Mauritius - and the fact that we met in Jisr, a coastal village, was quite something - we thought. Especially for us islanders! While we spoke that afternoon, in French, of course, we discovered that we had the same affinities when it came to anthropology and eventually we laughed, cried and were completely gobsmacked by the whole situation. Even the other tourists observing this evident familiarity commented: "well, you two really found your selves." (Extracts from Nov2014 Field diary, Jisr ez Zarqa, Israel)

Textbox 4 Excerpt 2 from diary recording November 2014 field trip in Jifna and Jisr ez Zarqa

Overall, fundamentally, this first phase fulfilling its objectives has laid grounds for the progress of the research. As the excerpts suggest the amount of information received and processed was considerable and to understand the contexts properly and in-depth an immersive period was clearly necessary. People's daily lives are different to media representations and each case carries its own particularities. Keeping a journal to record reflections and relevant events also helped in correcting any potential biases which may result from an immersion. For instance, getting used to certain social realities may make some elements of daily life seem 'normal' as the researcher started to share an insider's perspective. Briefly reporting how one's preconceptions, beliefs, values, assumptions and position may have come into play during the research process became critical. Further building on this idea of

acknowledging the human understanding as a form of interpretation, Schwandt discussed how authors of PH [Philosophical hermeneutics] have put forward the importance of the interpreter's own "standpoints, prejudgements, biases and prejudices" (Schwandt 2000: 195). Citing Garrison (1996), he explains:

> *"The point is not to free ourselves of all prejudice but to examine our historically inherited and unreflectively held prejudices and alter those that disable our efforts to understand others, and ourselves" (Schwandt 2000: 434).*

Being constantly present - alert and critically open but never judgemental – in the new relationships was the required outlook that kept the progress of the research and avoided slipping into any tangents (the macro-political conflict itself for instance) which easily caught attention. The need for thorough descriptions in the field diary and transparent interpretations has been key for the researcher-author to convey the research work to the reader in the most intelligible way. The next section moves on to discuss the subsequent methodological (data gathering methods, analysis and writing up) choices.

Chosen methods discussed

In line with an abductive reasoning as discussed in Section 4.2, the determining elements for choosing the methods were: 1) the volatile macro socio-political context; 2) the research question calling for sensitive data; and 3) the researcher's ethical responsibility. Following Schwandt (2000: 203), "Social inquiry is a practice, not only a way of knowing" (Schwandt (2000: 203). It was clear that researching people's personal experiences would require in-

depth interviews with participants about their relationships. Personal experiences, especially of tension, are sensitive intimate information which is not easily divulged to strangers and all the more in such a distrusting context as we have seen earlier in Section 4.1 and the exploratory phase described in the previous section. So, a level of social proximity and trust between the participant and the researcher had to be nurtured. By social proximity I mean a degree of closeness between two people such that the probability of building an interpersonal relationship is greater than if they were not. The degree of closeness does not necessarily imply physical closeness it can be a psychological one built through the exchanges of information between the two people such that they share something of value for each and the other. Besides, the fact that the new relationships were free of any past burdens eased the exchange process.

It was clear thus that formal interviews would not be the appropriate data collection method for this particular research. So, informal conversations, semi-formal and semi-structured in-person interviews were opted for in order to acquire in-depth understanding of the specific cases. Purely quantitative and positivist approaches would have been philosophically incoherent, not to say irrelevant in covering the salient aspects of the research question. Resilience is concerned with subjective discourses, as discussed in Chapter Two, around values, emotions and memories. All these can be very difficult, if not impossible to capture through questionnaires or quantitative methodologies.

Interviews, "active emergent process[es]" (Fontana and Frey 2000: 654), are "not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between (two or

more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based result" (Fontana and Frey 2000: 646). These interactional encounters (Fontana and Frey 2000: 646) can shape the data gathered and nuance the interpretations. It is important to allow time for responses to be offered. And, as much as possible, avoid imposing rigid pre-categorisations (Fontana and Frey 2000: 653) to decrease biases. Also, it was important not to assume understanding of any unspoken elements without checking with interviewee whether the perceived meaning of what he/she said matches what he/she meant. However, at the same time, to keep conversations focused on the theme, a degree of structure is needed. Annexe Six presents the broad template by which the interviews were scheduled. More than structuring, this template was a guide used as a checklist to make sure that all points of interest were covered but at the same time kept the interviews fluid enough and not rigid. This is why the informal and semi-structured forms were suitable. As the following field diary excerpt illustrates, a qualitative study in such a context has called for the researcher to spend extended time on the sites, being in face-to-face "contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting, revising meanings of what is going on" (Stake 2011: 445).

"Israel is a place of stories more than historical facts," said the Liverpool born tourist guide as he stood in front of the grandiose Jaffa gate of the Old city waiting for the rest of the group to arrive. The sun was shining bright although it was a chilly November morning. I stood there waiting for this free tour inside Old Jerusalem to start. I was going to discover a whole atmosphere blending ancient and modern. His sentence resonated in my mind as we walked through the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Armenian quarters of this 0.9 square kilometre sandstone-built area. "A concentration of the diversity of the world", I thought to myself experiencing the intensity of the surroundings. To me the people looked alike - their fashion varied- but their welcoming smiles for some or complete indifference to tourists for others were quite the same. This experience I had that day was quite formative as it confirmed *in situ* that the complexity of this region will not be easily understood through structured formal interviews or survey questionnaires. (Field diary November 2014 Excerpt, Jerusalem)

Textbox 5 Field diary November 2014 Excerpt

Although, what was sought after was an understanding of people's perceptions and attitudes towards each other in episodes of tension, only interviewing was not sufficient. As Eder and Fingerson (2002) point out, a combination of methods is needed to be able to understand and capture the diversity of human experiences, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. A degree of observation and participation have weighed in as much as the interviews in the process of balancing interpretations at the analysis stage. As Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2000) have underlined, observational methods offer cues to participants' behaviours and gestures that cannot be captured

through interviews alone. This is why a period of immersion (Phase 2) was important. This is discussed further in Section 4.3.3.

Abductive reasoning implies that observation be understood as a context of interaction (Fontana and Frey 2000). As discussed in Section 4.2, "understanding is participative, conversational and dialogic" (Schwandt 2000: 194-195). In an interpretative sense, meaning is negotiated mutually. And as discussed earlier, the attention required in-field is not void of subjectivity. Rosanna Hertz (1997a) suggested, the researcher self is only one of the many selves that the researcher as an individual brings to the field. This calls for clarity on the researcher's own positionings in the field. The discussion started in Section 4.1.2 of empathising without partisanship will be furthered in Section 4.3.3.

Table 3 shows through some key in-field experiences how the exploratory trip met the phase 1 objectives. The number of '+' indicates qualitatively the degree of relevance of the particular subjective experiences to these objectives based on reflexive analysis of scoping experience of the first field trip. Three '+' indicates complete relevance, while one '+' indicates some relevance.

Subjective experiences illustrated through trip highlights (see Annexe Three for details)	Trip Day date	Objectives of Stage 1		
		confirming that the region effectively qualifies as a context of on-going socio-political risk and uncertainty	confirming the feasibility of the study in terms of	
			physical accessibility	choice of data collection methods
The dual narrative tour of Hebron	Day 2	+++	++	+++
Touring in the West Bank while there had been "stabbings in a synagogue in West Jerusalem"	Day 4	+++	++	++
Travelling into the West Bank unaccompanied through the Qalindiyah checkpoint	Day 5	+++	+++	+++
Stay in Jifna at the 'Khouriya family guesthouse'	Days 5-9	+++	+++	+++
Stay in Jisr-ez-Zarqa at 'Juha's guesthouse'	Days 10-11	+++	+++	+++

Table 3 In-field experiences in the Exploratory phase which helped define the choice of methods

The dual narrative tour in Hebron (see Annexe Four for details) experienced at the very beginning of the trip rendered the complexity of the current socio-political situation more 'real' to the researcher's mind. Hebron is a hotspot where the extreme ends of the spectrum of tension in the region can be found. The core of the complexity lies in the feeling of mutual negative indebtedness people from both sides express towards each other. And this is exacerbated by the absence of dialogue between them. The socio-political situation in Hebron is an indication of how old and deep the wounds are on both sides. The place is not easily accessible for a foreigner and less so for a research student, Hebron was not retained as a case study area. From the experience with the people there I learnt that if tensions and mutual perceptions were to be understood, then in-depth informal interviews after a period of immersion in the lives of the people was the effective methodological route to adopt.

I understood then how much having reliable local contacts, was not only a matter of ease of access and safety, but also critical for time efficiency. This experience helped me also decide that I needed to arrange for accommodation in the West Bank during any data gathering period there instead of travelling to and from Israel every day. In any case, this concurred with the need to have an immersive period with the people.

Touring in the West Bank on the morning there had been stabbings in a synagogue in west Jerusalem was a showcase experience. Travelling in a vehicle with Israeli plates through any checkpoint was easy and quick. Travelling in a Palestinian vehicle is another story. People have to get off the bus queue whatever the weather, go through a tight metal detector, leave all belongings into an x-ray check like in airports and go through a dry identity and passport check with an Israeli army soldier. I travelled mostly with Abraham tours for security and efficiency reasons as discussed earlier. However, it was important that I experience travelling in solo from Jerusalem (Israel) into the West Bank by public transport (bus) through Qalindyah reputedly the "hottest checkpoint in the West Bank". I spoke with a young Palestinian student on the bus to whom I asked about her daily experience going through the checkpoint to go to university. In a short discussion I had learnt much more than I could observing on my own in a week. (Field diary November 2014 Excerpt, Jerusalem)

Textbox 6 Field diary November 2014 Excerpt

The lived experiences at the guesthouses in Jifna and in Jisr ez Zarqa had indicated that both places showed characteristics of on-going socio-political conflict each in their own ways but still quite physically accessible with a place to stay. Besides, as will be discussed in Section 4.3, the hosts were willing to participate in the research. As a result, both of these places were chosen as cases to study. In Jifna, political instability and threats of upsurge of violent outbursts was part of the daily routine. During the night it was not rare to hear

gunshots coming from confrontations between settlers and people in the refugee camp nearby. The Palestinians there consider that they live under an alien occupation. 'Alien' because there is no physical contact nor is there any constructive exchanges between the residents of this 'occupied territory' and the "occupiers" as they name the settlers. Daily life in the village is undermined because the basic resources are controlled by this alien domineering force.

Jisr az Zarqa, in Israel, long considered as a ghetto with a quasi-non-functioning local economy and worst education institutions of the country, the population is now around 15000 of which half are children. The underprivileged life style, low-performing education system, and seclusion[30] (Abby 2015) has plunged the place and its residents into a form of marginalisation and the rate of violence in the area testifies to this. The macro-political conflict in the backdrop does complicate things when it comes to how the people are perceived. In a way, even if this village is Israeli, there is a connection with Palestinian people as is the case with all the Arab societies inside Israel. For instance, after the abduction and murder of a Palestinian boy who was burned to death by Israeli extremists who claimed they were responding to the kidnapping of three Israeli settlers in July 2014, the *Middle East Monitor*[31] reported protests and clashes between Israeli-Arab citizens and the Israeli security forces in most Arab cities in Israel and Jisr az Zarqa was no exception.

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[30]*http://www.bendbulletin.com/nation/webextras/2801808-153/in-israel-secluded-arab-village-wants-to-be*
[31]https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/12595-israeli-newspaper-warns-of-escalating-violence-in-israel

Phases	Objectives	Methods	Effective Duration
Phase 1: Exploratory trip	To confirm that the region effectively qualifies as a context of on-going socio-political risk and uncertainty To confirm the feasibility of the study in terms of: i. physical accessibility; ii. choice of data collection methods and iii. finding potential participants	Travelling around and observing; Informal discussions	2 weeks (Nov 2014)
Phase 2: Immersive trip	To gather the core of the data necessary to understand interpersonal resilience through: i. understanding how people perceive each other in their relationships ii. identifying episodes of tensions in the relationships iii. understanding the choices people made in such episodes and how this relates to interpersonal resilience	Semi-structured interviews; Immersive participation and observation	8 weeks
Phase 3: Feedback trip	Gathering feedback (perceptions, attitudes and reflections) from the participants on the first analysis and interpretation that the researcher made of the data gathered in phase 2.	Group interviews with participants	5 weeks

Table 4 Summary of the core objectives, methods employed and timeline for each of in-field phases

To close this section, Table 4 recapitulates the core objectives and methods employed for each of the in-field phases (1, 2 and 3) with their corresponding time allocated in the overall design. Setting a timeframe is important for the sake of efficiency as research can be costly. Besides, scheduling with flexibility taking into account potential known risks as well as unpredictable unknowns offers a field research project with less negative stress for the researcher. This is important because the researcher as the main instrument of analysis has to maintain a clear and alert mind.

This preparation, in turn, helped in focusing attention on the research question and gathering quality data. Researching interpersonal resilience in the complex context has required a methodological approach that coheres with the emergent character of the concept. From Chapters Two and Three, it was clear that the heterogeneity of social relationships and the subjectivity of individuals involved intangible specificities which require qualitative in-depth inquiry. Personal narratives, as a primary source of data for understanding how individuals cope with each other in episodes of relational tension, can be achieved from informal, semi-structured interviews and observations during participation in the people's daily lives. The following sections will be explaining the pragmatic criteria devised to help in choosing the cases for study at the micro-level context.

Pragmatic Criteria for choosing the cases

A set of criteria was used to choose which case to study. As discussed previously, the first trip had helped initiating new relationships with potential participants who showed interest in the research question. Given the personal nature of the research question and the suspicious environment, the feasibility of the research was conditional to mutual trust (see Section 4.2.2). But willingness – identified through expressed interest and proactive engagement and sharing of information – was as significant.

Physical accessibility has been an important aspect of conducting fieldwork. It may be obvious but in this particular region, accessibility was a limiting parameter in the research design. So, making sure early on that the potential cases and participants were relatively easily attainable was factored as a criteria for choosing which case to study. Also, this element of accessibility

was closely related to the safety of the researcher as well. In times of unrest, it was advised for foreigners to avoid public gatherings and areas where there were high probability of protests (See a sample travel insurance report in Annexe Five). Overall, accessing Jisr az-zarqa was easier than Jifna as the former is in Israel and no checkpoint was involved while the latter is found in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to which access was always controlled by the Israeli military.

Thirdly, geographical location, although bounded by physical accessibility, was also taken as a criterion for selecting cases for study. Different locations meant different sorts of potential tension. This added value to the methodological framework as the analysis of the different cases through abductive reasoning allowed refining the understanding of processes leading to interpersonal resilience.

Fourth, cases had to consist of interpersonal relationships or dyads where the probability of tension existed. The focus of the research question has been on relationships not individuals. So, in each case at least a dyad had to be available for inquiry. This said, work relationships seemed more accessible than private ones.

The fifth criterion concerned the medium of communication in which the participants were at ease. The language of communication between the interviewee and interviewer is critical especially in qualitative research. As discussed, interviews are the result of a conversation, a negotiated text. The interpretations at play are not built in isolation but always in context of "shared understandings, practices, language and so forth" (Schwandt 2000: 197). If

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the language used is not intelligible by either party, the risk of not sharing understandings is possibly high. The help of a translator can be taken but in case of such private information exchange, it can be a delicate task. Besides, a translator comes with a cost. So, in order to keep conversations between the researcher and the participants and stay in the budget, cases where the people spoke English fluently or where the main contact as a trusted person could be the translator were preferred. These criteria were developed since the beginning of the exploratory trip and Table 5 shows how three out of seven potentially interesting cases were chosen through these five criteria.

Region	Israel			West Bank			
Cases	1.Juha guesthouse	2. Eyad Family shop	3.Fauzi guesthouse	4.Jamila family	5.Date farmer	6.Family farmers' cooperative	7.Khouriyeh guesthouse
Location	Jisr ez Zarqa	Old city, Jerusalem	Old city, Nazareth	Hebron, Shuhada st	Jericho, Area A	Si'ir, Area A	Jifna, Area B
Physical accessibility	✓	✓	✓	Difficult	Difficult	Difficult	✓
Trust and willingness to participate	✓	Not maintained	✓	✓	Not engaged	Not Maintained	✓
Geographical location	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dyads	✓	✓	✓	✓	No	No	✓
Medium of communication	English	English/ Arabic	English	English /Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	English
Chosen?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

Table 5 Seven potentially interesting cases identified during the exploratory trip read through the five case selection criteria developed

Referring to Table 5, Cases 1, 3 and 7 were chosen as they fulfilled all the selection criteria. As will be discussed in the next sections, each of these cases offered the best opportunities to study interpersonal resilience. In the Israeli context, Case 2 was not retained because although, physically accessible and existence of dyadic relationships, the first discussions with one of the potential participants, Eyad showed that although he was willing to participate, other members of the family shop were not ready to engage at that level of depth. It has to be noted though that the time I met with Eyad was quite tense in Jerusalem and there were rumours of a third intifada in preparation. So the climate was quite suspicious towards outsiders. In the West Bank context, several interesting Cases (4, 5 and 6) had to be left out because of difficult access to the locations and language barrier. First interviews were tried with a translator but did not seem to be constructive enough to be pursued. These cases were dropped out and only one case where the people spoke English was chosen. Such criteria have helped selecting cases on the basis of more efficiency in answering the research questions.

Trust building process with main contacts

Before moving on to the immersive phase of the research, a deeper look at the trust-building processes with the main contacts amongst the participants is a must. The period between the first contacts with those people who would become the main research contacts till finalising the second field trip preparations, has been critical in maintaining the trust initiated at the beginning and deciding which cases to choose for the inquiry. Relationships start with unknowns and to start a relationship, a risk needs to be taken. One of the stakeholders has to take the lead and make a step forward towards the other.

At this point there may be a positive or negative response from this other. This will depend on this other's judgement as to whether to accept this engagement or reject it. The fear of the unknown can be either a constructive tool or a destructive one. Only when the choice to interact is made can points of attunement be found. Again, the level of disclosure depended on the extent to which the stakeholders were ready to take the risk. Once the points of attunement were found the relationship developed from being an interaction and became a connection. After a reflective analysis of field notes reporting the researcher's experience, a set of seven complementary factors were found to have been instrumental in the processes of trust-building with potential participants from the first contact to before the immersive phase started. Table 6 provides a summary of how these factors spelled out in the first contacts with the three main local contacts/hosts – Genevieve from the Juha guesthouse, Sureida from the Fauzi guesthouse and Rawda from the Khouriyeh guesthouse.

Factors/ First main contact	Genevieve	Sureida	Rawda
Case	Juha guesthouse	Fauzi guesthouse	Khouriyeh guesthouse
Micro-level social setting	- Guest-house -Socially active in the neighbourhood	- Guesthouse -Socially active in the neighbourhood	- Family-run guesthouse -Socially active in the neighbourhood
Sociality of Interpersonal interaction at first	Private secondary	Private secondary	Private secondary
Medium of communication	French/English	English	English/ some Arabic
Commonalities	-Multi-cultural experience -Interest in socially oriented sustainable projects	-Multi-cultural experience -Interest in socially oriented sustainable projects	-Multi-cultural experience -Interest in socially oriented sustainable projects
Empathic interactions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Length of face-to-face interactions	Short (<3 hours> evening)	Short (<1 hour >one morning)	Medium (3 days)
Willingness	Expressed and maintained	Expressed and maintained	Expressed and maintained

Table 6 The key elements instrumental in the trust-building process with the main contacts of the cases

Each of these factors influenced the rapidity with which the researcher-host interaction became more of a connection. In terms of social settings, the interactions took place in socially sensitive environments. Although, starting off in a commercial nature – tourist-host interaction – the sociality (see Chapter Three) quickly shifted from public to private. This meant a social proximity (see Section 4.3.2.1) more favourable for more personal exchanges. In terms of the medium of communication, all spoke fluent English – which obviously helped enormously. However, not speaking the local language has not been a barrier but rather an asset in Jifna. In Jifna, the fact that I did not speak fluent Arabic allowed a certain form of socialisation between the hosts and myself as the researcher as the following field diary excerpt shows:

Rawda and Issa took turns to teach me local idioms and they were very pleased to hear a foreigner trying to learn their language. They would often teach me how to say certain idioms and everyone would laugh at my pronunciations. This 'game' became almost a catalyser of trust-building. (Field diary excerpt, June 2016, Jifna, West Bank)

Textbox 7 Field diary June 2016 Excerpt

The field experience at several instances has shown that people in such a private setting when certain points of attunement have been reached make an extra effort to explain the deeper meanings of the phrases they used. In Jisr az Zarqa, Genevieve seemed pleased that we shared a common language – French - and we mainly exchanged in this mother tongue. This was an ice breaker from the beginning (see Annexe Seven). In general, the first conversations with all the hosts were mainly opened from their intrigue on my

origins since I "look a bit Indian but still speak without any recognizable accent" (Field diary, April 2016, Participant). The first common question - "Where are you from?" – each time led to a conversation on my multiculturality. And, their own multicultural experiences and interest eased and prolonged the exchanges. As discussed, empathic interaction was fundamental. In each case, I intuitively had had empathic exchanges with the hosts – listening carefully and mindfully (Siegel 2010a) to what they had to say before putting my own project forward. With this, although the time spent face-to-face was not as long as an ethnographic approach would conventionally require, it was effective enough to achieve the aim sought after. This effectiveness was distinguishable when the successive interviews with the participants eventually produced repetitive data without new additions. This suggested coherence and degree of completeness in the data that could be gathered on the research questions.

Finally, even if all these happened, the project would not have happened without the willingness of the hosts to pursue the relationship. This willingness of the people to put effort and time in the relationship was interpreted through their expressed interest and proactive engagement and sharing of information on the subject. Nurturing a willingness from the stranger to become a potential participant has been essential but, as experienced, the decision to participate in the research remains that of the people. The only thing the researcher could do is to be as clear and honest about her project right from the start and allow the people temporal and emotional space to digest it and offer a response.

It is to be noted though that these processes leading to connection may change over time given the macro-political setting is volatile especially in the

West Bank. A permanent low intensity conflict prevails, with outbursts of high intensity. Trust, it has been seen, is a process and needs to be maintained over time else, just like anything else it fades away. So, the researcher had to maintain a long distance relationship with the potential participants exchanging emails and messages from time to time and in due measure accordingly with the personal relationship with each.

Now that it is clear how the cases of inquiry were chosen, the next section will explain the rationale and processes involved in the immersive phase during which the second field trip was carried out

4.3.3 Phase 2: Immersive phase

The core of this phase, conducted about six months after the exploratory phase, aimed at gathering the main body of data necessary. By then, the hosts had become main informants helping me meeting other potential participants. Annexe Eight provides the full itinerary of this period spent living at the three guesthouses. This immersive period in people's daily lives to grasp the story of each case carrying its own particularities extended over 8 weeks in total.

As discussed in Section 4.2, understanding is built in context with interpretations of what is being represented to the researcher and what the researcher subjectively understands therefrom. So, for the sake of rigour, the fieldwork consisted mainly of reflecting on the researcher's position while building the interpretation of the informants' narratives. As discussed in Section 4.3, keeping a field journal to record reflections and relevant events has helped in correcting potential biases. And being constantly present – that is, alert and critically open but never judgemental – in the interactions

maintained the research progress focused on the research question. Table 7 summarises each of the three cases studied in terms of the socialities and the existing dyads.

Cases	Dyads	Primary sociality	Secondary sociality
Juha guesthouse	Neta-Ahmad	✓	✓
	Genevieve-Neta	✓	✓
	Genevieve-Ahmad	✓	✓
Fauzi guesthouse	Sureida-Maoz	✓	✓
	Maoz-Odette	✓	✓
Khouriyeh guesthouse	Rawda-Issa	✓	✓

Table 7 Three cases described in terms of the socialities and the existing dyads studied.

People interact in different social settings which are more or less focused on the functions of people or on the personal relationships (Caillé 1986). As explained in Chapter 3, primary sociality refers to a person to person relation and a secondary sociality is concerned with social relationships based on the function (formal roles for example). This research seeks to explore the social relationships and the ability to deal with difficulties from the participants' perspectives. One way of organising the data gathered has been to look at the

different socialities they engage in. It was interesting to see that all the dyads studied engaged in both primary and secondary socialities. These will be further discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

The immersive journey started in Jisr az Zarqa at the Juha guesthouse where I ended up spending four weeks (instead of the originally two weeks planned) although I did travel twice over to Nazareth with Maoz while interviewing him (see itinerary in Annexe Eight). Like in most fieldwork involving social relations and people, how much every one may plan, the contingencies of everyday life take over. This is why factoring in a form of flexibility in the design has been crucial.

4.3.3.1 Immersing into different social contexts and the generosity of hosts

The immersion had to be carried out in the most suitable way for the hosts; for the research; and the researcher altogether within a time limit. A social inquiry is not about *taking* information from people at any cost. Respecting the participant is an essential part of the researcher's ethics. This said, the researcher-informant relationship has been one of human being to human being first and foremost. And this was clearly the position of the hosts as well, since they were mostly concerned with sharing and interacting with me, Dilshaad – a returning guest – generously. The term "generously" is used deliberately here to refer to Maussian gift grammar as discussed in Chapter Three.

At the Khouriyeh guesthouse, Rawda offered to give me a special price for my stay since I was "only a student" as she said (Field diary, June 2016, Rawda).

This meant a deep consideration knowing how much they were struggling to make ends meet. "We help you and who knows, somewhere somehow, someone will help our children," Rawda said (Field diary, June 2016, Rawda). And she taught me: "Laa shukra alaa waajib" – which translates as 'there is no need to thank us, it is an obligation on us'. Such elements of language cannot be easily understood without the Maussian gift grammar which distinguishes between generosity and reciprocity. Sharing their story was important to the survival and sustainability of who they are as Palestinians – "normal people who just want to live a normal life like everybody else" but at the same time people living under a "double occupation" as Rawda would often say – "a double occupation under the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities" (Field diary, June 2016, Rawda). At the Fauzi guesthouse, Sureida simply did not make me pay for my accommodation, telling me in an informal tone and a kindly smiling voice – "forget it – you are my guest!" (Field diary, June 2016, Sureida).

The rational mind might think that giving always means receiving something in return and that like adherents of a Bourdieusian approach to the gift theory may have retorted – nothing is free. It is true that the hosts are in the tourist business; earning a living on welcoming people and looking after their needs. The socialisation is part of and beneficial for the business. After all, it was an opportunity for them to share their stories. The following quote from Fine *et al.* (2000) relates this kind of reciprocity in field research quite well.

> *"they have welcomed us into their spaces to "exploit" our capacity – our*
>
> *class, professional positions and networks – and our willingness to write*

and to testify to these aspects of community life that the media ignore,
that stereotypes deny, that mainstream culture rarely gets to see" (Fine
et al. 2000: 123).

It has to be clear that acknowledging the generosity of someone does not take away the fact that this generosity brings him or her some benefit. This said, the intention and resultant action or consequences are two distinct elements (see Chapter Three). The point here is not to judge the intention behind the generosity but to note the way it was carried out, received and felt by the researcher. Besides, even if the actions, words, attitudes and behaviours were instrumental for some sought after benefit, there was still a risk of it not happening. In other words, rational or not, the hosts were putting themselves in a situation of vulnerability by sharing with me their personal information for the sake of a research project.

Volunteering helped build credibility

At the Juha guesthouse, volunteers – in exchange of free accommodation - help in the daily service activities of the guesthouse and the social sustainability project of offering free after school English and Leadership classes to the local youth; but also, are highly encouraged to develop a social project for the village the time they spend there. I was offered the opportunity to teach a small group of high school students English lessons which I happily accepted - twice a week for 2 hours at the local college.

Volunteering and spending time in the case contexts allowed a common space to be built between the researcher and the participants. Of course, an act of receiving indebts the receiver and that was the case of the researcher. Looking

back, the volunteering process was not only a way for cutting the budget costs for accommodation or understanding the context better by experiencing it, but it was also a way to build a degree of credibility and confidence needed to ask the personal questions. The field except in Textbox 8 illustrates this.

Today Genevieve was surprised by the way I dealt with the kids at the galleria. Earlier this week, she didn't hide that she found me 'too nice' and 'always smiling'. She was happily surprised to see me make a misbehaving girl apologise to her classmate. Later that day while walking back to the guesthouse, she said to me: "you are walking next to me now" with a big smile. It was my turn to be surprised: "what do you mean?" Genevieve: "Well, ever since you came here a week and a half ago, you've been walking slightly behind me all the time. Now you walk next to me." It was a question of confidence she thought and noted after some reflection: "it's normal, you had just arrived in a totally new place, new people … *c'est vrai que tu devez prendre tes marques… (you had to find your pace)*"

 I think it has to do with my teaching at the school. Giving something back to the people feels good. I feel useful here. Now that she said that I feel I got the approval I've been looking for. (Field diary Excerpt, April 2015, Jisr ez Zarqa, Israel)

Textbox 8 Field Diary April 2015 Excerpt

I remember finding it very difficult over the first week to start interviewing the main participants only because I did not feel that I was in a position to ask anything before I had contributed at some level towards their understanding of who I was and what I was after. Volunteering was also a way to show that I shared the participants' interest and was not only after my own interest. This

has been an important aspect of building a relationship of trust. At the same time, there was also some of what I would call the beginner's fear which could have been a barrier to taking the first step forward. A chain of events changed this uneasy feeling towards more confidence and the excerpt in Textbox 3 from the field diary unveils this.

Volunteering had helped in: 1) building a social connection which eased the task of the researcher when the time of interviewing came and 2) levelling the power relations between the researcher and participant. Doing the same daily chores or providing inputs into the participants' lives, engaged a cycle of exchange in the interaction where the researcher was no longer viewed as 1) the 'alien' intruding but a 'guest', a 'foreigner who cares' and even 'a friend'. Engaging this primary level was crucial to learn to know the different personalities, I knew nothing of some months before. It eased the process of knowing the participants' context of interaction but also their ways of behaving and talking; and learning what people around would say about them.

And at the same time, I had to maintain a sufficient distance to be able to reflect critically over what I was learning and becoming in the process. That balance (of reflexivity) has been the backbone of the research. Most of the volunteering was at the Juha guesthouse where I started phase 2. At the Fauzi Azar guesthouse and the Khouriyeh guesthouse, there was no volunteering opportunity at the time and I was mainly a guest who the people had already integrated as a research student. Besides, by the time I conducted the interviews with the people there, I had acquired confidence and had befriended them to a point where I could ask the personal questions and obtain thorough answers quite easily.

Main and peripheral interviews

The main interviews were conducted at the time the hosts chose, but also when the researcher felt the time was *right* to engage into deep conversations. Interviews lasted about 2 hours on average and always held where the participants felt it was more convenient. For example, in Jifna, we sat in Rawda's kitchen around a cup of Arabian coffee and traditional cakes and talked a whole morning after breakfast. The interview with Maoz was conducted in his car while we drove up to Nazareth from Jisr and back. He had a very busy schedule and could only fit such an interview whilst driving. Informal interviews with people linked to the guesthouse also helped in knowing a bit more about each person's personality and story from different perspectives.

The advantage of a semi-structured interview has been efficient thanks to the effectiveness of the scheduled guiding questions. The questions were the same but the conversations nuanced following who the interlocutor was. I had to know who the participants were. For this, I had to let them tell me in their own words how they defined themselves. This is how the perceptions of my participants became an essential part of the data source. The gift lens, besides being a powerfully efficient analytical tool, enhanced the interview experience. Every exchange carries a meaning. It can be a shared meaning or not. But it always carries a meaning given by the source of the information and a meaning perceived by the receiver. If the meanings given and perceived coincide, then it can be said that there is mutual understanding.

Interpretation being key, the question of how I was going to make sure that I was not observing what I was more inclined to observe; the differences and

similarities between my own perceptions and that of my participants – still remained. This was where the reflexive approach in a field and research diary took all its importance. So, almost every day, I collected words about what I was told, what I felt and what I observed - my experience. This exercise proved to be more than just a record keeping. It was a dedicated time to think back and forth, trying to absorb the present. It was also a place to unload the weight of emotions which accompany such engaging research. So, bracketing spaces was important. There was the space created by the exchange. This space was shared between the giver and the receiver. Its nature defined that of the relationship. But there was also the space of the researcher to her-self to keep that needed critical reflexive distance. A gift too heavy to bear for the receiver may turn into a problem. As Gemignani (2011) and Berger (2015) have underlined the emotional dimension in field research should not be neglected and may be managed through systematic reflection on involvement and detachment of the researcher. With this pragmatism in mind and act, immersing into the field to learn from these new personalities was facilitated to an extent. I was to be more alert and hence more respectful and open to absorb data.

Interviewing Ahmad – who did not speak English although he understands some of it - was the most challenging interview experience for me, who at the time spoke neither much Arabic nor Hebrew. Besides being always on the move due to his busy life, he was not a talkative man at all. He would offer an agreeing smile at my requests for a chat at the café but the conversations in Arabic would not go further than the weather before his phone would ring and he had to run off. I had however the opportunity to spend some time with him

when he would offer to take me to the weekly food shopping for the guesthouse in the next town and these times although we did not talk, we shared a space and expressed our appreciation for such and such song on the radio or he would take me to meet his sister. In his own way, he was willing to share parts of his everyday experience as the owner of the guesthouse with me. The following excerpt from the field diary explains how I dealt with the challenge.

At first, with Ahmad, there was the ice-breaking phase and then there was this language barrier. I spoke a few words of Arabic and none of Hebrew- Ahmad sparingly understood English but did not speak it. I needed a translator to help me with the interviewing. The best person was to be someone who would understand Ahmad and the village culture as well as speak sufficient English to translate and also not interpret his answers. I had to wait long before I found the right person. Ahmad smiled when I told him that Mithqal, a young man from the village, would be happy to translate for us. It was important for me that Ahmad felt at ease with the translator. He did not look quite enthusiastic about the first person I had proposed and following which, I quickly dropped the idea. Finally, four days before I left Jisr, we managed to agree on a time with Ahmad and a translator whom Ahmad knew and trusted at Ahmed's home in the garden. (Field notes, July

Textbox 9 Field Diary July 2015 Excerpt

Before the interview with Ahmad, I spoke to Mithqal, who was no professional translator, to make sure he understood the aim of the exercise – "this is not an interpretation but a translation, so please make sure you tell me what he says, not what you think he said", I pointed out to him. Afterwards I reviewed the

audio recording and spoke to Mithqal about particular times where I felt I needed to make sure I understood the situation properly. I could have given him the transcription to review but it seemed that this exercise would have been pedantic and ineffective – so this method of interactive reviewing was best option for both of us, since quicker.

Conducting an interview with a translator can be daunting for all three parties present. The space is not shared between two but three minds. Temple and Edwards (2008) have noted that the role of the interpreter/translator cannot be overlooked. Although the conversation is between two people, there is an interaction between the translator and the informant which has to be followed at the second by the researcher. This observation of the facial expressions, body language and intonations give an idea of responses given but is effort-intensive. Only the observations were not sufficient, I had to make sure that my interpretation was right and for that double checking with the translator during or after the interview was important. Another point to underline is the maintaining of my presence as researcher even when the conversation was between the translator and Ahmad. To achieve this, I maintained as much eye contact as possible and kept my attention focused on the person talking every time. When the translator was translating, show of understanding, surprise, or misunderstanding through facial expressions and eye contact with Ahmad was important to keep the conversation as natural and inclusive as possible. The following excerpt from my field diary where I am referring to Ahmad's reaction during the translation in the interview gives an idea of this – "As the translator was translating his words on that subject his smile would grow as he would see – reading my facial expressions – that I was gradually understanding what

he meant" (Field notes, May 2015). Such communication was all the more important given that it was not easy to get Ahmad to sit down and have a focused conversation for more than ten minutes. Achieving the interview process was conditional to maintaining his interest in the conversation.

4.3.3.2   Insights from Phase 2

The reflexive approach with a clear abductive reasoning has protected the research from potential biases and helped the researcher manage the difficulties of moving from one immersion into another in a relatively short time period. It provided time for winding back from the position of a researcher-insider to one of a researcher. Looking back on phase 2, it was clear that presence and empathy played an important part in gathering the data on interpersonal resilience in the best possible conditions both for the researcher and the informants. Alongside this, a reflection on the responsibility of the researcher is also important. These aspects are further discussed in terms of the positionalities of the researcher who is the instrument of analysis as well as the author of the research.

Presence: On being receptive and building trust

Siegel (2010a; 2010b) has explained how 'presence' can allow us to be receptive to information flows, signals from others by avoiding, with will, preconceived ideas, taking up judgmental positions or keep in biased proclivities (Siegel 2010a).

> *"Presence means being open, to whatever is. We come to acknowledge our own proclivities and in that awareness, free ourselves to move from peak to plateau with ease and will" (Siegel 2010a:13).*

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By moving from peak to plateau, Siegel, speaking of the states of the mind, means moving from a state of fixed certainty, of rigidity to one open to possibilities, that is, to a flexible state of mind. In a social interaction, this awareness of our own mental states and positionings helps seeing with lucidity what comes from our own perceptions and what the person actually means (Siegel 2010a). This distinction is an important stage in the process of interpretation which happens from the moment the researcher enters into the field.

Most research tends to focus on the role of the researcher at an individual level (Berger 2015; Brayboy and Deyhle 2000; Ganga 2006; Kerstetter 2012b; Milligan 2016a; Milligan 2016b; Muhammad 2015; Takhar-Lail and Chitakunye 2015). Reflecting on the positioning of the researcher was the starting point to engage in this circular process of being receptive and building trust. While this is a worthwhile and insightful exercise, equally so is understanding how the researcher is perceived by the people in the settings. A relational approach looking at the trust-building process helps in reflecting on and learning from both.

Now, in the field, the researcher may be subject to curiosity and indifference; interest and disinterest; trust and distrust. And since relationships are dynamic systems, they shift and thus nothing is certain or permanent. The ability to be receptive in all situations has been conditional to maintaining trust in relationships. In other words, as the researcher, the main instrument of the research (Janesick 2000: 389-390; Lincoln *et al.* 2011: 124), I had to be effectively adaptive to the situations and be able to understand different perspectives by focusing attention on the incoming information flows in both

substance and form. To be receptive to these flows of information, I had to be mentally primed. As discussed earlier (Section 4.1), the different strategies have been: 1) factoring in different risks and possibilities into the research design; 2) filtering information prior to going into the field and using only factual information obtained from the travel security agency updates. These have helped maintaining the focus and reducing any potential bias due to disinformation or emotionally-laden news in the media.

That said, it was important to formulate concisely what were the research purpose and aims such that I could communicate as clearly as possible to the potential participants. Equally essential was to have a transparent discourse about who I was and what was my agenda there. The experience in the field proved that this effort on clarity facilitated the data gathering throughout the research. It eased the process of relationship building with potential participants as well as focused the data collected on the subject. The research aim was about understanding how people cope with co-workers in situations of tension. The focus was not on the economic resilience of the enterprises but the interpersonal resilience of the relationships in these enterprises. This was critical to underscore with participants. People sometimes tended to talk about their businesses and not about the relationship with co-workers. I found myself at several moments redirecting the diverting conversations from the socio-economic resilience of the business back to interpersonal resilience.

Also people, used to talking about their businesses to journalists and/or guests, tended to have developed a formatted discourse about the story they wanted to share with the public. With Ahmad in Jisr and Issa in Nazareth, for instance, I had to avoid falling into these conventional discourses which remain

superficial to some extent not answering the needs of the research. With Ahmad, sensing that his story was slipping into what he would deliver to a journalist, in the very early part of the interview I pointed out with a smile –

"I know you have talked to many people before me, and I am no journalist. I would like to hear about you, not only about the guesthouse's success story – although it's related, of course. [I pause] It would be great if you could tell me something you never said to anybody before" (Field Diary, May 2015)

And he laughed and smiled back kindly setting out to tell me a different nuance of his story than the one he usually tells to journalists.

Without the trust of the potential participants, no data is available and hence no research possible. Besides, as discussed in Section 4.2, the data resulting from researcher-informant interactions are sets of interpretations dialogically built in conversations. "The meaning one seeks in 'making sense' of a social action or text is temporal, processive and always coming to being in the specific occasion of understanding (Aylesworth, 1991; Bernstein, 1983; Gadamer, 1975, p.419)", Schwandt underlines, explaining further that - "In other words, meaning is negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation; it is not simply discovered" (Schwandt 2000: 195). It is clear that the researcher-as-insider who becomes the researcher-as-author has the responsibility of being receptive to the perspectives put forward by the participants.

Responsibility

For Schwandt (2000: 201), there are three salient issues the qualitative researcher has to consider:

> *"how to envision and occupy the ethical space where researchers and researched (subjects, informants, respondents, participants, coresearchers) relate to one another on the sociotemporal occasion or event that is "the research," and, consequently, how to determine, the role, status responsibility and obligations the researcher has in and to the society he or she researches"* (Schwandt 2000: 201).

The researcher's role, status and ethical obligations requires fundamentally a discussion about the researcher's subjectivity. This is why, in the first place, the epistemology of the research was spelled out in Section 4.2 and throughout this Chapter. Acknowledging this subjectivity is crucial for transparency. This is a way of achieving consilience - as discussed in Chapter Three. In other words, this methodological approach is an attempt to reconcile two complementary elements of qualitative research in which the researcher is primary instrument of analysis - scientific method with being human. While the first is a tool, the second is laden with non-negligible ontological assumptions and intuitive behaviour as discussed earlier. Now that it is clear that the researcher's subjectivity has an impact on the research (Berger, 2015). The next step is to explain reflexively how this subjectivity entailed a form of responsibility in the field and throughout the different phases. To achieve this, it has been helpful to think of the positionalities of the researcher.

Essentially, a 'position' involves a question of perspective. Berger (2013) summarises the range of what Bradbury-Jones (2007); Finlay (2000); Hamzeh and Oliver (2010); Horsberg (2003); Kosygina (2005); Padget (2008) and Primeau (2003) refer to as 'positioning' a qualitative researcher may have:

> *"relevant researcher's positioning includes personal characteristics, such as gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases, preferences, theoretical, political and ideological stances, and emotional responses to participants)" (Berger, 2013, p.2).*

This definition from Berger (2013) makes 'positioning' an umbrella term. The mixture of different social categories, status, stances and abilities is questionable as it reduces the efficiency of argument. This is why the concept of positionality is preferred in this research. The term positionality thus carries the following questions: whose position is being viewed? By whom? When and where? Taken together the answers to these may determine what a positionality is. This said, because contexts and people change, positionalities change. The positionality of the researcher is not the same depending on whose perspective is being considered, that of the researcher and/or that of informant for instance. Identifying pre-dominant positionalities serving a particular purpose, instead of summing up positions in terms of insider and outsider or even inbetweener, has been a subtler, effective and efficient way to understand my role as a researcher.

Although debated, I am still deliberately using the concepts of *insider* and *outsider* here for the following reasons. First, the main criticism against these concepts is, according to Milligan (2016) in line with Hellawell (2006), Arthur (2010) and Thomson and Gunter (2010), the "fixed and dichotomous" notions attached (Milligan, 2016 p. 248). She proposes the term 'inbetweener' and argues that it "recognises that the researcher can make active attempts to place themselves in between" (p.248). I propose that instead of introducing another term, an efficient way to understand the researcher's positionalities is by explicitly addressing the elements which compose a positionality, hence the questions raised in the previous paragraph (that is, positionality of who; from whose perspective, where and when).

While Hellawell's (2006) idea of an insider-outsider continuum, where he conceptualises the researcher's positioning on varying gradients of insiderness and outsiderness, seems appealing intellectually, it still focuses on the researcher at the individual-level. The researcher is neither always and completely inside and looking from inside and neither always and completely outside and looking from outside. But, a question still remains: inside or outside of what? And, literature is not very explicit on that matter. Here, the *side* is mainly the micro-level context which forms the immediate social environment to which the cases studied belong and in which they operate. This follows Geertz' (1976/1979) idea of "inside" as getting to understand the actors' definitions of the situation, but specifies how it is achieved. Positionality is ultimately a relational concept and can only be understood in relational terms. Table 8 shows such a succinct conceptualisation of the positionalities

predominant during the different phases of the research process as I experienced them.

From the perspective of	Nuanced positionalities of the researcher	Some illustrations	Exploratory Phase 1	Immersive Phase 2	Feedback Phase 3	Writing up Phase 4
Researcher and informant	researcher-as-outsider	Guest at the guesthouses	■			
Researcher and informant	researcher-as-insider-outsider	Volunteering and being called "a friend" or even "part of the family"		■	■	
Researcher	researcher-as-outsider-insider	Allowing space for reflexive analysis		■	■	■
Researcher	researcher-as-author	Allowing space for writing up validated interpretations			■	■

Table 8 Conceptualisation of the positionalities predominant during the different phases of the research process

Given that the 'informant' is anybody (participant, interviewee, interlocutor) who provides information relevant to the research, five nuanced positionalities of the researcher have to be clarified here: 1) researcher as a role, a function, a positioning; 2) researcher-as-outsider; 3) researcher-as-insider-outsider; 4) researcher-as-outsider-insider; and 5) researcher-as-author. First the role of the researcher from this research philosophy has been discussed in Chapter Three. In a nutshell, following an abductive reasoning approach, a role of researcher is one in which the quest for enhancing understanding is ongoing (see Section 4.2). Although engaging in primary socialities whilst in the field, my primary role has been that of a researcher.

This positionality has been multi-lateral depending on different contexts and the spaces shared with the self and others. When as the researcher I arrived at the guesthouses for instance at first, I was perceived as an outsider – a tourist, a guest. I also felt like an outsider, but as soon as I explained my purpose, I was readily perceived as a researcher. I became the researcher-as-outsider both from my perspective and that of the potential informants. However, once the relationships of trust are initiated and developed, I became more of a researcher-as-insider-outsider. Because, the trust relationships were only starting to build up and I was not a local nor did I belong to the guesthouses studied, there was always an aspect of outsider that remained. This was not a problem as the aim was not to achieve complete insiderness but to have enough information given and received to answer the research question, hence the immersive phase. Besides, there may be a risk of being 'too much of an insider'. This is when people start to speak to you as if you

knew all the cultural subtleties implied in their discourses. This can become an issue if not addressed. As Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) highlighted in line with Denzin (1992) and Kogler (1996), the unravelling of the ideological coding embedded in cultural representations "is complicated by the taken-for-grantedness of the meanings promoted in these representations and the typically undetected ways these meanings are circulated in everyday life" (Kincheloe and McLaren 2000: 289).

Now because this is reflexive research, taking a mindful step aside the hustle and bustle of the everyday life in these micro-societies has been critical. The time set aside for writing down or recording audio reflections on the day was part of an overall strategy of data gathering, but more importantly keeping things manageable for the researcher. Social relationships can be quite engaging and effort-intensive. Berger (2015, p.3) noted the necessary "involvement and detachment" of the researcher to the informants in the context. The reporting in the field diary provided a space where I, as the researcher, was first deliberately an outsider looking in, while keeping my newly learnt insider insights. Writing down feelings, emotions, telling the story of the day to oneself or simply jotting down or recording reflections in a diary liberated the mind and allowed for a critical distance on the data received. Also, it allowed identifying areas of misunderstandings or of interest which could have been missed during the immersion of the day. This way of bracketing – intentionally deciding to set the mind's focus on a particular purpose at different times and in different situations during a day – raised the efficiency of the research. Tried and tested in the first case, it was applied within less time in the next two cases studied.

Finally, the role of the researcher as an author writing up the research raises the question of credibility to claim authorship on a piece of research containing interpretations of informants' subjective representations. Citing McNess *et al.* (2015), Milligan (2016b) points out that "relationships of power between researchers and participants influence the way in which knowledge is constructed and what becomes 'known'" (Milligan 2016b: 241). How researchers are viewed in the field and how researchers view themselves in effect cannot be neglected. For McNess *et al.* (2015), there is a need for understanding the complexities of the researcher-informant relationships.

> *"This should not only include a better understanding of the way in which more traditional boundaries, such as nationality, language, ethnicity, culture, gender and age, interact, but also a recognition and understanding of various ontological, epistemological and disciplinary boundaries that might be encountered and the way in which these might impact on the generation of new knowledge" (McNess et al. 2015)*

Although in this citation, I would prefer to talk about generation of new understanding than knowledge to be more precise, I still agree with the authors that understanding can only be achieved if analysis goes deeper than just linking such 'traditional' categories and conceptualising those linkages into theory.

Understanding is about giving meaning to something that is closest to the meaning the 'thing' gives to itself. Say an action is narrated to the researcher by the participant. In the discussion with the participant I would ask further questions such as: "what do you mean? Or "why did you do this?". Often, the

reasons why we do things are not clear to us in the spur of the moment, but when we reflect back on them we assign meanings to them. The meanings we assign are not necessarily exactly those we assigned at the time of the action. The meanings assigned in retrospection are reviewed in relation to several factors such as the content of the question we are answering or later events related to or had had an impact on that particular action or vice versa. Fine *et al.* (2000) have argued that "our obligation is to come clean "at the hyphen," meaning that we interrogate in our writings who we are as we coproduce the narratives we presume to "collect," and we anticipate how the public and policy makers will receive, distort, and misread our data" (Fine *et al.* 2000: 123). As discussed earlier, authoring research comes with a responsibility, hence the need for the researcher's interpretations of the data received from informants to be to confronted by the givers before writing up.

4.3.4 Phase 3: Feedback

Throughout this research, the importance of understanding the perspectives expressed has been consistently mentioned and defended. Because our anticipatory interpretations unconsciously nuanced by prejudices or personal biases are constantly changing over time through the different encounters we experience, our understanding of information received are also nuanced and/or confirmed. As Kerstetter (2012a: 112) has noted there is "value of bringing the data back" to the participant. Authoring research involves representing the information presented by the informants. In that, I am in line with Roni Berger's (2015) approach that she spells out in studying mothers' experiences with their children's law guardian:

"A main strategy for monitoring such an impact of researcher's ignorance is embracing humbly the standpoint of the uninformed and actively seeking guidance and feedback from participants and peers who are familiar with the study topic and population ('tell me what I may be missing')" (Berger 2015: 13).

Besides, the pragmatic philosophy and consequential abductive reasoning logically imposed a feedback phase whereby the researcher's first interpretations of the data gathered in phase 2 were presented to the main participants for evaluation. This phase conducted about 16 months after the immersive phase, closed the data gathering period. Such time lapse provided the opportunity for the researcher to digest the effort and emotionally-intensive immersive fieldwork and conduct a first analysis of the data and gather feedback from peers on the first two phases (mainly the theoretical and methodological aspects). Presentations to colleagues and fellow PhD students and discussions with supervisors were helpful as they were bringing in outsider perspectives which pointed to possible developments or other related issues[32] which may have been missed or dropped out by the researcher. Also, a long period for analysis of narratives offered the reflexive space to think and identify where my own experience interfered in the data interpretation thus checking for biases.

This time, I stayed in a place independent of the three cases studied. This was deliberate to keep a degree of detachment to the immediate context. I was

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[32] For instance, discussing the field experience with a colleague revealed that the latter thought all Jews in Israel were religious people and all Arabs were Muslims and living in Palestine. From this encounter, I realised that it was important to specify some elements of language (Section 4.1) such that readers do not misunderstand the local context.

however travelling to meet with informants informally as a friend and at the same time we managed to schedule meetings for the feedback interviews in their busy agendas. Prior to travelling, I had explained the aim of the visit in a personal email to each informant. From each case, I received the proposal to conduct the feedback meeting in a group of the dyads studied. "It would be easier to organise for us and better for you as the discussion would be richer… we would be able to discuss with each other" – I remember one informant mentioning (Field diary November 2015). Once in the field, I realised it was the best strategy given the content of the feedback interviews.

A research briefing (see Annexe Nine) summarising the three key findings was produced as a basis for discussion during the second part of the interview. This material was used to engage the participants to reflect and feedback on my analysis so far. The main aim of this set of interviews was not to add any new data but to review analysed data; add another layer of analysis to it and validate or refute the interpretation I provided. The first part of the interviews was kept quite informal and allowed for catching up for the last year or so. Then, I presented the findings orally to the participants and listened to what they had to say. During their discussions, I presented them with the briefing and allowed them some time to review it. Using a research briefing added efficiency to my presentation and effectiveness to their understanding of what I was focusing on. For the Arab speaking participants, I produced an Arabic version translated and reviewed by local friends (see Annexe Nine). This was outspokenly well received and all participants asked for a copy to keep. Producing a tangible output was significant in that it allowed participants to see a concrete outcome of their contribution to the research process. Besides, it is

a piece of work they could potentially use as a form of feedback for their own projects and business relationships given that they are all social-oriented enterprises.

All participants validated the interpretations presented and further pointed to its importance in terms of learning about their own relationships. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

4.3.4.1   Insights from Phase 3

Two key insights have to be pointed out as a result of this third phase: 1) levelling asymmetrical power relations and 2) the question of anonymity.

Asymmetries from a gift perspective

The power relation between researcher and informant discussed explicitly until now has been about the researcher authoring – ultimately representing the information offered by the informants. But there is another form of power asymmetry that, although acknowledged throughout the process, has not yet been explicitly discussed. And this is the expert position of the informants on their interpersonal resilience and the ignorance of the researcher on this. Recognising the informants' expertise (Berger 2015); (Berger and Malkinson 2000) and underlining this fact with participants has been helpful in the trust-building relationship with them. Acknowledging that I was there to learn from their experiences had placed my informants in a position of giver and me - the researcher - as a receiver eager to receive (not take). At the same time, I was offering them an opportunity to share their stories, which would not only benefit my research, but also to some extent their social goals. Read through the lens of the Maussian gift as discussed in Section 3.2.4, my interactions with them

were mainly characterised by agnostic *gift and role play* on Chanial's (2008) compass navigating between reciprocity and generosity. We are far from any form of exploitation or predation which explains how the relationships of trust quickly formed and maintained over time. This last phase was meant to check the validity of my interpretations and thereby establish or not the credibility authorising me to write up and publish the interpretations. This authority was earned through the approval of the participants in the feedback phase.

The question of anonymity

In this particular research, it is clear that I could not anonymize the data due to the specifically identifiable cases. Practically it was impossible. However, at the beginning and the end of every interview, I specifically underlined that participants point out anything they wish not to be reported from the information they gave formally or informally. I was not going to make public anything that they did not agree to. I received their verbal consent to publish everything reported here, as well as agreement to use their first names. Also, following the nature of the cases studied – social entrepreneurial guesthouses - the choice of not being anonymous has been understandable. Sharing their story was also a form of recognition of their work and a means to contribute to society's understanding of interpersonal resilience through their personal experiences in such a volatile context. Besides, given the prototypical nature of their enterprises in the region, they would have been easily identifiable.

Summary

This Chapter has clarified the abductive reasoning which led to choosing a qualitative case story approach through a phased field research. Reflexivity has been a means to enhance the rigour of the research both ethically and scientifically (Berger 2015; Gemignani 2011).

Each of the four phases has served the purpose of building the database while assuring that interpretations of information provided by informants were understood represented in context. Phase 1 has allowed experiencing the in-field elements of the macro-political context; identifying potential research participants and start building a trust relationship with main informants. The context of an intractable conflict environment has called for a flexible approach in the methodological design, hence an immersive phase using ethnographic-inspired methods (participation, informal and semi-structured interviews). Presence and emphatic cognition with the informants contributed by facilitating the interactions between researcher and informant. This was critical, as data sought after require sharing of sensitive intimate information which is not easily divulged to strangers and all the more in such a distrusting context as discussed in Section 4.1. Phase 3 closed the field data gathering process and the feedback session with informants confirmed the researcher's first analysis, hence explicitly giving her permission to publish the findings. It was also a time to share the first tangible output of the research with the participants and thereby catalysing the thinking of the practical implications of the research (This will be discussed in Chapter 7).

The phased fieldwork design had the advantages of 1) cutting down costs; 2) allowing time for trust-building such that; 3) sensitive personal information could be shared with consent over shorter periods of time. Alongside these, there were some challenges. For instance, the immersive process has been emotionally demanding (for on-going presence) as I have been dealing with people's personal lived relational experiences. Focused attention has required constant reflexivity and navigating between involvement to understand and detachment (bracketing) to maintain a critical distance. Figure 17 synthesizes the four interrelated pillars of the qualitative data gathering employing an abductive reasoning which have been developed throughout this process.

- Filtered openness to the information flows form the field settings

- A negotiated process between the researcher and the participants

Phase 1
Receptivity

Phase 2
Trust-building

Phase 4
Responsibility

Phase 3
Bracketing

- Because the researcher is the main instrument of analysis

Navigating between involvement and detachment by allowing space for critical reflection and immersive learning

Figure 17 Four pillars of this micro-level qualitative data gathering employing an abductive reasoning

This methodological framework developed has provided the added value of building rigour into the qualitative field research, in that its design was constructed to reflect on the positionalities of the researcher from her perspective, as well as from the participants. Spelling out these intricacies of the research process has inscribed transparency at the core of the methodology. For instance, the question of power asymmetries in the researcher-informant relationship was addressed through acknowledging the expertise of the informants over that of the researcher, when it came to understanding the informants' experiences of interpersonal resilience in episodes of tension. This recognition placed the researcher in a position of learner and receiver and the informants in the empowered position of giver. Likewise, their feedback on the researcher's interpretation of the key findings gave the researcher the power of authority, that is, the permission to write the research with the consent and approval of the informants. It is clear that this methodological framework cohered with the pragmatic philosophy of the research.

Now that the methodological framework is set out and justified in relation to the research question, the cases analysed can be presented and this will be done in the next Chapters Five and Six.

Part III Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

"It is not the story that makes the people; it is the people that make the story." (Mithqal Amash, 2017)

This quote translates the whole idea underlying this context-based analytical framework of which the personal narratives have been the building blocks. The literature review in Chapter Two showed that interpersonal resilience, as a subjective and emergent concept is context specific. Consequently, as discussed in Chapter Three, the types of socialities through which the dyads operate and evolve became salient, as much as the perceptual and active positionings of the protagonists have been, in understanding the eventual adaptive pathways chosen in circumstances of tension.

In Chapter Four, it was seen that a story-based approach recounting the highlights of the relationships studied provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the micro-level and socio-temporal context in which the dyads evolved. Besides informing how the protagonists perceive their dyadic partners and others, such a story approach told as a patchwork of the narratives of the main protagonists interviewed, carried the advantage of putting forward those elements which are valued by the interviewees. This in turn spelled out their motivations for the relationships which are crucial elements for understanding what drove the interpersonal resilience. Therefore, Chapter Five will provide a complete analytical account of the first case studied demonstrating how the different partners of the relationships studied adapted

to varying sources of stress. Presenting the case on a story-based approach addresses the need for contextualization identified in the literature.

Key:
'Observable in data gathered' in green rectangles
'Interpretation from data gathered' in ellipses (following colour coding of Chapter Three)
'Articulations to be discussed' : double arrows in dotted lines with a question mark
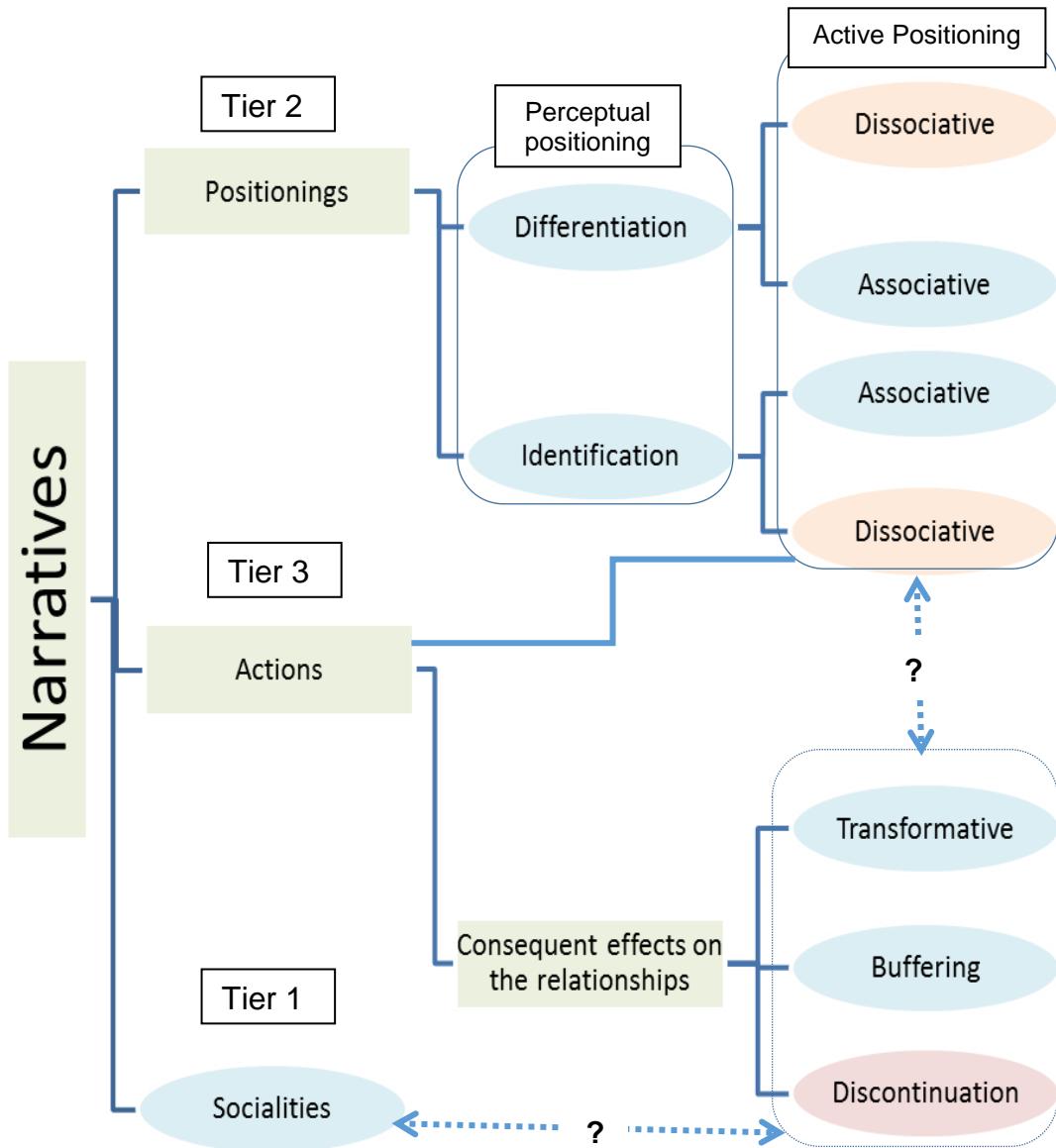
Figure 18 The context based logical transition from narratives to interpretation

Figure 18 shows the logic of the transition from data gathered to interpretation through the three tiers of the socio-cognitive analytical framework developed in Chapter Three. In green rectangles are those elements that were observable in data gathered and in ellipses (following colour coding of the framework as described in Chapter Three) are the interpretations from data gathered. Finally, the question marks on the double ended arrows point to the articulations ultimately sought to be understood in the analysis. Exploring the articulations between positionings, actions and socialities will be insightful in confirming the salience of the framework for understanding interpersonal resilience as an emergent, subjective and context-specific concept.

Organizing the stories

Each case tells the story of the relationships which built the entrepreneurial project of setting up a guesthouse - the Fauzi Azar; the Juha and the Khouriyeh. The narratives' locus has been the guesthouses and the dyads studied were mainly the relationships – alliances - of those who founded the guesthouses. The beginnings of the relationships; the social representations of each character and the identification of circumstances of tension helped in organising the stories in a fluid manner such that the eventual adaptive pathways the relationships took during circumstances of tension could be substantiated with thorough descriptions of context. The sources of tension or stressors were defined as those elements - events, incidents - which reportedly caused a pressure on the dyad and/or on the person such that it affected the dyad. These were identified from the narratives of the interviewees and confirmed by them in the feedback interviews. The highlights narrated by the interviewees which according to them were stepping stones in

the alliance's evolution are narrated through episodes of the guesthouse timeline till November 2016. Anecdotes which happened at the beginning of the foundation process of the guesthouses are told to tell the story of how the co-worker dyadic relationships started. Then, episodes showing how these dyadic relationships evolved over time especially in circumstances of tension are presented.

Logic of the interpretation process

For each story, the forms of socialisations of the main characters are analysed in terms of how each perceive their belonging to the different social groups in the micro-level context of the guesthouse and the immediate environment. This is presented through the social representation of the selves as narrated by the interviewees and interpreted through the perceptual and active positionings by the researcher. It is important to bear in mind that these social representations of the selves are context specific and not meant to be generalized to other contexts, as discussed in Chapter Four. How interviews are conducted, that is the perspectives in and around which the conversations develop, necessarily influence the information received. It was key that interviewees feel free to express what they wished to and in that way, the elements they value could be identified.

The perceptual positionings involved identifying which elements the interviewees held as valuable with regard to their belonging to the relationships. These valued elements carry a symbolic significance which in turn informed about their motivations to be in the relationships. The interviewees attributed subjective meanings to these elements which when

discussed using the gift grammar allowed for an elaborate understanding of the social positioning. Understanding the social representation of the self and the valued elements of the persons interviewed has been an essential stepping-stone in building understanding of the interpersonal resilience as the following Chapters will discuss.

Structure of Part III

Part III first presents the case-specific analysis of each of the three cases studied in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five provides a detailed presentation of the Fauzi Azar story in episodes which illustrate certain forms of adaptation through the events and incidents experienced by the dyads. Then it moves on to further analysis of symbolic representations informing the alliances' nature. This is conducted in terms of how each protagonist socially represented her or himself in relation to the case studied. Here particular focus was given to what these social representations say about the positionings (perceptual and actual) of the protagonists. Then digging further into understanding how perceptions and actions articulate into adaptive pathways or not, the intricacies of interpersonal perceptions are discussed in light of the Maussian Gift theory.

The Chapter was structured in such a way that it will allow the reader to follow the interpretation process the researcher has chosen. This makes Chapter Five a template, a blueprint for presenting the case analyses. However, for the sake of brevity and efficiency for the reader, in Chapter Six only the symbolic representations informing the alliances' nature in the Juha and Khouriyeh cases is presented. The detailed presentations of the story of each of these

cases are presented in Annexes Ten and Eleven respectively. Chapter Six presents a cross-analysis of the empirical findings from three cases studied to discuss how interpersonal resilience can be understood through a context-based framework in the light of the findings.

Finally, Chapter Seven recapitulates the contributions of the research followed by a discussion on the conceptual and methodological strengths and limitations in relation to how these play out in future research avenues.

Chapter Five Case story analyses I

5.1 The Fauzi Azar case story

> *"Israel is around 80% Jewish and 20% Arabs "separated communities with almost no interaction and a big gap between them… and I wanted my social business to create a bridge and to narrow this gap… So coming from a Jewish community I decided to open my business in the Old City of Nazareth" (Informal discussion, Maoz Inon, May 2015)*

Maoz was born and raised in an Israeli kibbutz. After his military service, at 22 years old, like the majority of young Israelis (Shulman et al. 2006), he went backpacking around the world. Through his experiences, and especially after seeing how a small guesthouse changed the lives of the locals in South America, Maoz learned how the tourism industry can be harnessed to make a positive change – "empowering and raising the self-esteem of youth and old alike" as he put it presenting at the 2014 Global Social Business Summit in Mexico City. In 2005, he engaged on his entrepreneurial journey: "so with an entrepreneur spirit I decided to open a tourism business in my homeland, Israel"[33] (Inon, 2014).

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[33] Maoz Inon's presentation during the 2014 Global Social Business Summit in Mexico City. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQu2wetRkNg

Choosing Nazareth was a particularly bold economic and social decision. The city is in the centre of the Galilee is the largest Arab city of Israel. "Christian heritage, Muslim majority in a Jewish state - you would never find any other city like this in the world!"[34] , Maoz always says- "so it was the perfect place to start". Once a culturally rich and flourishing locality, after the 1948 war, the Old City of Nazareth, saw an economic downfall for various reasons- emigration and economic abandonment (Falah 1992; King-Irani 2007; Rabinowitz 1997; Uriely *et al.* 2003). Local businesses have been shutting down (see in picture). And over the years, the place became prey to criminal activities and a haven for drug dealers.

Episode 1: Beginnings

In 2005, when Maoz started looking for a property in Nazareth he met with Sureida. Sureida is a well-educated lady who comes from an Arab family. She was born and raised in Nazareth. And she is also quite outspoken. This is what she told me in one of our informal discussions about her first exchanges with Maoz:

> *"First of all you are a Jew, nobody would support you and on the other hand, the economic situation in Nazareth is very bad. People are closing their businesses" (Informal interview with Sureida, May 2016).*

When Maoz explained that his aim was to open a guesthouse inside the Old City, Sureida was even more startled-

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[34] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQOxzyaS0G0 ; Accessed November 2016

"How dare you walk in the Old City of Nazareth?" "No one dares to go there because it is a very dangerous place - full of drugs, dark in the night, stinky, dirty, people get drunk all the time… you have fights on the streets and all the shops are closed. Now you are telling me that you want to bring tourists to Nazareth? If we are locals and we don't even dare to step in the Old City of Nazareth?" (Informal discussions with Sureida, May 2016)

She told me how she spoke frankly to Maoz who replied: "*maybe you don't see the other side of the coin.*" Sureida told me that at that point she felt insulted, so she retaliated: "*with full respect Maoz, but I was sixteen when my grandma died so who are you to tell me about the Old City of Nazareth?*". But Maoz was adamant to share his perspective: what he experienced while walking in the Old City was a "*special atmosphere*". For him who had walked the Old City three or four times already, what he experienced was the "*delicious smell from the bakeries, the spices, the cardamom of the coffee all around… and the bells of the church on one ear and the voice from the mosque on the other*" (informal discussions with Maoz, April 2016). However, this wasn't enough to make Sureida trust in him. For her he was "*abnormal*" and living in his own "*fantasy*". Besides, Maoz had no money to invest so Sureida decided to leave the meeting. But as every relentless entrepreneur, Maoz persevered and asked to see the mansion which he heard Sureida's family have in the Old City.

"I looked at him and I said: 'Maoz, with full respect, for your own sake just don't think of opening a business in the Old City. But if you insist,

forget about the family mansion. You look for another family because mine is not the family that would cooperate with you. I have nothing against you, with all respect, but because you are a Jew. And you don't know who was Fauzi Azar" (Informal discussions with Sureida, May 2016)

Fauzi Azar was Sureida's grandfather - 'grandpa' as she always refers to him with warmth. Family is highly valued by Sureida as this quote indicates: "Listen. I am the seventh or eighth generation already. And all the time, we were brought up to respect and protect the name and honour of the family" (Informal discussions with Sureida, May 2016). The Azar family was amongst the well-off Arab families living in Nazareth. They had several hectares of land which as Sureida says:

"After 1948, were taken by the Israeli government". She told me: "In the late 60s, grandpa had the official Turkish papers of these lands and by the way we still have them. He wanted to get back the land. So he went to the special offices and he asked to get back the land. The answer was: 'we can't give you back the land but we will pay you some money instead.' Grandpa refused the money. He said: 'I won't accept your money because I won't let my children or grandchildren say that I sold my lands to Jews'" (Sureida, Lines 281-284).

For Sureida telling Maoz this story was important to show him that money was never their priority; instead, what has always been important? was protecting and honouring their heritage. This mansion holds high symbolism for the

identity of the Azar family. When everyone migrated to Syria after 1948, only Fauzi Azar stayed in Nazareth with his family. He was determined to conserve the family heritage in the Old City. So much so that it even cost him his life. In 1980, on a cold winter night when no one except the old man was home, the carpet in the main hall caught fire from oil spilled from the heating. He fought to put out the fire, succeeded but was severely burned. Two weeks later he died from his injuries.

So Maoz, who just wanted to see the place and got a blunt: *"no way!"* from Sureida (Sureida, line 82). She pointed that her mother, Odette Azar Shomar, was responsible for the mansion and thus she couldn't help him any further. However, he still wasn't discouraged in any way by this and asked for her mother's number. *"I gave him the number thinking he would never dare call after I've told him all this!"* she exclaimed (informal discussions with Sureida, May 2016).

The Azar Mansion (or as the family calls it, Beit Fauzi Azar, the house of Fauzi Azar) was built around an open courtyard, replete with Ottoman arches and architecture is symbolic of the heritage of this Nazarene merchant family. It is their ancestral home in Nazareth and was built in the first half of the 19th century in the bustling "Suq Quarter", the heart of the Old City by Azar Habib, the grandfather of Fauzi Azar. He was owner of numerous properties and several dunums (one dunum equals to one thousand square metres) of land around Nazareth. The grandiose architecture of the place testifies of the wealth and high social status of this merchant family. In the late Ottoman period, Nazareth merchants' wealthy from the flourishing trade built lavishly decorated houses (Sharif-safadi 2013) in the city from imported materials. Beit Fauzi Azar is no less with its marble floors are from Marmara in western Turkey; its wood from the Taurus Mountains in southern Turkey and terracotta roof tiles from Marseille in France. The Azar family even commissioned a Lebanese artist – Saliba- from Beirut to paint the ceilings in exchange of a gold coin every day and a bottle of arak. The Italian-style murals are flavoured to the Oriental taste: the green and yellow wheat symbolising the required hard-work for prosperity and the angels reflecting the Christian roots of the family.

Textbox 10 Field Diary November 2016 Excerpt describing Beit Fauzi Azar

Episode 2: Odette and Maoz: a win-win agreement

Odette recalls Maoz calling her and asking to meet: *"let's have a coffee together. There's nothing wrong in that. No harm will come from that"* (Informal discussions with Odette, May 2016). They met and Maoz asked to rent the house. On one hand she was scared for his life. A Jew in Nazareth was an unimaginable thought back then. And on the other hand, she felt that this was just unbelievable that he dared ask this. *"It's not enough for you what you took from us? Now you want my parents' house?" … "are you insane?"* (Informal discussions with Sureida, May 2016). The beginnings here were tumultuous. Maoz was lucid about the different barriers on his road. *"In the Arab culture you are doing business on family connections, reputation…Coming from no reputation, no one knows your family, your parents – no one will do business with you."* (Informal discussions with Maoz, May 2016). That was another difficulty. However, after the fourth meeting, it happened. Odette that Wednesday asked Maoz if he really wanted this and as always he replied in the positive. She finally said: *"You know what, here are the keys. You can start your business today"* (Informal discussions with Odette, May 2016). Sureida noted her mother was clear:

> *"'If you want me to see you as a Jew, I won't make any business with you. I see you as a human being'. And this is what was important. He [Maoz] suggested at the beginning to call it 'the House of Peace' or something like that. She [Odette] refused. She said 'the only thing, the condition is to open the house in order to keep the memory of our father. I don't care for peace. I don't believe in the real peace. I don't believe we might solve any problem'"* (Sureida, lines 297-301).

Sureida explained that her mother, Odette, was ready to trust him- "*ok I want to give you my trust*" but that was conditional.

> "*We will give you the house for five years even though you don't have money. Instead of paying renting fees you have to make renovations. There was no electricity, no water – the house has been closed for 17 years… Drug dealers and addicts had turned the yard into a toilet… Even so, my aunts first of all refused the whole idea because people thought we sold the house because it was published in the news in Nazareth that an Arab family in the Old City sold their house to a Jew. At the end, they knew that we didn't sell the house. The only condition was to rent the house to keep it Fauzi Azar's house. To memorize our father, grandfather's name*" (Sureida interview, lines 86-93)

Amongst the Israeli Arabs, selling land or a house to a Jew is viewed as a disgrace and betrayal to the community. While for her sisters and members of the family it was a question of reputation in their social circles, for Odette looking beyond that and seizing an opportunity to rescue the mansion was more important. Sureida told me: "*My mom said to her sisters: 'do you have any better option? Give me. The house is going to collapse any time and all the drug dealers …'*" (Sureida Lines 231-233).

Since Sureida's grandmother died in 1989, Odette Shomar was the only one to come and check on the house.

> "*And she saw that they [drug addicts] used the courtyard as a toilet for the neighbourhood… but no one was ready from the family to come and*

bring his children and live here" Sureida told me (Sureida, Lines 199-
201).

For Odette the best case scenario was a win-win for both of them. Maoz
wanted to open his business and she wanted to renovate and protect the
family heritage from a growing plague of drug dealers. She did not believe then
that the business would survive even - "*Okay let him try, at least he will clean
it and close it. Protect it and close it. This was a kind of …like the last thing
they could try to protect the house. Nothing else. No one could before … there
was a journalist, Jonathon Cook, they gave him the house in order to live in it
and use it. It wasn't a good area to live in- even till today*" (Sureida lines 201-
204). So in perspective, as Sureida repeated: "*It was a win-win situation for
both sides*" (Informal discussions with Sureida, May 2016).

Episode 3: Sureida and Maoz; a turning point

About a year later, after the guesthouse - the Fauzi Azar Inn - was opened and
running Maoz called Sureida and asked her if she could come over to the
place.

> *"At the beginning, I told him 'I can't come and find you there. It's another*
>
> *occupation[35] for me. That it's not easy to find you a stranger and what!*
>
> *A Jew also at my grandpa's house!' and he said 'But it's still your*
>
> *grandpa's house. If you can come just for once, just to see and tell me*
>
> *what you think. And more and more journalists are coming… so why*
>
> *don't you help me…'. My husband told me 'Just go once, and then you*

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[35] she is referring to the political Occupation

don't have to go again'. And I decided one day to come." She paused
(Sureida, Lines 242-246).

Then, continued eating her breakfast and told me about the rest of this turning point in her life.

"I came, it wasn't easy. I was crying downstairs. I was afraid to open the door. You know after 17 years to come here to open the small door. I was afraid to see things that don't fit here. [I thought because] he is a Jew- he would have changed everything. It's not a normal house outside the Old City. It's an authentic thing. It is inside the Old City of Nazareth… (she pauses) And it was very difficult for me to believe that he didn't damage anything or do anything that would have keep it the same you know. So I entered… and it was … It was difficult a little bit. I found the courtyard clean [she says with her eyes wide open conveying the surprise she felt] The plants… The same staircase… I saw the doors open as if they were always open…" Then, "immediately when I entered I thought 'How stupid we are that we gave him this house. What did my mom do?' [she laughs] …But in the main hall, on the right I saw grandpa's picture still hanging on the wall [she concluded with a change of tone in her voice expressing her change of heart towards Maoz]"
(Sureida, Lines 248-256).

Maoz had respected Odette's request and kept the family portraits on the wall. Sureida recalls that there were many people and they were asking Maoz:

"'Who is this in the picture? Why is it called Fauzi Azar? Who painted the ceiling?" … And Maoz said "she is the grand-daughter, she would know more ..." I started answering them. After ten minutes I felt I was very very happy you know! I felt I have a commitment towards my grandparents" (Sureida line 242-263).

Since 2006, till at the time of the interviews in November 2016, Sureida works with Maoz at the Fauzi Azar. The guesthouse has received several awards and international recognitions but the unstable socio-political climate in Israel and the Middle East did not make things easy. Maoz has been investing money from other businesses of his to keep the guesthouse running. Sureida told me about her reservations for the future:

"The family will now sign a contract for another five ten years. The thing is that we are not sure about that because this time it's not going be Maoz alone. It will be may be with his partners... maybe. Because he said that if he … he wants to support and things like that, he needs to bring more money here. And as a partnership with his partners, it will be stronger. ...But on the other hand, I was against the whole idea since the beginning. Because I know that with Maoz I feel free. I feel that we trust each other. I don't have to ask him. He doesn't have to check on me. But with other partners…" [she paused and showed her hesitations] (Sureida, Lines 460-466).

She gave me an example of how much they trust in each other's judgement and that this has helped her keep a certain degree of control over who comes over to her grandpa's house and who doesn't:

"Today I can control this. I can say for example Dali (she calls me Dali), I don't want her to enter here in this house. Because I don't accept extremists to enter … For instance, Maoz will respect this, I say 'I feel she is not a good thing for the hostel, I don't want her to be here.' I have this possibility to decide. I don't want you to enter because this is grandpa's house and I know that you are doing something bad for this house. With the other four partners I don't think it will be easily like this. Even though if they respect me and everything… so a little bit I am afraid… so I told Maoz: 'for me. Don't ask me to see them like you. Don't ask me to look at them or deal with them like (with) you… though I like them a lot the four of them. I know one of the partners that he is like Maoz for me… I know that blind… he is a great man. the others are very good but they are businessmen. They want what is better for their own sake. Maoz looks also what's good for us as a family. He would never hurt or insult the family. He would never do something that would be very good for the business but not good for the family. He would give up and say 'I don't need it if will do something bad for Sureida or her family. And this…You can't ask all of them to be like this. and I would understand and they came here for business… I will tell you something, If it was just Maoz, I would never even have to think about it. But it's with other partners... I know it will be stronger, they will bring money,

it's the Abraham Tours, it's cooperation… but still… we'll see" (Sureida, Lines 468-493).

Maoz asked Sureida to be his business partner and after four years' refusing she finally accepted the idea.

"I refused because I told him 'I don't want to have any problems with my family, with my cousins… because we are fourteen grandchildren and the fourteen deserve to be partners, not only me. So I don't want to have any trouble with them. And now after talking to them, they said 'with pleasure, you deserve to be the one to be his partner for the family. And we see you as a representative of the family" (Sureida, Lines 486-490).

Today, the Fauzi Azar is a prototypical world-renowned guesthouse in the Middle East.

5.2 Symbolic representations informing the alliances' nature

The aim of this section is to understand the perceptions the allies have of each other. In the case of the Fauzi Azar, the focus has been on Maoz and Sureida relationships. The development of the analysis has involved three key steps. The first step has been to look at how the interviewee positions him/herself in relation to the alliance. This positioning, as discussed in Chapter Three, can be assimilated to the symbolic representations of the social self which the interviewees have put forward in their narratives for this particular alliance. In other words, I looked at what are those elements of tension from interviewees' personal experiences that they are bringing into their experience of the alliances they are in. The second step involved identifying what are the elements which were held as valuable from the subjective experience of the interviewee. Finally, the last step, moving into the meso-level of the analysis, involved investigating the how the 'other', the 'ally' is perceived by the interviewee.

5.2.1 Social representation of the self within the Fauzi guesthouse alliance

Maoz: the relentless bridge-builder

It was a Wednesday morning when I first saw Maoz in person in Binyamina at his house. He kindly accepted that I spend the day accompanying him around his busy schedule. We took his shabby car to the mechanic for repair, waited

over breakfast at a nearby café and then headed to Nazareth at the Fauzi Azar guesthouse where he first had his weekly update meeting with Sureida and then later on he was chairing a business support meeting with local entrepreneurs. Most of the interview was conducted on the way in the form of an informal but semi-structured conversation.

Maoz presented himself as a social entrepreneur whose aim is not only to bridge the gap between Jews and Arabs but create a platform - via responsible tourism - to "unite and create shared interest with the people in the Middle East" (Maoz, Lines 583-584). After opening the Fauzi Azar Inn, he also co-founded the Abraham Hostel in Jerusalem –

> *"We want to bring Abraham's biblical hospitality to the 21st century so that's our business philosophy and vision. And we see Abraham as the communal father for Judaism, Christianity and Islam" (Maoz, Lines 570-572).*

From what I could observe, he joins vision with action. Back when he started in 2005, he would walk through the streets of the Old City of Nazareth and engage in conversation with the local people. He did that almost every day for four years although he lives way south in Binyamina (58 Km, about one-hour drive). His aim was to become part of the community - be recognised as Maoz and "*be part of the local community*" as he put it.

Acknowledging the differentiality in the perceptions of Arabs and Jews towards each other, Maoz maintained his resolve. After all, his aim was to build a bridge, so he was to set the example.

"For an Israeli to come and stay overnight in the Old City was unthinkable; the seamy area had a bad reputation even in the eyes of the local population. Most of the people in the tourist industry, as well as friends and the people of Nazareth, considered me a weirdo or insane when I started. And being born Jewish didn't make life any easier…" (Informal discussions with Maoz)

His personal investment paid back. I saw the warmth and respect people showed to him as we walked the streets of the Old City. Almost every shop owner seemed to know him so we stopped quite a few times. On the way, the exchanges were in Hebrew - Maoz's Arabic is "poor" as he said apologetically with a kind smile. I couldn't understand what they said as I did not speak any Hebrew then. But I could distinguish a couple of words which hinted that he was introducing me as a student and that was confirmed when I received loud "Welcome! Welcome! Ahla wa Sahla!" - with large smiles and strong handshakes.

Investing in the tourism business in the Middle East is more than just a business opportunity for him. He had actually, for instance, been investing profits from the Abraham Hostels into the Fauzi Azar to keep it running. The tourism industry in Israel is always subject to uncertainties due to sudden upheavals or spontaneous terrorist attacks. Besides, any major or minor incident in the Middle East impacts the industry in Israel (Beirman 2002; Drakos 2003; Krakover 2005)).

"For example, Egypt now is suffering. And we see now for us, for social entrepreneurs, now is the time to invest. When the market is low it is

the time to make a difference. And that our business will make and
impact. Not just our capital or money. And our philosophy, we want to
spread our philosophy like Abraham did. So if he started Monotheism,
we want to start to unite and create shared interest with the people in
the Middle East" (Maoz_Lines 579-584).

"*In the end we are all people*"- he concluded explicitly putting forward his focus on identification with the other through the lens of a common humanity. And this perceptual identification is furthered in an active positioning through a relentless associative entrepreneurial endeavour to build the business partnership with the Azar family.

In line with this idea of commonness in humanity, Maoz despises social injustices which corner people in asymmetrical power relations. Maoz grew up in a kibbutz where he witnessed a certain form of social injustice. The philosophy of the kibbutz was based on the principle of communal duties and shared benefits within the community. However to him, as a child, he saw an evident misbalance in the kibbutz life - while his parents were working "very hard", several people were benefiting from outside support and free riding.

"But when it is in a kibbutz where everyone is basically supposed to be
equal, then it is injustice. And if someone will take risks to live this… to
share this… then it's ok. But basically no one is taking risk. Or you're
taking the risk together. But only some of it" (Maoz Lines 700-703)

A recurrent theme he brought into in our conversations was the social injustices in the name of philanthropy whereby gifts are given under such

conditions that there is an eventual loss of freedom of action for the receivers. "*Something in the equation was broken. And I could feel it from childhood*" (Maoz Interview_Lines 691-692) he told me. For him, exchanges where one party is giving and the other only receiving or giving back just enough in order to keep receiving is "*not sustainable*". Put another way, when one party is taking more than his/her contracted share, this leaves the other party in deficiency. In fact, he assimilates the colonial ideology with misplaced philanthropy. Both give just enough to be able to control the receiver. He is very critical towards certain forms of philanthropic funding:

> *"the money will stay with them and they still need you as a small business and the entrepreneur to beg for this money. And like they are doing you a favour… [he pauses] even stuck we don't want favour. We want to play on the same level. We don't …but again .. just on the same ground.." (Maoz Interview Lines 321-324).*

Through the tone of his voice I could sense his impatience, his frustration against these behaviours of maintaining control over people. The rhythm of his speech conveyed how much he despised exchanges which are detrimental to human dignity.

Receiving without the possibility to give back corners the receiver in a position of domination to some extent. The inability to re-adjust the balance in the relationship maintains an asymmetrical power relation. Maoz in his own actions allows space for his peers and colleagues to participate and contribute. An example was his proposal to Sureida to work with him at the guesthouse.

Maoz defines responsible tourism business as a tool which can help create spaces of knowledge sharing for understanding: *"... otherwise… it's not only people having fun. They can make fun at home. I don't need them here."* (Maoz Interview Lines 588-589).

> *"Yes.. So it's a tool. Like I think we need to use the economy or business. It's another tool. And again, now, I think, the biggest challenge for the world it's the gap between poor countries and rich countries and inside countries between poor and rich. And the flow of immigrants, refugees from Africa to Europe, it's not going to end. It's only gonna get worse. And like … we the white men basically created a lot of damage to the world with colonialism. Now we suffer it… it is very difficult how to fix it. Because it ruined the culture. It ruined the way of life in so many continents and regions. Now, After you ruin it how can you fix it?"* (Maoz Interview Line 591-597)

> *"Like if you have high water here and low water there… and you put a pipe it will flow to the lower. I do not know what you call it in English. But that's what tourism can do. It can bring from the rich countries... It can bring back to the poorer country [he quickly underlines] BUT in a very honest and dignified way. Not through philanthropy… not through colonializing… not colonializing down, slaving down… because that's what most of the western world is still doing"* (Maoz Interview Lines 613-617).

"Tourism if it is being done right, it is still keeping the flow of money in one direction but on the other side they are getting service they are getting knowledge. They are being educated" (Maoz Interview Line 632-634).

In such an exchange, both parties are receiving and giving. Beyond the services the tourists are paying for, they are also receiving a social experience from the local people. And the people in turn are not only offering a paid service but are also giving time and sharing their stories and culture with the "guests".

So in the Maussian terms, Maoz can be viewed as an anti-utilitarian social character. His entrepreneurial approach is based on agonistic exchanges (see Chanial's compass) seeking shared interest taking shared risks. He took the risk of coming to Nazareth at a time when no Jew was welcome there and walked the streets of the Old City engaging with people. He initiated the circle of exchanges and through regularity over the years maintained the momentum of the relationships until he became part of the community recognised as Maoz first before anything else.

Sureida: the straight-forward grand-daughter of Fauzi Azar

I met with Sureida on my first journey to Israel travelling with the Abraham Tours. She gave a presentation of the history of the Fauzi mansion as she usually does at the guesthouse. Back then, I had no idea then that five months later I would be interviewing her at that same place while she was trying to have some breakfast juggling between phone calls, a continuous flow of guests inquiring about everything - from where the milk was to how to catch the bus to Jerusalem - or just keen to engage in conversation. She apologised

kindly for such a busy morning but we managed to cover everything we both wanted to discuss.

Interestingly, although Sureida was the manager of the Fauzi guesthouse, she did not present herself as such at first. She defined herself as an Arab Palestinian with an Israeli passport.

> *"This is our history. This is our origins. We are Palestinians. When they [journalists] interview me, I say I am an Arab Palestinian but I am an Israeli citizen. But I am a Palestinian Arab. This is how I present myself"* (Sureida Lines 312-314).

Sureida held a clear narrative about how she presented her social self. Her social and cultural identities overlap and mirror each other. This attachment to her roots was clearly visible when she told me about her experience of a form of cultural occupation:

> *"always I raise my children up - I have two boys, 14 and 9 - that we are occupied [under occupation]…that we have a history. And Look how my grandpa died in order to protect this house and the whole family left to Syria. And … It is a pity that I can't give my son land because it was taken from my grandfather. And it's the history that we are occupied today. It's a fact. And has nothing to do with Maoz or the Jews. We love a human being as a human being. But Jews they occupied us as Palestinians and when we go to the West Bank, we feel we belong … like this is our people, the land, the food, everything. We feel very happy to speak our own language. Here we speak our own language. But*

when we go shopping in malls we speak all in Hebrew. And the Hebrew…and we are forgetting our language. Even at the university, We study in Hebrew. Our kids sometimes they put lots and lots of words of daily life in Hebrew. So we are losing our language. Our mother tongue. And this is very bad. (she says with concern) you see…This is occupation." "You feel occupied in your identity…?" I asked. "Exactly!", she replied, "Like in Morocco and Tunis, they speak French together. They don't know how to speak Arabic" (Sureida Lines 346-360).

Her sense of belonging to the Palestinian community is so strong that she moves from using "I" to "we" when referring to Palestinian culture. In her narratives, she marks clearly her belonging to the Palestinian people and does not shy away from saying it out loud although it could be a source of potential conflict or misunderstanding. On the contrary she believes speaking out about her family history is her duty. A duty she believes has to be honestly carried out:

"We [she talks about herself and her mother, Odette] are very honest" (Sureida Interview Line 284)… "This is what the people… even the most religious fanatic Jews, they respect that… maybe they feel aggressive or defensive but they respect that because I am telling them the truth. Because I am not lying to them. I am not trying to be nice to them- "oh I feel very Israeli !.[she ironically pointed out]..." (Sureida Interview Lines 325-327).

Being honest to what she believes in is a marked trait of Sureida's character and she brings this in her relationships without flinching. She acknowledges the differentiality existing between Arabs and Jews and wants this to be recognised.

Being the grand-daughter of Fauzi Azar is a legacy that, as Sureida explained, has been an essential element of the social identity she expressed within this alliance.

> *"They [the Israeli authorities] suggested that instead of the lands that they took from grandpa to give some money and he refused. And his answer was "I won't accept your money" to the Israeli authority; "I won't accept your money because I won't let my children or my grandchildren say that I sold my lands to Jews. It was a very important thing." (Sureida Lines 281-284)*

In her narrative, the Jewish identity is assimilated with the Israeli authority. But again, the Israeli state defines itself as a Jewish state so this language is understandable although it remains debatable. The land taken has left the relationship unsettled. Fauzi Azar refused to settle it through the proposed monetary route. Had he accepted the money, what would have been symbolically sold would have been the family identity and hence the honour. For him, no money could ever be enough to equal the value of a family legacy particularly within the Arab culture where family legacy is held in high respect and recognition. Consequently, there still exists a feeling that the Israeli authorities are liable to the Azar family for having taken the land. And this feeling of being owed by the authorities transpired in Sureida's narratives. It

explains in large part the hostile approach to whatever resembles, by a way or another, those who took the land. The feeling of having been harmed in their very identity has been felt strongly over three generations now and this is not an easy debt that can be just wiped out by a cheque or a speech. One can neither judge nor settle the problem; only understanding is, to some extent, possible.

Working at the Fauzi Azar has been, for Sureida, more than an attempt, an endeavour to re-affirm a cultural identity she feared could be fading away. At the guesthouse, a special space next to the guesthouse reception is dedicated to selling Palestinian artisanal crafts:

> *"It's all hand-made products made by Palestinian women from all the refugee camp and I also collect it from the UN centres in the West Bank. And with this we help our people in Palestine," Sureida explaine. (Sureida Lines 102-104).*

The recognition of the Palestinian Arab cultural identity transpired as an essential motive for keeping the alliance alive.

> *"We received this prize in London In 2011 being the best accommodation for the local communities because we are giving a lot of support to the community by making this free tour that usually depend on tips to support orphans in Tipori and also by this gallery" (Sureida Lines 99-102).*

The Fauzi Azar guesthouse has offered a space for Sureida to share her side of the story to people who are willing to hear it although they may not always agree with her perceptions and she with theirs.

> *"I think that this is a very good opportunity for me to show individuals and to let them know what we are and what we think. It is very important. Not on the TV, not in a lecture… I won't be like this…Though I had some bad reactions from the Jews," She explained, raising her eyebrows implying that it has not always been a pleasant experience. So she has been more mindful to who she speaks to: "Because when I started the introduction [of her usual presentation to guests], they said: 'who took your lands? Why you say they took the lands? Why you say Palestine?'… I have no nerves for this so I decided it's enough. Because, some of them are really attacking and aggressive... They don't listen and some say they don't want to see the other side! … [she paused and then continued] I listen to you. Ok, I heard you… but when you talk from your own experience, I can't feel like you… because you are different. I can't feel like you feel... in this country or in that country…if you were occupied … if you were…it's a total difference." (Sureida Interview Lines 536-545).*

Sureida's narrative translated an explicit positioning of perceived differentiality between her Arab self and the others, those who took her family land, who forced her family out of the country. She tends to distrust Jewish Israelis in general but at the personal level it is more nuanced. Although the starting point is an ingrained form of distrust, this does not prevent her from engaging with

people who she perceived as different to her. She simply chose not to engage in what she perceived as sterile exchanges.

5.2.2 Intricacies of the Interpersonal perceptions

Overall, the dyads went through several stages before they consolidated to a state of what can be qualified as a resilient alliance - that is, a relationship which tend to adapt to stressors relatively effectively. In this section, I will analyse the evolution of the interpersonal perceptions the two parties narrated of each other.

Elements of differentiation and a consequential differentiality in perceiving the 'other'

It was clear that the whole story of the alliance started over a differential but nuanced perception of each other. Maoz knew he wanted to start building bridges between Jews and Arabs and chose Nazareth as a starting point as the place symbolises a confluence of social institutions –religious, national and ethnic. His very endeavour acknowledged that he was well aware of the differentiality between Jews and Arabs and still opted for an associative positioning.

Sureida and her mother Odette at first saw Maoz as an intruder. He was "a Jew". Sureida recalled her first encounter with him. The relational exchange started in a confrontation.

> *"At the beginning I suspected in him. I told him 'How come you want to open your business in Nazareth where there are no Jews. You were*

sent by who? The Mossad[36]? Who sent you to Nazareth?' He said, 'No

one…'. I said, 'You have to convince me….and Nazareth is a very

sensitive place. And even if you open your business no one will support

you because you are a Jew". It wasn't easy" (Sureida Lines 76-80).

From their standpoint, he represented the domineering power which took away the land from their family. Maoz as "a Jew" was perceived as the 'other' who is not only different from them but also representative of someone who caused harm to their family. This harm was lived as a negative legacy which passed on from one generation to the other. The negative legacy can be understood as an unsettled debt that has been lingering over the family history since the 1948 war. So Maoz was perceived as the 'other' who was in negative debt towards their family- "'*You jews took our land and now you want to take our house as well?!'*" Odette said to him. (Sureida interview lines 275-276)

The source of tension, the **stressor** in the **beginnings** of this relationship, later to become an alliance, was that negative legacy that Odette and Sureida attributed to the 'other'. This legacy is still felt strongly in the family and is an everyday reality for Sureida who talked about its influence on every aspect of her life and that of her children. From that, it was evident to Sureida that Maoz – who she perceived as 'that other' assimilated to those who harmed their family, their people - couldn't belong to neither their **primary nor secondary social circle**. She was clear that her family would not cooperate with him in any case:

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[36] The Mossad, the Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, is the national intelligence agency of Israel.

"You look for another family because mine is not the family that would cooperate with you. I have nothing against you, with all respect, but because you are a Jew. And you don't know who was Fauzi Azar" (Informal discussions with Sureida).

From the beginning, she took an antagonistic positioning – perceptual differentiation and actively dissociative - towards Maoz who she perceived as the 'other', the 'different', "*the occupier*" (Sureida Interview Line 305). She remained in this positioning until she finally started to engage with people at the guesthouse and had the opportunity to observe Maoz' actions within a secondary social circle – the guesthouse - over a period of time allowing her to know him better.

Socialisation and consequential elements of identification in perceiving the 'other'
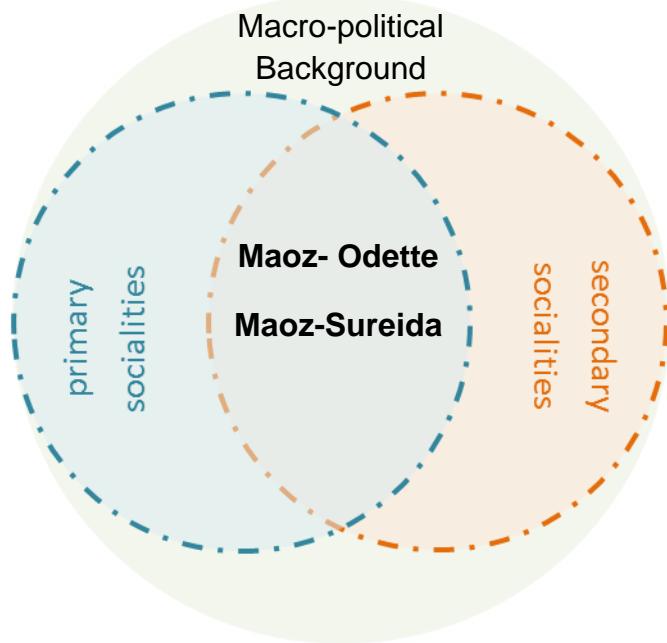
Figure 19 The hybrid sociality within which the Fauzi case dyads operate

Figure 19 summarises the hybrid sociality within which the main protagonists operated at the time of the research. The interviews have been conducted in relation to their belonging to the different social groups in the micro-level context of the Fauzi guesthouse and its immediate environment, the Old city of Nazareth in Israel.

Forms of socialisation may bring changes in positionings. In line with his endeavour to "*create a bridge of understanding*", Maoz persisted in opening the conversation –"*let's have a coffee together. There's nothing wrong in that. No harm will come from that.*" Following exchanges in a primary social setting such as the sharing of coffee on multiple occasions, the relationship between Maoz and Odette changed. Odette eventually chose to find the commonality

between them rather than focusing on what differentiated them: *"If you want me to see you as a Jew, I won't make any business with you. I see you as a human being"* (Sureida Lines 297-298). This is an interesting line which illustrated several elements about how perception of the other can change the resultant social action path chosen. As long as she perceived him as the 'negatively indebted other', engaging in any shared action was not possible. However, the first step of the gift circle that started the relationship was when Odette accepted the proposal to have coffee together. This has a significant symbolic value. Sharing coffee in the Middle Eastern Arabian culture is an act of hospitality. Moreover, it puts all participants at the same level as it is an exercise levelling social differences the moment it is taking place. In a way, exchanges in a space conducive to free and frank interpersonal dialogue, allowed for a change in the perception of the other. As Maoz recalled[37]: "*It took several long evenings of discussion, while drinking strong Arabian coffee, to make her my strongest supporter and a true believer in my vision*" (Maoz, on the Abraham Hostel webpage).

The shared interest defined the beginnings of the alliance. The subjective definition of the timeline for the alliance was assumed to be a long term one right from the beginning. Odette and Maoz agreed on a five year contract. Sureida recounted how the deal was agreed upon:

> *"She [Odette] told him 'you know what, if you don't have money, don't pay us. But you have at least to make renovations. Like the showers,*

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[37] Accessed November 2015: https://abrahamhostels.com/nazareth/the-fauzi-azar-story/

toilets…Electricity, water and at least someone can go back and someone can stay there. She said that she would get benefit of that that he would fix the showers and toilets" (Sureida, Lines 212-215).

For Sureida it was important to underline that it was a deal benefiting both parties: "*not always it is good for both sides. This was good for both sides*" (Sureida lines 177-219).

Now any interpersonal relationship does not happen in a vacuum - there are external factors which can act as catalysers (drivers) or stressors (barriers). If a relationship is a bond of energy symbolised by the gifts exchanged, then anything that impedes this bond from growing is another energy barrier which both parties have to overcome so as to maintain the relationship (even if that means going through a short-lived breakage of the bond and fast re-formation of the bond). They happen and operate in a social environment which comes with its own set of norms and a priori. For instance, the immediate society's perception and behaviour can be a source of tension as was the case when the relationship of this partnership between Odette and Maoz was misunderstood by almost everyone - from the close family to the people in the community. As Sureida explained the Old City has been a symbolical space for the Arabs who stayed and did not leave after the war in 1948:

"because it is the symbol of staying here and … allowing Jews to come and moving out and still... It is the biggest Arab population in the country…only Arabic. Not one Jew. It's not Nazareth Ilit [a suburb of the Nazareth district] where you have Jews and Arabs" (Sureida Lines 170-173).

She was clear that had it not been her mother's courage, the alliance would not have happened:

> *"She has so much self-confidence. She doesn't care, if she believes in something, She is ready to fight. She doesn't care about what the community says. The opposite of like if I want to do something then I say 'oh no, what would the people say.. oh no…" She pauses and pursues her point: "We live in this kind of culture and community. It is very, very sensitive. And going around here the first time and telling them this young man, obviously he is a Jew, might start opening our father's house and planning a project. No one would have this courage to tell anyone. Not my aunts. Not me"* (Sureida, Lines 177-183).

The social context has an influence but the decision of the action remains the individual's choice. However difficult it may have seemed going against the social norms, Odette had chosen an active associative positioning motivated by a shared interest.

Odette who had now built a trust in Maoz had set out to deal with the social pressure she was facing. She walked with Maoz in the Old City, "*She introduced Maoz to the people and she told them that if he needs any help, you have to know that he is from our side*" (Sureida, Lines 185-186). She in turn opened the dialogue with the people and addressed their fears and suspicions. Again offering a space of frank dialogue and being in a vanguard position in dealing with the source of stressor proved helpful as the rumours of treachery eventually died out. Her use of the phrase "he is from our side" implicitly shows the social fracture in the Israeli societies. Odette had

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supported Maoz's endeavour to become more of an outsider-insider in the micro-society of the Old City. In response to her family, she spoke a language they could understand. What was dear to them as to her was their family heritage. Even if they did not necessarily accept to find any point of identification with Maoz, at least they had to agree that doing business with him was a win-win deal. They had nothing to lose and in the end their heritage would be renovated and protected.

Trust-building and differentiality

For Sureida, acknowledging her differential position was a part of her social representation of her reality that she held as a fact. Working with Maoz at the guesthouse gave her the opportunity to experience the fact that he respected her positions and her family choices. Maoz once again had opened the dialogue and offered for her to contribute to the guesthouse life back in 2005. Refusing at first to accept the offer she later accepted and once there, she in no time engaged in the process of answering to the curious guests. She recalled feeling the drive of a commitment towards her grand-parents:

> *"that someone has to tell people about the house. Because I won't know what you [the guests] go around and listen to other people in the market what they say…they think we sold the house, we betrayed the family, we sold to this Jew. I was not sure that… I couldn't trust Maoz that he would tell the right story of grandpa [we both laughed at her honest comment]…So I felt I had to be here and tell the story. But I felt that he is a good guy. I felt that he cares that we give our fact… our history you*

know… Otherwise he wouldn't let me… not let me… he wouldn't ask me to come " (Sureida Interview Lines 266-272).

She was enabled to tell her side of the story. And she had recognised that Maoz had been instrumental in providing her with a space for cross-cultural dialogue and sharing what she held in high value, that is her family heritage. Equally the fact that she accepted this offer and chose associative action (in synergy), instead of maintaining a rejection to enter into this gift circle, has been a driving factor for the maintenance of the constructive exchanges and the transformation of her relationship with Maoz.

In parallel to this, the feeling of being "occupied" in her cultural identity was significantly present in her narratives,

"I still feel occupation... I say it obviously. I know that my children now are brought up to feel that they are occupied. You know it's not easy. It doesn't mean that if we work with Maoz we [forget that]… because my mom told him 'If you want me to see you as a Jew, I won't make any business with you. I see you as a human being'. And this was what was important" (Sureida Lines 295-298).

Indeed that was important because she repeated it at least three times in the interview. For Sureida this point of identification as a human being has been essential to be able to engage in the alliance. At the time of the interview, she still could not totally perceive him as a Jew,

"Even till today you cannot say that he is an Israeli. I mean …I say it in front him. He does not believe in the politics… he is a human being that doesn't have anything to do with Judaism or Zionism…" (Sureida Interview Lines 155-157).

She described her experience of 'occupation' as part of the story of her family, as a heritage which still weighed on the family, hence on herself and her relationship.

Interestingly, this differentiality, as long as there are no external stressors, was not a barrier to the development of the relationship. In fact the nature of the relationship having started on a note of outspokenness, has allowed for a dialogue from both parties to share their perceptions of each other:

"She [Odette] was very honest with him. And till today I am very honest. You know sometimes I trust him a lot. And I feel that if I have anything, like a problem or danger … I would trust Maoz more than my own sister or something" (Sureida, Lines 302-304).

But in face of an external stressor, as was the case in the August 2013 war[38], it happened that she reverted back, even if it was a short-lived moment, to an antagonist (differentiated and dissociative) position towards him because at that moment her perception had toggled from identification to the 'Maoz who

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[38] "Forty-four people were killed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 2013. The vast majority of them (38) were Palestinian, six were Israeli. Five of the Palestinians were minors and one was a woman. The youngest was two years old, the oldest was 61. Some were actively involved in hostilities or were members of armed groups and armies, others were civilians who were uninvolved in hostilities." (Schaeffer Omer-Man 2013) https://972mag.com/2013-was-a-deadly-year-in-israel-palestine/84728/ Accessed September 2017

was part of her primary sociality' to differentiation, seeing him as 'an Israeli Jew who was responsible of the conflict happening'.

> *"But the thing is that there is a fact that you [Maoz] were born like this and I was born like this. He [Maoz] is the occupier and I am the one who is occupied… and things like that… So, at the last war, not the last one the one before it, I came here in the morning, I saw him. I saw him as a Jew. I told him: 'What are you doing? You are killing children?'. I saw him that minute as a Jew. I didn't see him as Maoz the one I respect and…It is a fact. I can't deny that"* (Sureida Interview Lines 304-308)

The sensitive political situation made the ground slippery especially for Sureida who already felt constantly that she was being 'occupied' in her identity by another culture. Although she trusted Maoz intimately – "more than her own sister" as she said – she still represented him as a domineering 'other' causing harm to people just because he was Jewish. So when shifts in perceptual positioning from identification to differentiation may happen is uncertain and nearly unpredictable. But the active positioning that derives therefrom ismore problematic.. In this case, Maoz reaction was that of understanding. He maintained the connection – "It's me Maoz" - and did not close the dialogue nor reacted in dissociation. His lucidity helped avoid discontinuation or further conflict between them.

Expressing positionings can be a learning curve. Sureida appreciates that Maoz acknowledged the fact that they were de facto not starting on level ground when it came to social power.

"And this is what Maoz believes. I said it once and now he says this: 'No matter what you are... This Jew as a Jew… he speaks with me, no matter what he feels with me as an Arab but he speaks always from the strong… the strong role. I am not the strong one here. He is the strong. Even though… because he is the one who occupies me. I am occupied. He is the occupying" (Sureida, Lines 546-550).

Her tone was clear but her expression was intermittent. It was clear that this situation did not make her happy and revived the feeling of differentiation – she ends up assimilating him again with the "*occupying power*". I asked to make sure that I understood what she meant. She replied that as a Jew he belongs to the dominating social group but nuanced her argument by highlighting that in any case he is using his relative position of power, his advantages "*for the better*" (Sureida, Lines 556). This point of clarification allowed me and her to dissociate her feeling from the fact of his actions. This showed how important it is to see the nuances between perceived positionings and actual actions.

In this case story the trust-building process nurtured the ability of the alliance to adapt effectively in circumstance of tension. In fact, after the first five years were over, the family didn't sign any formal contract with Maoz and now the project had completed its tenth year. Sureida, smilingly, told me how her mother had built a strong trust in Maoz:

"Just to tell you that they had another option to extend to another five years and this is the tenth year and till today they didn't sign anything. So it's ended already… (laughter) without any.. This means that they

trust him. He was very lucky with my mom" (Sureida Interview Lines 228-230).

Talking about one of the important things she learned being part of this alliance, Sureida underlined the significance of buffering first impressions:

"Sometimes I was against the first thing from the first impression. But this is wrong. You don't have to judge a person from the first impression. This is I know.. and we do always wrong things. When I see you and you see me and I feel something… but you always have to give other opportunities… I tell you the truth I didn't believe that there would be Jews that would have this humanity towards Arab.. that would SEE [she underlined this word] from our side. Never!". "You couldn't believe that this was possible?" I asked. "No no… even if they tell you. I didn't believe them. But Maoz didn't say it. Maoz, his actions made me believe that he really thinks this way" (Sureida Interview Lines 515-522)

5.3 Analytical résumé

From the case story, it is clear that there are a number of elements - social, political and interpersonal stressors - which have not been conducive to a constructive, let alone resilient, relationship between the main protagonists. Following the analysis of the case story, two elements stood out in the exploration of the intricacies involved in interpersonal alliances: 1) the nature of the exchanges and 2) the nature of the space within which the exchanges happened.

In terms of the nature of exchanges, it is clear that the beginnings of the relationships required two critical conditions: 1) that one party offer an opportunity to the other to contribute and 2) the other party to accept the offer. This element of choice 1) to make an offer and 2) to accept the offer is fundamental in understanding that adaptive pathways are not only dependent on contextual factors but also on contingent choices which are not necessarily predictable.

In terms of the nature of spaces within which exchanges happen, the findings suggest that a primary social circle has been more conducive to sharing personal perceptions. In this case story, the protagonists found a space in each other's presence for expressing their differences freely. Such freedom of expression initiated a process of trust-building to an extent. As much as this buffered the relationship between Odette and Maoz, it was still not sufficient for Odette to engage in associative action with him. He still represented "the occupier" in the identity she perceived him to be in. Maoz's perseverance in maintaining an open position of acknowledged differentiation along with a committed associative positioning nurtured trust – Odette decided to perceive him as a fellow human counterpart which made it easier for her to engage in an associative action with him. So much so that she even embarked in introducing him as an outsider-insider to the micro-society of the Old City.

The willingness to initiate a flow of information and energy with a person and society that is refusing to accept receiving anything from one is not easily understandable. Maoz was called by people from his own primary private circle by all sorts of names – "weirdo", "insane". It did take a lot of guts to be a young Jewish Israeli male to walk in the Old City of Nazareth back then and claim to

be willing to open a tourist guesthouse in a drug and poverty ridden area. In a similar way, it did take a lot of courage for Odette to go against the normative tide in her own community and primary private socialities. But each had a purpose to their endeavours. And that was an aim that drove their willingness. Maoz wanted to bridge the socially fractured societies in the Israeli society and Odette wanted the last standing material symbol of her family heritage to be safeguarded. The collaboration over a guesthouse became a platform which enabled the actualising of their respective personal interests. The cooperation became thus "a win-win deal" which transformed the relationship. The willingness has been motivated by both a personal and a shared interest.

Now even if there is an interest in the relationship, it does not directly imply interpersonal resilience. It is evident that when each party finds in the dyad a space of recognition of the social self he or she present, then not discontinuing the relationship at times of tension become most probable. A case in point has been when suspicious and distrusting Sureida walks in the guesthouse to find that Maoz has respected the will of family and in a way was honouring her family heritage. This explicit recognition of her identity which she values highly made her accept to engage in associative action with him by working at the guesthouse. And this despite the fact that she perceived him through a positioning of differentiation. Interestingly, differentiation is not necessarily a barrier to cooperative social action.

To be noted finally, each actor acknowledged that they were not starting from level ground. De facto, their being Arab and Jewish socio-politically meant there was an asymmetry in their social power within the broader macro-political context (as discussed in Chapter Four). However, at the micro-level

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this differentiality in social status was not an insurmountable barrier. They did end up in associative positionings with each other. The condition to overcoming this barrier has evidently been the symbolic exchanges (energy and information flows/ gifts) within the primary socialities where people engaged at the person-to-person level in a frank manner.

Chapter Six Case story analyses II

The Chapter divides in three main sections. Section 6.1 analyses the relationships of Neta, Ahmad and Genevieve which formed the Juha guesthouse team in Israel. Section 6.2 provides the analysis of the Khouriyeh family guesthouse through the narratives of Rawda and Issa - co-worker but also husband and wife - based in the West Bank. The Chapter then closes with section 6.3 discussing the cross-analysis of the three cases studied looking into the similarities and particularities of the cases in the light of the abductive reasoning employed. The socio-cognitive context-based framework devised in Chapter Three will be thus refined addressing the aim of the research.

6.1 The Juha case story

"I came to Jisr ez zarqa because I thought that it … [is] a cool place for travellers and its gonna be a great destination and it's exactly what I wanted to do. It wasn't about "let's go and help the poor Arabs in Jisr ez Zarqa! " I think it makes it a better motivation if you don't. For me the issue of being Arab or Jewish is not even an issue. It's true that the media because it is nice story to tell turned this into a coexistence and romantic story. But for me we are all people and this is a place with a

potential and there is so much to do here why don't we do it together"

(Neta lines 182-188)

Neta used to work as a criminal prosecutor for the Ministry of Justice of Israel, but before that as a scuba diving instructor she travelled around the world for several years. One of her most memorable experiences which she would dream about from her office was her years teaching in the Red Sea by the Sinai.

> *"I used to work a lot with the Bedouins over there- the ones who are working in the sea fishing, driving boats for divers. So the crew of the boats on which I took groups to dive, they were Egyptians or Bedouins. They were all muslims… And I … I was charmed and fell in love with the combination of the special culture and the location… With the location of the sea… boats… and whatever is .. All this scene," she told me with a pleased smile and brightening eyes (Neta Lines 124-126).*

Jisr ez zarqa, where her mother, a film-maker, had come to make a documentary about the fishermen, reminded Neta of Sinai- "*a place that is very touristic, developed but still very authentic and natural*" (Neta, line 129). "W*hy can't Jisr ez Zarqa benefit from its potential to become the same?*" (Neta, Line 130) she asked herself.

The village and its reputation

Jisr-ez zarqa, the bridge over the blue as the Arabic name translates in English, is mainly described as the only Arab Israeli town on the Mediterranean

coast of Israel. The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics reports[39] a population of about 14000 inhabitants in 2016. It sits secluded half-way between the Caesarea, which is one of the richest towns in Israel, and the kibbutz Magaan Michael. Historically, Jisr az-Zarqa was inhabited mainly by people from the Bedouin of the Ghawarina tribe (Tyler 2001). Depending on who is talking the story about the origins and history of today's Jisraouis is quite different. For instance, according to the local historian, Izzedin Amash, there is proof that "*when the Turks arrived in Palestine in the 16th century, people were already settled in the Kabara swamp area*" (Field Diary, Peripheral informal Interviews, May 2015). Known as the Arab al-Ghawarna, people of the valleys, because some came from the Jordan Rift valley, others from the Hula valley escaping blood feuds or other reasons. The old Muslim cemetery in the area just between Jisr and the kibbutz Ma'agan Michael testifies of the long heritage the Arabs have in this area. The Kabara swamp stretched from Binyamina to Zichron Yaakov and the Carmel, covering 6,000 dunams (1.6 square kms) with Nahal Taninim, the Taninim stream, running through it. Map 6.1 shows the geographical situation of Jisr ez Zarqa (area shaded in blue) bordered by the coastal highway linking North and South Israel. Neighbouring towns are Caesarea, Ma'agan Michael, Binyamina and Zihron Ya'akov. The Taninim stream is represented by the line shaded in green near the town but it takes it source in the higher plateaus.

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[39]
http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?MIval=%2Fpop_in_locs%2Fpop_in_locs_e.html&LocalityCode=541 : Accessed August 2016
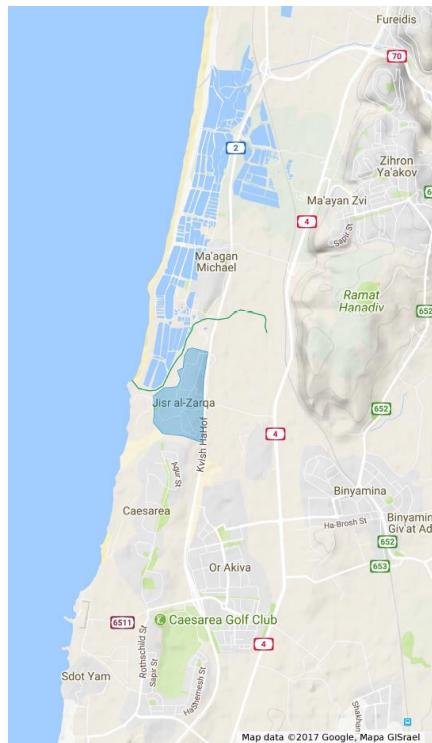
Figure 20 Geographical situation of Jisr ez Zarqa (area shaded in blue)

The people back then lived off the swamp: herding buffalo, weaving straw mats from the reeds (Field Diary, Peripheral informal Interviews, May 2015). According to Benvenisti (2000), because the Jewish people from the neighbouring towns of Zikhron Ya'akov and Binyamina relied on the population of Jisr az-Zarqa for agricultural labour, this Arab population was not displaced in 1948. Rapaport (2010) also reported from local historian Izzedin Amash, that, early 20th century, receiving a license from the British government to drain the swamps into agricultural land but also to eradicate malaria, the Baron of Rothschild of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association employed them to drain the swamps (Rapaport 2010) (Pappe 2006). In exchange, the people received the land which is now Jisr making it the only Arab village formally established by the Zionist movement. As Izzedin Amash put it to a journalist in the Haaretz,"*We are one of the Baron's communities*" (Rapaport 2010) (Haaretz, Rapport, 10th june 2010) Knowing the differential perception the

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people of Jisr feel from external populations – Jewish and Arab alike – this statement is a demonstration of the willingness to belong to the wider Israeli community through a quest of recognition. Today, at the time of the research, the town which had just recently benefited of sewage installations, has a high crime rate, high dropout rates in school and counts as one of the lowest income in Israel (Field Diary, Peripheral informal Interviews, May 2015).

Despite its natural beauty and location, the village has been suffering from social stigmatisation from both Jewish and Arab communities in the country. For instance, I am told in the village by all interviewees that until about ten years ago, people would not marry into the village considering the people of Jisr as "social outcasts" because of their origins for some and because "*they worked with the Baron of Rothschild*" for others (Field Diary, Peripheral informal Interviews, May 2015). To add to their lot, Jisr attracted a negative reputation in the media because during the riots in October 2000, a Jewish man was killed by a rock thrown from the bridge above the coastal highway. The rock was thrown by an adolescent from the village and this lethal incident stuck to the village. Within the village itself, people report tensions between the different families, especially the two biggest ones- the Amash and the Jurban. All these, according to interviewees, added up to make Jisr a place perceived as "a ghetto" from both Arab and Jewish communities. People would not even drive into this small town on the coastal highway between Tel Aviv and Haifa.

> *"Not long ago when you say to someone… to a Jewish person they would say 'oh this place where they threw stones on the highway?' in*

2000 something..” Neta explained. “Was it during the second intifada?”

I asked. “Yes… but it was not an organisation or something... it was just

one stupid teenager who did that. So .. but in Jisr ez Zarqa.. Because

it's in the centre of Israel and the stone was thrown on an important

highway, people remembered it much better than the thousands of

stones that are being thrown elsewhere… so that was a very bad image

for the village,” she continued, “....so at the beginning when there were

suddenly so many stories on TV about our guesthouse opening finally

the village got a positive media coverage, talking about the potential

and the beauty and nature instead of the negative side. So it was all

new to them so the self-appreciation of the people it changed a little bit

like step by step. When we had those tv shows, they used to come to

the guesthouse and ask me to play it again and again. To show them

again and again the videos [she tells me with a large pleased smiles].

Because they were amazed that someone sees something positive

here” (Neta Lines 831-845).

In fact, driving into the small town through the main entrance (one of the only

two ways one can access the area), crossing under the highway bridge (see

Figure 21 1), you end up in amidst a dusty street patched all along with

overflowing rubbish bins; densely packed road sides with concrete houses

almost creeping on one another. It is the main road into the city centre. The

most striking element to me has been seeing kids, sometimes as young as 3

to 4 years old one on the streets without any adult supervision. Given its

'refugee camp' looks, in 2010 the town was even used as a film set for shooting

Gaza scenes (Rapaport 2010).

Figure 21 One of the two entry ways to the town

Photo taken in 2010 (credit David Bachar) was the same in 2016, narrow and allows only one vehicle at a time

6.1.1   Intricacies of interpersonal perceptions

The alliance between Neta, Ahmad and Genevieve went through several stages and the relationships transformed over the different episodes they experienced together (see Annexe Ten). In this section, the intricacies of the interpersonal perceptions narrated are analysed. The case-specific analyses combine and articulate with the analytical concepts put forward in Chapter Three. Such a presentation allows the reader to understand the case specificities and is more transparent in terms of the interpretation process.

6.1.1.1   Elements of identification through different socialities

Neta started the whole project with a clear positioning: that of identification. She had previously worked and lived in a multi-ethnic and multicultural context and her perception of the "other" is firstly as fellow human being like her. Her being a Jewish woman seeking to open a business in a Muslim majority village was never an issue for her. In that spirit, she spent six months knocking at people's doors offering a business partnership. Her locus of engagement with

people was at the person-to-person level (in a primary public sociality). This played a significant role in the way she reacted when she was confronted with interpersonal tensions or closures like when she received only vain and disengaging looks and replies to her proposal. She, however, did not consider the behaviours of a few to be that of all the residents of Jisr and kept seeking for collaboration.

Ahmad identified with Neta's willingness to open a business in Jisr. However, his identification was at the secondary level (within a secondary public sociality). At the beginning, he confessed to being "a *bit scared*" because of their cultural differences. He did not trust her directly and preferred to speak to Maoz whom Neta mentioned in their discussion. As Maoz later told me, "*He [Ahmad] was serious about the tourist business in Jisr. And he wanted to go for it."* (Field diary notes, Informal discussions, Maoz)

Another process of identification at the secondary level which initiated and motivated the building of a relationship can be illustrated through Genevieve's story. Her narrative suggests that what she identified with was the functional role Neta was leading in setting up the whole socio-entrepreneurial project. While Genevieve clearly spelled out her willingness to "*walk in the footsteps*" of Neta, positioning herself in associative action, she maintained her own personality and more so, brought into the relationship her own perceptions.

In sum, positionings of identification, whether at primary or secondary level, seemed to have been common in the initial phases of the relationships formed in this particular case. These positionings have helped in understanding the motivation to form relationships but still cannot predict whether consequential

actions would be associative or dissociative. This, evidently, remained the choice of the parties.

6.1.1.2 Socialisation and consequential elements of differentiation in perceiving the 'other'

When people start to socialise, they tend to learn more about each other and their mutual perceptions sometimes are modified, nuanced. In the Juha case, it was interesting to see the perceptual evolution of the dyadic partners and the consequences thereof. The tense episode between Neta and Ahmad at the bank (see Annexe Ten) has been a case in point. Ahmad felt insulted at the request of signing a paper attesting the terms of their common management of the business bank account. And he expressed this felt insult: "*you know what? Never mind! Let's cancel everything"; "you know what I don't need this project!"* (Neta Lines 270). The pathway he was choosing then was reactive and clearly opting for a discontinuation in the exchange, hence of the relationship. Neta looked beyond this instinctive and spontaneous reaction and showed him her understanding. She explained while telling me the story: "*I think in Jisr ez Zarqa they are not very business developed. They do not have business culture for them a handshake should be enough*" (Neta Lines 281-282).

Noting Ahmad's differential positioning, she responded in associative action, calming him by showing that she could understand his feelings – "*I calmed him. I told him: "listen. You don't have to be offended. It's not that I don't trust you. It's just what is wise to do when so much money is concerned." I just calmly explained to him. And we smoke a cigarette together*" (Neta, Lines 365-367). This, and Ahmad's positive response (he calmed down), transformed the

confrontation to a situation of buffered exchange. Ahmad had calmed down but the source of tension was not eliminated and the problem not solved. The exchange was maintained. Neta avoided a discontinuation but the state of the relationship on that particular subject stagnated. This experience suggests that differentiality in positioning does not necessarily result in a discontinued relationship if one party at least takes a step towards showing the other that she is trying to understand his feelings. If the other acknowledges this effort (it is an effort because it requires one to focus the attention on being constructive; injecting enough energy in the exchange such that the barrier setting up is overcame), then the tension can be subdued. Such is one form of adaptive pathway which led to the stabilisation of the relationship but cannot be qualified as an effective adaptation because the source of the problem was not solved with at that moment.

Another episode of tension arose when the question of the business partnership was to be determined. It seemed to Neta that Ahmad was not ready to sign any paper and he kept delaying the process asking to check with a different lawyer every time. She was willing to trust him and enter in a business partnership with him conscious of the financial risks that she could incur. His behaviour, once again, changed Neta's perceptual positioning towards Ahmad from identification to a recognised differentiation at the secondary private level and not at the primary private level. She dealt with the issue by directing her exchanges with Ahmad at the secondary (focusing on their functional roles) but also private (recognising that he had felt insulted) level. This said, she did not make the issue personal but remained pragmatic

and solution-driven. These episodes made Neta realise the differential positioning between them.

> *"I mean how much patience should I show. I have patience but how much patience should I show to him regarding those issues like being late with salaries. Sometimes may be I feel like maybe I am missing the limit between being patient and education to being like a sucker!", she paused and then continued: "and also being too patient in a way that it is not educating but just giving up. And then nothing good comes out of it. It is Very delicate balance to strike." (Neta Lines 445-450)*

Then, quite lucidly, she explained:

> *"I have to say that if I came at the beginning to this village believing that we are really are the same and there is no reason why can't be partners so I realised that it was very naïve. I think I am now very aware of the … not in a wrong way …of the gap… there is a big gap to bridge… I am not saying that.. (I mean) at the basic we are all the same but...culturally… yes there is a big gap that is very challenging and is not easy to … if I with all the faith that I have and all the patience that I have, could not establish a partnership at the beginning… so just imagine… how hard to is to make a peace contract or process…" (Neta Lines 661-668)*

When asked if she feels less naïve now, she instantly replied:

"Yes and no. because I am more and more aware of me being naïve. But I decided to stay that way. Because I think that you need to be naïve and to be able to step into something like that and to really open a new page" (Neta, Lines 674-676).

Basically, her narrative showed that she was conscious that she was taking risks in her endeavour and chose to maintain this openness. The risk taking approach resonates with the Maussian gift's principle of generosity as discussed in Chapter Three. Neta's choice to understand Ahmad's reaction instead of reacting negatively, followed a pathway which requires a step back – "*I took a deep breath*" she repeated several times in the interviewees when talking about how she adapted (Neta, Lines 396, 407). She explained what she felt and how it helped her focus her attention on what she wanted to achieve, that is stop the confrontation and ease the tension. Her action was not guaranteed to be received positively but she still placed herself in this vulnerable stance and 'gave such that the other may give in turn' to use one of the logics in Chanial's compass. This will be further discussed in the light of the cross-story analysis in section 6.3.

Another element which came out of the Juha case's narratives concerned socialising at the primary private level while working together. The data suggest that this may have positive and negative sides to it. Let's consider the Ahmad- Genevieve dyad. Ahmad considers Genevieve as part of his family.

"The relationship between me and my worker, we are like a family. The people that work with me come to my home, to my kitchen and spend

time like with family. It is not a formal relationship. It is not just professional. It's more like a big family…" (Ahmad, lines 293-295)

He would often drive her home or for her shopping when she needs it. But, at the same time, just like he does not pay his son any salary for holding the guesthouse café, he would allow himself to be late on payments of her salary. Genevieve had been patient but still expressed her discontentment to both Neta and Ahmad on the issue. Although her expressed frustration within this primary private sociality between herself, Neta and Ahmad was heard and recognised, the problem was still recurrent, which indicates how difficult relationships can be at times. However, as Ahmad highlighted in his interview, the relationship with the two women has been and still was (at the time of the research) a kind of learning curve for his business management skills. He felt he was becoming more conscious that he had to work in concordance with the team and not on his own terms.

Another differentiality that became evident and inevitable from Genevieve's perspective who had spent days working and living in this town was cultural. She talked about a "subculture" in the town and how she felt at times the need to escape into 'her world'. This suggested a form of differentiation at the micro-level. However this did not impede her associative action with the people. Individual perspectives of belonging vary and one way to conceptualise the variation is through the levels of socialisations. At the personal level, she reported feeling close to both Ahmad and Neta, although differently. Ahmad greeting her 'good morning' with a hug in the middle of the village; or sitting down together at the coffee shop terrace were strong statements in this town

where appearances may be quite conservative towards public men and women mixing. There are about two cafés in the town which although not reserved for men are almost only used by local men heavily smoking the traditional shisha. The local social norms would not regard a local woman sitting in such cafes as "proper." Genevieve was perceived as an outsider, her status was different.

She frankly recognised a differentiality between the culture she feels she comes from to the subculture in Jisr- "*you can't escape from that*" (Genevieve, Line 468), she told me knowing that I could understand partly what she meant being myself from outside.

> *"And for Neta and for myself … When we were escaping by going to lunch and going back to our "Jewish Israeli world" [she uses air quotes here to underline that she is using the terms in a non-standard nor an academic way but just in a general spoken manner], We were escaping from the tensions. Even if you are not going back to a Jewish religious world, you are going back to a Jewish world… Going back to a secular Jewish world... A world where we feel comfortable... A world in which other people would acknowledge and appreciate what we do in the way that we are willing to give… Things are perceived differently here by the people in the village… [how different?, I asked]… The whole culture, the whole mess of throwing paper everywhere…The balagan that you work with and then someone just does the same thing and over and over again. And for Neta… and for me it is tough… When we were going back to our peaceful little places of coffee and places that Neta would*

bring me to make me discover more and more of them …The world we

aspire to" [she ended with a smile mentioning the women café they want

to set up in the village] (Genevieve, Lines 474-486)

Building on her narrative and the experience I had volunteering by her side, several elements could explain Genevieve's felt positioning of differentiation. She had been socialising with Ahmad and his family at the personal level and with their approval turned the gallery into a workshop where she held the meetings with the 'young leaders'[40] and the team use to give presentations of the Juha social project to tourists. Genevieve showed a significant sense of belonging to this workshop - "*this gallery is like a baby of mine*" (Genevieve, line 746). The gallery is part of Ahmad's home, it was used by Ahmad's family as well. With their permission, she had spent days cleaning and redesigning the place using for example the basic materials she could recycle to keep costs low since there were no funds available for this. The problems arose when the family would use the place and not leave it in the state they found it. She felt disrespected and frustrated but remained patient. However, this did not push her towards any dissociative action. She maintained an open and active the dialogue.

Reflecting back on these experiences, the data seems to suggest that at least in this case a differential positioning does not necessarily lead to a dissociative positioning. The actions engaged by the parties involved remain a personal choice motivated by the purpose they each value.

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[40] The 'young leaders' are those youth from the village who Genevieve give weekly leadership classes. This is a year-round project in collaboration with the local college was part of the social entrepreneurship of the Juha guesthouse.

6.1.1.3 Significance of contributions

The data suggested that a decisive element in the pathway of adaption has been contribution. Three complementary forms of contributions – which are in fact forms of gifts or flows of energy and information exchanged- became salient from the interviewees' narratives: 1) contribution of the relationship to the personal interest; 2) contribution to the relationships by the parties involved (shared interests); and 3) contribution of the relationship to shared interests which go beyond the relationship. The balance between personal and shared interests becomes essential in driving motivations to remain in the relationships and invest efforts for effective transformations eventually or not.

Both Neta and Ahmad noted their personal interests but also underlined how this was clearly linked to a shared interest - between the two of them in setting up the business and as well for the micro-society of Jisr which would be benefiting from their business. Neta honestly noted that her original intention was her own personal interest of realising her dream - "*I am not a social activist*" (Neta, Line 181) but she quickly realised that she also always wanted to "*do it together*" (Neta, Line 188) with the local people. As for Ahmad, he clearly stated his threefold motivation comprising of his personal progress; and contributing to changing the negative image of the village as well as enhancing the understanding of Jisr of foreigners coming to the guesthouse. Ahmad considered that the work with Neta and Genevieve has helped him progress at the personal, economic level but also has allowed him to bring another point of view of Jisr. He noted several times how now people were visiting the town more and more and not resenting to be here anymore. "*Not only that, but people are coming to study our work and our town, like you*", he highlighted

smilingly "*and this is itself a proof that things are changing* [he paused and drawing our attention with a hand gesture]" he then concluded with the motto of the Juha guesthouse: "*Be the change you want to see!*" (Ahmad, Lines 334-335). The relationship formed was a platform which enabled each of these people to do something which they valued at an individual level – their personal interest as well as a broader shared interest. More significantly, the relationship enabled the actualisation of their personal interests.

As discussed earlier, the Taglit meeting was turning point for Genevieve. This has been an illustration of the significance of recognition of one's work in a team. This felt recognition creates a space of belonging where people feel they are perceived as part of the team. The feeling that one's contribution was acknowledged by the valued others was significant for this particular actor. The first Taglit meeting was the turning point where Genevieve felt her work was acknowledged and recognized.

> *"I think a moment that was big and I don't know if am right but I think*
> *this is it. We had a meeting with the people. We started the project*
> *working with Taglit. From the get go I was super excited about Taglit.*
> *And we didn't know that it was gonna work or something would happen.*
> *And Neta was all excited -and me I was still a volunteer- telling me ' you*
> *could do a project and lead that project!' and that was exactly the kind*
> *of thing that I wanted to do. Socially, working with kids and helping*
> *them. Politically, bringing Jewish youth here in Jisr and learning the*
> *Arab side of Israel…. And after a few months that I would work with the*
> *kids and sometimes I would be afraid that they [Neta and Ahmad] would*

not understand that they would [stop everything] …Getting the kids ready [such] that they would lead those guided tours for the Jewish kids from Taglit would take a lot longer than telling them ' ok you say this, you say that'. This way of working took a long time and its effects and progress were not necessarily observable right away. "But one moment, I think changed things, I think [she insisted], was when we had this Taglit meeting. And I had work with them [the Jisr teenagers], and no one knew the extent of the work that I had done with them…The meeting happened and they all questioned whether those kids could speak English or not…" (Genevieve Lines 603-606).

The young leaders, Neta, Ahmad and the people who were Israel experts for Taglit were present at the meeting and it was conducted in English.

"And the kids did a wonderful job. They understood everything. They spoke. They were amazing. I was so proud of them. And I think at that point Neta could see "OK", this whole time that I was not here to see or supervise this, she completely let go and trusted me to be here. To work in here… To work in her path in her steps... And not in any way take her place. Or do something that was not in the spirit of what she wanted. So I was experimenting and had not certainty that it would work. There was no other way anyway. So if they believed that there was another way, they did not have the time to experiment it. And I knew there was no other way. And I think that at that moment it became like "Oh, ok, she is really working with us." That's what I feel. That could be completely wrong, but that's how I felt… my work became obvious. All

of a sudden, in that one and half or two-hours meeting. All of a sudden,

all the stuff that I had worked with that couldn't show before because

this work needed to be done. All of a sudden it became "ok… now she

did something" (Genevieve Line 621-633).

For Genevieve, this experience marked the recognition of her contribution to the Juha team. She cared about her work but also cared about belonging to the team through her contribution. She knew both Ahmad and Neta had trusted her without really asking for any particular targets. But she was nevertheless an employee and knew the work she had been doing had not shown any tangible results. It was important that Ahmad and Neta saw some kind of indication that all her efforts were paying off in some way. The experience at the Taglit meeting where the 'young leaders' at everyone's surprise spoke in proper English was a significant materialisation of Genevieve's work with them.

That episode also drew out an interesting form of contribution to the relationships which concern the expression of discontentment to the peers. Back then Genevieve did not speak fluent Hebrew and she had been working for three months intensively with her group of 'young leaders' to help them guide Taglit groups. When, during the meeting, some external person started driving the exchanges from English to Hebrew, Genevieve showed her frustration and disapproval but at the same time, she took care to clarify with Neta that her frustration was not directed towards her but the situation created by the external. Such subtle attention which may seem insignificant is in fact a sign of freedom of expression within the relationship. Not only had this

avoided misunderstandings which may cause unnecessary problems later, but it illustrates that the relationship is one of trust where feelings are expressed and perceived as being receivable by the other.

"I was really upset by that and I showed it and Neta felt really bad because my face was like [she had her eyes wide open and wore an expression of discontentment such that I may understand what she meant] - because I was really upset. First because I don't understand and after doing all this work for three months with the kids and having a meeting that I could not understand was very hard. But also, and especially because I knew they were capable and we were asking them to become tour guide in English then there was no point making this meeting in Hebrew. And I told Neta, I said 'don't worry it's not about you, there was someone else who intervened…!' It turned out that the meeting naturally actually switched back to English." (Genevieve, Lines 630-645)

6.1.1.4   Trustee-trusted: relational asymmetry?

Just as recognising contributions to a relationship is significant, the nature of contributions (gifts or flows of energy and information) also matter as they shape the relationships and tend to influence the adaptive pathways followed. Just like in the Fauzi case, the beginnings of the Juha team saw several efforts in building the trust in each other.

At the beginning of their relationship, Neta was willing to trust Ahmad and get into a business partnership although it involved her taking the financial risks which may incur but he was not ready to trust her completely.

"I was ready to trust him. But he didn't want to sign it. And it's not … May be if I insisted, he would have signed it. It's not like he said 'no'. but in fact he didn't sign it. He kept saying 'ok, I need to send it to this lawyer and this lawyer and this lawyer… he kept like delaying it… But Ahmad gave me a hard time…" (Neta Lines 323-326, 346).

Opting for an adaptive pathway to transform a buffering state of exchanges into something more constructive requires an effort which often places the trustee into a vulnerable position. The following quote from Neta explains this clearly.

"I decided My mission is to….I thought ok in this situation the side who is seeing the big picture which is me at the moment needs to trust the other one before the other one trusts him in order to create a trust relationship. I decided that I am going to trust this person and he is going to trust me back. Because if I am not.. Otherwise how can we make a progress? And Today I say that I think it is like a miniature of the peace process. [she laughed]. Because I am saying we cannot expect the other side to trust us. But someone needs to trust before. So I actually put 92 000 NIS that I raised into his bank account" (she said with a wry smile followed by a laughter) (Neta, Lines 372-379)

"A gift calls for a gift" (see Chapter Three section 3.2.4) the Maussians would say and this corroborates what Neta sought to explain: "*someone needs to trust before*" (Neta; Line 377). The act of giving first is one of generosity because the giver is, like in this case, placing herself in a position of uncertainty. Indeed, she did not know if her strategy would pay back. She did not know if her act of trusting will trigger an act of trust from the receiver (of her trust). Her active positioning remained resolutely associative as her intention has been to inject this new element of trust in the relational exchange.

The exchanges in Neta's and Ahmad's relationship transformed over time. Ahmad told me how he actually came to trust Neta's perspective and respect her opinions "*because she knows what she is doing*" (Informal discussions with Ahmad) and the time they spent working together doing every jobs "*from painting the building*" to "gi*ving interviews to journalists and presentations to visitors*" (informal discussions with Ahmad). Also he appreciated that "*when she was working from her home, she would still call him for advice or to have his opinion on things, although she was not required to ....* " (Ahmad, Lines 323-325). For Ahmad, the mutual respect they showed towards each other had been a significant factor in building the relationship with each other. Working together and the fact that she spent time work in the building which was to become the guesthouse were the things which he named as important in him knowing her better and them building a connection with each other.

For Ahmad, consulting Neta was indicative of how he expressed his trust in her. And Neta was well conscious of that: *"He is like saying "Neta, do what you think is right, I trust you. You know what you are doing!" and then, so …I think*

it is enough. It is his way to be part of the vision. He is taking part in it because he is enabling it to happen" (Neta, Lines 796-798). She recognised that Ahmad was also enabling her to realise her ideas. This mutuality created a space of 'we', 'us' which translated in their narratives where as they told their stories, the individual 'I's gradually shifted to 'we', 'us'. This space of mutuality was enabling each of them to achieve the goals they value. "*yes. it is a 'we'. It is my ideas but he is enabling it. He is enabling me to practice my idea.. And I think that with time he is becoming more and more… he is embracing more and more these kind of ideas*" (Neta Lines 802-803).

Neta never took a judgmental position towards Ahmad even in her narratives about his difficult behaviour. Contributions to a relationship are not always necessarily other-oriented as observed in the episodes above. Expressing one's frustrations and discontentment regarding an action of the other has been another aspect which became salient in this case. Neta's frank attitude towards Ahmad concerning his behaviour was a case in point. A notable episode which illustrates this was when Neta showed her disapproval of Ahmad's behaviour about the access to the bank account of the guesthouse:

> "*And also He saw how angry I was, He gave me his password. I don't have the permission in the bank but it's like he gives me his password and I use his. So I said :"Ok. If it gives him a better feeling, I don't mind." I was like "OK. Whatever!" [she said in a deep breath] (Neta Lines405-407).*

She had been quite understanding and supportive –"*I feel that he is a good man. He does not have bad feelings*" (Neta, Line 370). They have very

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different business management cultures and she clearly has been engaging with this differentiality at the secondary private level while at the personal level (primary private or public level), she respected who he was as a fellow human being but also what he represented as her co-worker. She was keen and determined to speak about her recognition of Ahmad's valuable contribution. The following quote illustrates this clearly:

"Also I want to say that.. when I had a chance to be alone with the mayor… so he told me something like.. "you know if not for you Ahmad would not do anything like this!" I told him that he is wrong. I told him that Ahmad was the only one in this village (to agree to this project) and we can't forget it. And he had a lot of courage to believe in it and to start doing that with me. I think that he is a very courageous and brave man! You know, I think opening a tourist business in Jisr ez Zarqa is very surprising and … you have to have like a vision that none of the people of the village have. And you know he owns this building. Right now the business pays it's not very profitable… If Ahmad would just rent his building to I don't know what he could have made even more money right now. so I think Ahmad deserves a lot of respect in spite everything we said. In the village that women are not hanging out in public places and cafes… So having these women [Genevieve and herself]… Also most of the women… also, although we are not partners on paper when Ahmad introduces me to people, he says 'my partner'. He likes it that way. And also in the village he says ' my partner'. For him to say that in this kind of village, It's brave. Its making a change and making a point!"
(Neta, Lines 602-616)

Such a balanced positioning as Neta's suggests that the flows in relationship under tension better remain in circulation whether hierarchically (for example when Neta takes the initiative of giving in more effort to calm the situation down) or circular (like when they share a cigarette together or consult each other which both symbolise a moment of levelling felt power asymmetries). The nature (hierarchical or circular) of the flows (in giving and receiving) in the relationships tended to influence to some extent which adaptive pathways the relationship followed. This will be further discussed in section 6.3.

6.1.2. Analytical résumé
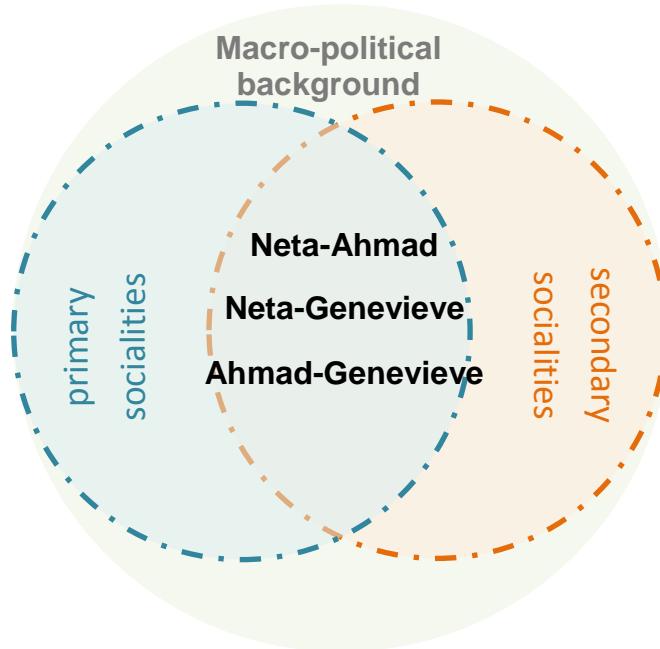
Figure 22 The hybrid sociality within which the Juha case dyads operate

Figure 22 summarises the hybrid sociality within which the main protagonists operated at the time of the research. The interviews have been conducted in relation to their belonging to the different social groups in the micro-level context of the Juha guesthouse and its immediate environment, the town of Jisr ez Zarqa in Israel.

Neta, Ahmad and Genevieve identified different 'others' in their narratives with whom they reported circumstances of tension. The analysis has shown some articulation between the nature of the sociality within which the other is dealt with and the positioning of the protagonist towards those others. Table 9 presents a summary of those articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to others identified from different socialities following different

circumstances of tension. There is no specific predictable pattern in the way actors perceive and act in circumstances of tension in relation to the other. The adaptive pathways emerge from the choices of the protagonists to choose one pathway or another; to choose to give or receive. This articulation of choices within a certain context may partly define the effectiveness of the pathways of adaption.

Actors	Sociality of Others identified			
	Secondary public	Secondary Private	Primary Public	Primary Private
Neta	-Identification with the Jisr residents when looking for a partnership -Associative action -Transformative effect on relationship	-identification Differential with Ahmad -Remained Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Identification with Jisr residents -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Differential -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship
Genevieve	-Differential with the Jisr residents - Associative -Transformative relationship	-Differential with Ahmad -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship -Identification with Neta -Associative -Transformative effect on the relationship	- Differential with the Jisr residents -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship -Identification with Ahmad as a friend -Associative -Transformative effect on the relationship	-Differential with Ahmad -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship -Identification with Neta -Associative -Transformative effect on the relationship

Actors	Sociality of Others identified			
	Secondary public	**Secondary** **Private**	**Primary** **Public**	**Primary** **Private**
Ahmad	- Differential with the people outside Jisr - Discontinued at first Then associative through the guesthouse -Buffered then Transformative	- Differential with the guests - Associative -Transformative -Identification with Neta -Associative -Transformative	-Identification with Genevieve as member of his family -Associative -Transformative -Identification with Neta as his business partner and a friend -Associative -Transformative	-Differential with Neta -Associative Transformative -Identification with Genevieve as member of his family -Associative -Transformative

Table 9 Matrix showing articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to the others identified from different socialities following different circumstances of tension

The Juha case story has presented mainly interpersonal and cultural elements which have acted as stressors on the relationships of the main protagonists. Following the analysis of the intricacies involved in interpersonal relationships in terms of these stressors, the focus has been drawn on the: 1) the nature of the exchanges and 2) the nature of the space within which the exchanges happened just like in the Fauzi case story. However, it was seen in the case that the articulations between positionings, effects on the relationships and socialities within which tensions happened and were dealt with were nuanced compared to the former case.

Here again, looking at the nature of exchanges, the beginnings of the relationships required two critical conditions: 1) that one party offers an opportunity to the other to contribute and 2) the other party to accept the offer. Conceptualising the decision to choose to make an offer and to accept the offer made as part of the analytical process has been fundamental in understanding that adaptive pathways are not only dependent on contextual factors but also on contingent choices. So far this finding is similar to that in the Fauzi case.

In terms of the nature of spaces within which exchanges happen, the findings suggest that a primary social circle has been more conducive to sharing personal perceptions. In this case story, Neta and Genevieve found a space in each other's presence for expressing their differences and common aspirations freely. Such freedom of expression initiated a social proximity and a process of trust-building. With Ahmad, this has been more difficult due in part to his own personality of not sharing his emotions easily. However, the

trust-building process Neta started by giving her trust and showing her understanding and respect of his emotions at times of tension eased this process and gradually transformed the relationship. Neta's perseverance in maintaining an associative positioning nurtured the trust and made it easier for Ahmad to engage in an associative action with her as a trusted partner in business and family member which means a lot given the socio-political context of the country and the relatively conservative social norms in Jisr ez Zarqa.

Neta's willingness to initiate a flow of information and energy with Ahmad as a co-worker even at times of tension was motivated by her personal interest at first and a sense of shared interest later for Ahmad's own development. She was resolute to "write her own story" and not miss the picture. She walked the streets of Jisr looking for a partner who would be willing to open a tourist guesthouse in a marginalised and poverty ridden area. Ahmad's willingness was also motivated by personal interests but he also had a vision which went beyond his economic interest as Neta underlined. Each had a purpose to engage in the enterprise and that drove their willingness to initiate the relationship.

Now even if there is an interest in the relationship, it does not directly imply interpersonal resilience. It is evident that when each party finds in the dyad a space of recognition of the social self he or she present, then not discontinuing the relationship at times of tension become most probable. A case in point has been when Genevieve was offered to be employed. This explicit recognition of her work to which she attributed social value changed her mind set and

maintained her associative action at the guesthouse. Interestingly, recognition of one's contribution can be a driver of cooperative social action.

Although, their being Arab and Jewish socio-politically meant there was an asymmetry in their social power within the broader macro-political context (as discussed in Chapter Four), for Neta that was not a point of consideration. She was conscious of the socioeconomic and political difference but personally made no distinction. Her focus was on the common humanity and potential business collaboration. Ahmad however perceived Neta as 'a Jewish' woman and was at first hesitant to trust her. But Neta's perseverance in communicating her understanding of his emotions at times of tension but at the same time expressing her reasoned refusals when she disagreed with his mismanagement, earned his trust.

Socialisation can bring about differentiality as well. In this case, it was clear for Neta and Genevieve who experienced several circumstances of tension with Ahmad. For both women, the consequential differentiality did not influence their actions negatively as they both maintained their associative action with him.

The differentiality in their in social and cultural belongings as well as their own personal behaviours were not an insurmountable barrier. They did end up in associative positionings with each other. The condition to overcoming this barrier has evidently been the symbolic exchanges (energy and information flows/ gifts) within the primary socialities where people engaged at the person-to-person level in an out-spoken manner.

6.2 The Khouriyeh case story

The third case studied has been the story of the Khouriyeh family guesthouse through the narratives of Rawda and Issa (See Annexe Eleven for a detailed account of this case). The analysis is fundamentally about how this family came to transform the exogenous difficulties they face living in a complex context into an opportunity. After the second intifada, Rawda and Issa bought their family home in Jifna and decided to make it a tourist guesthouse for foreigners to visit the West Bank and experience the life of a Palestinian family. It was also the only means of income in an area where the economy is blocked due to the military occupation but also a form of laxness of the Palestinian authority. The purpose of setting up a tourist guesthouse in the middle of the West Bank has been to survive economically but also socio-culturally in the face of adversity.

Jifna is a small village that sits on the hilly landscape in the governorate of Ramallah and al-Bireh in the central West Bank (see Map Section 4.3.2.1). With about 1700 inhabitants the village is home to circa 70% Christians and 30% Muslims. Although known for its abundance of olive trees, and apricots, Jifna's economy today is less on agriculture and more focused on small businesses- restaurants, commerce. The village is adjacent to the Jalazone refugee camp to the south and the Beit El Israeli settlement to the south-east. It is not rare to hear gunshots during the night coming from confrontations between people from the camp and those in the refugee camp. Jifna remains however a peaceful area but still affected by the unstable political situation and the conditions of the military occupation. Speaking to the people, it was clear

that they feel being under a "double occupation"- of the Palestinian authority and the Israeli military. The expressed frustrations of the interviewees about the lack of job and development opportunities, the water distribution issues, and the highly controlled mobility across the region are some indicators of where this feeling of being doubly prejudiced from the authorities crops from.

6.2.1 Intricacies of interpersonal perceptions

Unlike in the other first two cases, the main sources of tension are exogenous to the dyadic relationship that Rawda and Issa share. The tensions they pointed at are mainly external to the relationship they share with each other. In this case, the 'other' is not only the dyadic partner but also people outside the primary private sociality of the family.

6.2.1.1 Integration and emotional space for communication

Rawda's and Issa's relationship functions as an integrated system. From the beginning, they have been supportive of each other and they have shared the same vision when it comes to their personal relationship and the guesthouse as well. They have reported perceiving being a couple as an asset to run their business together because of the possibility to discuss with each other freely at any time. Interestingly, the primary private sociality merges with the secondary private when in their privacy they discuss about their roles and functioning in the guesthouse.

> *"I think we do it in a good way. But I sometimes may be … there is some clashing between each other – she want to clean all of the house at the same time… I ask her please we can fetch a lady to help us. She don't*

want. She wants to clean by herself. And I feel with her on such days. And from my side I can do all of the things from the guests and shopping and tours and the home she will take care of the cleaning… but it was good really. "And even outside you clean" Rawda from the other end of the living room, reminded him to say. "yes even I clean outside. And even our children when there is a group they help. We are a good family business" (Issa, Lines 202-212).

Within their primary private sociality, they both pointed out in formal discussions and in the interviews that the "foundation" of the proper functioning of their dyad has been "Love" which they translate in their mutual respect for each other as well as their own self-respect.

"Love. That's the foundation" Issa affirmatively said replying to my question on what makes their team function well. And Rawda corroborated instantly laughing happily: "Without doubt! Yeah! and sometimes it is normal to have clash and to talk this and … because it is not good to be always ok and like this … no. if we have some problem then we solve it then it was good also to have something nice after heart pains… this is the life…. Thank God for this" [she looks up in prayer for a second].

"You have to respect yourself and then the people will respect you. even your wife, your boyfriend, your children …" Issa continued talking to me while Rawda tells me with her eyes shining: "I have a good husband! Really!" (Issa, Lines 214-222)

The respect that Rawda feels and expresses for Issa gave some clear indication as to how integrated this dyad is.

"I think for me I am very glad that he is my husband. He is a really honest person and he has principles. And he is serious and he takes responsibility.

We are together like this [she holds the two indexes (fingers) firmly together to express how connected they are] but I feel he takes more responsibility to take care about me, about the children, about us.

This is good feel… when I am tired like this may be I shout or I fight but he accepts it and makes me calm down. I like this. I appreciate this [she says to Issa lovingly touching his shoulder] Habibi (my love)…

"In July we will be 21 years married… I feel like it was just last year so… Thank God! We complete each other. I smile and socially active. He is strong, quiet – he doesn't talk much- calm. This is good. It is good in the home to be like this and even with the community. So I cover him and he covers me in with good work. [Rawda laughs]" (Issa, Lines 226- 241).

Between Rawda and Issa, besides the fact that they are a couple and share a primary private sociality, their positioning towards each other is clearly associative in action and differentiated in perception. They accept each other's differences and appreciate their mutual contribution to the relationship as Rawda explained. Circumstances of tension are dealt with by each other

expressing their feelings without fear of being judged by the other. Conflict is perceived as part of their system of functioning and even as a form of exchange that can be constructive if well-managed.

6.2.1.2 Socialisation and consequential elements of differentiation and identification in perceiving the 'other'

Within the broader primary public sociality that is in the neighborhood, community and with their guests in the guesthouse the personal and dyadic positionings reported are varied. It was interesting to observe, here as well, how socialisation may bring about differentiality as well as identification.

The couple shared their idea of hosting foreigners in their home as a business in view of consultation and respect to their neighbours. Their endeavor had been to avoid any potential source of misunderstandings once their business will be set up running. However, the reaction of the neighbours surprised both Rawda and Issa who expected them to be sharing the broader shared vision of the project – that is providing a platform for foreigners to learn about Palestinian life from within a local context. Expecting identification on the part of the neighbours, they received differentiality. The neighbours questioned their judgement of choosing to "*bring strangers into their home*", hence, missing from the Khouriyehs' point of view the bigger picture. However, later out of personal interest, some neighbours, who had originally chosen a dissociative positioning towards their project, came back offering their own free guestrooms when they saw that the business was running well. Although this could have been viewed as form of opportunism, the couple accepted the offers in order to help the families as Rawda explained. The consequential associative positioning has been a conscious decision motivated by the

original purpose of their project – the vision of informing better first-hand experiential understanding of the Palestinian life in the West Bank.

> *"My perspectives changed towards people- I understand more things also. And also the people they change- when they come to offer a room – it means the people they believe you and respect you and your house … if I listened to them from the beginning – I would be zero- I don't know – if you have children you have to work for your children… and then people will change. Because, here sometimes – not just here everywhere- the new thing is not easy... 23 years I had a life and all this we had to build from zero. It is not easy for anyone even for us I was worried and we were worried" (Rawda, Lines 388-395).*

Whilst the relationship with the neighbours could have tensed up and become competitive eventually, the pathway chosen by the couple was one of association although their perceptual positioning has been differential. This is interesting in that the question it raises is: why would the Khouriyeh cooperate with the other families who had clearly been unsupportive since the embryonic stages of the project?

In a way, it could be argued that cooperation in providing more guestrooms helped in maintaining the economy of the business but at the same time, it could be argued that this could take away clients from the Khouriyeh to other businesses. The beginning of an answer could be found in Rawda's narrative and discussed in the next section.

6.2.1.3   Identification and differentiation in struggle

Rawda explained that she finds "*strength to hope through the hard life*" living in the West Bank.

> *"Yeah because when you have a hard life [she pauses] we have struggles here and here and here – and I want to tell [talk about it]… I go to my neighbours but they have the same problem… so what I did, I stayed in the home and I was thinking – if I feel weak or depressed – I don't want to go out and show the people because all they are like this. So always you have to be strong and empowered- you have to show them and then you strengthen them. Sometimes when I talk to the people, or say something I feel that they are more in depression than me- then I am strong so I take strength from them also you know… But first I need to settle myself first you know… And say 'no it's not worth it- I have to stay strong'. We discuss together [with Issa], also with Issa sometimes we stay up late … we have our problems and discuss – and then 'ok then we have to do this'. So sometimes also, we talk to our friends. We talk to the guest that we have…" (Rawda, Lines 400-412)*

Rawda has a generous approach to the people around her. She gives for the sake of giving; keeping faith that it will bring good for herself and everyone – "*God will give me better things*" (Rawda, Lines 178). Also, she feels the responsibility to lead by example. At the same time, she acknowledges that sorting out difficulties involve discussing and sharing ideas and opinions with like and unlike-mined people as well as her family and friends. Her adaptive

pathways are driven mainly from inside-out through her primary private sociality.

While Rawda's narrative focuses on identifying with the Palestinian people, Issa's narrative is more nuanced. His narrative indicated that he identifies more with the foreigners coming as guests than with the local people. As discussed earlier, Issa's perception of the people in the West Bank is differential and he also to some extent tended to be in a dissociative positioning preferring to emigrate if he had the opportunity - *"I don't like this country,"* he confessed openly to me. Despite this, his words still indicate his sense of belonging to the Palestinian people. This can be observed when he says

> *"I think what I like with my guest how they deal … I prefer… I want my people to be like this.. to be like the foreigner…when you speak with him is easy and simple.. They don't lie… to deal with the foreigners is easier than with the Palestinians for that we don't accept to have any Arabs in the guesthouse". (Issa, Lines 146-149)*

The guesthouse has become for both Issa and Rawda a space where they feel useful, recognized. Mutually acknowledging their contributions to the business, to the community and to the broader international communities visiting them, they report to be happier and able to overcome the daily tensions and stress they face.

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6.2.2 Analytical résumé
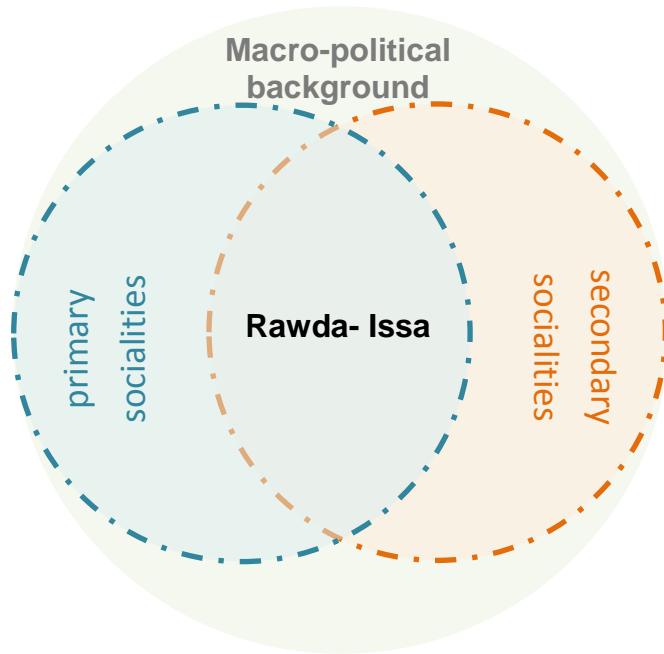
Figure 23 The hybrid sociality within which the Khouriyeh dyad operate

Figure 23 summarises the hybrid sociality within which the Khouriyeh dyad operated at the time of the research. The interviews have been conducted in relation to their belonging to the different social groups in the micro-level context of the Khouriyeh guesthouse and its immediate environment, the village of Jifna in the West Bank.

Emotional space for communication

The particularity of this case lies in the fact that the dyad studied is a married couple. They both pointed out how their intimate relationship had been an asset in their difficult times. They had conceptualised this in terms of the mutual support they offered each other and at the same time the mutual respect of their differences in personality and in dealing with their other social

relationships. Indeed, although Rawda and Issa form an integrated system as a couple and share the same vision when it comes to the purpose of their guesthouse, their positioning in relation to others in different socialities is starkly different. This has been observed from their narratives especially in the way they describe their sense of belonging to the Palestinian community in the West Bank.

Rawda and Issa identified different 'others' in their narratives with whom they reported circumstances of tension. The analysis has shown some articulation between the nature of the sociality within which the other is dealt with and the positioning of the protagonist towards those others. Table 10 presents a summary of those articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to others identified from different socialities following different circumstances of tension.

Actors	Sociality of Others identified			
	Secondary public	Secondary Private	Primary Public	Primary Private
Rawda	-Identification through struggle with the wider West Bank community -Associative action -Transformative effect on relationship	-Differential with guests -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Identification with people in the local community -Associative / Dissociative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Differential with Issa -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship
Issa	-Differential with the wider West Bank community -tending towards dissociation -Buffered relationship	-Identification with guests -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	- Differential with the soldiers at the checkpoint -dissociative -Buffered exchange	-Differential with Rawda -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship

Table 10 Matrix showing articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to the others identified from different socialities following different circumstances of tension

Again, like in the other first two cases, there is no specific predictable pattern in the way actors perceive and act in circumstances of tension in relation to the others identified. The adaptive pathways emerge from the choices of the protagonists to choose one pathway or another; to choose to give or receive. This articulation of choices within a certain context may partly define the effectiveness of the pathways of adaption.

6.3 Refining the analysis of interpersonal resilience

In coherence with an abductive reasoning, the analysis was refined through each case studied. Each analytical resume presented at the end of a case story analysis has paved the way towards this cross-cutting analysis by drawing out the overarching common and case specific patterns which were identified in the previous case. In other words, the interpretations of each case were further refined through understanding of the other cases.

This approach's strength, compared to an inductive analysis, is found in the fact that the salience of one explanation has not been chosen over another, nor has one explanation been deemed as being fixed or generalizable. Instead, attention has been given to common patterns as well as case specific

ones, showing, in conclusion, the context-specificity of interpersonal resilience. Hence the need for a context-based framework of analysis.

As discussed in Chapter Four, an abductive reasoning builds on empirical data without neglecting theoretical concepts. The aim is to build a more refined explanation using insights from both theory and empirical findings. The combination of theoretical insights on interpersonal resilience (a subjective, emergent and context specific concept) and the empirical findings (as presented in the case story analyses) brought out new patterns (articulations) which helped in refining the context-based framework. In that sense, the abductive reasoning underlying the research has added value to the research process, findings and dissemination. This is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Participants' validation of the first cross-analytical interpretations was crucial to building robustness in the research process, as discussed in Chapter Four. Annex Nine shows the first interpretation of the data gathered. This was unanimously validated by all the participants during the feedback group interviews conducted in the final field visit. Following this validation, the data was sifted through the analytical framework again to refine the primary interpretations and translate them into a sociological language through the Maussian Gift grammar. This was particularly important because there was a clear need to have a sociological conceptualisation of adaptive pathways driving towards interpersonal resilience, as discussed in Chapters two and three. Again, further reflections on the significance of this are provided in Chapter Seven.

6.3.1 Insights from Cases' specificities

Spelling out the specificities of both the context and positionings helped in refining the understanding of how people chose to adapt effectively in circumstances of tension. Tables 11, 12 and 13 present the summary of different positionings and related adaptive pathways chosen by the main protagonists in each case to cope with the relational tensions they identified in their narratives.

The findings suggest that there are no predetermined adaptive pathways in terms of socialities or in terms of perceptual and active positionings. The outcomes of the adaptive pathways taken depend on the subjective stories the partners tell themselves, but also on the unfolding of these subjective stories into the space of intersubjectivity – that is, in the relationship. This unfolding can be 1) a resonance resulting in an integrative system, a purposeful relationship; 2) a dissonance where partners are unable to understand each other resulting in a chaotic system without any effective adaptation; and 3) a buffered situation where both parties are neither completely in phase nor completely out-of phase but where the tension still weighs on the relationship to some extent. Obviously, these three categories serve a conceptual purpose, and help to build understanding of a complex and highly subjective set of dynamics. In reality, relationships are always moving diachronically as well as synchronously through these constructed categories. To illustrate this further, the following sections examine the stories that the participants have built their social representations and interactions through.

6.3.1.1 Fauzi case

Maoz: Acknowledged differentiality, identification and associative action

Maoz for instance, acknowledging his position of differentiality as a Jewish man in an Arab majority locality, sought for and maintained an associative behaviour throughout his interactions in the different socialities he evolved in. Interestingly, in parallel to this acknowledged differentiality, his perception towards the people he engaged with was focused on identification in the common humanity. Motivated by the purpose of building long term constructive relationships with the Arab community in the Old city (and beyond), in the face of tensions (suspicion, refusals, misunderstandings), he took a stance of prioritising the principle of generosity – "give for the other to give". This stance, what Chanial (2008) would call the "agnostic gift", carries a degree of risk and puts the giver in a vulnerable position because there is no guarantee of any return on investment. At the same time, because he wanted to set up a business, the fact that his efforts were reciprocated became important as well. He was seeking to "give for the other to give back" – he wanted the partnership to happen. The partnership could only happen if Odette accepted to trust in his project. His perseverance paid off when his efforts were recognised, received and subsequently returned in the form of trust first by Odette, then Sureida and finally by the local people. Table 11 recapitulates the different articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to the 'others' identified from different socialities in circumstances of tension for the dyads in the Fauzi case.

Actors	Sociality of Others identified			
	Secondary Public	**Secondary Private**	**Primary Public**	**Primary Private**
Maoz	-Differentiality acknowledged between Jews and Arabs -Associative action -Transformative effect on relationship	-Identification with Odette and Sureida as business partners - Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Identification with local Arab community of Nazareth -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Identification in terms of humanity -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship
Sureida	-Differentiality with the Israeli Jews declared - Dissociative -Buffered relationship	-Differential with Maoz -Dissociative -Buffered relationship -Differential with Maoz -Associative -Transformative effect on the relationship	- Differentiality with the Israeli Jews declared -Dissociative -Buffered relationship	-Identification in terms of humanity -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship -Differentiality with Maoz during episode of Gaza war -Dissociative momentarily -Buffered effect on the relationship
Odette	-Differentiality acknowledged between Jews and Arabs -Associative action -Transformative effect on relationship	-Differential with Maoz at the beginning -Dissociative -Buffered relationship	- Differentiality with the Israeli Jews acknowledged -Associative -Buffered relationship	-Identification in terms of humanity with Maoz -Associative in a win-win deal -Transformative effect on relationship

Table 11 Matrix showing articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to the others identified from different socialities following different circumstances of tension

Odette: Acknowledged differentiality, identification and associative action in a win-win deal

Odette started off in a clearly dissociative positioning with Maoz but changed after socialising with him. She could only engage in associative action when she decided to prioritise her perception of their common humanity, hence shifting into identification. This was a first space they could share at the primary level. Then came the secondary level where Odette found a benefit in engaging with Maoz's project. This win-win deal they agreed on transformed the relationship further into an example of interpersonal resilience. Odette agreed to "give for the other to give back" in a ritual interaction founded more on the principle of reciprocity. They found a common ground and the relationship kicked off in a constructive manner. Figure 24 illustrates these interpersonal dynamics on Chanial's (2008) compass.
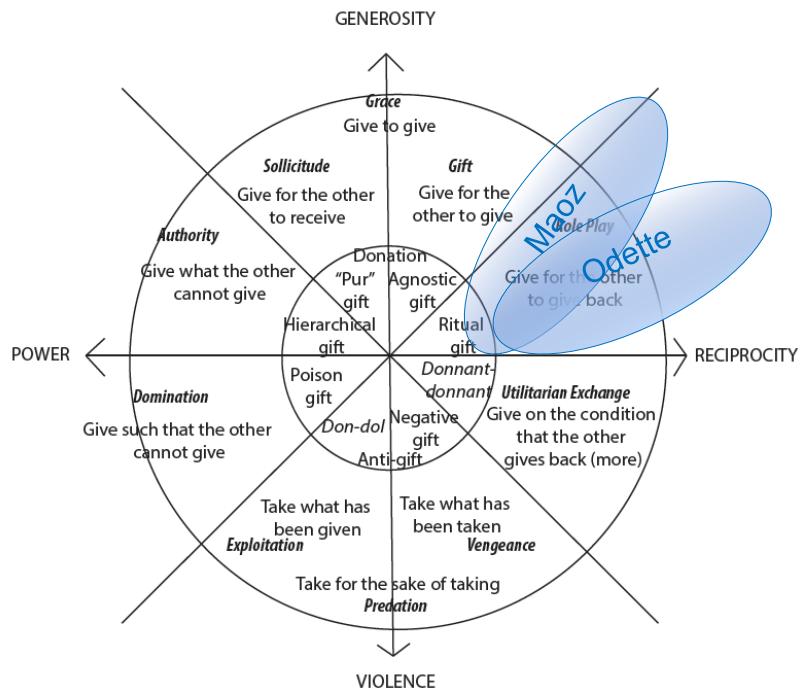
Figure 24 Common grounds become opportune to constructive interaction: Maoz and Odette

Sureida: Declared differentiality, associative action mitigated by an unresolved debt

For Sureida, her story is told through the lens of a symbolically laden unresolved debt of the Israeli authorities towards of her family. She considers that "something has been taken" and is still being taken away from her without her being able to do anything about it. This perception of being owed and knowing that the perceived debt will not be repaid drives her positioning into one of dissociation towards anything that could, in her perception, represent the debtor. Her feeling of resentment could be explained by her subjective experiences of being 'occupied' by a State she considers is liable to her family. Two elements of respect seemed to have made her change from a dissociative to associative behaviour. The first instance was observing Maoz's recognition of her family heritage. And in the second, she was given the opportunity to further contribute to this recognition of her family heritage. This ability to give in this way allowed a shifting of her focus from suspicion and resentment to a more constructive interaction. The resentment was so ingrained, however, that the balance was evidently difficult to keep and could only be re-adjusted by finding a common ground again – a sense of common humanity and a shared

interest in the business. Figure 24 illustrates the interpersonal dynamics of Sureida's relationship with Maoz on Chanial's (2008) compass.
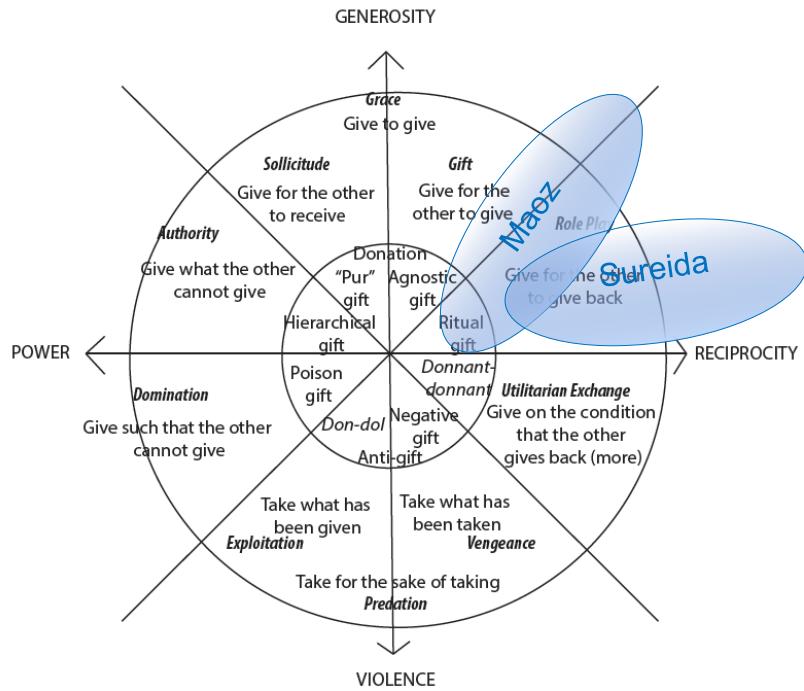
Figure 25 Common grounds become opportune to constructive interaction: Maoz and Sureida

It has been important to find a common ground where the partners could interact in purpose at times of tension. It has been within this space of communication that the resilience of the relationship could be enabled.

6.3.1.2 Juha case

Table 12 recapitulates the different articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to the 'others' identified from different socialities in circumstances of tension for the dyads in the Juha case.

Actors	Sociality of Others identified			
	Secondary public	Secondary Private	Primary Public	Primary Private
Neta	-Identification with the Jisr residents when looking for a partnership -Associative action -Transformative effect on relationship	-identification with Ahmad -Remained Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Identification with Jisr residents -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Differential -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship
Genevieve	-Differential with the Jisr residents - Associative -Transformative relationship	-Differential with Ahmad -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship -Identification with Neta -Associative -Transformative effect on the relationship	- Differential with the Jisr residents -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship -Identification with Ahmad as a friend -Associative -Transformative effect on the relationship	-Differential with Ahmad -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship -Identification with Neta -Associative -Transformative effect on the relationship

Actors	Sociality of Others identified			
	Secondary public	**Secondary Private**	**Primary Public**	**Primary Private**
Ahmad	- Differential with the people outside Jisr - Discontinued at first Then associative through the guesthouse -Buffered then Transformative	- Differential with the guests - Associative -Transformative -Identification with Neta -Associative -Transformative	-Identification with Genevieve as member of his family -Associative -Transformative -Identification with Neta as his business partner and a friend -Associative -Transformative	-Differential with Neta -Associative Transformative -Identification with Genevieve as member of his family -Associative -Transformative

Table 12 Matrix showing articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to the others identified from different socialities in circumstances of tension

Neta: Feeling of Identification, acknowledged differentiality and associative action

At the beginning, Neta interacted with all her interlocutors, clearly identifying herself with them in common humanity at the personal level. Her focus was on building a business first. Her reported subjective experiences socialising with Ahmad changed her perception to acknowledging more the existing differentiality between them. However, this did not change her positioning as an actor. She remained in an associative stance and put in efforts for the sake of her interest which was the success of the business. This meant accepting to 'put her ego on the side' and deal not only with some of Ahmad's objectionable management behaviours but also his personal character. Like Maoz she was ready to trust first – "give for the other to give back". Her efforts were as well recognised which built a form of mutual respect between her and Ahmad. The guesthouse became a platform for them to enable their personal interests to blossom, and a purposeful relationship to be maintained.

Ahmad: Feeling of differentiality, identification and associative action

For Ahmad, his narrative started with his childhood memories of feeling rejected and resented just because of his social belonging. This could have instilled the feeling of differentiality which transpired in his narrative. Trusting Neta was not the obvious thing for him but he immediately identified with her entrepreneurial character, which he shared. More than a circular interaction where flows of information are symmetrical, Ahmad preferred a hierarchical one that prioritised his personal interests at times where he tended to "give for the other to give (more)". At first, because their expectations did not match,

there were episodes of tension. Responding to Neta's efforts of understanding, pedagogy and frank attitude, he gave back his trust and instead of opting out in dissociation, he chose to remain in an associative interaction. Another reason which comforted this associative positioning could have been the success of the guesthouse and the fact that his personal interests were fulfilled. Figure 26 illustrates the commonality in positioning for Neta and Ahamd on Chanial's (2008) compass.
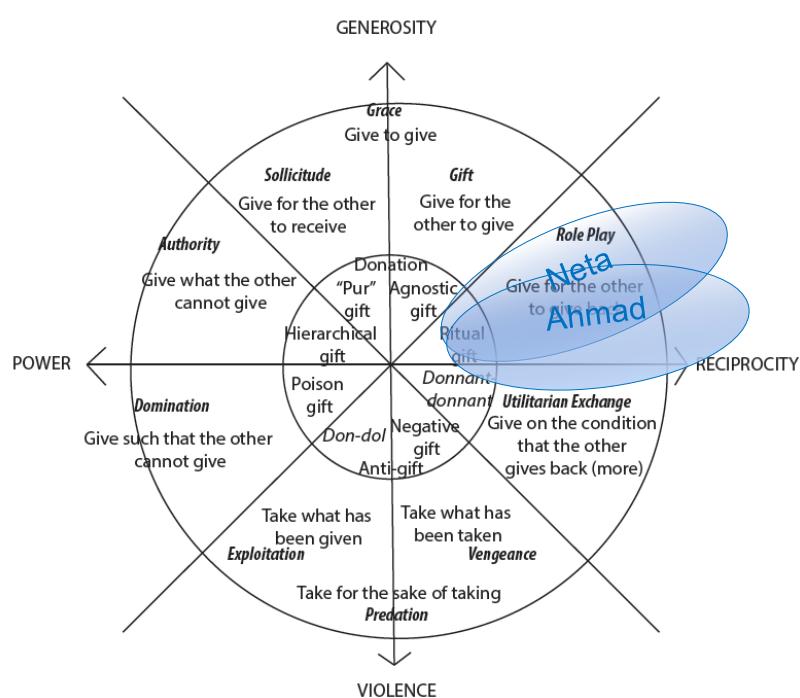
Figure 26 Common grounds become opportune to constructive interaction: Neta and Ahmad

Genevieve: Feeling of differentiality, differentiation and associative action

Genevieve's feeling of differentiality was accentuated by some of her subjective experiences with Ahmad and his family. She felt that her contribution was not being acknowledged nor valued. This for some time

resulted in a buffered exchange in the relationship whereby the source of the problem was not solved, but at the same time she did not disrupt her associative positioning (although she noted having thought about it). The recognition of her contribution had a transformative effect on the relationship which, already motivated by a purposeful friendship, gained momentum. Figure 27 illustrates, on Chanial's (2008) compass, the overlaps in the interpersonal dynamics between Ahmad and Genevieve.
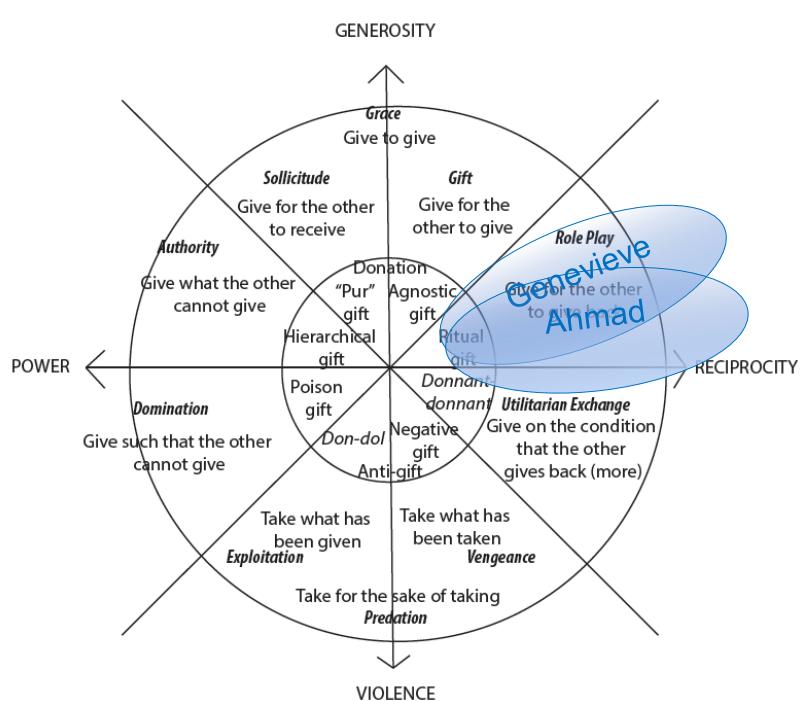
Figure 27 Common grounds become opportune to constructive interaction: Genevieve and Ahmad

It is important to point out that a common ground, overlaps in the interpersonal dynamics, while they enhance the ability of a relationship to be resilient, do not necessarily imply that the tension/conflict will be resolved. The interactions in a relationship may be maintained even if there are elements of discord/tension remaining in the relationship.

6.3.1.3 Khouriyeh case

Table 13 recapitulates the different articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to the 'others' identified from different socialities in circumstances of tension for the dyads in the Khouriyeh case.

Actors	Sociality of Others identified			
	Secondary public	Secondary Private	Primary Public	Primary Private
Rawda	-Identification through struggle with the wider West Bank community -Associative action -Transformative effect on relationship	-Differential with guests -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Identification with people in the local community -Associative / Dissociative -Transformative effect on relationship	-Differential with Issa -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship
Issa	-Differential with the wider West Bank community -tending towards dissociation -Buffered relationship	-Identification with guests -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship	- Differential with the soldiers at the checkpoint -dissociative -Buffered exchange	-Differential with Rawda -Associative -Transformative effect on relationship

Table 13 Matrix showing articulations of actor specific positionings in relation to the others identified from different socialities following circumstances of tension

Rawda: Identification, associative action

Rawda tends to constantly find points of commonness in her relationships. Her focus is on constructive action and thus she prioritises a positioning of associative action. Her mind set is based on "give for the other to give" and tends to trust in 'God'. This said, she acknowledges, relates to the importance of being able to share her frustrations in the intimate sociality of her family and close friends. However, this is balanced by her care to help other by giving support in any ways she could – even if it is just in her attitude.

Issa: feeling of differentiality and dissociative action; feeling of identification and associative action

Issa's narrative suggested a double-angled story. On one hand, the data suggested that Issa nurtured a sense of resentment against both the Israeli military and the Palestinian authorities. With the scourges of the military occupation and the weight of the laxness of the Palestinian authority, he explained feeling pushed into a situation where he became unable to give back. He narrated the feeling of his freedom of movement and personal development being taken away without any possibility of him requesting that it be returned. He also clearly posed a differential positioning towards 'his people' – Palestinians living in the West Bank on the basis of their behaviours which he cannot identify with and actually resents. These elements seemed to explain his wish to emigrate and thus his position of dissociation. On the other hand, his participation in the guesthouse transforms this positioning from focusing on resentment to construction. The opportunity to contribute to something he values – sharing the Palestinian culture with foreigners and learning from them as well – transforms his experience. Being listened to and understood by people he respects translates into a form of recognition, which he needs. Although possible, it would be difficult to illustrate such interpersonal dynamics on Chanial's (2008) compass of relationships. Also, because this exercise will not bring any further clarification for the discussion here, this illustration has been omitted.

In sum, acknowledging and incurring differentiality can seemingly lead to different outcomes. Each case testified to the criticality of choice of the partners in the dyad. In circumstances of tension, socio-economic and socio-

political factors may be just as salient as personal inclinations. However, an element that cannot be neglected is the choice of the dyadic partner to initiate an act which opens a potential flow of gift (or patterns of energy and information). Depending on the response of the other at the receiving end, the relationship tends towards a positive or a negative activation. Put differently, the positive activation may result in a constructive exchange which transforms the relationship, while the negative activation ends in a disruption in the exchanges and hence leads to a breakdown in the relationship. This concurs with the views of Siegel (2010), that interpersonal resilience has an inherently subjective character that cannot be ignored. Taken together these substantive findings confirm the salience and need for a context based analytical framework, as devised in Chapter Three. Both points are returned to in Chapter Seven.

6.3.2 Common patterns across cases

Hybrid socialities

As Figures 21, 22 and 23 have depicted, the dyads studied have been oscillating in a hybrid sociality between primary and secondary forms of socialisation. While in some cases this has been beneficial to the relationship, in others, such as in the Juha case, it has also complicated matters. The analysis of the data suggests that definition of boundaries has been an issue to consider across cases. This confirms the necessity of the first tier of analysis concerned with the socialities within which the dyads and relationships evolved. Although no pre-determined adaptive pathways can be identified in terms of the sociality, the three cases have shown that distinguishing types of

interactions at the primary and secondary level can refine the distinction of 'common grounds' - spaces where people are able to negotiate their way out of the tensions. That said, the necessity of first tier of the context based framework is thus empirically validated and confirmed.

Emergent drivers of interpersonal resilience

Analysis of the three case stories suggests that there is some congruence amongst the participants as to what the principal drivers of interpersonal resilience could be. Three such drivers were identified in all three cases studied. Figure 28 presents these three complementary elements - validated by the participants - as driving interpersonal resilience of all the relationships studied across the three cases: willingness, space for communication and recognition. The complementarity lies in the empirical observations that the drivers play out in different spatio-temporal combinations in different (micro, meso and intrapersonal levels) contexts to bring about constructive transformation to the relationships after circumstances of tension.

Willingness

In each case, whenever there was situation of tension followed by a transformative effect on the relationship, willingness to maintain the relationship by both parties involved proved to be crucial. This willingness was underpinned by a twofold motivation comprising a degree of self-interest combined with a degree of interest for the 'other' (a shared interest). All participants underlined the salience of their personal benefits in staying in the relationship without disregarding the shared benefits that it may bring about. This willingness to maintain the relationship finds its roots in the balance

between these two aspects of motivation. Without one or the other the relationship may become brittle and eventually fractured.
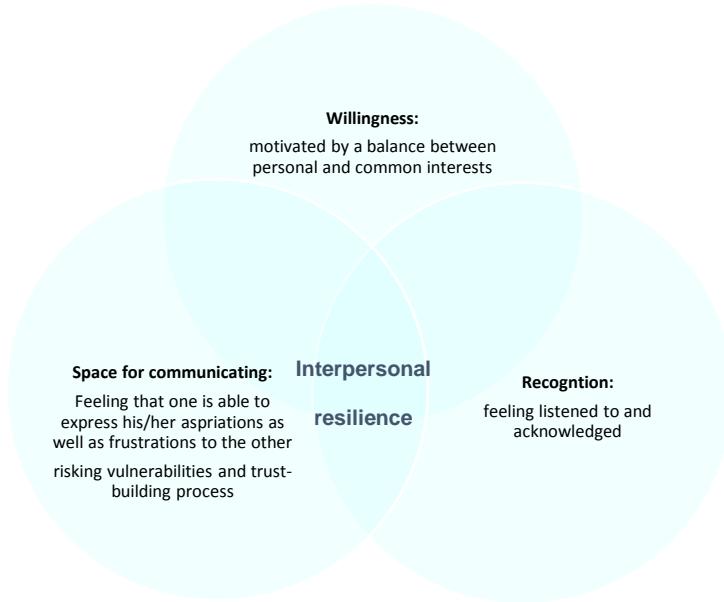
Figure 28 Findings common across all three cases studied

Space for communication

The existence of a space in the relationship where stakeholders feel they are able to express their feelings - frustrations and aspirations alike - has been described as a fundamental element to building the relationship. Depending on the situation, such a space often comprised a physical and emotional dimension. In many instances the guesthouses became a space for social contribution and the collaboration over a guesthouse became a platform which enabled the actualising of their respective personal interests. In circles where results are not immediate and easily quantifiable, having spaces of dialogue are even more important as these help the stakeholders explain their actions

and expectations and strategies such that others concerned may at least understand, even if they don't fully comprehend.

Creating an emotional space in conversation which makes the other feel understood and reassured has also been a recurrent element of salience when it comes to driving a situation of relational tension to one of effective adaptation. This has required taking a step back and choosing to deal with the pressure of the moment. An illustration has been Neta's attitude towards Ahmad "putting her ego aside" and with her emotions under control as she reached out to Ahmad.

Recognition

A third and equally important driver identified through the case stories was the feeling of being listened to and acknowledged (recognised) within that space by the other in the relationship. Acknowledgement can be defined as the feeling that the other listens to one's expressions of differences while recognition refers to a feeling that the other often makes an effort to act upon (to some extent at least) what he/she observed and understood from this acknowledgement. Recognition is a form of respect which nurtures trust and promotes choice of adaptive pathways, which can have a transformative effect on the relationship.

In sum, all three drivers reinforce a feeling of belonging to the relationship which further maintains and strengthens the social interactions.

Summary

Ultimately, the cross-analysis has confirmed the need for a context-based analytical framework and at the same time has provided insights on what common drivers of interpersonal resilience could be. The drivers, to recall the definition, are those conditions which help to initiate and maintain adaptive pathways in circumstances of tension. Figure 29 presents a summary of the insights from the overall analysis conducted. The insights from the specific cases have shown that adaptive pathways chosen emerge from a multi-layered (micro-social and macro-political) context; from individuals through their personal cognitive behaviours, but also dependent on the relational dynamics. An actor may decide to give to the other, and the other to receive what is given in such a way that the relationship is either buffered or is transformed. Depending on the nature of exchanges, relationships evolve. The lens of the Maussian gift has provided an effective framework to build understanding of these evolutions.

These salient findings are discussed further in Chapter Seven, where they are reflected upon in light of the literature reviewed, the theoretical framework developed in Chapter Three and the methodological framework in Chapter Four.
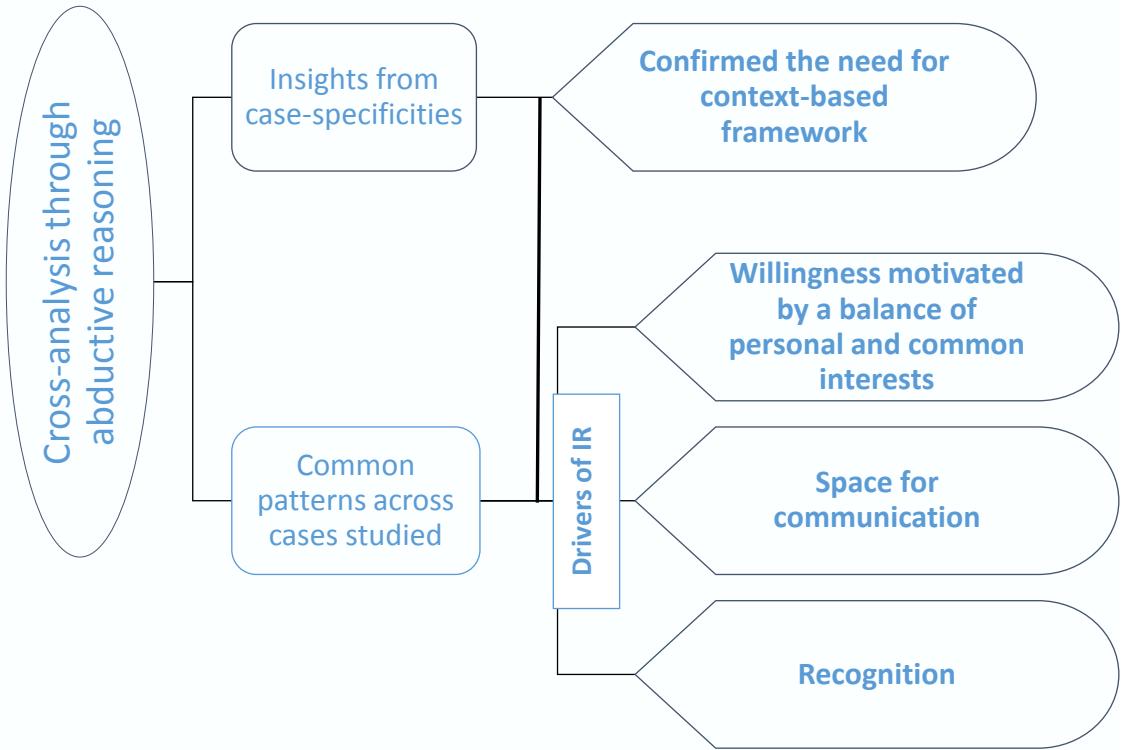
Figure 29 Summary of the insights of the cross-analysis conducted

Chapter Seven Discussion and Conclusion

"There are two characters of the Chinese expression of crisis: opportunity and problem"

Mark Svendsen

"We have to realize … that times of stress are also times for growth. And if we use adversity properly, we can grow through adversity."

Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to consolidate and take forward the findings of this study which has aimed to:

- Conceptually, develop an empirically and theoretically refined context-based analytical framework for better understanding adaptive pathways driving interpersonal resilience;

- Methodologically, develop a robust and efficient methodological framework which allows for data gathering in real-life contexts of intractable conflict environment; and

- Empirically, enhance practitioners', academics' and policy-makers' understanding of the emergent, and hence complex nature of what drives adaptive pathways in circumstances of tension within relationships.

Through discussing the findings in relation to the literature and theoretical and philosophical constructs that helped shape it, this chapter will demonstrate that these aims have been met and will provide recommendations for research that can usefully build on this thesis. Table 14 recalls the objectives devised to achieve these aims and the respective Chapters that deal with them.

The chapter is divided into four broad sections. The key insights from the research are first briefly discussed in terms of the theoretical and empirical contribution, as well as the methodological framework that has been put in place. An in-depth discussion of these insights in relation to literature is then

provided, drawing out their implications for development at the theoretical, methodological and practical level. The third section considers the limitations of the study, and moves on to identify future research avenues that could be usefully conducted. Headline conclusions of the research are then summarised in the final section, briefly crystallising the main points in order that the contribution of this study to the literature is clear and accessible.

	Research objectives	Achieved in
Conceptual	To critically review the literature and debates around the concept of resilience which will inform the conceptual framework of the study and derive knowledge on the potential drivers of interpersonal resilience of co-workers in contexts of conflict;	Chapter Two
Conceptual	To critically assess theories which are relevant to the study of interpersonal resilience;	Chapter Two
Conceptual	To devise an analytical framework which is coherent with the deductions made from the literature review and serves the purpose of the study;	Chapter Two
Methodological	To develop a method for selecting a context for feasible field research and a set of instrumental cases which allow in-depth enquiry of interpersonal resilience;	Chapter Four
Methodological	To define a temporal interview schedule which will allow for an immersive as well as efficient method of data gathering in the different field settings of each case; and reflect the available temporal and financial resources	Chapter Four

	Research objectives	Achieved in
Analytical	To describe in detail the story of each case selected to allow the reader to better understand the social and subjective contexts; and to explain the types of relationships studied and their evolution through the locus of reported circumstances of tension;	Chapter Five
	To analyse the dyads in each case using the analytical framework developed, focusing on the reported episodes of stress or tension on the relationships;	Chapters Five and Six
	To explore the mechanisms underlying the drivers of interpersonal resilience identified in relation to the theoretical and philosophical constructs of the analytical framework, drawing out elements of adaptation as well as common drivers of effective adaption through a cross-analysis of all cases studied.	Chapters Five and Six
	To develop an understanding of the mechanisms underlying the drivers of interpersonal resilience identified in relation to the literature and to the theoretical and philosophical constructs that helped shape the analytical framework	Chapters Six and Seven

Table 14 Recap of Research Objectives

7.1 Key insights from the research

Fundamentally, the research has highlighted seven key insights, which are summarised below and discussed further in the subsequent two sections.

It has been demonstrated that Interpersonal resilience is an emergent and subjective concept that warrants further exploration in a sociological context. In methodological terms it has also been shown to be context specific, which is crucial to its study.

Theoretically, it has been clearly demonstrated that the combination of the Maussian Gift theory and Siegel's Interpersonal Neurobiology theses provide a relevant paradigm to study an emergent and subjective concept such as interpersonal resilience. This relational concept, hitherto much discussed in a psychological language, can now be conceptualised in a sociological grammar, thus addressing an important gap in the academic literature.

The abductive reasoning underlying the methodology has helped to refine the framework combining theoretical and empirical constructs to build a complex and consilient understanding of interpersonal resilience without pre-determining the results by biasing the lacuna gathering and interpretation processes.

Case specific findings have pointed to the complexity and variety of existing pathways and confirmed the need for a context-based framework to approach interpersonal resilience.

Although to an extent incidental given the limited number of cases studied, identifying the common relational drivers which conditioned the dyad-specific adaptive pathways adopted has enhanced understanding of these cases;

In terms of the research process, transparency around the researcher's decisions and subjective experiences during the research has become a marker of rigour and replicability in the research. Obtaining participants' feedback on the first interpretations from the participants and receiving their unanimous validation helped to confirm the robustness of the findings which are specific to each as well as common across the cases.

Finally, the reflexive presentation of the trust-building process has provided an alternative perspective on the researcher-participant relational asymmetries occurring in an environment unfamiliar to the researcher and characterised by on-going conflict in the macro-political background.

The following section takes the opportunity to review these insights more deeply, and in the light of more recent relevant literature not previously reviewed. To provide clarity, it focuses discussion on the theoretical, methodological and practical implications of each of these distinct and related contributions that the research has made.

7.2 Discussion

"Because real insight into our social nature has gained momentum only in the last few decades, there are tremendous inefficiencies in how institutions and organizations operate. Societal institutions are founded, implicitly or explicitly, on a worldview of how humans function. These are theories regarding the gears and levers of our nature that institutions try to operate on in order to strengthen society. Our schools, companies, sports teams, military, government, and health care institutions cannot reach their full potential while working from erroneous theories that characterize our social nature incorrectly" (Lieberman 2013: 10).

"neuroscience research indicates that ignoring social well-being is likely to harm team performance (and even individual health) for reasons we would not have guessed" (Lieberman 2013: 10).

These quotes from Lieberman (2013) call for our attention on how we think about our social life and our social relationships. A pragmatist approach of sociological theories, which this research has taken, argues for understanding interpersonal relationships through the lens of what is symbolically exchanged within and through them. The sociological context based framework developed here has integrated both the cognitive and the social aspects in order to concur with latest neuroscience research. This is a unique contribution to triggering

more consilient approaches in sociological theories aiming to progress the building of constructive and more effective social organisations.

In this Chapter, the discussion of the substantive findings is divided into three main sections covering the theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions. The first section focuses on the conceptual aspects of the study. It first reviews the definition of interpersonal resilience in relation to literature and in the light of the empirical findings. And the salience of the context-based analytical framework devised to form a sociological grammar around interpersonal resilience is reviewed. In the second section, the insights gained from the methodological framework applied are discussed in relation to contemporary academic and practitioner needs.

7.2.1 Implications of the context based analytical framework

Emergent nature of resilience confirmed

The context specificity of interpersonal resilience as an emergent and subjective concept has been confirmed by the empirical findings, as discussed in Chapter Six. As described in Chapter Two, a number of authors have been calling for a fresh definition of resilience that coheres with the complexities of social contexts (Adger 2000; Cumming *et al.* 2005; Porter and Davoudi 2012; Weichselgartner and Kelman 2014; Welsh 2014). Human beings, with their demonstrated ability to make complex decisions (Goleman 2007; Sawaguchi and Kudo 1991), are unlikely to ever return to the exact same overall state of being. This is due to the evolving nature of our lives, minds, environment and feelings, to name but a few of these complex and interconnected contexts that

social life implies. The case specific findings, uncovering dyad specific dynamics involved in the effectiveness of adaptation, have pointed clearly to this complexity and the existence of a variety of adaptive pathways have been identified, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six. The variance of adaptive pathways identified evidently confirms the emergent character of interpersonal resilience.

Multilateral approach through the interpersonal locus

Authors such as Cumming *et al.* (2005); Obrist *et al.* (2010) and Glavovic *et al.* (2003) have argued for a multi-layered approach to resilience. In social processes, individuals' actions and behaviours are influenced by a wide variety of parameters which are not always observable, measurable and quantifiable, adding to the complexity of reporting on these aspects. A multi-lateral approach integrating both the multi-level and multi-dimensional while working on resilience was necessary. Fundamentally the heterogeneity of social systems has called for a deconstruction of the concept in order to work towards a contextualization.

The locus in this research was intentionally on the interpersonal level because the concept is relational (Behailu 2014; Zou *et al.* 2015). In line with this, neither the micro-level, macro-level nor the intra-personal perspectives were neglected in this research. The immediate local environment of the dyads and the macro-socio-political background within which the relationships evolved were integrated into the analytical framework and analysed through the participants' reported narratives. This conceptualisation has thus addressed an important gap in the literature, namely that of considering contextual – cognitive and social – factors. And the three tiers of the context based

framework were empirically validated through the cases studied and in effect during the feedback phase whereby receiving the participants' reflections on the data analysis.

As Figures 21, 22 and 23 of Chapter Six have depicted, the dyads studied have been oscillating in a hybrid sociality between primary and secondary forms of socialisation. This hybridity in spaces of socialisation influence the relationship in positive ways but if not well-managed may also complicate matters, as discussed in Chapter Six. The cross-analysis of the cases suggests that the definition of social boundaries can be an issue. The first tier of analysis identifies the socialities within which the dyads and relationships evolved. Distinguishing types of interactions at the primary and secondary level can refine understanding of 'common grounds' - spaces where people are able to negotiate their way out of the tensions – and this has been pivotal in driving interpersonal resilience, as discussed in the subsequent section on the common drivers. Consequently, the necessity, validity and pertinence of the first tier of the context based framework are empirically confirmed.

The pertinence of this multilateral approach is all the more significant because, as observed from the empirical information, the reported sources of tension on the relationships are not necessarily endogenous to the relationship itself. In several cases, people underlined the salience of past personal or collective experiences in their perception of the other in the relationships they are engaged in. For instance, Sureida's family narrative about their difficult experiences of the 1948 conflict still weighs on their identities and on the relational choices they make to this day. Another illustration can be found in Issa's positive experience with foreigners during his education, which he still

foregrounds in with his relationships with guests and uses as a standard to evaluate the behaviour of his fellow Palestinian citizens. As Siegel (2010) explained, the tension arises from the discrepancy between the narrative one values and the perception he or she has of the other's narrative. When the two narratives - the two 'scripts' (Siegel 2001; 2012a; Siegel 2012b) - do not match each other's expectations, the likelihood of tension seems greater. This research has confirmed the subjective nature of interpersonal resilience where the subjectivity results from the corresponding dynamics happening between two persons. Considering the relationship as an entity in itself has thus been a conceptual decision confirmed by the empirical findings, and not only the theoretical underpinnings.

Had the focus been only on endogenous sources of tension, it may have ended up painting a partial, and hence biased, picture of the actual interpersonal intricacies of adaptation. People live in contexts that influence their lives as much as their own intrapersonal experiences. Again, the different sources of tension identified and the different ways of perceiving and acting in consequence have confirmed the pertinence of this multilateral approach.

Distinguishing perceptual and actual positionings

The present findings are coherent with the position of Siegel (2001; 2010c; 2012a); Siegel (2012b) and Lieberman (2013) on the importance of acknowledging differences for better social integration and human well-being. In the same way, it confirms the effectiveness of using the Maussian Gift theory in making an insightful distinction between a) the gift (as the object, resource exchanged) per se; b) the intention with which it was given or received; and c) the impact of the action (of giving and receiving) on the

relationship. But as well as providing confirmation, the study takes this theory further. Distinguishing the perceptual and actual positioning has proven to be crucial because, as observed in each case, perceiving someone as different to one self does not imply that one cannot act in association with that other. And the opposite is also valid: if one identifies with another, it does not imply that he or she cannot act in dissociation with the other. That said, from the cases studied, it was clear that differentiality is not necessarily followed by dissociation (or association); and identification is not necessarily followed by association (or dissociation). It can be confirmed that perceptual and actual positionings have to be distinguished as they provide nuanced layers of understanding the adaptive pathways. In effect, identification and differentiation in perceptual positions are respectively partial translations of, but are not necessarily equal to, continuation or disruption of the flows in the relationship. This nuance is fundamental to building some socio-cognitive malleability which recent literature has been promoting as a potential alternative peace building mechanism, especially in intractable conflict environments (Cohen-Chen *et al.* 2014; Halperin and Gross 2011).

This research puts forward a much needed alternative way of perceiving and engaging with participants living in conflict-ridden areas - as human beings with their rationalities and irrationalities and with their own subjectivities. The epistemological choice of distinguishing the perceptual from the actual positioning and conceptualising the analysis in terms of energy flows instead of pre-categorisations of people in fixed pre-determined identities based on what is observed, has resulted in a non-judgemental analytical framework. And this represents an important contribution of the thesis. Combining, and

conciliating the Maussian gift theory with Siegel's interpersonal neurobiology theses provides a relevant and novel paradigm to study the emergent and subjective concept that is interpersonal resilience. The empirical findings suggest that distinguishing perceptual and actual positionings is salient in building interpersonal resilience and cannot be neglected, thus confirming the need for and pertinence of the second and third tiers of the analytical framework (see page 233).

This relational concept, much discussed in a psychological language, has in this study been considered through a **sociological lens.** A relationship is the culmination of how each person in the relationship chooses to relate to the other at a particular time. Examining relationships at a given point in time - especially times which are reported as being determinant to the relationship's survival or transformation - allows the telling of a story which gives insights on the nurturing of interpersonal resilience. Relationships change adaptive behaviours as well. Thus, instead of looking simply at 'what' the adaptive behaviours are, this research has focused on the conditions which drive the relationship towards effective adaptive pathways. And the conciliation of the Maussian Gift theory with the theses of Interpersonal Neurobiology has been efficient in spelling out as much complexity as could be possible from the data gathered. The paradoxical epistemology of the MGT has allowed the different elements to exist in synchronicity, which intuitively might be thought impossible. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Gift theory takes a more nuanced approach which allows brushing a more detailed picture of the exchanges taking place and their resultant effects on the interaction and the relationship. But combining thinking from the Maussian Gift theory with that of

IPNB provides another layer of depth which hitherto has remained unexplored, certainly in a sociological context. Taken together these substantive findings have validated the salience of, and need for, a context based analytical framework using a sociological lens in studying what drives adaptive pathways towards interpersonal resilience in real life stories.

7.2.2 Complementary drivers of interpersonal resilience

Human beings are complex and unpredictable – rational and irrational, logical and emotional. A person's subjective experience is complex. A dyad forms a certain intersubjectivity which is, following Siegel (2012b), the "shared experience created in the joining of two or more minds, revealing how the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (Siegel 2012b: p.467). This also represents a complex and dynamic system. Resilience at the interpersonal level is built in tandem, making it emergent and subjective, and hence context-specific.

Although it is evident that in circumstances of tension, socio-economic and socio-political factors may be just as salient as personal inclinations, the decisions of the dyadic partners to give and receive is a critical factor in understanding the intersubjectivity playing out in the relationship. At times of tension, if at least one partner takes the initiative of choosing to give something to the other in the dyad - taking the risk of it not being accepted but with the intention to open a constructive cycle of exchange - then the likelihood of the tension to abate is significantly increased. However, one element often overlooked in sociology literature – except within the Maussian Gift paradigm – is the receiving end of the gift. In the consilient theses of Interpersonal

Neurobiology the sociological angle is yet to be developed further and the present research begins to address this theoretical gap by pragmatically combining these two theories into one analytical framework.

Thus the third tier of the analytical framework, which examines the symbolism underlying the exchanges happening under tense circumstances, has helped to indicate the consequent effects on the dyadic relationships. And the cross analysis of the cases studied has successfully put forward three complementary drivers of interpersonal resilience: willingness; existence of a space for communication; and recognition. Given their complementarity, it was not an easy task to single out each driver and discuss each separately. While this was undertaken for conceptual purposes, it is important to bear in mind that these drivers are mutually articulated in real life contexts. One without the other would not necessarily catalyse towards a constructive adaptive pathway.

Willingness

Willingness to start, maintain or constructively transform a relationship was seemingly motivated by a balanced combination of self and shared interest found in the relationship. As underlined in Chapter Six, all participants highlighted the salience of their personal benefits accrued through staying in the relationship without overlooking the shared benefits. Without one or the other the relationship may become brittle and eventually fractured in the face of tension. The analysis suggest that a resilient relationship is one that forms a platform which enables each partner to carry out something they value at a personal level. This may be related to their personal interest(s) and / or a broader social interest. However, for such a relationship to form, efforts are needed from both dyadic partners. And these efforts, as the data analysis

suggests, fundamentally start with cognitive flexibility (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015) which I argue is a catalyser of the willingness to engage in constructive adaptive pathways. Figure 30 provides a pictorial representation of the main elements underlying this willingness as a driver of interpersonal resilience.
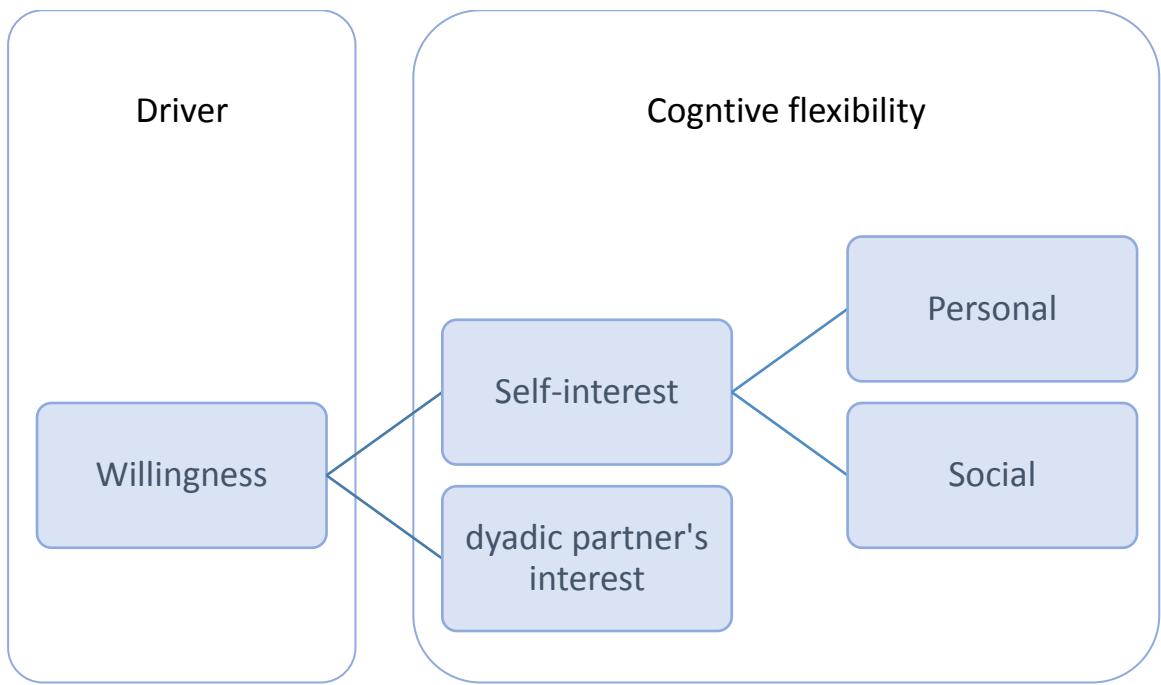
Figure 30 Willingness as a driver of interpersonal resilience

This idea of balanced self and other interest has not yet received much attention in the sociology literature. In a 2015 special issue on Positive Psychology, Gilin Oore *et al.* (2015) examined individual and organisational factors deemed "to promote successful responses to workplace conflict" (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015: 1). This informative paper interestingly points out two such individual factors: "a balance of self and other focus" (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015: 6), and; cognitive flexibility" (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015: 4), both of which are pertinent to the discussion here. The "balance of self and other focus" (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015: 6) is mainly referring to seminal research conducted by Rubin *et al.* (1994) on the modelling of a "joint combination of two motivations – that

of satisfying self-interest versus satisfying the interest of others in the conflict"
(Gilin Oore et al., 2015). From there, they note, most research in social and
personality psychology has tended to approach the study of interpersonal
tension or conflict through the angle of 1) avoidance –where personality traits
such as agreeableness, extraversion and empathy have been associated with
less competitive conflict at work (Moberg 2001) - and; 2) concession – where
accommodating behaviours have been suggested to be motivated by a desire
for maintaining relationships (Amanatullah *et al.* 2008). I concur with their
arguments that such approaches are insufficient in the long term; because,
building on Amanatullah *et al.* (2008), they have noted that:

> *"When overly focused on maintaining a positive relationship and not*
> *"rocking the boat" by also pursuing one's own needs and interests,*
> *conflict does not get sufficiently resolved at its roots to set a basis for*
> *mutually satisfying interactions" (Gilin Oore et al. 2015: 6).*

Indeed, using Helgeson and Fritz (1999) terms, both *unmitigated agency* –
prioritising ones' interest over the other's - and *unmitigated communion* –
rejecting ones self-interest over the other's - in the face of conflict are
ineffective in driving the relationship out of the tension towards constructive
adaptive pathways. More recently, building on the developmental psychology
literature, Leiter *et al.* (2015) proposed to study conflict at the workplace in
terms of attachment theory. Although insightful in terms of developmental
psychology, this "alternative way" as Gilin Oore et al, 2015 put it, still does not
provide a sociological grammar to study and conceptualise the adaptive
pathways taken under tension. The reason being that these studies again

suggest categories – securely attached, avoidantly attached or anxiously attached – to classify individuals in terms of their behaviours towards conflict without considering the interpersonal mechanisms driving the relationships towards effective adaptation, or not. In other words, they place emphasis on the individual rather than on the relationship, to the detriment of forging an adequate sociological understanding.

In this research, the application of the Maussian gift theory has allowed a move away from dichotomies towards a complementary view of social concepts such self-interest and selflessness, as discussed in Chapter Three. This integrated conceptualisation has proven helpful in understanding the dynamic and synchronous existence of self *and* other- oriented interest without the need to pitch one against the other. Weingart *et al.* (2015) proposed that focusing on both self and the partner's interest as significant in handling conflict and had noted the need for research in this direction. The context based analytical framework devised in this thesis is thus one response to this lacuna.

Cognitive flexibility, a factor for success in conflict management according toGilin Oore *et al.* (2015), involves a mind-set allowing the person to "move flexibly through various perspectives on the conflict situation" (Gilin Oore et al, 2015, p.5). Building on this and in the light of the empirical findings of this research, I argue that the cognitive flexibility forms a catalyser of willingness at times of conflict. In several cases, a participants' ability to mentally take a step back from the tension and prioritise their interests with regard to the conflict has proven to be a successful approach to deal with the conflict. It is evident that the balance between different interests is subjective and depends on different contexts and circumstances. Sometimes putting social interests

first is more effective and sometimes prioritising personal interests over the others' is more beneficial to the relationships, and vice versa. At times of tension, or when sentiments of resentment arise and when the balance is evidently difficult to keep, finding a common ground – a sense of common humanity and a shared interest - appears to be fundamental. This is why a space for communication is a critical driver of interpersonal resilience.

Space for communication

One of the drivers common across the cases analysed is concerned with a space of communication whereby the partners can exchange information in order to transform the conflict into a something constructive. As simple as it may sound, the existence of a space – physical, temporal and emotional – for communication between dyadic partners about their perceptions, aspirations, and frustrations is an essential driver for interpersonal resilience. The nature of the space is especially important. A physical or temporal space where no exchange is possible nor happening has no function. An emotional space where only one partner dominates without allowing the other to express his or her perceptions or feelings is not an effective one either. Thus the simple provision of a physical and/or emotional space does not guarantee meaningful exchange.

Communication comes from the Latin word *communicare* which means to impart, to make common. In making something common, there is a degree of shared meaning that has to exist so that the partners connect, at least on the point expressed. Whether physical or emotional, the space has to be conducive to the circulation of constructive energy and information flows – that is for communication - in the dyad. The cases studied have provided several

illustrations of such spaces. In the Juha case story, Neta and Genevieve found a space in each other's presence for expressing their differences and common aspirations freely. This freedom of expression initiated a social proximity and a process of trust-building between the two women and enhanced the quality of their relationship. Interestingly, their relationship is a healthy, effective and efficient one where they understand each other and do not hide away from dealing with tensions if any arise.

These findings concur with Prenzel and Vanclay (2014) conceptual research highlighting the importance of communication in conflict management. Although their work lies in a different paradigm using game theory and is focused on social impact assessment, their argument in favour of "direct means of communication through grievance mechanisms" between conflicting parties because it "ensures that the individual perceptions, which could form the basis of the conflict, are noticed and addressed in a timely manner thus preventing escalation" (Prenzel and Vanclay 2014: 34) chimes well with my research findings. What they term as establishment of grievance mechanisms, relates to the spaces for communication identified in this research. Trust is nurtured in spaces where communication is free. And in a similar fashion as Prenzel and Vanclay (2014) point out: "adequately-designed grievance mechanisms can foster trust between parties, thus facilitating the process of negotiation and conflict resolution" (Prenzel and Vanclay 2014: 34).

Creating a space for communication at times of tension, it was observed, also requires taking a step aside and evaluating the situation. While this relates to the cognitive flexibility discussed earlier, it also includes emotion regulation as conceptualised by Gilin Oore et al.(2015). They suggest that emotional

regulation, defined as "exercising cognitive control to manage or redirect the impact of negative emotions" (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015), is salient in reducing escalation in both intractable conflicts (Halperin *et al.* 2013) and marital conflict (Finkel *et al.* 2013). Halperin et al. (2013) found that training Israeli research participants to view situations in a more analytical and detached manner reduced their support for aggressive retaliation against Palestinian violence. At the interpersonal level, Finkel *et al.* (2013) noted less relational distress in married couples when they were taught to take a third-party perspective on their issues. Ultimately, these research findings highlight the salience of a proactive behaviour in shifting the dynamics and in taking action to avoid a merely reactive cycle. For instance, in the Juha case story, Neta mentioned several times that taking a deep breath and reassuring the dyadic partner, Ahmad, not only allowed her to manage the tension but also avoid it from harming the relationship. Instead of addressing tension through a reactive emotion, this detached and analytical form of expression served the purpose of abating tension. This echoes Kalokerinos *et al.* (2017) research which provides evidence from controlled in-lab experiments that indiscriminate suppression or expression of emotions is not necessarily the best strategy. They argue that is it is important to be contextually sensitive and to respond in a way that fits the circumstances even if it implies suppression of the emotions (Kalokerinos *et al.* 2017; Kalokerinos *et al.* 2015).

More conceptually, in each case, the criticality of choice of the partners in the dyads to initiate an act which opens a potential flow of gift (or patterns of energy and information) is to be highlighted. Depending on the response of the other at the receiving end, the relationship tends towards a positive or a

negative activation. While a positive activation results in a constructive exchange which can transform the relationship, the negative activation can end in a disruption in the exchanges, and hence a discontinuity of the relationship. Findings from the case stories suggest that the physical and emotional space for communication is integral to the existence of the relationship. Without shared meaning built from the patterns of energy and information flows in the dyad, the communication is illegible for the partners and results in two out of phase monologues.

Spaces for communication also offer the possibility to build shared narratives. According to Siegel (2012b: 353),

> *"Interpersonally, the lack of co-constructing narratives within relationships* that can provide both shared meaning making and ongoing social support, isolating the individual from fitting into a larger "we" that weaves the traumatic experience into a collective and healing life story" (Siegel 2012b: 353).*

A relevant illustration of a physical space of communication is the Fauzi Azar mansion where over time Sureida and Maoz found common interests. The space is highly symbolical to Sureida as it represents her family heritage. Observing Maoz' active valuing of her family heritage softened her rigid attitude towards him and improved her perception of him as a fellow human being rather than a resented party. The findings duly underline the sense of common humanity and shared interest as being more effectively identified and celebrated within shared spaces of communication.

The subtle difference between a space for communication and a space of recognition is worth noting. The first does not necessarily imply the second but the second almost always implies that the first exists. When in the space for communication an individual feels that her or his contribution to the relationship is acknowledged and valued, then the space becomes one of recognition, a third pivotal driver of interpersonal resilience.

Space of recognition

The research findings suggest that expressed recognition tends to drive the relationship away from frustrations and misunderstandings. Recognition is a form of respect which in turn nurtures trust and promotes a preference for adaptive pathways which have a transformative effect on a relationship. I have deliberately used the term recognition for two reasons. First, its etymology – meaning to know again – implies that it is an acknowledgement of something known. Second the suffix *re* implies an extra effort to identify that something. It is that extra effort which indicates a form of respect.
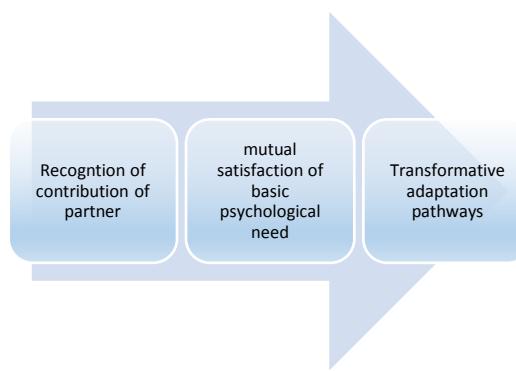
Figure 31 Conceptual layers of complexity within spaces of recognition

Discussing recognition as a driver of interpersonal resilience integrates three layers of complexity: 1) contribution of partners to the relationship; 2) satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs – namely autonomy,

competence and relatedness (Deci *et al.* 2006; Deci and Ryan 2014); and 3) transformative adaptation. Figure 31 shows the conceptual layers of complexity involved within spaces of recognition. Contribution refers here to the forms of gifts or flows of energy and information exchanged which were salient from the interviewees' narratives. Borrowed from self-determination theory, SDT, as developed by Deci and Ryan (2014) are the concepts of autonomy - "the feeling of volition, willingness, concurrence and choice with respect to some behaviour or experience" -; competence - "the feeling of being effective and confident with respect to some behaviour or goal" - and relatedness, "that is to feel personally accepted by and significant to others, and to feel cared for by the other and to care for them" (Deci and Ryan 2014: 55). SDT assumes that, independent of instrumental advantages, "all human beings have a fundamental psychological need to experience relatedness" (Deci and Ryan 2014: 53). While the first two concepts underline the salience of differentiality, the third involves finding a common ground for building identification with the other in the dyad. When the contribution of the other in the dyad is acknowledged, he or she feels valued in what he/she brings but also in his/her own particularities, his/her differentiality. Acknowledging or incurring differentiality has varying outcomes on relationships, as the analysis suggest. More specifically, the perception of this psychological need satisfaction has been underlined as having a positive effect on the perceived quality of the relationship.

In all of the narratives it was observed that each research participant highlighted the importance of seeing their contribution – valued gifts they have injected into the relationships - as being a determining element of their

satisfaction in the relationship, in turn indicating a degree of understanding and respect about their social self and their gifts to the relationship. For instance, Genevieve, observing that her work with the youth was appreciated by Neta and Ahmad felt less frustrated and more confident in her feeling of belonging to the Juha team. In the Khouriyeh case, Issa confided that he found purpose and hope in the social exchanges with the guests to whom he was able to share his knowledge of local history and culture. In the Fauzi case, Sureida felt that the value of her family heritage was being restored through the guesthouse project that Maoz started. This acknowledgement of contributions of someone in an organisation as Anicich *et al.* (2015) note, is a means to view that person's role with more respect, "thereby imbuing it with higher status over time" (Anicich *et al.* 2015: 32). Interestingly, their research suggests that roles combining low status with either low or high power seem to result in higher likelihood of interpersonal conflict. This angle of power dynamics will be discussed further.

Relationship motivation theory suggests that "the more need satisfaction people experience in a relationship the more satisfied they will be with the relationship and the better they will be at dealing with the inevitable conflicts in the relationship" (Deci and Ryan 2014: 55). It should be noted, however, that receiving acknowledgement is as important as giving it. Deci and Ryan's research suggests that the quality of relationships depends on the "mutuality of autonomy and autonomy support" such that each partner not only receives but also gives support to his/her partner. In fact, as they point out, providing support is even more satisfying than receiving support. Rawda acknowledged how being able to give support enhanced her own ability to adapt in times of

tension. Although Neta noted that Ahmad did not make her job easy, she still recognised that he contributed through allowing her to make her vision a reality. She recognised that Ahmad was in some way also enabling her to realise her ideas. Mutuality creates a space of 'we', 'us' which translated in the participants'' narratives where, as they told their stories, the individual 'I's gradually shifted to 'we' or 'us'. The space of mutual recognition enables dyadic partners to achieve the goals they value and the felt recognition creates a space of belonging where people feel they are perceived as part of the team.

7.2.3 Symbolic power dynamics reconsidered within the context based framework

There are several ways of discussing power as a concept. As Gross *et al.* (2013) writes "the socially constructed categories of race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, and ableness are hierarchical systems that often connote and confer material and symbolic power" (Gross *et al.* 2013: 13). Taking a more pragmatic approach, focusing at the interpersonal level brings forward an alternative way of conceptualising dynamism in power relations, especially in terms of the subjective choices that people make. This research has shown that the context based framework applied can offer a more complex understanding of symbolic power dynamics in relationships under tension, thus enhancing our understanding of how to transform conflicts into constructive events.

Although shifting power relations seems to be an important element to understand when investigating the adaptive pathways adopted in the face of tension, few sociological studies have been conducted on the relationship

between power and resilience at the interpersonal level. Reviewing recent psychological research on organisational conflict, for instance, Gillin Oore et al. (2015) have noted that "workplace conflict involves inherent power dynamics and differentials" (Gilin Oore *et al.* 2015: 8) and have pointed out the need for further theoretical and empirical work in adaptability (Coleman and Kugler 2014). In another approach, bringing the social hierarchy and organisational conflict literature together, Anicich *et al.* (2015) have pointed to the salience of distinguishing power from status when examining the determinants of interpersonal conflict. Following Magee and Galinsky (2008), they define power as "asymmetric control over valued resources" and status – "respect and admiration in the eyes of others" (Anicich *et al.* 2015: 3). Interestingly, they found, for instance, that in the workplace dyads including a low status/ high-power individual are more likely to indulge in interpersonal conflict and demeaning treatment. Taken together these recent studies point to two fundamental insights. First, it is the discernment between actual and perceived meanings given the subjectivity (of stakeholders to the conflict in question) involved. And second, as a consequence of the first, the dynamic nature of interactions should be taken into consideration. These echo the discussions in Chapters Two and Three about the salience of subjectivity and context-specificity on investigating what drives the choice of adaptive pathways.

That said, as Anicich *et al.* (2015) rightly conclude in their discussion around distinguishing power and status, focusing on the behavioural realm is not enough and the cognitive has also to be explored. More recently Avelino and Wittmayer (2016), introducing a multi-actor perspective, have discussed

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power relations in sustainability transitions at the macro social level. Their work is addressing conceptual weaknesses in the literature by nuancing the complex diversity of the roles of actors at different levels of aggregations – sectors, organisations and individuals - instead of assuming that actors are homogenous and/or belonging to one or another social category. I concur with them that although insightful at providing a picture of the power relations at a given point in time, role-based approaches which do not integrate the fact of changing behaviours and decision-making in actual social life processes carry a conceptual weakness. Their multi-actor-perspective approach is more insightful but still methodologically limited in the eyes of a pragmatist.

To put it differently, the angle of analysis which I argue is necessary in building a multi-lateral (multi-level – micro, meso, macro - and multi-dimensional – social, cognitive, psychological, political to name a few) understanding of what makes good – constructive and beneficial – relationships is the patterns of energy and information flows, or gifts, which flow in human interactions. Why? To study dynamism, the researcher has to be able to track not only the changes but more fundamentally those elements bringing about the changes. If, as discussed in Chapter Three, we want to be as precise as possible, we need to find those primary elements such that we touch the core of the processes. This is why the consilient approach to science is essential. It allows a consideration of the primary constituents of processes without falling into strictly positivist perspectives. This is manifest in Siegel's theory of Interpersonal neurobiology where the author brings together the mind, the brain and social relationships into one framework cohering with each other through the primary element of *patterns of energy and information flows*. This

study has demonstrated that this IPNB paradigm is clearly transposable to the Maussian Gift theory's gift paradigm because gifts are essentially patterns of energy and information flows within a pragmatic philosophy. Focussing on flows, instead of categories, opens the possibilities for exploring different and unexpected perspectives as well as identifying findings which may have been missed by a categorical grid analysis for example. This departs from deterministic research and embraces an iterative approach to inquiry. This discussion about flows-oriented theoretical tools is timely, not only because real life dynamism is difficult to study given its often unpredictable changes and the uncertainties it carries, but also because only few studies have been conducted through such useful lenses.

At the same time, because the human being has the ability to formulate an intention at any given point in time, predicting the behavioural pathway without inquiring about the intention of the dyadic partners becomes ineffective. The value added of the contextual framework developed in this research is that it considers both the cognitive and the behavioural and carefully discerns each from the other to understand differences, while also combining both to identify any articulations which enhance understanding of patterns, if any.

The seven dyadic relationships studied trough the three case stories in this research have identified three complementary drivers of interpersonal resilience discussed previously. Taken together, they provide a new conceptual framework for studying power dynamics in relationships under tension. A relationship under tension tends to follow a pathway of constructive adaptation if: 1) parties involved are willing to maintain the relationships having a personal *and* shared interest in it; 2) there is a space for communication of

their frustrations as well as aspirations; and 3) recognition of each other's contributions is given to and perceived from each other. However, for this virtuous cycle to be initiated, at least one act of *generosity* (Chanial 2008), and one act of *kindness* (Siegel 2010c) is required. The act of choosing to be *proactive in purpose* instead of being *reactive in emotion* is a condition for this virtuous cycle to be catalysed. This proactivity in purpose requires an effort on behalf of the giver, the initiator. It is a cognitive and behavioural effort which places the person in a vulnerable position since he/she has no guarantee that the outcome will be constructive as he/she has no control over the other's decision to accept, to receive positively this effort.

Following the Maussian gift theory, a power relation is linked to ability of the receiver to give or not. When the other is unable to give back, the relationship is considered to be one of domination. When the other is receiving what he/she cannot give, the relationship is one of authority. If power is defined as the asymmetrical control over valued resources (Magee and Galinsky 2008), then the Maussian gift theory facilitates a reading of the asymmetry in gift terms and the context-based framework developed here allows identification of those resources which are valued from the perspectives of the stakeholders through their own reported narratives. Without falling into either strict structuralism or contextualism, this pragmatic research provides a framework which combines the methodological advantages of both, and thus furthers the debate by addressing a pressing need in the sociology literature to study interpersonal resilience in social relationships. Patterns of energy and information flows, gifts, are considered as operators and as the medium of social exchanges which organise and embed social interactions, thus enabling a sociological

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language grammar. This is in line with Chanial's thesis that sociology is a form of political philosophy, and vice versa (Chanial 2011).

In sum, it is clear that interpersonal conflict or tension is likely to arise when there are differential perceptions over issues of value to the parties involved. A central question occupying this thesis has been about understanding how people get out of the tension without negatively affecting the relationship and/or the people involved. All relationships are at some point subject to conflict. The nature, type, source and consequences of the conflicts vary depending on the context and are subjectively perceived. Seeking efficient ways for nurturing good quality relationships (Goleman 2007) involves enhancing our understanding of the drivers of interpersonal resilience via a thorough analysis of people's experiences. This research has opened the door on such work, through the vehicle of the context based framework devised, and just as uniquely, through the lens of a sociological grammar. Having established its intellectual contributions, the following section discusses the methodological and practical implications of the research.

7.2.4 Methodological coherence and practical implications reviewed

The empirical and theoretical evidence collected from the field research analysis and literature review have shown the uniqueness, effectiveness and efficiency of the methodological framework developed in this thesis. The academic and practical merits of the research methodology are hence discussed from the point of view of the research design and the abductive reasoning underlying the data gathering and analysis.

Abductive reasoning

Fundamentally, the abductive reasoning underlying the overall research process has been pivotal in refining both the analytical and methodological framework, thus adding value to the research process, findings and dissemination. First, this thesis has spelled out the importance of combining both theoretically reviewed concepts and empirically identified concepts which have emerged from the field research. Abductive reasoning differs from a deductive approach which deduces hypotheses from theory and seeks to confirm (test, validate or invalidate) these through empirical observations, and an inductive approach which draws patterns from observations and builds a theory therefrom. Both tend to generalise their findings and hence narrow down the possibilities of explanation to those validated hypotheses or observed empirical findings. Consequently, their fundamental weakness is that neither conceptually encourages nor nurtures the quest for other interpretations or different perspectives. Abductive reasoning concurs with a pragmatic approach of research in that it keeps pushing the boundaries of

understanding since it merges theory with empirical experience and assumes that each nurtures the other. This combination does not generalise interpretations but rather uses these to enhance understanding of particular cases studied, leaving the door open for refinement and follow-up research.

Two central implications of abductive reasoning for more rigorous and effective research are its acknowledgement of :1) an ongoing need to review research findings in the light of changing contexts; and 2) a need to be transparent in analytical processes with regard to choosing one interpretation over another. In line with a pragmatic philosophy, this reasoning embraces the iterative process of research assumed and employed in this thesis. In fact, a growing number of more recent studies related to resilience theories are calling for methodologies that enable a thorough understanding of dynamisms and the integration of diverse perspectives across academic disciplines, practitioners and communities to develop a shared understanding (Redman 2014). The consilient combination of IPNB theses and the Maussian gift theory is thus timely. Scientifically robust, both stress the inductive and empirical nature of theory building through their underscoring of a contextual and dynamic approach to studying relationships and their impacts on individuals and societies, and vice versa. At the same time, their combination into the three-tiered context based framework has integrated the cognitive and the social (behavioural) aspects for a move towards constructive or destructive adaptive pathways. The focus on gifts exchanged or patterns of energy and information flows, as discussed earlier, has allowed the dynamism of processes undergone within relationships under tension to be followed.

Although abductive reasoning begins with empirical data, it does not neglect the theoretical concepts. It builds a more refined explanation using insights from both while not avoiding the question of salience of one explanation over another. The analysis of empirical data is combined with theoretical insights from other studies bringing about new patterns which enhance understanding of the subject in question (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009: 4). For instance, several cases can be studied and overarching patterns in similarities as well as particularities can be identified and analysed in light of pre-existing theoretical concepts. These interpretations can then be further refined through other cases using the same reasoning.

But more importantly to methodological aspects of social sciences, acknowledging an abductive reasoning implies that the researcher-as-interpreter of the data gathered holds the responsibility of spelling out how he/she came to the interpretations and to justifying their salience over others. A unique contribution of this research is in its continuing questioning of the role of the researcher in terms of her responsibility which comes with authorship. This discussion is one of transparency which contributes to building rigour in the analysis, as well as enhancing the objectivity of an undeniably subjective process, since the researcher is the main instrument of analysis. In that sense, the methodological framework of this thesis adds value to: 1) academic debates on the quality of research processes; 2) validity of findings; and 3) authority for dissemination. The following sections discuss these aspects further through a reflexive discussion of a) the phased field design; b) the researcher-participant relationships; c) the case story method of dissemination; and d) insights from conducting research in a context of

intractable conflict environment unfamiliar to the researcher. Again, these aspects are all interrelated, making it difficult to separate one from the other. However, for the purpose of argument, these will be discussed separately although in practice they articulate, cohere with and nurture one another in defending the effectiveness of the overall research process.

Phased field design: an effective pragmatic approach

The phased field research design has demonstrated the practicality and cost-effectiveness of the approach employed, especially compared with a conventional ethnographic approach which can be emotionally and financially costly (Brannen 2017; Denscombe 2014) as well as unfeasible (Brereton *et al.* 2014) if people refuse to participate. And this approach was particularly unique in that it was built from the ground in a context of a long-standing and on-going conflict environment where uncertainties and risks are exacerbated for a foreign researcher unfamiliar with the area and having no local contacts or social network to draw upon.

The research design structured through phased visits helped to avoid several pitfalls which may arise while conducting research in an unfamiliar context. The exploratory phase – the purpose of which is summarised in the Figure 32 - succeeded in confirming the feasibility of the field research, identifying instrumental cases which illustrate interpersonal resilience; and initiated relationships between potential participants and the researcher, who deliberately opted for a non-invasive approach. This point is discussed further.
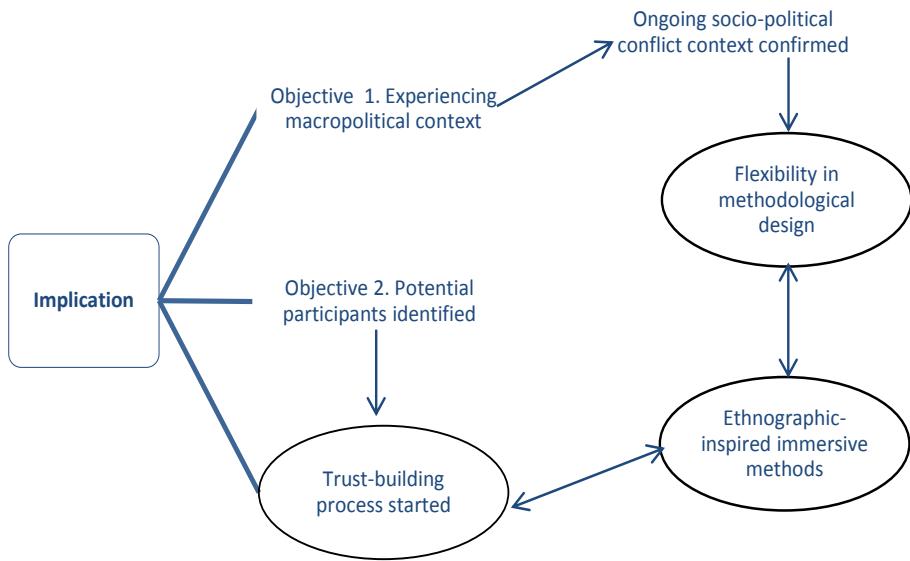
Figure 32 Implications of the first field trip

The immersive phase provided a space for engagement with participants, whilst fostering a detachment between their milieu and the researcher's own perspectives. This phase, consisting of the core data gathering, is effort intensive and requires adequate and flexible time and resource management by the researcher. First, researching people's experiences especially in an intractable conflict environment, where cultural and socio-political awareness are fundamental givens of every day interactions, calls for non-invasive methods. It is important to nurture trusting relationships through genuine social interactions first with outspoken purposes that serve both the researcher and the participants. Once the researcher has established sufficient rapport and credibility to begin asking questions, then the formal interviewing processes can start. Giving oneself and the others the time to get accustomed to the new relationship and priming the researcher-participant relationships to be ready for interviewing is part of the immersive process and cannot be overlooked given the sensitivity of the data targeted.

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The feedback phase – comprising the third and last visit in the field before the writing phase – serves a double purpose: 1) validation from participants; and 2) avoidance of *professional bias* (Chambers 1983: 22). After the immersive phase, a first analysis was conducted which was in turn confronted to the participants' critique. Receiving their unanimous validation not only confirmed the robustness of the case specific and common findings but this validation process also helped to avoid professional bias (Chambers, 1983). Chambers (1983) has argued that professionals (doing research) "are programmed by their education and experience to examine what shows up in a bright slender beam which blinds them to what lies outside it" (Chambers 1983: 22). The problem this gives rise to is, as he points out, that the biased researcher observes, interprets, writes up and disseminates what in the end is only part of the picture, and more problematically what is not necessarily the reported perspectives of the main stakeholders. Including a feedback phase where participants are able to reflect on the researcher's first interpretations of their narratives contributes to building robustness of the interpretations and hence, the research findings.

Overall, the phased research design has provided a balance of efficiency and effectiveness given the limited temporal and financial resources that were available, and the carefully designed data gathering processes. A temporal schedule which allowed for an immersive approach to data gathering in the different field settings of each case, primed by a flexible mind-set, has contributed to an efficient and effective methodology. With acknowledgment of the underlying principles - a) a primed mind-set; b) a flexible adaptation to changing premises; and c) a mindful awareness of socio-cultural particularities

- of this field research design mean that it has the potential to be adapted and applied in other situations exhibiting similar characteristics of unfamiliarity with the context as well as unstable environments.

Case stories

Writing case stories built from multiple perspectives provide a degree of transparency over interpretations as they contextualise the analytical processes for the reader. Stories – constructed through multiple perspectives – allow the reader to become immersed in the participants' social world and see the field experience through the researcher's eyes. In this way, the reader's own experience of the context is enhanced and thus his/her understanding and evaluation of the interpretations and analyses is more informed rather than subjected. For the sake of quality in both analyses and dissemination, this approach, although time-consuming and effort intensive, answers to a much needed transparency in research processes in the social sciences.

Recently, Lund (2014), reflecting on what actually makes a case from an anthropological perspective wrote:

> *"A case is an edited chunk of empirical reality where certain features are marked out, emphasized, and privileged while others recede into the background" (Lund 2014: 224).*

I agree with his argument that a case is an analytical construction "aimed at organising knowledge in a manageable way" (Lund 2014: 224). That said, one cannot deny the fact that the researcher is the main instrument of analysis and

is making subjective choices as to what to include or not in the cases reported. Interestingly, Gimbel (2016), reading Weber through the lens' of Gadamer's hermeneutics, argues that the objectivity in the social sciences is conditional to acknowledging the subjectivity of social scientists. This argument of acknowledgement is in line with the consilience thinking adopted in this thesis. However, I will refrain from using the term 'objectivity' because it has become an academic concept heavily laden with opinionated debates with proponents for and against. Besides, this issue is not a major point of focus here.

Going back to the argument of acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher, building transparency into the process of data gathering and analysis has been pivotal throughout the study. The case story approach has paved the way towards rendering analytical coherence transparent rather than pursuing positivist and empiricist approaches which Janesick (2000) denounces as "*methodolatry*"- the combination of method and idolatry- incarnated in the "trinity of validity, reliability, and generalisability" (Janesick 2000: 390).

Keeping the researcher's bias in check has been crucial especially for a research project building on reported narratives of subjective experiences on such personal issues. While it has been important to gather multiple perspectives on the stories and where possible the perspective of outsiders who know both parties in the dyadic relationship analysed, the main body of data has remained the reported narratives of the dyadic partners. What was fundamentally important was the perceptions and representations they have of each other. In terms of the research process, transparency over the researcher's research choices and subjective experiences during the research

thus became a choice for intentional impartiality ensuring rigour and replicability.

Researcher-participant relational asymmetries: research ethics reviewed

Researching how people adapt relationally to tension requires that the researcher invests time and effort into in-depth qualitative interviews, observations and participation wherever possible, but is conditional to the potential participants' willingness to be part of the research. Research in design literature has recently been discussing the pertinence of ethnographic approaches in remote and economically poor settings arguing for engagement processes between researcher and participants which are culturally appropriate (Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010; Brereton *et al.* 2014). Fundamentally, this discussion is about respect for the participants' perceptions, lives and choices which in turn influences the quality and reliability of data accessed.

Reflecting back on the trust-building process involved in the field research provided an alternative perspective on the researcher-participant relational asymmetries. As mentioned earlier, out of respect, it is important to conduct research in a *non-invasive* manner towards participants. In an unfamiliar context, asymmetry of information exists from both the perspective of the researcher and the potential participant. Initiating a dialogue to reduce this asymmetry to a point where both parties feel at ease to communicate relatively freely becomes the first step. Then, as discussed, the phased research design – deliberately alternating engagement and detachment - helps to nurture a relationship of *trust* with participants without necessarily being physically

present continuously over the whole research period (in this case, four years). These trusting relationships have been particularly important given the sensitivity of the personal information being sought. But of more interest to academics and practitioners working in research is the process of initiating trust in the researcher-participant dyad – in this case between a curious foreigner and a local resident.

Of particular interest to this discussion is Nelson *et al.* (2016) recent work on rapport which they define in line with Tickle-Degnen (2006) as being an optimal dyadic experience of mutual attentiveness, positivity and behavioral coordination (Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal 1990): "dyadic action is intrinsic to the formation and maintenance of rapport, as it creates a bidirectional expressway for information sharing and rapport development" (Nelson *et al.* 2016: 2) . Indeed, looking at how rapport is initiated, built and maintained requires linking mutual perception and dyadic action. In practice, choosing the alternative posture of researcher-as-learner where I explicitly shared with potential participants my willingness to learn from their personal experiences was a determining starting point for initiating dialogue.

While earning the trust of participants involves active effort from the researcher, it also depends on the willingness of participants, which is largely out of the researcher's control. It is a reciprocal relationship where each partner has to find his/her own interest and/or choose to give time and attention to the other without necessarily seeking something in return. In other words, it is a gift relationship in Chanial's (2008) terms. Prenzel and Vanclay (2014) also emphasise the importance of reciprocal trust. To this I will add, in line with Chanial (2008) and through my own experience, that it is more

accurate to talk about *generous and reciprocated* trust. This calls for humility and encourages entering the field with a mind-set bearing ethical responsibility and attentiveness towards participants. Approaching the cases without a pre-set and rigid agenda and fixed pre-elaborated questionnaire has been part of building this mind-set. Setting up a schedule of precise questions may have placed undue focus on what I, as the researcher and outsider, had expected to be a valuable element; or a source of tension for my participants. That would have potentially skewed the data gathered. By allowing them to tell me their own stories relatively freely (my role was to keep the focus of the story on their relationships in relation to the guesthouse) the research was less biased towards my own perspective.

More theoretically, the sociological framework of the MGT, through refuting determinism and allowing a more complex and dynamic approach, has provided a lens for scoping and analysing relationships for what they are instead of imposing a rigid filter which then blocks out all those interactions which do not fall into the pre-defined categories of the filter. As explained in Chapter Three, there is distinction between observing an action and determining its motive. This is why using the narratives of the participants has formed the building blocks of the case research in view of refining the context based framework. This research has demonstrated that careful and non-invasive engagement and integrating reflexivity through maintaining a critical distance results in effective maintenance of researcher-participant relationships.

Placing the researcher in an intractable conflict environment

Reflexively, the context based framework devised together with the phased methodological design have enabled the uncovering of four methodological pillars for conducting research in an intractable conflict environment. Conducting qualitative research on a sensitive subject (interpersonal resilience) while managing risks in an intractable conflict environment can be a daunting experience, especially if the area is unfamiliar to the researcher. The resilience of the researcher, her ability to adapt effectively, is an essential discussion to have because the researcher is the main instrument of the analysis. However, few studies have addressed the issue adequately, focusing instead on the researcher's positioning in relation to the participants, and often suppressing the dynamics underlying these relations (Berger 2015; Kerstetter 2012a). As discussed earlier, the researcher's adaptability to the environment – intrapersonal, interpersonal and micro and macro social – is crucial to the relationship, and in turn the quality and depth of the data collected. This aspect remains largely unexplored to-date and this thesis is an attempt to discuss it adequately in pragmatic, practice-oriented terms.

This thesis has assumed that research is iterative and that perceptions and interpretations are negotiated in an interpersonal and social space. As an individual, the researcher evolves within different socialities: a) in intimacy through her own private primary socialities as well as private secondary ones she builds with people in the field; and b) in public through the fact of being present in a socio-political environment with its social norms, cultures, trends and actualities punctuating and affecting everyday life there. These four pillars, abductively derived, and collated into a unique framework, hold the credit of

offering transparency as to the researcher's methodological choices in practice, thereby building reliability into the research process.

7.3 Limitations and further research

This research, although limited to the cases it studied, has developed, refined and verified a context based framework for assessing interpersonal resilience, addressing a theoretical and methodological gap in the sociology literature. The analytical and methodological frameworks - accessible as clearly detailed; cost effective; and theoretically grounded – were successfully refined and validated in the three cases studied. At the same time, the research has revealed several fruitful theoretical and methodological avenues for future research on interpersonal resilience processes. The following sections reflect on some of the limitations of the research on the refinement of the method and future inquiry.

In order to refine the theoretical understanding of interpersonal resilience, the framework could be applied to other macro-political, geographical and micro-social contexts. The research was conducted in areas relatively accessible to a foreign national and while the primary focus has remained on the interpersonal resilience of the dyads, the physical locus of the research has been tourist guesthouses. This was largely a choice of convenience and feasibility, as discussed in Chapter Four. Future research could usefully be conducted in less convenient or accessible contexts - for example in remote areas difficult to access; in areas with different socio-political climate such as

post-conflict zones - to avoid what Chambers (1983) refers to as spatial bias; in other organisational structures such as small or medium enterprises or management groups in different sectors. While this would open up new research design challenges, it would also enable the consolidation of the framework as an established approach and provide a further way of testing its efficacy in different contexts.

Another element to consider is that the participants were all educated, relatively articulate and easily accessible. This eased the process of data gathering as well as the analysis since, as discussed in Chapter Four, the participants were articulate in their reflexive discussions of their own experiences and readily shared these with me. It was, however, more challenging with participants who were not fluent in English expression. It is advisable that researchers learn the local language before and while conducting the research to avoid what Chambers (1983) calls elite bias, arguing the importance of avoiding the researcher's attention being monopolised by the loudest or the more articulate. It is indeed important to hear and record less expressed voices due to their relative inability to be in the foreground of the research.

The feedback group interview has brought about new perspectives amongst participants who underlined the importance of a space for communication where people could discuss and reflect on each others' perceptions routinely as part of the business model. This is definitely a field to explore and investigate as it holds potential for preventing misunderstandings and supporting adaptive pathways leading towards constructive transformations. Beyond resilience, this can be further investigated within conflict management

and peace-building research where a shift from being individual-oriented to relationship-oriented is becoming a need increasingly highlighted in recent literature as discussed.

The three drivers of interpersonal resilience identified – willingness, space for communication and recognition – are common and relevant to the dyads studied in the cases selected. These cases' immediate micro level context were tourist guesthouses operating in an environment of intractable conflict with ongoing low intensity and unpredictable violent outbursts. While valid in the present context, these drivers have to be further investigated in other international cases; less accessible geographies and across different socio-political contexts. They should also involve varying micro-level settings such as business and sports organisations, and can be applied across almost any social group, community of place or community of interest. As discussed earlier, several recent studies have independently identified one or two of the drivers uncovered here. It is timely to investigate the pertinence of the complementarity of the three drivers in relation to conflict management.

From this analysis, it was possible to go a step deeper and conceptualise the myriad possible ways in which people tend to relate to each other when they are involved in an enterprise and/or where they have a shared interest. It was observed that one of the characteristics of a resilient alliance is a shared interest but also shared risk. While this research did not elaborate much on this articulation, future investigations could highlight the salience of shared risks in the willingness to maintain relationships. The analysis has also started to point to a link between recognition, respect and trust-building. This could be investigated further as follow up research and in other cases. The concept of

belonging came up several times in discussions around spaces of communication. This offers another route of inquiry to follow.

7.3.1 Potential applications of the context based framework

Interpersonal conflict management

Conflict is an unavoidable part of social life and transforming it into social learning is a challenge this thesis has taken on and succeeded in opening up the discussion on. The added-value of this tiered analysis is that it allows studying forms of power relations involved in the circumstances of tension. This could be another area for future enquiry. Understanding pathways of adaptation which are effective and those which lead to discontinuation of relationships can prove to be useful in conflict management and human resource management to a certain extent. The refined approach enables sources of convergence to be pinpointed, as well as sources of divergence when tensions arise over time and across different spaces – both synchronously and diachronically.

The case analysis template as developed in Chapter Five can be used to enhance conflict management in, for example, small social enterprises as those studied internationally. Such an approach would benefit co-worker relationships, as discussed with participants during the feedback interviews. Further, this refined pluralistic approach is of potential benefit to policy makers by helping them to implement efficiently targeted and case-tailored conflict management approaches instead of a 'one-fits-all' strategy, which often ends up as 'one-fits none'.

If further cases are studied, and similar findings in terms of drivers of interpersonal resilience are found and validated by participants, a context based conflict management guide could eventually be developed to help organisations deal with tension and conflict. The study, as designed here, would be especially useful in multicultural contexts such as humanitarian projects, but also in organisations or any work place which are subject to conflict or social tensions. At whichever level the conflict or tension, the decision-making and negotiation processes happen within the intricacies of the interpersonal relationships, and herein lies the real strength of the developed framework that so many other approaches lack.

Recently, Prenzel and Vanclay (2014) have asserted that: "Successful negotiation results in an acceptable outcome for both parties, thus marking the resolution of the conflict." (Prenzel and Vanclay, 2014: 34). Ultimately, if relationships are negotiated realities subjectively experienced by the persons then understanding the negotiation position of both parties becomes an essential aspect in driving the negotiations towards effective adaptive pathways in circumstances of tension. Understanding the other's perspective may not bring solutions *per se*, but may at least help in making progress in discussions and negotiations and most importantly avoid ruptures or discontinuations. In case there are discontinuations, the motivations of these could be understood better and hence help in future negotiations.

Nurturing emotional and social intelligence

Daniel Siegel writes that "*Reflecting on the inner nature of one's own and others' mental lives is the basis of emotional and social intelligence*" (Siegel, 2012: 400) which he defines as:

> *"Mental skills that enable an individual to understand the impact of emotion on behavior and thinking, to regulate emotions and behavior, to understand the importance of emotions in others, and to understand social interactions and engage in adaptive ways with others in social situations. A capacity to envision and shape the mind, to have mindsight, is thought to be at the root of emotional and social intelligence" (Siegel, 2012: 452).*

It is clear that the key societal impact of understanding interpersonal resilience from both a cognitive and behavioural angle is in its contribution to building good – constructive and beneficial - quality relationships. For this, further research is necessary and since social relationships form the basis of all walks of social life, the potentially relevant fields are numerous – to mention some: post-conflict community building; mediation for debated policies' implementation; and even effects of team sports' practice. Since the opportunity has arisen recently, I have initiated an interdisciplinary research symposium involving human geographers, sociologists, social economists, criminologists, social psychologists and martial arts practitioners which aims to explore how martial arts' practice might enhance - or not - interpersonal resilience. The context based framework will allow for a multi-lateral analysis of adaptive pathways encouraged by the particular Martial arts' epistemologies taught. Moving beyond this analyses, the symposium will seek to develop a socio-cognitive impact assessment of the practice of martial arts – that is, a tracking and evaluating how the martial arts' philosophy as taught nurtures the relational intelligence in practitioners' social interactions.

7.4 Conclusions

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study that has combined the interpersonal neurobiology theses with the Maussian gift theory to devise a sociological context-based framework that has sought to inform understanding of interpersonal resilience from both a cognitive and behavioural perspective. The robust methodology employed and explained provides ample opportunity for interdisciplinary collaborations committed to investigating and refining the concept of interpersonal resilience through further cases across the world, in areas of conflict or not. Reconsidering objectivity in social science as discussed here hopefully provides a platform for encouraging more ambitious and robust research on sensitive societal subjects. It is clear that understanding pathways of decision-making in circumstances of tension is a stepping stone to bringing about more efficiently constructive and mutually beneficial social relationships, hence avoiding social fractures, resentment and indifference which often hinder progress towards any form of solution. Distinguishing between theoretical, methodological and empirical aspects, the central messages to take away from this thesis are as follows. In theoretical terms, Interpersonal resilience is an intersubjective, context-specific and multi-dimensional concept. It varies with the nature of relationships, time and place and this variation has thus called for a dynamic socio-cognitive framework that enables analysis of such an emergent concept. Combining Maussian Gift theory and IPNB into a unique context-based cognitive and behavioural framework to study adaptive pathways in synchrony and diachrony addresses an important gap in the sociology literature. While the Interpersonal

Neurobiology theory has put forward a consilient approach to studying the triad of the mind, brain and relationships, very few theoretical developments have been made in Sociology from the perspective of relationships specifically, as opposed to individuals. For IPNB itself, the work represents a useful step forward in that very few applications of IPNB have been made in other disciplines. This thesis is a first in paving the way to more consilient sociological theory building. It has also advanced the application of the Maussian Gift theory, notably through the tiered analysis and in clarifying the distinction between perception and action in social relationships. Acknowledging variegated perceptual and active positionings and articulating those with different intentions of maintaining, transforming or ending relationships under tension has certainly added a needed layer of refinement to the Maussian Gift theory. It can now be applied to conduct complex and dynamic socio-cognitive analyses, for example it can be adapted to map transparent negotiation processes in conflict situations. .This represents a significant theoretical development in a Sociological context.

Methodologically speaking, consilient thinking in research is built through an abductive reasoning combining the theoretical and the empirical iteratively refined. And achieving rigour and robustness in research builds from acknowledging subjectivity of the researcher-as-main-instrument-of-analysis; transparency over philosophical choices made and a research design conditioned by the researcher's ethical responsibility and participants' validation of interpretations of their narratives. In any case, the four pillar methodological framework derived from the research integrating receptivity; responsibility; trust-building and bracketing, forms a sound basis to design field

research in areas of intractable conflict and unfamiliar environments to the researcher. And finally from an empirical perspective, the three complementary drivers of interpersonal resilience common to the cases studied, although incidental in this research, offer an avenue for future research committed to refining understanding of what catalyses constructive and beneficial, that is, good social relationships. As such relationships form the backbone of so many human endeavours, and underpin the human condition in a world fraught with conflict and misunderstanding, this would intuitively seem a fruitful road to take.

Annexes

Annexe One   Macro-political background: Israel and the West Bank

Few are the ones who haven't heard about the geo-political tensions prevailing in the region over the past six decades. The Israeli and West Bank region, a confluence of heterogeneous populations in terms of ethnic origin, system of belief or religious background, socioeconomic status and political positioning, has been experiencing low to medium socio-political conflict with unpredictable peaks of violence over about the last 70 years. Of all, the contemporary armed conflicts indexed by the joint venture of International SOS and Control Risks[41], the Israeli-Palestinian conflict[42] is the longest running in contemporary human history. The social complexities at play in this region of the world and the relative ease of access and security to foreigners made it a first choice to enquire about interpersonal resilience in a context of on-going socio-political conflict – making it an intractable conflict environment.

Why on-going socio-political conflict?

Why use the term "on-going socio-political conflict" to designate the nature of this context? The objective of this section is to show why this context where there is conflict that has been prevailing for six decades now, has been termed one of 'on-going socio-political conflict'. An understanding of the field settings cannot be complete if we do not look at some politico-historical events which

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[41] formed in April 2008, provides clients with a complete suite of assistance and travel risk mitigation support services with a unique footprint of travel security and medical resources that spans five continents.

[42] Conflict tracking websites (accessed regurlarly over the period of the research 2013-2017): https://www.travelsecurity.com/Page.aspx?pg=15178
http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/
http://acd.iiss.org/en

have shaped this area of competing memories and perceptions and an overview of the socio-economic situation to-date. The major historical dynamics (since the late 19th Century till today) which are still impacting the socio-politics of this geographical unit will be discussed. The Chapter will close with a reflection on what can be learned from these impacts and what they implied in terms of data collection in researching interpersonal resilience.

A historical perspective of the region after the 19th Century

Historically, what today is Israel and the West Bank cannot be completely dissociated from one another. Although, going deep into the historical and political details is beyond the scope of this research, a brief overview of what the literature regards as key dates to understand today's complexity is a must. Late 19th Century is a far enough starting point for this presentation as it marked several turning points in this region of the world. The falling Ottoman Palestine would become British Mandatory Palestine, and eventually Israel, Jordan, and Palestinian territories (Krämer and Harman 2011).

Representing a balanced account of imperialist and nationalist competitions over this region was essential to understanding the complexity of conflicting and intersecting histories. In fact, literature shows patches of disputes and controversies amongst historians over "the smallest details to the grandest strategies" to sum it up in historian Yoav Gelerd's words (Gelerd 2008). For him, the only undisputable fact is the existence of the on-going controversy over the events of 1948, which for "both peoples residing in the Land of Israel touches the rawest of nerves". Indeed, the issue is not only complex but also sensitive at many regards. So, the choice of references providing readable

and critical narratives was a priority in order not to fall into biases, even unintentionally.

To-date: A geographical unit of no precise boundaries

To be able to get an objective picture of this geographical area, one has to put aside one's notions of nation state and clear-cut territorial boundaries. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the British colonial powers have called the area Mandate Palestine. Since then the territories have been disputed and still are. The maps shown in this section are by no means representing definite and consensually agreed upon territorial ownerships but rather indicating some kind of political control. Only bearing these specificities in mind can one start to grasp the complex state of the conflict in this area.

What forms today the region of Israel and the West Bank was part of a province of the Ottoman Empire - the southern part of the *Syria vialet.* The Empire had lasted for about six centuries, at its largest in the 17th Century roughly extending from today's Algeria in the west, north taking part of Austria to the Middle Eastern territories and was organised into provinces called *vialet*. Multicultural and multi-ethnic societies with Muslims, Christians, Jews and many others were living in the territory but not under the Western concept of nation state. Figure 33 gives an idea of what was the mid-19th Century border of the Ottoman Empire (the area shaded in blue) and those of countries to-date (the areas with full black line boundaries).
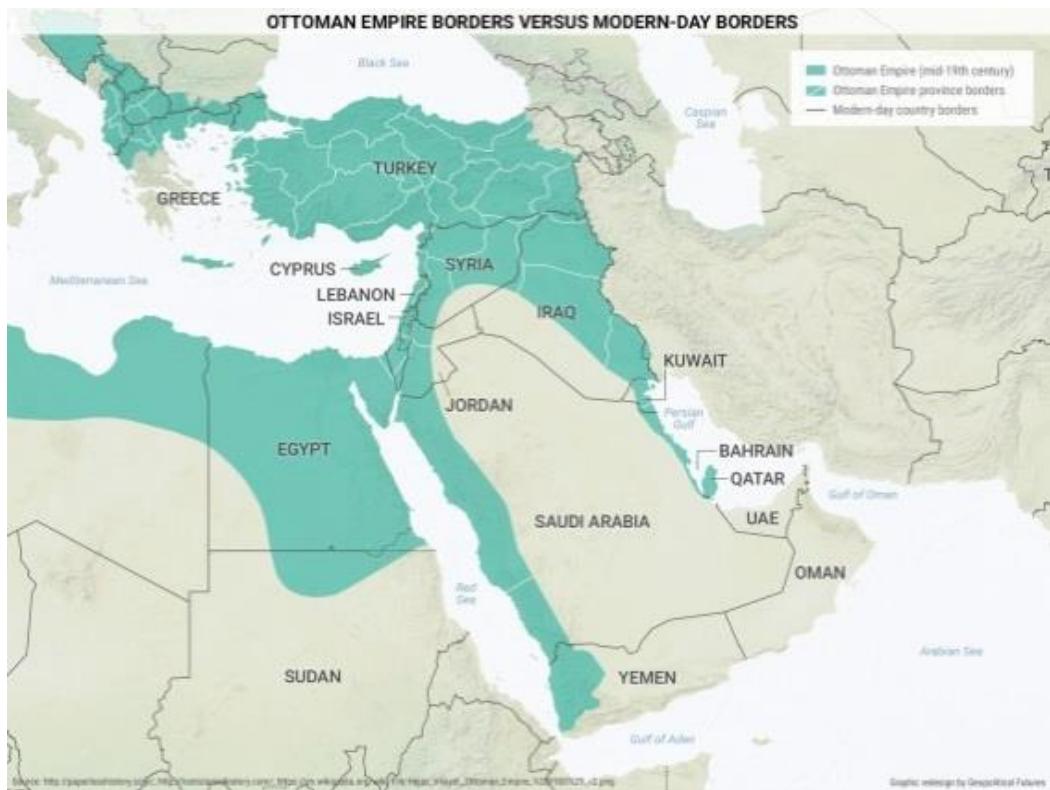
Figure 33 The political borders of the Ottoman Empire mid-19th Century and those of countries to-date. (Source: Britannica Online)

Today, the State of Israel is a country located at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea bounded by Lebanon to the north; Syria to the north-east; Jordan to the east and south east and Egypt to the south-west (Figure 34). It is the only Jewish democratic state of the modern world and its internal boundaries are disputed.

Figure 34 The geographical location of the State of Israel today (source: Britannica Online)

The West Bank is part of what is internationally called the Palestinian territories. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines Palestine[43] as the "area of the eastern Mediterranean region, comprising parts of modern Israel and the

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[43]"The name Palestine has long been in popular use as a general term to denote a traditional region, but this usage does not imply precise boundaries. The perception of what constitutes Palestine's eastern boundary has been especially fluid, although the boundary frequently has been perceived as lying east of the Jordan River, extending at times to the edge of the Arabian Desert." https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine; Accessed Jan 2015. See also (Gerber 1998; Schölch 1993)

Palestinian territories of the Gaza strip (along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea) and the West Bank (area of the west of the Jordan River)." (Britannica Online; Accessed March 2017). For a long time, the name Palestine denoted a traditional region without specific official 'nation-state' boundaries because it was not a State as defined today. The geopolitical entity called Mandatory Palestine was defined on paper by the League of Nations (Mansfield 1992; Yazbak 2000) after the First World War and placed under British administration between 1920-1948. After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war following the declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, the West Bank area was annexed by Jordan who ruled over it until 1967 giving the area its name West Bank as it is on the west side of Jordan River. In 1967, following the Six Day War, the West Bank was captured and came under military control of the State of Israel.

In 1978, the Camp David Accords were signed by Egypt and Israel, and the Israeli Civil Administration body was created to carry out the military-related governance of the territories- the West Bank and the Gaza Strip- captured by Israel (Schmidt 2001: p.348)

In 1994, after the Oslo Accords were agreed upon by the State of Israel (represented by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin) and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO, represented by Yasser Arafat), the West Bank was divided into three administrative areas - A, B and C - and some of the governance was transferred to the newly created Palestinian National Authority (Le More 2008). Meant to be a temporary solution, the divisions are still of actuality today. Annexe 2 shows a map of the West Bank published by BT'Selem the 'Israeli Information Centre for Human rights in the Occupied Territories' dated 2012. It is to be noted that this map is a picture at one point in time of the situation in

the field. It is not meant to be taken as an accurate depiction of the territorial possession of the land by one party or another. The aim of showing this map is to give the reader an idea of what a mixture of political decisions and other contingencies have resulted: a uniquely complex patched and disputed terrain.

Officially, Area A, accounting for circa 18% of the land in the West Bank and home to 55% of the Palestinian population is under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority. Entry is strictly forbidden to Israeli citizens (with the exception of Arab Israelis). Area B is home to about 440 Palestinian Arab villages and accounts for circa 22% of the land. The area is under civil control of the Palestinian Authority and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control. Area C, circa 60% of the land, is under full control - civil and security wise - of the Israeli government. For journalist Danny Rubenstein[44] Area C is an annexed territory. He writes:

"Area C comprises more than 60 per cent of the West Bank, and includes the Jordan Valley and the Judean Desert, along with Jewish settlements[45], highways and territories under the supervision of the army. In practical terms it is annexed." (Rubenstein 2015)

Compared to Areas A and B which are overcrowded archipelagoes with controlled access between one another, Area C is contiguous and, according the World Bank report published in 2013, mostly underdeveloped, comprising of most of the area's natural resources (Niksic *et al.* 2014) which again raises

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[44] http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4624580,00.html, 09/02/2015, Accessed March 2017

[45] (Haklai and Loizides 2015)

debates on the ability of the Palestinian people to move away from their donor-dependent economy (Alon and Bar-Tal 2016:278).

Figure 35 Israeli signpost placed at main checkpoints warns Israeli citizens that entry into Area 'A' is forbidden, life-endangering, and constitutes a criminal offense.

Nature of the conflict: political; social or socio-political?

Now that we have an idea of the geographical complexity, the next logical step to understand the background is to look into the nature of the tensions prevailing. Reviewing findings from literature on conflicts and development, Ray and Esteban (2017) argue that conflicts are profoundly economic in nature and that in the presence of economic inequality, there is a systemic bias toward ethnic conflict. They argue that economic inequalities between people create resentment and people within similar economic activities tend to get into conflict. So the question is if conflict is fundamentally economic, then why is there a bias towards ethnic divisions? Esteban and Ray (2008) answer that

ethnicity becomes salient in conflicts as ethnic identity is often visible and unchanging thus making it easier to create and target as an identifiable 'enemy'. To understand this prejudicial stereotyping, Goleman (2007) socio-cognitive approach may offer an explanation.

"The human mind depends on categories to give order and meaning to the world around us. By assuming that the next entity we encounter in a given category has the same main features as the last, we navigate our way through an ever-changing environment. But once a negative bias begins, our lenses become clouded. We tend to seize on whatever seems to confirm the bias and ignore what does not. Prejudice, in this sense, is a hypothesis desperately trying to prove itself to us. And so when we encounter someone to whom the prejudice might apply, the bias skews our perception, making it impossible to test whether the stereotype actually fits. Openly hostile stereotypes about a group — to the extent they rest on untested assumptions — are mental categories gone awry" (Goleman 2007p. 483-484).

This supports Esteban and Ray's (2008) argument that besides economics, there is a bias to organize conflicts along ethnic lines. The case of conflict in the Israeli and the West Bank region seems to be no exception. Several issues have been at stake and the conflict or conflicts prevailing are of varying nature and intensity. To earn a possible understanding of this complexity, a quick detour to what was happening in the late 19th and early 20th Century is probably necessary.

Key Political dynamics since the late 19th Century

In the late 19ᵗʰ Century, there were growing upheavals for independence in provinces against the Ottoman Empire which itself had already been economically weakened losing control over its territories to the growing powers of the European colonial countries. We were in the wake of World War One and the race for the recently discovered oil resources plenty in the Middle East had begun (Engdahl 2004; Engdahl 2007).

In the same period, in Europe anti-Semitic and nationalist ideologies were on the rise (LeVine and Mossberg, 2014). Early Zionists, defending the idea that Judaism is not only a religion but also a concept of nation and the Jewish people, being persecuted, needed a state of their own (Rhett, 2015), sought to establish a state for the Jewish people in the Middle East and a migration movement was engaged (Laqueur 1971; 2003). So the region was on the radar of colonial powers as well as Arab and Zionist nationalists.

Sources of tension and conflict of interests

The sources of tension in the area seem to have cropped up from a series of conflicts over economic and political interest. After the First World War, the territory of the Ottoman Empire under occupation of British and French troops was partitioned and placed under tutelage of the colonial powers by the League of Nations (Mansfield 1992; Yazbak 2000). Mandatory Palestine, a geopolitical entity, was formed in the southern part of what used to be the Syria *vialet* and was placed under British administration (1920-1948). During that period, Jewish people under ever-growing threat in Europe continued to migrate to Mandate Palestine.

From a political perspective, literature points out two main roots of disagreement between Arab and British colonial leaders about the land partition after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. One relates to the negative perception of the Picot-Sykes agreement of 1916 whereby the colonial powers had agreed to partition the land between them as a betrayal of the McMahon-Hussein correspondences during WW1 (1915-1916). These letters exchanged between Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, and Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt, allegedly concerned the political status of lands under the Ottoman Empire. In essence, these are claimed to have concluded recognition of Arab independence after World War I "in the limits and boundaries proposed by the Sherif of Mecca" and that, in exchange of support in fighting the Ottoman rule during the war (Schneer 2010). In this climate of political tension, the British colonial rule over Mandate Palestine did not find consensus in the region. Furthermore, this dissensus intensified with the Balfour Declaration[46] of 1917, which put forward colonial British endorsement of establishing "a national home for the Jewish people" in the Mandate (Norris 2013; Schneer 2010). The tensions were fundamentally over land partition and boundaries.

In the aftermath of World War One, the competition for resources had become very real and urgent. Interestingly taking a side step view to what mainstream literature usually mentions, Norris (2013) points out that British support in

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[46] This letter from the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild, then leader of the British Jewish community to be transmitted to the British Zionist Federation acknowledged British endorsement to establish "a national home for the Jewish people" in the Mandate Palestine noting that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country" (Schneer 2010).

favour of Zionism in Mandate Palestine was not without any interest. The British colonial power caught in the First World War, was:

"pushing colonial development to the top of policy-making agenda, with its accompanying methods of population redistribution, scientific governance, and intensive exploitation of natural resources" (Norris 2013:68).

In 1918, British census showed an estimate of 700,000 Arabs and 56,000 Jews (Mansfield 1992). More European Jewish settlements were promoted - Norris (2013) notes that the "imperial government saw Jews as useful agents of development". According to Krämer and Harman (2011), between 1933 and 1936 more than 164,000 Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine, and the Jewish population had reached 370,000 people in 1936 , increasing the Jewish population from 17% to 27%, and that in a context of deteriorating Arab Palestinian and Jewish relationships (Krämer and Harman 2011:239-240).

According to Yazbak (2000), economic factors contributed to the rising tensions between Palestinian and colonial powers in the area leading to the Arab revolt of 1936-1939. His argument is that the Palestine *fellahin*, that are peasant farmers, which made up two-thirds of the indigenous Arab population, were driven into urban environments where they faced poverty and social marginalisation. Yazbak (2000) argues, through a detailed account, that the revolt started off as a socioeconomic uprising and eventually developed further into a country-wide revolt. Krämer and Harman (2011) argue that the conflict with Zionism contributed to making the Palestinian Arab society more conservative in cultural, social, religious and political affairs. The preservation of their distinct heritage and identity against the dual impact of British

colonialism and what was perceived as Jewish-led innovations (through the economic development and different cultural approach) was a plausible motivation for this apparent growing conservatism (Krämer and Harman 2011).

Against this background, November 1947, UN Resolution 181 voted the termination of the mandate, partition and independence of the then Mandate Palestine. On paper, the land was partitioned[47] between a Jewish and an Arab state with a Special International Regime for the city of Jerusalem. But this arrangement was rejected by the Arab leaders.

From an Arab –Israeli to a Palestinian-Israeli conflict

The first Arab-Israeli war broke out and persisted during the period between the United Nations vote on the partition plan in November 1947 and July 1949 and consisted of two phases, according to Gelber (2004). The first stage was an "intercommunal war" (Tal 2004) between Arab Palestinians and Jews under the British rule. After May 1948, when David Ben Gurion, head of the Zionist Organisation and chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, declared the independence of the State of Israel (Brenner 2003: p.184), the new state was invaded by Jordanian, Egyptian, Syrian and Iraqi armies and war waged between the Arab and Jewish armies as well as at the intercommunal level.

This period has hence been known as the War of Independence for Jews but as Firestone (2012) writes: "To Arabs, especially Palestinians, it is the nakba

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[47] The demarcation line – in green ink- commonly called the **Green Line** or **(pre-)1967 border** or **1949 Armistice border was set out** in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between the armies of Israel and those of its Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria after the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. It became a border of the State of Israel from 1949 until the Six-Day War in 1967.

or calamity."(Firestone 2012: p.10) The State of Israel kept the area as per the UN partition plan in Resolution 181 but also placed some parts of the West Bank and the Galilee under military occupation. The situation drove several thousands of Palestinian Arabs out of their homes into refugees spread across other states around the world and abandoned properties were taken over. Over the years, the socio-political situation remained tense between the State of Israel and its neighbours. Famous Palestinian author of *Orientalism*, Edward Said writes in (Said 1989:23): "Alone of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, the West Bank and Gaza remained in an unforgiving limbo of local repression and frozen political process." In the remainder of the West Bank, the number of Jewish Israeli settlements steadily expanded.

In 1987, the polarisation of the conflict shifted from Arab-Israeli into Palestinian-Israeli with the uprising, commonly called the First Intifada, amongst the Palestinian Arabs (Beitler 2004). Israeli historian Avraham Sela writes[48]: "No longer international, it now became an internal ethno-national conflict playing out within one geographical unit."(Sela 2012) What had the started as "a spontaneous outburst caused by economic, social and national factors alike" had then been recuperated by politicians from different fronts (Sela 2012). In September 2000, the second intifada broke followed by a dark period for the both people Israel in terms of civilian deaths. While the first uprising, focused on unarmed rebellion and civil disobedience against the Israel perceived as the 'Occupier', the second uprising was more violent with use of firearms and suicide bombings (Beitler 2004).

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[48] in the Haaretz dated 13th December 2012

In the early 2000s, during the Second Intifada, the State of Israel, arguing the necessity to protect its citizens against terrorist[49] attacks by Palestinians, started building separation barriers with checkpoints to control access of Palestinians from the West Bank to the Israeli State territory along the 330 km[50]. Frisch (2006) noted that the number of Israeli casualties from terrorist attacks had decreased with the construction of barriers. However, these walls and fencing, running over 280 miles in length and up to 26 feet in height, controlled by the Israeli military, are highly disputed in terms of their locations, purpose and impact by different groups. For some, like the Israeli government it is referred to as the 'security fence' while for others mainly from the Palestinian side, it is viewed as a "segregation" or "apartheid" wall (Rogers and Ben-David 2010; Yiftachel 2005). The argument of the latter being that it has been a means to keep the Palestinian population under occupation with limited access to movement as for instance, to travel abroad they have to go through Jordan instead of Tel Aviv lengthening their journeys to the airport by 24-48 hours because of the double checkpoints through which they have to pass. Symbolically, the barriers have materialised the psychological schisms which has slowly been installed between two people- those living with a green ID and those not; those living on either sides of a virtual Green line. In effect,

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[49] "Terrorism is the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by individuals or subnational groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience, beyond that of the immediate victim."(Sandler and Enders 2008)

[50] https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html Accessed in Jan 2016.

political decisions from all sides have contributed in maintaining and exacerbating this fracture in the social fabric in this area. (Al-Haj 2005; 2012; Bekerman and Zembylas 2014) .

Annexe Two   Final Field research budget summary

Field Trip	Start Date	End Date	Duration/weeks	Flights	Accommodation	Food	Inland transport	Interpreter		Total/£
Final Budget Summary for fieldwork between Nov 2014 and Nov 2016										
Details				Return tickets	Average of £25/day	Average of £10/day	to and from airport + between cities + tours	Free		
Phase 1 Exploratory (2 weeks)	Nov-14	Nov-14	2	370	313	150	396	none needed		1229
Phase 2 Immersive Data Collection (8 weeks)	Apr-15	Jun-15	8	395	1575	630	230	Free		2830
Feedback (5 weeks)	Oct-16	Nov-16	5	369	78	850	123	Free		1420
Total expenses /£										**4250**
Total yearly student allowance from UoG over the period /£									500	
Funding obtained from UoG for the research /£									3750	
Total Funding available /£									**4250**	

Annexe Three Overview of the Exploratory phase (Nov 2014)

Israel field trip 14th till 28th November 2014			
	Date	**Locations/ Itinerary**	**Accomodation**
Fri	**14-Nov**	GlOS-Heathrow by National express coach	home, GL1 4UF
		Heathrow-Tel Aviv: BA0163 DEP14Nov ARV15Nov	
Sat	**15-Nov**	Tel Aviv - Jerusalem by shared Taxi	Abraham Hostel, Jerusalem
Sun	**16-Nov**	08:00 - Depart from Abraham Hostel-Davidka Square	Abraham Hostel, Jerusalem
		10:00 - Arrive in Hebron for a tour tour of H2, the Israeli side	
		13:00 - Lunch	
		14:00 - Tour of H1, the Palestinian side	
		18:00 - Return to Jerusalem	
		19:00 - Arrive back in Jerusalem	
Mon	**17-Nov**	07:30 - Pickup from Abraham Hostel - Davidka Square	Abraham Hostel, Jerusalem
		07:45 - Pickup from Carta Parking Lot	
		09:00 - Arrive at Mount Gerizim	
		09:40 - Visit the Church of Jacob's Well	
		10:00 - Tel Balata	
		10:20 - Tour of the Old City of Nablus	
		12:00 - Joseph's Tomb	Cancelled
		13:10 - Lunch at a family house in the village of Zababde	
		14:30 - Walk around in Jenin Refugee Camp	
		15:00 - Free time in the Market in Jenin	
		15:40 - Depart from Jenin & head back to Jerusalem.	
		17:45 - Arrive back at Abraham Hostel	
Tue	**18-Nov**	08:00 - Pick-up at Abraham Hostel, Davidka Square	Abraham Hostel, Jerusalem
		08:15 - Pick-up at Carta Parking Lot (Near Jaffa Gate)	
		09:15 - Qasr el-Yahud baptism site	
		10:00 - Tour of Jericho	
		12:00 - Tour of Ramallah	
		14:00 - Lunch in Bethlehem	
		15:00 - Tour of Bethlehem	
		19:00 - Arrive in Jerusalem	
Wed	**19-Nov**	Jerusalem	
Thu	**20-Nov**	Bir'Zeit University	
Fri	**21-Nov**	Jerusalem	
Sat	**22-Nov**	Jerusalem	
Sun	**23-Nov**	Jerusalem	Abraham Hostel, Jerusalem
Mo Tue	**24-Nov**	Jerusalem, Caesarea, Jisr az-Zarqa	guesthouse in Jisr az-Zarqa
Tue	**25-Nov**	Jisr az-Zarqa, Haifa, Acre, Rosh Hanikra, Nazareth	Fauzi Azar Inn
Wed	**26-Nov**	Nazareth, Capernaum, Banias, Mas'ade, Bental, Nazareth	Fauzi Azar Inn
Thu	**27-Nov**	Nazareth, Arbel, Tiberias, Yardenit, Jerusalem	Abraham Hostel, Jerusalem
Fri	**28-Nov**	Jerusalem- Tel Aviv by shared Taxi	home GL1 4UF
		Tel Aviv- Heathrow BA0164 DEP28Nov ARV28Nov	
		Heathrow- Gloucester by National express coach	

Row labels in left margin: "West bank Tour 1" spans 16–18 Nov; "Northern Israel Tour 2" spans 24–28 Nov.

Annexe Four   Exploratory fieldtrip notes

A socio-political climate of disturbances

The **socio-political climate** in the region over the period nearing the trip was particularly tensed and the UK government, for instance, was advising to postpone travels in the region whenever possible. In fact, over the last weeks preceding the arrival of the researcher in the field, Reuters reported that:

"*Five Israelis and a foreign visitor have been deliberately run over and killed or stabbed to death by Palestinians. About a dozen Palestinians have been killed, including those accused of carrying out the attacks. Residents trace the violence in Jerusalem back to July, when a Palestinian teenager was burned to death by Jewish assailants, an alleged revenge attack for the abduction and killing of three Jewish teens by Palestinian militants in the occupied West Bank. Other triggers have been the summer war in Gaza and a row over access to a Jerusalem compound sacred to Muslims and Jews alike.*" (Accessed online on the 11th Feb 2015: http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/17/us-mideast-jerusalem-driver-idUSKCN0J10O220141117)

Safety and security were part and parcel of the fieldwork design. The researcher subscribed to the Global security centre of the Control Risks International SOS agency via the University of Gloucestershire's insurance department. The following is an extract of an e-mail exchange with one of the former's coordinators:

"Israel in general is a Medium risk travel destination. The travel security environment is generally benign though the security risks are heightened in certain parts of the country in the event of an escalation of hostilities with Gaza or the West Bank (Palestinian Territories). Furthermore, the border areas with Egypt, Syria and Lebanon are also more unstable due to the risk of rocket fire or militant cross-border infiltration. However, the government maintains a robust security infrastructure to mitigate these risks. Other concerns include the underlying risk of sporadic, albeit low-level, militant attacks against 'soft targets', despite an overall threat reduction, as well as the risk of petty crime and communal violence in Jerusalem. This information is intended as a summary of the travel security environment; however, the risks can change at short notice during a crisis or evolving situation."

Risk *"change at short notice"* is a common characteristic of the socio-political climate in this region. Such embedded uncertainty is what is sought after as context for this research and comes with however more requirements regarding safety and security of the researcher. Consequently, the trip had to be organised accordingly. In other words, because the researcher was new to the field, she had to look for reliable tour agencies and packages which would give her sufficient leeway and freedom of movement in security. An Israeli tour agency, Abraham tours, offering accommodation as well as 24 hour assistance was chosen. This tour operator was chosen for the following reasons:

1. Its apparent political neutrality- *"Abraham Tours does not promote a political agenda of any kind. We encourage and assist travelers in*

seeking as many political opinions as they can in order to effectively formulate their own views" (Abraham tours mission statement: accessed online on 11th Feb 2015: http://abrahamtours.com/about-us/);

2. the internationally recognised safety provision- the agency receive *'The Certificate of Excellence award"* which *"provides top performing establishments the recognition they deserve, based on feedback from those who matter most – their customers*" as Stephen Kaufer, President and CEO, Trip Advisor says. (accessed online on 11th Feb 2015: http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/PressCenter-i6013-c1-Press_Releases.html);

3. It is cost-efficient and designed for backpackers and independent travellers, hence, ideal to the budget and needs of the researcher who travelled as a tourist backpacker.

4. And last, it's internal networking. In fact, Abraham tours work with Israeli as well as Palestinian guides and assures tours in the West Bank areas where Israelis are officially not allowed entry (REF). With this tour operator accessing both sides of the wall was relatively easy because this meant dealing with a single intermediate to access either sides. Such a structure was efficient since it proved to cost and time-effective.

The exploratory trip proved useful in confirming that the region effectively qualifies as a context of on-going socio-political risk and uncertainty but as well the feasibility of the study in terms of (i) physical accessibility and (ii) choice of data collection methods. How the trip answered to the trip objectives is illustrated in Table C where highlights of the exploratory journey are linked to

the trip objectives. Each experience in-field helped **confirm the instability** prevailing over the livelihoods in this region.

Day 2: a dual narrative tour of Hebron

The researcher engaged in a tour in Hebron on Day 2 of the trip which was conducted for the first half of it by a Palestinian guide and an Israeli Jewish guide for the second half. The tourists could thus visit the city of Hebron through two different narratives. Hebron provides an excellent illustration in that it presents the two extremes of the diversity of ontologies which prevail in this whole region situated between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. It is also home to the 'Tomb of the Patriarch' or 'Ibrahim Mosque' which is regarded as a holy site for both Jews and Muslims. This makes the city second most sacred after Jerusalem where there is another holy compound sacred to both these religious communities. This dual narrative tour brought out the gap of communication between the Arab and Jewish Israeli citizen of this city. Hebron is a segregated city and is divided into two segments: H1 and H2. This division hides a complex and long-standing conflict and much suffering on both sides.

Picture taken in November 2014.. Main Market Street in Hebron shut down for the security of settlers.

"*Over the years, Israel established a number of settlement points in and around the Old City of Hebron which had traditionally served as the commercial center for the entire southern West Bank . Israeli law-enforcement authorities and security forces have made the entire Palestinian population suffer in the process of protecting Israeli settlement in the city. The authorities impose a regime intentionally and openly based on the "separation principle", the result of which is legal and physical segregation between the Israeli settlers and the Palestinian majority*". (btselem, 2011; accessed online on 13th Feb 2015: http://www.btselem.org/hebron)

The discourse prevailing on each side is fundamentally the same: *the other is the cause of our suffering; all we want is peace*. While the displaced Palestinians are claiming their right to return to their homes and for those still living there are seeking international support to be able to stay in their homes, the Israeli settlers claim authority over the land for religious reasons. The core argument of their belief is based on religious scriptures dating back to more

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than 2000 years (need to check exactitude of this). "*According to the Scriptures, the land belongs to us, the Jews and this is a fact. The Arabs hate us.*"(Female Israeli settler, in Hebron). For the Palestinians, the middle-class and working class, life in Hebron is under constant military scrutiny. The Palestinian guide lives next to the settlement and the road he lives on has been closed *for the settlers' security*. All the Palestinian people living close to the settlements have to go through checkpoints all the time. This delays all movements as the situation is very unpredictable at the checkpoints. The soldiers can be friendly sometimes but can be cruel and humiliating often (a local mentioned). The Palestinian guide, Abed, a young man of 22 years of age, has a surprisingly mature outlook over the situation of the soldiers at the checkpoint 200 m from his home- "*most of them are just kids with guns. What do you expect to happen, if you give the most sophisticated gun to a young kid who's just left school and basically tell me that he can do whatever he wishes, he's got all the rights and those people- that is, us- are the enemies? I remember once a soldier telling me:" you know I don't want to be here, I'd rather be with my girlfriend somewhere and enjoying myself… it's complicated.*" This same Abed lost his 16 year old cousin who fell under the bullet of an Israeli soldier a couple of years earlier: "*my cousin was stopped at the checkpoint and they asked him to put down what he was carrying. It was his birthday cake. They humiliated him and he got carried away and replied some words. But they just shot him. I mean he was just a 16 year old kid carrying his birthday cake unarmed.. There's the video on you tube. The sequence where he is shot is cut. You just see he lying dead on the ground…it was later claimed that he was carrying an unidentified object and had refused*

to cooperate. And you know the woman who shot him is free and everyone knows who she is and she is working on another checkpoint in the same area. She was not reprimanded, nothing."

Another complicating element is blood debt. In fact, on both sides of the conflict there has been loss of lives, loss of family, children, women, men, fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. As the Palestinian guide was saying: "*in every single house, be it Jewish or Arab, every single family has lost someone over this situation*". Another, Palestinian young man: "*how can you live like this, knowing that your neighbour is the killer of your son? How can they live next to us, knowing very well that they killed our 3 year old baby?*"Stories like this are common in discourses on both sides.

Overall this perception of mutual indebtedness crowned by an absence of dialogue is an indication of the how complex the relationship between Israelis and Arab Palestinians is. Consequently, it also shows that the situation is one of on-going political risk and uncertainty, so much the power relations and political games are unpredictable.

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Day 4: touring the West Bank while there were tensions in Jerusalem
Touring in the West Bank on the morning there had been stabbings in a synagogue in west Jerusalem was a showcase experience. The following excerpt of the researcher's field diary illustrates how the West Bank is overall not an easily accessible region so much the level of uncertainty is high:

"That morning, we were six people in the van and the driver drove out of Jerusalem through Qalindiyah checkpoint. The van is Israeli and has "Abraham Tours" written all over it. Crossing the checkpoint was incredibly easy: no checks. We just drove into the West Bank. The driver picked up the Palestinian guide, a middle-aged man with a sarcastic humour. It felt later that his cracking of jokes every time he spoke was a sort of emotional outlet… we arrived in Bethlehem and the guide, Tahar, looked quite worried even though he tried to keep his composure. He very diplomatically told the group that there had been stabbings in a synagogue in west Jerusalem. He tried his best to put up a normal face but his worry was showing clearly. He showed us Facebook pictures of the attacks while were in Bethlehem when we stopped at the wall where all the peace-activist tags are.

This visit meant to drive through Bethlehem, Jericho, stopping at the Jordan River and finally have a late lunch in Ramallah. Throughout the trip, the guide connected to Facebook, and other social media updated us all on the developments. The tension was palpable in the eyes of the guide- the two attackers were from his village and he knew them personally. The authorities have decided to pull down their houses and arrest all of their families… That day the Makloubeh we had in that posh restaurant in Ramallah did not go down very well. I remember skyping whenever there was Wi-Fi access with family and colleagues to let them know about my location and that I was fine."

Travelling in a vehicle with Israeli plates through any checkpoint is easy and quick. Occasionally the driver may be stopped and asked who are travelling with him and where he is going but this is just a superficial check. Travelling in Palestinian vehicle is another story. The researcher experienced a bus drive.

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People have to get off the bus queue up whatever the weather, go through a tight metal detector, leave all belongings into an x-ray check like in airports and go through a cold identity and passport check with an Israeli army soldier.

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Day 5: Crossing Qalindiyah checkpoint

Travelling into the West Bank by public transport unaccompanied by any known person was another experience which showed how much having a reliable local contact is not only a matter of easing access but also a matter of safety.

"*This time I was on a Palestinian bus getting into the West Bank. Earlier that day, I had left the hostel in west Jerusalem and walked into east Jerusalem to catch the Palestinian bus. Israeli buses do not go into the West Bank. "Elderly people are allowed to stay in the bus, but we have to go through the checkpoint," a young Palestinian girl told me. She was about 19 years old and had kindly explained to me what the procedure is through the checkpoint when I asked while getting off the bus at the checkpoint. This was her daily commuting routine as a student at Al Quds university in Jerusalem and she lives in the West Bank. "Oh, sometimes, it may take more than 2 hours but sometimes 20 minutes, it depends on the number of people" she said as if this was a normal thing. I was surprised at how patient she seemed and how as if she had accepted this situation.*

It was clear that commuting between Jerusalem and the West Bank through the Qalindiyah-which is the main checkpoint which one has to cross while travelling from Jerusalem into the West Bank- is not an ideal scenario during

the field work. This checkpoint has the reputation of being the "hottest checkpoint in the West Bank". So the next trip had to accommodate for a stay in the West Bank during the data gathering period there. The field work will have to be designed in such a way that the researcher allocates a time period for each case study and be based in the area then. This carries the important advantage of allowing for participant observation.

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Day 5- 9: Jifna

The lived experiences in Jifna and Jisr-ez-Zarqa have indicated that both show characteristics of on-going socio-political uncertainty. As a result, both of these places have been chosen as case study areas. The following excerpts of the researcher's field diary illustrate this:

"*Jifna is a small hilly village on the outskirts of Ramallah just next to a very green and posh-looking Israeli settlement and a compact dull, over-populated Palestinian refugee camp…*

Getting to Jifna from Jerusalem by public transport requires passing through the Qalindiyah checkpoint and driving through Ramallah, then through the compact Palestinian refugee camp. On two out of the four nights I stayed in Jifna, there had been shootings in the middle of the night. When I asked what it was, I was told: "oh don't worry about it, it's the settlers, they go crazy sometimes and shoot at the people in the refugee camp down there… it a common thing here. Don't worry we are not close to them over here. You are safe here." Even though the words were meant to be reassuring, the tone and sigh in the voice conveyed the

helplessness and heaviness the people felt because of this situation. "We are in a prison here" later Rawda would tell me, "we cannot move about freely, our lives are controlled: we have water access only once a week and that can be cut off anytime without any reason. Gas and electricity is just so very expensive. They've taken control over that as well. And we pay almost double the price (Need to check the exactitude of this) now. Look, it's cold and we have heaters but we just can't afford to put the heating on."

Political instability and threats of upsurge of war is part of the daily routine in this region. The people live under an alien occupation. 'Alien' because there is no physical contact nor is there any constructive exchanges between the residents of this occupied territory and the occupiers. Daily life in the village is undermined because the basic resources are controlled by this alien domineering force.

Days 10-11: Jisr-ez-Zarqa

"At the time of the first visit, Jisr ez-Zarqa is the poorest all-Arab village in Israel and situated mid-way between the two richest cities. One of which is Caesarea – home to the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. I chose this tour because the particularity with this fishermen village is that it is the only Arab village on the coast of Israel but also because the people are estranged from the rest of the population- Arabs and Israeli alike. Jisr-ez-Zarqa is situated in Northern Israel about half an hour drive from Haifa. The source of uncertainty and risk in this village is double.

The village is considered as a ghetto (CITE; http://www.bendbulletin.com/nation/webextras/2801808-153/in-israel-

secluded-arab-village-wants-to-be). The local economy is quasi-non-functioning. "*The men go everyday out at sea even if they know they won't catch anything*". Some women work outside the village in the rich homes and from what I am told; the men mainly stay in the village. The population is around 14000 of which half are children. This underprivileged life style, low-performing education system, and seclusion plunge the place and its residents in a marginalisation and the rate of violence in the area testifies to this.

There is also the political conflict in the backdrop does complicate things when it comes to how the people are perceived. In a way, even if this village is Israeli and there is a connection with Palestinian people. For instance after the abduction and murder of a Palestinian boy Mohammad Abu Khdeir who was burned to death by Israeli extremists in response to the kidnapping of three Israeli settlers In July 2014, the Middle East Monitor (https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/12595-israeli-newspaper-warns-of-escalating-violence-in-israel) reported protests and clashes between Israeli-Arab citizens and the Israeli security forces in most Arab cities in Israel and jisr-ez-zarqa was no exception.

Annexe   Five Sample of a Travel insurance daily report

Travel Security Online

16 Nov 2015

Palestinian Territories: Ramallah: Avoid planned demonstrations on 16, 20 November due to risk of unrest

Members undertaking essential travel to Ramallah (West Bank) on **16 November** should avoid a planned rally set to start at **12.00** (local time) in al-Manara square. Protesters will then march toward the Israeli settlement of Beit El in order commemorate the 27th anniversary of the symbolic Palestinian Declaration of Independence.

In a related event planned for **20 November**, protesters will march from the Hamzeh Mosque toward Beit El. No precise timings for this have yet been announced.

Travel Advice

- Defer non-essential travel to the West Bank until further notice. Those undertaking essential travel should exercise caution in the vicinity of potential flashpoint areas.
- Clashes between various groups, including Palestinian protesters, Israeli settlers and the Israeli security forces, can break out without warning. Avoid all gatherings on the above dates and plan routes bypassing the protest locations to mitigate the risk of incidental exposure to any violence.
- Maintain flexible itineraries as the Israeli security forces may impose curfews, travel bans or similar restrictions in areas of the West Bank with little or no notice.
- Travel to the West Bank requires careful journey management planning. Use a private vehicle with a trusted local driver. Do not self-drive or use public transport. We recommend the use of a vehicle with number plates registered in Israel due to ease of access through roadblocks and roads restricted for Palestinian-registered vehicles. However, members should be aware that Israeli-registered vehicles are at a higher risk of being targeted by protesters or militants.
- The above advice is not exhaustive; consult the Standing Travel Advice for the Palestinian Territories for further information.

provided by the joint venture of International SOS and Control Risks

Advice provided in this email represents the best judgment of AEA International Holdings Pte. Ltd. and Control Risks Group Holdings Ltd. Advice in this email does not however provide a warranty of future results nor a guarantee against risk.

Textbox 11 Travel Insurance report dated 16 November 2015

Annexe Six   Interview guide

General Interview guide

The following is a guide organised on the basis of the type of data I wanted to gather: socioeconomic, socialisation, socio-politics (to some extents) and individual perspectives on the dyadic relationships. In most cases, the interviewing process followed a natural pace emerging from the interactions between myself and the interviewee. This list only served as a reminder to myself during the interview such that I cover the basic data required for thorough analysis.

After the experience of the field research, it was clear that each interview was a unique interaction where the questions had to concord with the flow of the stories shared. In most cases, as the interviewees were already aware that my focus was interpersonal relationships, the interviews were carried out as focused in-depth fluid conversations rather than a formal and rigid interaction.

1.   Socioeconomic data

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Area of residence:

Household composition:

2.   Socialisation circles

This section determines the social circles the interviewee is part of and the roles he/she has in the community (public space) as well as his/her social identity in the private space. So this section maps, the interviewee's positioning in the social circles she/he identifies with.

3. Socio-politics (not the main focus of the interviews)

The themes identified here are the main objects of the conflict identified from literature review and confirmed during the exploratory trip. This section's aim is basically to determine the peoples' perception and interpretation of the nature of the risks and uncertainties they live in.

a. Land management

What are the main issues related to land management?

How do issues about the land affect your daily life?

b. Water access

What are the main issues related to water access?

How do issues about water access affect your daily life?

c. Energy access

What are the main issues related to energy access?

How do issues about energy access affect your daily life?

d. Mobility (freedom of movement)

What are the main issues related to peoples' movement in the region?

How do issues affect your daily life?

e.   Conflict outbursts

What are the main events of conflict you recall?

When was the most memorable one? How did you cope?

4.   Individual perspectives

How was it when you were a child here?

What is your role in the guesthouse?

What are the barriers to your role? Why do you think so?

What do you enjoy in your work? Why?

5.   The Guesthouse

Please tell me the story of how you came to the guesthouse?

Do you have any experience or story you would like to share?

6.   Relationships

How is your relationship with your co-workers?

Have you experienced any difficulties or problems with each?

Would you mind telling me about them?

7.   Support from social circles

How does belonging to the social circles you mentioned earlier help you or not

at times of tension in your relationships?

8.	Future perspectives

What are your aspirations for the coming 5-10 years?

Anything you want to add?

Annexe Seven First meeting with the Juha team

My first encounter with the Juha team was in November 2014 when I was on a tour with a small group of backpackers touring in the Northern Israel with the Abraham tours. After visiting the Roman ruins in Caesarea we were picked up by three people: Genevieve, Neta and Ahmad. They all seemed very friendly with each other and made us all feel at ease. We were going to drive to the Juha guesthouse in Jisr ez Zarqa. The place is presented to us as the only Arab village on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. Then, I had no idea that I would be spending 4 weeks volunteering with the Juha team in that village 7 months later.

As we drove into the village through a narrow road running under the highway, I found myself propelled into a very different place from Jerusalem where I had been staying till now. describe the village. To my surprise, as Neta gave her presentation of the Juha guesthouse, I found that at the core this tourism business is a social entrepreneurship project. The guesthouse is situated right in the middle of the village. As they put it, the shared vision of Neta and Ahmad led them to fulfil a shared goal of "serving both the local village community and the community of backpackers and travellers." In a declared vision of their social business though responsible tourism, these, at first sight, two very different persons, worked together in promoting local business by encouraging their guests to use local shops for breakfast for instance; consulting and cooperating with local residents; and most importantly, initiating volunteering projects in the village.

The perceptible synergy between Neta, "a Jewish woman" from a small moshav, Aviel, nearby and Ahmad, "an Arab Israeli from Jisr az-Zarqa" together with Genevieve, "who made aaliyah" makes of the Juha team one of exceptional interest to understand the intricacies of interpersonal relationships. Besides, it happened that both Genevieve and I have the French nationality and on top of that we were born on sister islands- Mauritius and Reunion. Intrigued by how two people who were born so close to each other in the middle of the Indian Ocean and having travelled and lived away from their birthplaces for a long time could meet in a small Arab town in Israel. It may seem insignificant when told, but when experienced first-hand, it has an impact on the people concerned. So this became an important ice-breaker and as we spoke about our lives that rainy November afternoon at the guesthouse, we realised that we shared several values in common. I promised to come back.

Annexe Eight   Overview of the Immersive phase (April-June 2015)

Israel and West Bank_ Second Field Trip_Mid-April till Mid-June 2015					
N.B. 1. Dates are subject to change depending on the siuation on ground and flights					
Date		Travelling		Details	Accommodation	Comments
		From	To			
17-Apr	Friday	Tel Aviv airport	Jisr-ez-Zarqa	train from TLV airport to Binyamina station where I'll be picked up by Genevieve/Juha people	Juha's Guesthouse in Jisr	Jisr is in Northern Israel 32° 32' 00" North 34° 55' 00" East
18-Apr	Saturday				idem	
19-Apr	Sunday				idem	
20-Apr	Monday				idem	
21-Apr	Tuesday				idem	
22-Apr	Wednesday				idem	
23-Apr	Thursday				idem	
24-Apr	Friday				idem	
25-Apr	Saturday				idem	
26-Apr	Sunday				idem	
27-Apr	Monday				idem	
28-Apr	Tuesday				idem	
29-Apr	Wednesday				idem	
30-Apr	Thursday				idem	
01-May	Friday				idem	
02-May	Saturday				idem	
03-May	Sunday				idem	
04-May	Monday				idem	
05-May	Tuesday				idem	
06-May	Wednesday				idem	
07-May	Thursday				idem	
08-May	Friday				idem	
09-May	Saturday	Jisr-ez-Zarqa	Nazareth	With Abraham tours	idem	
10-May	Sunday				idem	
11-May	Monday				idem	
12-May	Tuesday				idem	
13-May	Wednesday				idem	
14-May	Thursday				idem	
15-May	Friday				idem	
16-May	Saturday				idem	
17-May	Sunday				idem	
18-May	Monday	Nazareth	Jerusalem	Public transport to Ramallah where researcher will be met by local contact	Abraham Hostel in West Jerusalem	
19-May	Tuesday	Jerusalem	Jifna	Public transport to Ramallah where researcher will be met by local contact	Khouriya's family guesthouse in Jifna	Jifna is a small village on the outskirts of Ramallah 31° 58' 0" North 35° 13' 0" East
20-May	Wednesday				idem	
21-May	Thursday				idem	
22-May	Friday				idem	
23-May	Saturday				idem	
24-May	Sunday				idem	
25-May	Monday				idem	
26-May	Tuesday				idem	
27-May	Wednesday				idem	
28-May	Thursday				idem	
29-May	Friday				idem	
30-May	Saturday				idem	
31-May	Sunday				idem	
01-Jun	Monday				idem	
02-Jun	Tuesday				idem	
03-Jun	Wednesday				idem	
04-Jun	Thursday				idem	
05-Jun	Friday				idem	
06-Jun	Saturday				idem	
07-Jun	Sunday				idem	
08-Jun	Monday				idem	
09-Jun	Tuesday				idem	
10-Jun	Wednesday				idem	
11-Jun	Thursday				idem	
12-Jun	Friday				idem	
13-Jun	Saturday				idem	
14-Jun	Sunday	Jifna	Jerusalem		Abraham Hostel in West Jerusalem	
15-Jun	Monday					
16-Jun	Tuesday					
17-Jun	Wednesday	Jerusalem	Tel Aviv airport			

Annexe Nine   Research Briefings

Exploring the dynamics of interpersonal perceptions in resilient alliances: An interim report

Background of the research

There is evidence in the latest scientific research to suggest that interpersonal relationships are fundamental in building resilience, defined as the ability to cope with change to maintain a degree of core stability. With the growing frequency and flows of migration and the subsequent ever-increasing climate of insecurity across the globe, it is timely to develop efficient and effective methods of understanding the dynamics of relationships with 'others' who are often different socio-culturally. Thus the core aim of the research is to deepen the understanding of factors required to build and maintain interpersonal relationships operating in socio-politically unstable regions.

The aim of this interim report

This interim report is designed to help engage discussion with the research participants and allow them to reflect and feedback on the analysis conducted so far. This final phase forms an essential part of the research, which has been designed in the interest of scientific rigour.


Figure 1 shows a map of the locations of the three case stories
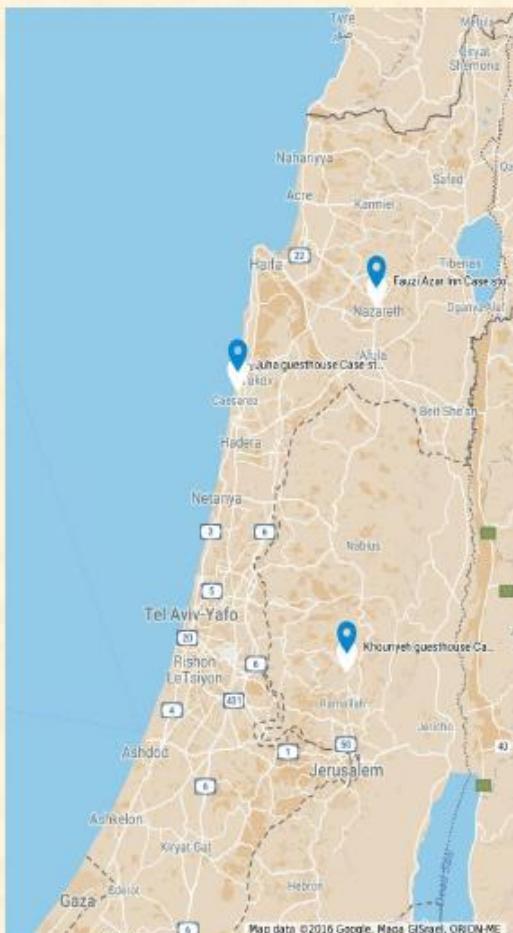
Learning in Context

To enable an in-depth exploration of what makes people accept each other and maintain their relationships even when facing socio-cultural difficulties, this research has employed an ethnographic approach focusing on the case stories of three guesthouses:

> - The Juha story, Jir ez Zarqa, Israel
> - The Fauzi Azar story, Nazareth, Israel
> - The Khouriyeh family story, Jifna, West Bank

These were primarily selected, first because they have proved to be resilient prior to the period of the research; and second, to help ensure variations in terms of geographical location and socio-cultural context. A case story is a detailed series of interviews with people who are a part of or a stakeholder of the social enterprise which provide a rounded view of the data in context from the perception of the people.

Learning from these case stories will further both academic and practitioner understanding of the intricacies of interpersonal relationships, as well as bringing to light the socially innovative grass-root practices happening in this region. It is hoped that understanding how and why people maintain their relationships despite a range of socio-political difficulties will be a stepping stone in providing guidance for establishing and operating long-term and resilient partnerships and relations.

In addition, the complexity of the Israeli and West Bank context offer a prototypical background to developing a robust and efficient method for future studies into the resilience of interpersonal relationships.

Exploring the drivers of resilient interpersonal relationships:
An Interim report

Emerging themes from stakeholder interviews

Analysis of the three case stories reveals there to be some congruence amongst the main decision-makers and stakeholders as to what the principal drivers of resilient relationships may be. There are three such drivers.

First, a **willingness** to maintain the relationship has proven to be crucial. This willingness is underpinned by a twofold motivation comprising a degree of **self-interest** combined with a degree of **interest for the 'other'** which is nurtured for the sake of the **relationship**. The willingness to maintain the relationship finds its roots in the **balance** between these two aspects of motivation.

Figure 2 shows the ritual of food (olive oil and zaatar) sharing from the same plates symbolising accepting the other of part of the social circle.

Figure 3 shows an example of a potential space of sharing

Second, the **existence of a space** where stakeholders feel they are able to express their feelings - frustrations and aspirations alike - has been described as a fundamental element to build the relationship. Such a space often comprises a physical and emotional dimension depending on the situation.

A third and equally important driver identified through the case stories was the feeling of being **acknowledged** and **recognised** within that space by the other in the relationship. Acknowledgement was mainly defined as the feeling that the other listened to one's expressions of differences while the recognition was referred to a feeling that the other often made the effort to act upon what he/she observed and understood.

All three drivers brought a feeling of belonging to the relationship which further maintained and strengthened the bonds.

Next stages
✓ Writing up the thesis: once the findings outlined are discussed, I will review and complete the thesis for my doctorate degree at the University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom.
✓ Publications and Dissemination through conferences, seminars and lectures.

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استكشاف ديناميات التصورات الشخصية في تحالفات مرنة:
تقرير مرحلي

خلفية البحث

وهناك أدلة في أحدث الأبحاث العلمية تشير إلى أن العلاقات الشخصية هي أساسية في بناء القدرة على التكيف، الذي يعرف بأنه القدرة على التعامل مع التغيير للحفاظ على درجة من الاستقرار الأساسية. مع وتيرة وتدفقات الهجرة المتزايدة ولاحق المناخ متزايدة من انعدام الأمن في جميع أنحاء العالم، حان الوقت لتطوير أساليب ناجعة وفعالة لفهم ديناميات العلاقات مع "الآخرين" الذين غالبا ما تكون مختلفة الاجتماعية والثقافية. وهكذا فإن الهدف الأساسي من هذا البحث هو تعميق فهم العوامل اللازمة لبناء والحفاظ على العلاقات الشخصية التي تعمل في المناطق غير المستقرة الاجتماعية والسياسية.

والهدف من هذا التقرير المرحلي

تم تصميم هذا التقرير المرحلي للمساعدة في بدء مناقشة مع المشاركين البحوث والسماح لهم للتفكير وردود الفعل على التحاليل التي أجريت حتى الآن. وتشكل هذه المرحلة الأخيرة جزءا أساسيا من البحث، والتي تم تصميمها لمصلحة من الدقة العلمية.

التعلم في السياق

لتمكين التنقيب في عمق ما يجعل الناس يقبلون بعضهم البعض والحفاظ على علاقاتهم حتى عند مواجهة الصعوبات الاجتماعية والثقافية، وقد استخدمت هذه الدراسة مقاربة الإثنوغرافية التي تركز على قصص قضية ثلاثة بيوت الضيافة:

القصة جحا وجسر الزرقاء ، إسرائيل
القصة فوزي عازار، الناصرة، إسرائيل
القصة عائلة Khouriyeh ، جفنا، الضفة الغربية

وقد تم اختيار هذه في المقام الأول، أولا لأنها أثبتت أنها مرنة قبل فترة من البحوث؛ والثانية، للمساعدة على ضمان الاختلافات من حيث الموقع الجغرافي والسياق الاجتماعي والثقافي. قصة القضية هي سلسلة مفصلة من المقابلات مع الناس الذين هم جزء من أو أصحاب المصلحة للمؤسسة الاجتماعية التي توفر نظرة مقربة من البيانات في إطار من الإدراك للشعب.

التعلم من هذه القصص الحالة سوف تحسن من فهم الأكاديمي والممارس من تعقيدات العلاقات الشخصية، فضلا عن تسليط الضوء على الممارسات على مستوى القاعدة الشعبية مبتكرة اجتماعيا يحدث في هذه المنطقة.

وفهم كيف ولماذا الناس الحفاظ على علاقاتهم على الرغم من مجموعة من الصعوبات الاجتماعية والسياسية تكون نقطة انطلاق في توفير التوجيه لإنشاء وتشغيل طويلة الأجل والتراكات والعلاقات المرنة.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تعقد سياق إسرائيل والضفة الغربية توفر خلفية نموذجية لتطوير وسيلة قوية وفعالة للدراسات المستقبلية في مرونة العلاقات الشخصية.
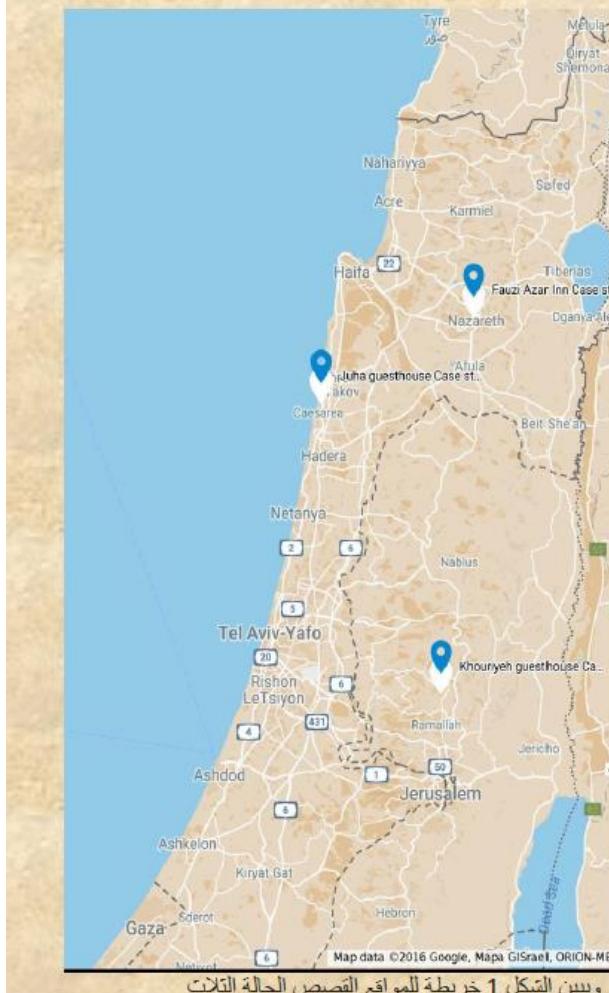
ويبين الشكل 1 خريطة للمواقع القصص الحالة الثلاث

استكشاف ديناميات التصورات الشخصية في تحالفات مرنة:
تقرير مرحلي

مواضيع من المقابلات أصحاب المصلحة الناشئ

تحليل القصص حالة ثلاثة يكشف أن هناك بعض التطابق بين صناع القرار وأصحاب المصلحة الرئيسية لما المحرك الرئيسي للعلاقات مرنة قد يكون. هناك ثلاثة من هذه السائقين.

أولا، وقد ثبت الرغبة في الحفاظ على العلاقة أن تكون حاسمة. وترتكز هذه الرغبة من قبل الدافع شقين تضم قدرا من المصلحة الذاتية جنبا إلى جنب مع وجود درجة من الفائدة لل"الآخر" الذي رعايتها من أجل العلاقة. الرغبة في الحفاظ على العلاقة يجد جذوره في التوازن بين هذين الجانبين من التحفيز.

ثانيا، وجود مساحة حيث يشعر أصحاب المصلحة أنهم قادرون على التعبير عن مشاعرهم ـ وقد وصفت باعتبارها عنصرا أساسيا لبناء علاقة ـ الإحباطات والتطلعات على حد سواء. غالبا ما يتكون هذا الفضاء البعد المادي والعاطفي تبعا للحالة

ويبين الشكل 2 طقوس من المواد الغذائية (زيت الزيتون والزعتر) مشاركة من نفس لوحات ترمز قبول الآخر جزء من الدائرة الاجتماعية.

وكان السائق الثالث وبنفس القدر من الأهمية التي تم تحديدها من خلال قصص حالة الشعور اعترف ومعترف بها داخل هذا الفضاء من قبل الطرف الآخر في العلاقة. وقد عرفت شكر وتقدير أساسا للشعور بأن البعض يستمع المرء إلى التعبير عن الاختلافات في حين أحيلت الاعتراف لشعور بأن البعض في كثير من الأحيان بذلوا جهودا كبيرة للعمل على ما هو / لاحظت وفهمها.

جلبت كل ثلاثة سائقين شعور بالانتماء إلى العلاقة التي حافظت أبعد من ذلك وعززت السندات.

ويبين الشكل 3 مثال على مساحة المحتمل للتبادل

المراحل القادمة :

-كتابة تصل الرسالة:
مرة واحدة ناقشنا النتائج المذكورة هنا، وسوف مراجعة واستكمال أطروحة للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في جامعة جلوسيسترشاير ، المملكة المتحدة.

المطبوعات والنشر من خلال المؤتمرات والندوات والمحاضرات

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Annexe Ten   The Juha case story

Episode 1: Beginnings

Often like most young Israelis who often travel around the world after their military service, Neta's dream was to have her own guesthouse. While investigating the potential of opening a guesthouse in Israel, she came across Maoz Inon's work in Nazareth. They met and discussed her idea of a guesthouse in Jisr ez Zarqa. "*He was all excited about it … really his eyes shined. Up till today, I think this is what has given me the motivation- the enthusiasm he showed.*"(Neta lines 159-160). She told me how much it meant to her then to find someone so knowledgeable about entrepreneurship in this sector to believe in her idea while everyone else seemed sceptical and dismissive: "*Jisr ez Zarqa! People are avoiding stepping into the village so talking of accommodation there it's like "are you crazy?"* (Neta Lines 163-165)

In 2012, on maternity leave, Neta spent a challenging six months in the village literally knocking on people's doors to find a business partner and a property for the guesthouse project in vain until she was introduced to Ahmad Juha. He was the only person in the village who had shown any interest, so she told him all about Maoz story with the Fauzi Azar in Nazareth. Ahmad owned a building in the middle of the village but seeking for something bigger and nearer to the beach, Neta kept looking for another place until Maoz called Neta; "*listen this guy from Jisr called me …I think you should give it a chance. This guy is serious.*" (Neta Lines 225, 228)

Ahmad was ready to give his building and not make any profit for the first two years but not to invest any money: *"I am ready to give it a chance. I'll give my building. I am ready to not make any profit in the next two years but I don't want to lose anything. I am not ready to invest or lose like actual money. So that was just the beginning, the first stage."* (Neta Lines 245-247). So Neta worked out a crowd funding campaign which offered people a night in the guesthouse and dinner in the village for 60NIS (circa £17). This not only raised 92000 NIS (circa £19500[51]) but also drew a lot of media attention. *"And the suddenly we were getting interviewed for the TV and radio and newspapers and big stories about us. It all happened really fast. It was like a good story for the news"* she said with a smile (Neta Lines 272-274).

Show a picture of the guesthouse in the village.

Episode 2: Ahmad and Neta: two different business cultures

Building the partnership meant encountering several challenges sometimes not that easy to define. One such challenge has been the difference in how Neta and Ahmad perceive their business relations as well as in how they act following their own business cultures.

At the beginning, *"It was like "ok, It will be your project"… It wasn't clear what model it was then"* Neta explained (Neta Lines 247-248). But attending the entrepreneurship workshop conducted by Maoz, got Ahmad more interested in the business- *"then [Ahmad] was a lot more into taking a real part in this*

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[51] 92000 NIS represents about 18 times the minimum salary (circa 5000 NIS) in Israel in over the 2016 period.

business" (Neta Line 258) So the logical next step for Neta was to materialize this work relationship into a formal business partnership making things clear on the terms of the partnership. Being a lawyer she wrote up a *"basic agreement that every basic partnership has.*" (Neta Lines 276) For instance, she pursued "*It included things like when we want to make some expenses we need to consult to each other and we need also both of us to approve it.*" (Neta lines 276-278) Unexpected to her, Ahmad was reluctant at the idea of signing anything. He took the document to other lawyers, kept delaying and eventually decided he didn't want to sign it. That was the first marked tension which happened between in the dyad.

Although it was difficult for Neta, she had to put things into perspective:

> *"Then I said 'ok. The cause [the vision of the project] is what is most important. I want this project to happen no matter what. I am going for it. I don't mind I put my ego aside. It's not gonna be my business. It is going to be his business. But I am going to make my vision, our vision live. So I told him "listen, I will give you the solution: you are the owner and I am the employee. But it means that I get, that we decide on a salary. And it becomes your responsibility to manage the money and to be able to pay me."*

A deal to which Ahmad agreed. Neta's discernment of what mattered to her the most allowed her to choose to put her "ego" aside and act in such a way as to transform the tension. Her compromise offered Ahmad an opportunity to pursue the relationship and this process resulted in the relationship

transformed into one which still could serve the purpose of her priorities even though it was not in the form she imagined it would be.

However, Neta was not at the end of her surprises. The money from the head start campaign had to be transferred on a joint bank account for the guesthouse so Neta asked Ahmad to sign a paper which stipulates that they will both have access and that the money will be spent only for the purpose of the project. But here again, things didn't go the way Neta was expecting. Ahmad felt insulted at Neta's request and expressed it: "*you know what I don't need this project!*" Neta's eyes opened wide as she recounted the story:

> *"We were in the front door of the bank because it was all happening very fast. I told him: "listen, you need just to sign this paper that says that this money is for the project." And he was insulted. And he said "you know what? Never mind! Let's cancel everything. I calmed him. I told him: "listen. You don't have to be offended. It's not that I don't trust you. It's just what is wise to do when so much money is concerned." I just calmly explained to him. And we smoked a cigarette [she laughed recalling the moment] together. And he said "ok. Ok. Ok" and we did it. But really took it hard and Imagine how I felt when he has such a hard time to agree to sign on this paper, like what should I think. I did feel that he is a good man (though). He does not have bad feelings." (Neta Lines 365-370)*

Note that we are not after understanding why Ahmad reacted the way he did. It could be anything ranging from past experiences of being distrusted or just having a bad day because of a headache or anything else. The point here is

to focus on how the situation was dealt with at that very moment. Neta did not have the time or resources at that particular moment to investigate Ahmad's behaviour. She engaged pragmatically while recognising that he may have felt distrusted: "*listen. You don't have to be offended. It's not that I don't trust you*." Neta showed a form of pedagogy imbued with respect of how Ahmad could have felt. Her way of speaking has been non-confrontational especially when she starts with "Listen" in a calm tone opening to discussion instead of closing the exchange abruptly. Her noting that she understood that Ahmad may have felt insulted is an important aspect of her associative positioning.

Neta's frank and yet patient attitude towards Ahmad paid back eventually. When some time later, he said to her "*this month I am going to give you less because I had this big expense…*" she was direct:

> *"I sat down with him and I told him "Listen I know that so far I behaved like it was my own business because I thought it was going to be that way. And it is still very important to me and I am still very dedicated but it was your behaviour that led us to decide that you are the owner and I am an employee. And if you want it that way you need to take responsibility. This is the salary that we decided on and you need to make it happen." He respected that. In this conversation I felt that he was very respectful of me. And he respected the fact that I was so assertive about it and he said "you are right. You are very right." (Neta Lines 429-435)*

Neta's pedagogy with Ahmad did not stop with showing him that she understood his feelings. It was grounded in generous recognition but also in

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reciprocity. He had to recognise that she had put in efforts to accept Ahmad's exigencies which she did not share at the start. And that he had to take responsibility for what he committed to – "*it was your behaviour that led us to decide that you are the owner and I am an employee*". This assertiveness combined with a willingness to maintain the agreements brought him to connect back to his responsibility. From then on, although officially Neta is an employee, Ahmad always introduced her as his business partner to people in the village as well as outside. And this has been something that Neta appreciated.

Episode 3: Genevieve: becoming a member of the Juha team

Genevieve joined the team as a volunteer in February 2014. She, at the time, was a student completing hers Masters in Peace and Conflict Management at Haifa University. Back in October 2013, she bumped into Neta on the Jisr beach while visiting the village with a university friend. "*I completely fell for the dynamic energy of this young woman and the way she was dealing as a woman as a Jew in an Arab village and as a mother of three at the time. I asked her if she would come talk about the project in my leadership and conflict class which she did. It took her a month to prepare that. She did. She presented the Juha's guesthouse project. And as we became friends I asked her to supervise my project.*" (Genevieve Lines 36-41) So they agreed and Neta became one of the supervisors of Genevieve's practicum. The Juha guesthouse encouraged its volunteers to conduct social projects which would answer to a need in the village in order to benefit the local people. So from

February to May 2014, Genevieve joined the team as a volunteer to build "The Zarqa pallet project" which consisted of building vertical gardens, picnic tables and benches for the junior-high school courtyards where these were lacking. But as the project ended and her college year ended, Genevieve continued volunteering. "*I still stayed. I sticked around to help Neta and Ahmad as a volunteer and I was commuting from Haifa to Jeser [Jisr], two or three times a week.*" (Genevieve Lines 48-50) This commitment was partly how Genevieve gradually built and earned herself a place in the Juha team.

Building the Zarqa pallet project with the help of Neta drew the two women closer. Genevieve recounted the story as she smiled with a sparkle in her eye:

> *"One of the priceless moments was when we started building those pallets, pallet gardens and we started brushing and we were literally like waiting on the other to release the sanding machine. We were really excited about doing the manual stuff.. and we were like all dirty with the dust from the polishing .. but we were like spending countless hours trying to build those pallets.. and we had A L-O-T of fun! It was really fun. That was just super fun! That's when really we became very much closer… like I felt very much closer … I just felt that "ok … it just feels good! It just feels right!"" (Genevieve Lines 101-107)*

Neta and Genevieve, while conducting the pallet project, had built a space of their own where they both reported a sense feeling a mutual support which kept both of them going during the difficult times they had at work. They would "*escape for lunch to a nice little café*" where they could rest "*away from the Jisr balagan [the mess]*".

Going back to our world it is important to understand this differentiation. No matter how much one may like the residents of Jisr, the area is not an easy place to fit in for someone who was not born there. The word "culture" may be debatable but there is a kind of Jisr culture where people are quite closed.

That Neta helped her doing the job while the members of Ahmad's family would mostly just watch, was particularly valued by Genevieve who underlined her appreciation towards Neta. The way she told the experience had more to do with the feeling of belonging to a team rather than just the utilitarian perception of getting a help to do the job. The social meaning she attributed to those "priceless moments" goes beyond the materiality of getting the job done. Enjoying the experience had touched her feelings - "I felt very much closer." And sharing an emotional space made their relationship become more personal.

In fact, as the months went by, Genevieve's role in supporting both Ahmad and Neta in putting the Juha project vision into action turned out to be instrumental and crucial. After this first project was completed, Genevieve being a woman of action started another one with helping a group of the junior high school students with their spoken English in leadership-building workshops she held at the Galleria. The Galleria is a large room part of Ahmad's home. It used to be one of Ahmad's sons' bedroom and a sort of storage area which on agreement with Ahmad and his wife, Genevieve was gradually turning into a workshop.

Annexe Eleven   Khouriyeh case story

Episode 1: Beginnings

For the Khouriyeh family, opening a guesthouse in Jifna was more of a survival strategy than just a business opportunity. Several reasons –macro-political, socio-economic and personal- pushed the family to open a guesthouse in a conflict zone.

Both husband and wife, Issa and Rawda used to have well-paid jobs at the Moravian Star Mountain rehabilitation centre but in the year 2000, during the second intifada, things changed. Rawda was the general director of the Moravian church school for disabled project in Palestine and the couple used to live in the compound with their two children. Issa was a part-time subcontractor and part-time working as infrastructure manager at the compound. "*During the war, the 2nd intifada started it was really hard to go to Israeli side*"Issa explained (Issa, Lines). Not going there meant that he could not develop his contracting business as he used to have contracts from Israeli companies.

> *"After the Oslo agreements when they allowed Arafat to come to West Bank, it was in 1994… there was hope… I had built my company years before and I was working with Israeli company…We thought now Arafat came and this khalass [over] it will be real peace. And I was working with this Israeli company and he had his company and I had my company and we were going to grow together as partners probably and share ideas and contracts – him in Israel and me in the west bank –*

and so on… but… Ptchht [he shows the collapse of all the aspirations with his hands falling back heavily and the table]". (Issa lines 30-39)

"And our thinking was that we could do something together but then it was not easy… we cannot work in Israel and they cannot work with us and as we said here with the Palestinain authority – if you are big you can continue big but if you are small, then nobody just for support will give you the work…because if you want to build a big project you need a big company to do this, so big fish eat the small fish. So our business collapsed and we stopped. Not just us. many people were in the same situation. May people came from America – because "oh the peace process come, then we have our state, we have our freedom we want to invest our business here !!" then most of them – bankruptcy and go back ! [she snapped her fingers to point to how quick it all went]." (Rawda, lines 140-151)

"But other people and us- we went through bankruptcy… So you dream, you have some vision, you want to develop, you dream for you for your future for your children and then you find everything what you planned collapsing …So you have to adapt … as I told you, you have to be creative to live. Nobody will tell you… like in other country there is the law, if you don't have work then you have a pocket money [unemployment benefit] then you are fine. But here no!" (Rawda, lines 158-167)

"but the problem here in this country there is no chance to … you cannot plan for the future and you cannot succeed … Because it is too uncertain … you cannot have a long term vision" (Issa lines 119-122)

The macro-political situation had impacted their lives deeply. Living at the compound became more and more difficult and the family felt isolated. "In the compound the foreigners they go home and the [disabled] children they go home and we had just a small circle they come the teacher in the school and they have daily and then all go back home. So we as family in the compound we were alone. So all the Palestinian in prison and we as the family prisoned in prison." (Rawda lines 50-60) Beisdes, it was difficult to visit their families in Taybeh. Movement was highly restricted during the war.

"And we used to each weekend to go to Taybeh to our home town, the children play with their cousins, I see my family and Issa sees his family… and then it was not easy to go there. it was blocked… And even it was not easy to go to Ramallah. It was blocked there were tanks. It's only 5 km to Ramallah and you have to change two taxi and walk two km. and you go through the checkpint and it's hard and all this … we are in a prison. And then one day our children they said 'oh but what are we going to do here – nice compound playground, we have to talk to the stone and play with the sand?'" (Rawda, lines 35-44)

"From 1998 till the second intifada… it was hard and we cannot go like this and I decided to move to the village here. Because my children

wanted to be with people because in the compound we were alone….

The second intifada it was hard for us… " (Rawda, lines 20-24).

At the same time, Rawda lucidly pointed out to the personal reasons which pushed her to resign from her job. She explained that not being able to give time to her children as much as she wanted because her work took all of her attention and energy was a problem to her.

"And I'm always come home tired and the children want to talk to me and I say I cannot talk to you, I had enough. Then I was thinking that this is not good because money is not everything. Because … We bring the money not the money bring us. and anyway, I need my people and I need my children…" (Rawda lines 72-75)

"There were many reasons. The children first but also with the work. I feel it was enough. I had to follow the reports, the meetings. It was too much for me. If I couldn't give my 100% commitment then I have to leave. And also a new staff in Germany was making problems for all the staff." (Rawda, Lines 160-162)

Leaving her job was not a simple and easy decision for Rawda but she did for the sake of what she valued, that is, her family.

"So then I decided to end my work and I resigned. It was not easy because 23 years to build a place and when I start to work at the Moravian Star Mountain rehabilitation centre… it was just 10 disabled boarding section and 10 volunteers, and two teachers. I build it stone

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by stone [she makes the gesture to show me how] Slowly slowly. And when finished we had six sections, Now we have the school, the community and the agriculture section, the maintenance section [she smiles proudly] It was six sections. I started with 10 disabled and when I left it was 300 disable with 33 staff. We have the school and the classes also in the village… I feel proud from this. but it was hard also for me to just… it was my home also for me… my second home. Even it was my first home. And I lived in the compound for ten years. Because when I was the director I had to live there. so we lived with the family. It was part of my life. It was not easy to be away from this like this you know….” (Rawda lines 81-92)

Episode 2: A shared vision and an opportunity (buying the house)

The idea of opening a guesthouse had always been on the back of Rawda's mind. She travelled to Europe through her job and came to learn about this tourism business which she found interesting at the time. The opportunity to buy the house came around the same time they moved to Jifna. The owners couldn't finish the building and had put it for sale.

"And even for us never ever ever we had ever imagined that we would have such a big house. And I say it is a dream. And we lived nearby. We saw people come to buy the house. And then nobody came to buy it. We asked the neighbour who was a relative to them… The price was high and then the price went down down down. It was about 300 000

dollars and then it was down to 160 000 dollars.. [she smiles, then giggles almost] But we don't have the money. This was a real adventure and a big risk. So we took a big loan from the bank and then we buy the house. And then we renew it inside like this and then two years I rented and then I lived in my house." (Rawda, Lines 122-129)

They decided to take a loan which they repaid with their pensions and bought the house. "*So when we finished the work, I take my pension and Issa as well, we take all our pension and all Our pension go to the loan. So they take all our money and the house is for us, you know…*" she explained diligently (Rawda, Lines 148-149) "*So thank God, we finished the loan. We have the house, we don't have job we don't have money!*" she laughed. (Rawda, Lines 151-152)

The enterprise of opening a guesthouse in the middle of the West bank just after the second intifada was a risky take but Rawda felt up to the challenge now that she was available as a mother for children having left her time-consuming job.

"so then I had the idea… so now that I was relaxed and I feel empowered. I said 'so what do we have to do?' and then we discussed as family together and we said ok we have a big house and we can make a Bed and breakfast. There is mission and vision behind that also. There is a need. As palestianian living here in Palestine, we like also to fight for our freedom and our Peace but also we don't like to fight with weapons but we like to fight with our minds." (Rawda, Lines 189-194)

Both husband and wife, however, shared the same vision of why they wanted that. Besides the fact that the house was big enough to be used as a guesthouse, they had identified a need for bringing foreign people to the West Bank such that they can have a lived experience of Palestine instead of a media reported one.

"And always in the media it is so negative. The people outside they think that we are terrorists because of bomb here or problem there and conflict…This is not the reality. The image [in the media] is that Israel only is the victim. But in reality we are the victim. We like to change this image towards us that we are as terrorists. And for this we have to show… we have to fight with our mind. For that we liked to open our guesthouse." (Rawda, Lines 207-211)

"We want to have foreign people and help them explore Palestine through our eyes. Because the media… Israeli media, is totally different what is going on in the West bank. Because nobody knows about problems: the blocked roads, about water problem, about checkpoints… our daily life. For that the aim to come to see to explore in Palestinian eyes" (Issa, Lines 8-12)

I asked if they both shared the same vision and Issa replied: "*yes ! This is the vision we had to open our guesthouse, our family business, then really that was a vision to let people know about problem as Palestinians. Then they can go back home and bring a real message about what they saw.*" (Issa, Lines 14-16)

Although the vision was shared in the couple and the family, the local community had a different approach. Before opening the guesthouse, Rawda and Issa consulted their neighbours and told them what they wanted to do to avoid any confusion when people will see foreigners coming in and out of the Khouriyeh's house.

> *"So I was thinking about it. Because we are originally from Taybeh not from this village. We were thinking that, me and my husband, even the children, that if people start to come, then people will think 'oh what is going on inside this house' then it will be question mark. So we thought we will discuss with them. so on the right side they are muslims and on the other side they are Christian, we have no problem we all live together. We have good contact with all. So we just discussed with them. we went to their houses and we talked with them. 'we want to open our house and this and that'. And both as muslims and Christians, I was astonished, both of them they said: 'Oh !!! you will bring strangers to your home?' So this is from the beginning making the impression that is negative. I was thinking: 'what is this?!'" (Rawda, Lines 212-220)*

The neighbours were more concerned about the breaking of the social norms than looking at the bigger picture the couple were aiming at. This however surprising to Rawda, did not discourage her from pursuing the project.

> *"I was in good contact with the coordinator of the Quakers' meeting house in Ramallah. Sometimes I go to the worship there on Sunday. I like this worship -We sit in circle and just we pray each to with God*

direct. And I like this. And then when we finish we meet with each other and there are many international. And we drink coffee and tea and we talk and discuss.

So one Sunday, there was me and Issa, so we told them, both we discussed the issue. We said we have a house and we would like to do like this. and that I stopped my work and so on. And she liked the idea. And their was another American lady she married a Palestinian in Ramallah. So both of them they said ok we come to see and try to support and help you. so they came to visit us in the home and stayed one day here. We had lunch together and see the rooms and make round and all this… And then we talked. They have a good perspective coming from outside. They said:' this is a good place it is quiet and it is not far from the city. It is good- there is a swimming pool and there are restaurants. It is a historical site and it is good for tourism but also for the Palestinian here. Most of the Palestinian they like to come from Ramallah – less then 10 km you are in the quiet. So people like to come here. So we said ok we will start. So we took the decision to start."

I said: 'ok I don't care what the neighbours think or say' because in the end I have to decide to do this project so. So we did. Then thank God we had the first visit from the Quakers in august 2009. So this august will be 6 years. And then the first group was October 2009 also from the British Quakers. From then tll now, each October we have a group from the Quakers. They come 14 people. They come to help the people near the separation wall where they have their olive trees. So if they are near

the settlements we cannot go to pick alone , so they accompany them. So we got used to get these groups and they are really very good with us."

The support from her social network, but the resolve and determination of the family helped them in launching their purposeful business.

Episode 3: Volatility of the socio-political context

Operating a guesthouse in the centre of the West bank is not a smooth running business. Parts area as discussed in chapter four being prone to unpredictable outbursts of violence makes the whole of the West bank perceived as unsafe to an outsider. But more subtly perhaps are the living conditions the people undergo. In terms of the political geography, Jifna is under Area A. Palestinians from Area A cannot travel to other areas within the West Bank without crossing Israeli checkpoints and that in spite of Palestinian civil and security governance. Israeli military has de facto final authority. The main resources such as water, electricity and gas are ultimately under Israeli control. And given the conflictual relationship between the Palestinian authority and the Israeli government, the living situation for the people on the ground especially during outbursts becomes critically difficult.

"And we thought 'this is a good way that international people can come from all over the world and they can meet with us, eat with us and stay with us. And then we can talk and discuss. At least if they don't want to talk politics, they can just talk about our daily life and about our story and about our happiness and sadness. And about our freedom of

movement – that we cannot travel to Tel Aviv we cannot go to Jerusalem. The water issues we have. You see on our roofs there are black tanks because we have to keep water for the next week. If you go further 2km, you can see in the settlement there is green. In this case we feel that this is injustice. They have all the water and it's our water and we have to buy it and it is controlled like this. So you came from everywhere, you come from Jerusalem and from Tel Aviv. And for us we have to go to Amman if we want to travel. So everything in the daily life, it is not easy…" (Rawda, Lines 194-206)

"We are in a prison here" later Rawda would tell me, "we cannot move about freely, our lives are controlled: we have water access only once a week and that can be cut off anytime without any reason. Gas and electricity is just so very expensive. They've taken control over that as well. And we pay almost double the price (Need to check the exactitude of this) now. Look, it's cold and we have heaters but we just can't afford to put the heating on." (Informal discussions with Rawda, November 2014)

Tourists tend to cancel their bookings as soon as there is a problem reported in the Middle East, even if it is not in Israel or the West bank. Because of such unpredictability, their tourism business cannot be managed using conventional tools of management such as forecasts and investments over long term periods. Saving for insuring difficult times becomes a must.

> "*You know our guest numbers have gone back down because of what is happening in the Milddle East. Now less people want to come. This is a problem too.*" (Rawda, Lines 317-318)

Both Rawda and Issa are quite lucid and pragmatic and have no problem explaining their willingness to work with the Israeli.

> "*We tell the people just come and see. How you were brave to come to Israel, come here as well come to Palestine and see both sides. We don't say come to Palestine and forget Israel. We accept Israel as a state. We accept them, this is 1967 for our border… we want to live together we want peace we want our movements freed. This is our home and this is our mission.*" (Rawda, Lines 319-322)

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