WHEN PROCESSES COLLIDE
Leadership, Legitimacy and Liberation in Palestine

Pippa Barnes
When Processes Collide:
Leadership, Legitimacy and Liberation in Palestine

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Umeå 2019
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Abstract

Palestinian national movement leadership has long been intertwined with the context of the national movement processes – liberation, peace and state building. Over time, as these processes have not come to fruition, the numerous leadership groups have had to negotiate their relationships with these processes as both the groups and processes increasingly overlap, creating significant observable points of tension within Palestinian politics. There are currently multiple levels of leadership across the national movement: two representative governing institutions – the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Palestinian Authority; two dominant political movements – Fatah and Hamas; and numerous popular resistance initiatives such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement coalition that has different levels of endorsement (or lack of) by the other leaderships. This thesis seeks to map the Palestinian national liberation movement leadership, examining the inter-relations between the multiple leadership groups and internal (i.e. intra-Palestinian) legitimacies. Examining the internal legitimacies of the Palestinian leaderships results in an expansion of how internal legitimacy can be conceptualised. For the historical period (1958-2008) analysed, I found revolutionary, representative, oppositional, institutional, democratic and moral legitimacy types within the Palestinian case. Furthermore, these were all attributed to respective national movement processes. Analysing the recent period (2016-2017) requires the use of a relational approach to further develop understandings of legitimacy. This approach transforms legitimacy into a process of (de)legitimisation, which interacts with the national movement processes and helps us capture and analyse the complexities of the Palestinian case – that of concurrent, multiple and contending perspectives. I found the continuation of the liberation and state building processes as simultaneous bases of legitimisation to be a critical point of tension within the tandem legitimisation-delegitimisation process. Engaging a relational approach demonstrated the need for ongoing leadership reconstruction. I conclude that, in order to negotiate the interactions and contestations between the multiple and dynamic processes that underlie legitimacy, leaderships face an ultimatum of 'reconstruct or delegitimise'. Where Palestinian leadership groups have stagnated and not engaged with a process of reconstruction, we see processes of delegitimisation arising that can explain the current leadership complexities within the Palestinian national movement.

Key words
Leadership, legitimacy, legitimisation, relational, Palestine, liberation, national movement, peace process, state building
I wish to begin by thanking, once again, the person who started me on this journey: Nigel Parsons. Your teaching has inspired countless students and sparked my journey with Palestine. I want to thank all of those I have met over my numerous trips to Palestine, without whom this research would not be possible. I can never repay the immense hospitality of the Palestinian community, especially those interviewed who shared their time, experiences and opinions with me. My journey with Palestine has now taken me to Sweden and I would like to thank Anna Jarstad for initially recruiting me. I cannot express how grateful I am to my supervisors Patrik Johansson and Malin E. Wimelius. You trusted me to go about this my own way and guided me when needed. Your feedback has always been exceptionally thoughtful, constructive and insightful and I can only apologise for the amount of pages you have had to read. Thank you to all those who commented on my work, especially Isabell Schierenbeck, Gino Sahovic and Katarina Eckeberg. I also want to thank all those at the political science department who helped me transition into both Swedish and PhD life. Special thanks to the friendships of Irina Mancheva, Elsa Reimerson, Katarina Hansson-Forman and Magda Cardenas. Of course the person who has immeasurably shaped my life here is min bästa kombo, Matilda Miljand. You, your whole family and friend group welcomed me and I honestly could not have done any of this without you (and our over-eating of tårta). I also want to thank all my friends from home who supported from afar. I don’t think there has been a day without chatting to any of you across the time (and temperature) difference and our enduring friendships mean the world to me. Though the person who has truly endured is my proofreader-in-chief and constant visitor: my mum, Jane Brooker. At this point I think you have earned an honourary PhD. As Abba’s biggest fan you naturally embraced my move to Sweden, but the trips, constant care packages and cat photos have meant a lot. And thank you to my brother, Andy Barnes, for supplementing the latter. Finally, the best thing I take away from Umeå – l’italiano. I consider myself lucky to have one home in Europe; Michele, I want to thank you for building one with me in Stockholm and thank the Cicchetti family for giving me a second, slightly sunnier, southern one. Grazie mille alla famiglia Cicchetti. I also want to acknowledge the wonderful Swedish system that makes these PhD positions a privilege.

Pippa Barnes
Stockholm, October 2019
## Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions</td>
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<td>BNC</td>
<td>BDS National Committee</td>
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<td>CLT</td>
<td>Complex leadership theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFLP</td>
<td>Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>Executive Committee (PLO)</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>oPt</td>
<td>Occupied Palestinian Territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Palestinian Authority (formerly Palestinian National Authority – PNA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACBI</td>
<td>Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFLP</td>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLC</td>
<td>Palestinian Legislative Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>Palestine Liberation Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>Palestinian National Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNGO</td>
<td>Palestine Non-governmental Organisation Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLT</td>
<td>Relational leadership theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNLU</td>
<td>Unified National Leadership of the Uprising</td>
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1. Introduction

Freeing themselves from the crisis requires new thinking by the Palestinians about all of the options available to them in their internal affairs and in their relations with Israel, the West, and the Arab world. As things currently stand, it is hard to envision the various factions and currents in the Palestinian national movement taking a consensual and logical step in this direction, and therefore it is improbable that it can extricate itself from the crisis.

(Ghanem, 2010, p. 183)

Palestine presents a national liberation movement that is central to one of the world’s longest ongoing conflicts. Leadership is a recurring issue for the Palestinian national movement and it is safe to assume that leadership is a central element to any future resolution. There are currently multiple levels of leadership across the national movement: two representative governing institutions – the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Palestinian Authority; two dominant political movements – Fatah and Hamas; and numerous popular resistance initiatives such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement coalition that has different levels of endorsement (or lack of) by the other leaderships. Each of these has different historical and ongoing relations with what I will refer to here as the three national movement processes – the liberation process, the peace process and the state building process – and thus a different, and potentially competing, basis underlying claims of leadership and legitimacy. As a consequence, it has been posited that there is a leadership legitimacy crisis within Palestinian politics, arguably one that has been developing for quite some time. Elgindy (2015, p. 135) states that while there is an awareness of the broader crises within Palestinian society, there is a lack of practical understanding by actors of the “seriousness or implications of the far more fundamental crisis of legitimacy that undergirds them all.” Furthermore, he argues that there are wide political and social transformations at play that see the Palestinians sitting at an intersection with the failure of the peace process. Elgindy (2015, p. 134) asserts that “how Palestinians and leaders respond to these challenges in the coming months and years will have a profound impact on the future of the Palestinian national movement as a whole, as well as on the prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace...”

Although much has been written on Palestine, on individual leaders, organisations and Palestinian politics, there is a lack of analysis examining the highly complex contemporary relations amongst the multiple leadership groups. I argue that legitimacy is a critical element for advancing our understandings of
such relations and of Palestinian leadership. However, current conceptualisations of legitimacy are not reflective of the Palestinian leadership landscape and there remains a disconnect between theoretical approaches to leadership and analysis of the Palestinian national movement. Palestinian leadership may have been studied countless times before, but Palestinian leadership has not been analysed in regards to the relations underlying the process of seeking legitimacy. Given the dominance of Arafat and Fatah, long periods have lent themselves to traditional leadership analysis focusing on traits and hierarchical organisational structures. Engaging with traditional approaches to legitimacy, where it is seen as a property that rests solely (or not) with a particular leadership, does not, however, allow comprehension of the relationships currently at play in the Palestinian case. They cannot provide us with a means of analysing the often articulated, but seldom theorised, issues with the Palestinian national movement leadership. In other words, the Palestinian national movement has often featured leadership that has not been captured within this approach, such as that of the distributed grassroots leadership of the initial stages of the first intifada and the current Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

Focus on the internal leadership dynamics within the Palestinian national movement is therefore much needed and it is increasingly being perceived as a critical issue: “Internally, the Palestinian national movement has reached a stage of internecine struggle and internal collapse ... paralyzed the Palestinian political system and created an internal polarization which is dissolving the national movement from the inside” (Ghanem, 2010, p. 18). Furthermore, leadership has been intertwined with the context of the national movement processes – liberation, peace and state building. Over time, as these processes have not come to fruition, the numerous leadership groups have had to negotiate their relationships with these processes as both the groups and processes increasingly overlap, creating significant observable points of tension within Palestinian politics. Therefore, I propose that there are strong intersections between the three elements: leadership, legitimacy, and the national movement processes. However, as already indicated, the existing ways of conceptualising leadership legitimacy do not account for the relational impacts of these processual elements. The specific recent dynamics and multi-directional effects of interactions within these networks have yet to be analysed. It is within these relations that legitimacy must also be included as a process undergoing reconstruction. In order to advance understandings of the current intricacies of Palestinian leadership, it is consequently necessary to develop a new approach to legitimacy in response to the changed (and still changing) Palestinian political context. Steps have begun to be taken, especially through the work of Möller and Schierenbeck (2014), but there is more work needed to reconstruct the concept of legitimacy outside of its current long-standing limitations.
In the following sections, I provide a short overview of the complex Palestinian leadership landscape and problematise dominant approaches to leadership and legitimacy in order to further underpin the relevance of the research problem around which this thesis revolves; namely how the complex relationships between the various Palestinian leadership groups can be described and analysed, and how leadership legitimacy can be approached in constructive ways in order to enhance such analysis.

1.1. The Complex Palestinian Leadership Landscape

The political movement for the freedom of Palestine from occupation has been active since the early 20th century. Popular resistance has been a major part of the movement throughout the entire period. At the same time, the face of Palestinian leadership has changed greatly during the 20th century. Following the British Mandate period (1923-1948) different groups and organisations have been claiming to be representatives of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian national movement. Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) emerged separately during the early stages of the liberation movement – 1958 and 1964 respectively. Where they initially held different approaches to Palestinian independence, Yasir Arafat quickly became the dominant figure in both and oversaw the merging of leadership between the two groups. The formation of Hamas followed in 1987 as the seeds of the peace process were being planted by Arafat’s Fatah faction who were still in exile. Hamas did not initially present a direct challenge to the increasingly institutionalised power of Fatah or how it lay claim to legitimacy. However, this was to change with the creation of the Palestinian Authority in 1994 as a result of the Oslo peace process; with the introduction of an internal governing institution came the introduction of electoral-based mandates for political movements built around liberation, not state building.

The Oslo peace process of the 1990s and the negotiations between the Israeli state and Palestine Liberation Organisation were a key period, as PLO was accepted as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in the negotiations. The process resulted in several agreements over administration and mutual recognition between the parties in conflict. The Palestinian Authority (PA) was established to provide a form of self-government for both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, this has been limited to specific areas and the planned shift to complete PA governance was never realised. The end effect was that the territorial contiguity of the Palestinian territories continued to decrease through the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements. As satisfaction with both Oslo and the functioning of the formal Palestinian leadership decreased within the Palestinian
population, there was a rejuvenation of grassroots movements to oppose not only Israel, but the formal Palestinian leadership as well. The once diminished popular resistance has re-emerged in an increasingly challenging role for the formal leadership bodies. It has since then often been stated that there are two occupations – that of Israel and that of the PA (Munayyer, 2018).

With 25 years passing since Oslo, the different channels of leadership have increasingly complex relationships with each other through numerous official and unofficial networks. To illustrate: Fatah, the PA and the PLO are all individual organisations. However, Fatah is the dominant party in both the PA and the PLO, with the leader of Fatah continuously ruling as the head of both. Fatah also has a division working with popular resistance. In recent times, the PA has suppressed certain popular resistance from the Palestinian population. The Palestinian security forces take their orders from the President of the PA, who is also leader of Fatah. So any suppression does not come directly from the wider PA or Fatah organisations, but it does come from the leader of both. Similarly, the PLO has made certain statements supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement; the PA does not support the full boycott of the state of Israel; and Fatah has included BDS strategy in its congresses and has members within the core BDS leadership. There exists an increasing amount of discord within the national liberation movement, regardless of periodic reconciliation or unity government agreements.

Moreover, while leadership groups engaged in the formal political governance systems receive a lot of attention, the interactions with leadership groups who operate with informal authority have not been studied to the same extent. The sporadic demonstrations in Jerusalem during 2017 were driven by the civilian population and show an increasing need to look beyond singular sources of leadership operating in governing institutions. The resistance occurring there is not formally organised and does not align with one leadership group. Indeed, the Palestinian Authority (PA) often struggles to contain the protests and instead posthumously (along with others) lays claim to any meaningful resistance. There is perceived competition within the national liberation movement, while it is not uncommon for politically active figures to belong to multiple of these at times competing and contradictory groups. We can see that the interactions between the leadership groups and their differing relations to the ongoing national movement processes is presenting as an internal issue for the Palestinian national movement. This has resulted in questions of legitimacy being impossible to examine in an isolated context.

The Palestinian leadership groups themselves can be seen struggling to articulate coherent views surrounding the process of seeking legitimacy in light of the complex web of relations. This has important implications for the development
and management of the Palestinian national liberation movement – both internally and for the external actors who seek to influence the direction of Palestinian politics and legitimacy. There has been a blurring of boundaries between the popular resistance, the political parties, and the governing/liberation institutions, as illustrated by Brown (2003, p. 12), who writes that:

Palestinian political life is characterized by overlapping institutions, confused chains of command, and a multiplicity of authorities. Indeed, Palestinians frequently complain, with considerable justification, that this situation is more than a historical accident; it is a strategy by the leadership to maximize maneuverability. The complicated and ambiguous set of institutions is not simply a political strategy, however; it is also a product of the Palestinian political experience over the past several decades.

The breakdown of these boundaries has not lent itself to a more cohesive leadership of the national movement. Instead it is reflective of a critical tension between liberation and state building. In addition, the complexity of the issues is increased due to the fact that there are multiple processes in the core of the national liberation movement. After decades of incomplete liberation, peace, and state building processes it can be argued that any associated legitimacy remains only partial. The leadership groups have become increasingly interlinked, meaning that relative sources of legitimacy have also become interlinked.

Palestine sees a national movement that has engaged with, but not resolved, liberation, peace and state building processes. Additionally, the movement ‘leadership’ is spread across numerous actors who emerged in disparate conditions to operate at different levels, sometimes competing and sometimes overlapping. These complications illustrate that leadership legitimacy is unlikely to be as clear cut as the existing conceptualisations. But the key is in asking how we move beyond this, so that we are able to assess and understand legitimacy within this context in order to better comprehend the recent period of Palestinian leadership.

1.2. Studying Leadership and Legitimacy

Leadership has primarily been studied as a structure or individual status and this has been echoed in the concept of legitimacy, whereby it is viewed as a state or property that is either present or not (e.g. the seminal texts of Burns (1978) and Weber (1947)). Existing analysis of political leadership legitimacy only goes as
far as questioning different types that may be present – and even this is limited in number. What if a leadership group does not align with the existing options of: Weberian, democratic, or the cover-all ‘external’ and ‘internal’ forms. Furthermore, given that leadership groups cannot be assumed to be homogeneous, what if there are multiple legitimacies engaged with? Existing approaches to leadership legitimacy leave us with limited typologies that do not capture the multifaceted nature of Palestinian national movement leadership, or other similar ones, and thus do not provide sufficient means for analysing the recent period. To identify presences or absences of legitimacy does not speak to the potential processes underlying such; without understanding the interactions of processes affecting leadership legitimacy we cannot address the issues at hand. Therefore, re-evaluating how legitimacy is conceptualised is essential to developing new understandings of Palestinian leadership.

Möller and Schierenbeck (2014) have engaged a constructivist approach to leadership and introduced ‘relational’ as one dimension of leadership to examine in cases such as Palestine transitioning towards democratic states. Their work was able to expand the explanations of Arafat’s tenure during the shift towards democratic state building and has paved the way to expand further into a relational approach that goes beyond being one elemental part of leadership. I believe that leaning more fully into a relational approach could help us reconstruct how we conceive of leadership and the concept of legitimacy that may then provide a means of explaining the current complexities that lie outside the scope of traditional approaches. Where Möller and Schierenbeck (2014) relied upon the existing conceptualisations of legitimacy for analysing transitional leadership, understandings of legitimacy (and the opening up of such) have not yet been fully explored within relational leadership. I propose that a means of moving beyond conceiving legitimacy in the existing typologies is to examine it as a process of legitimisation. This opens the focus of the analysis to what is occurring within that process in a way that is not limited by existing conceptualisations or labels. In order to reconstruct, first we must deconstruct if we are to develop understandings of legitimacy that allow us to capture and examine the Palestinian leadership complexities.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to map the Palestinian national liberation movement leadership, examining the inter-relations between the multiple leadership groups and internal legitimacies. For years Palestinians have expressed to me how deeply complicated is the nature of the leadership within the occupied territories – an issue that has attracted attention
from the academic community as well, as seen in the body of previous research on Palestinian leadership. In-depth knowledge about networks of relations amongst the numerous groups claiming leadership is needed. For this purpose, there is also a need for theoretical advancements in form of a reframing of understanding of legitimacy as a necessary component of explaining the complex relations. I therefore engage in a concurrent process of building the empirical material and developing the analytical means of conceptualising leadership legitimacy, seeking a symbiotic relationship between these two elements. In line with this I raise two questions to be addressed within the research:

**Q.1 Within the various Palestinian leadership groups what are the bases of:**

a) legitimacy during key historic foundational periods?

b) legitimisation during the 2016-2017 period?

**Q.2 How can a relational approach to legitimacy deepen our understandings of recent Palestinian leadership?**

For the first research question I will initially use the national liberation, peace, and state building processes as structuring points to align with the approaches in Palestinian literature. Any new types of legitimacy can then be linked to the processes with which they are related upon their emergence. In addition, despite the processes starting at distinct periods, arguably all three remain incomplete. So whilst originally the processes may be used to provide chronological clarity for examining Palestinian leadership and legitimacy, their unfulfilled nature holds analytical importance for the examination of the recent processes of legitimisation; the analysis drawn out in the first part of the research question is a necessary step for addressing the second part. It is in the recent 2016-2017 period that the relational approach is invoked in order to progress the analysis of these complex interactions as we switch to examining the open process of legitimisation. Invoking relationality, we are able to understand legitimisation alongside the ongoing national movement processes that contribute to the social order. In this sense, the processes are another angle by which to examine the concept of legitimacy and not the focus in themselves, as has been seen in other studies.
1.4. Scope

Examining Palestinian national movement leadership is open to a multitude of approaches and foci and therefore needs limiting. Høigilt explains the rationale for centring analysis within Palestine as “it is often overlooked in favour of a high politics perspective, and because the political culture of the Palestinian elite will continue to pose a problem for social and political development in the event of a future Palestinian liberation or self-determination” (2016, p. 470). This thesis does not focus explicitly on the role of Israel and the occupation, however it is forever the elephant in the room when examining the internal dynamics of Palestinian politics and should not be dismissed. Israel plays an undeniable role in Palestinian politics through the ongoing occupation, economic ties (both agreed upon and imposed), and security arrangements (also dually permitted and imposed). The Oslo peace process cemented the role and authority of Israel within the Palestinian territories in the linkages with the Palestinian Authority. Because of this, Israel equally plays a role in perceptions of legitimacy for the Palestinian leadership bodies as they negotiate these arrangements.

The ‘why’ of examining Palestinian leadership without including Israel within the scope is further captured by Marwan Barghouti (2012, pp. 7-8), imprisoned Palestinian leadership figure:

Over the past few years Israel’s greatest advantage and the thrust of its assault have centered around the rift within the Palestinian movement and the weakness of the disunited Palestinian leadership. . . The most difficult task that we face today is that of creating a unified leadership and strategy binding on all, from which no political or military decisions will depart, and within whose framework no single group or party has a monopoly on the decision-making process.

There are additional important external factors at play, such as the role of the United States; and Arab disunity, whose impact cannot be discredited but which falls outside the scope of the research. Ghanem (2010, p. 172) details a potential list of contributing factors, both historical and ongoing:

This situation is the result of diverse factors and causes, including the internal state of the Palestinian national movement, the conflict among various factions, Arafat’s leadership style, the antagonism displayed by some Arab states and regimes, and, above all, Israeli policy, which has sought to torpedo the Palestinians’ ability to function as a national group.
I focus on the first of these two factors: the internal state of the movement and the conflicts present within.

There is an abundance of work on each of the established formal leadership organisations. Therefore, this work does not seek to reinvent the wheel on each of these groups. Nor can this work provide the depth on the organisations that is permitted with a narrow focus. Instead, this work expands the focus to three key leadership levels that emerge from the selected leadership groups – the national institutional level, political parties, and the level of informal leadership. These are the levels represented by the selected key actors of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Palestinian Authority, Fatah and Hamas, and the BDS movement. These actors represent critical elements of the Palestinian national movement: liberation organisations, administrative governing, traditional party politics, armed resistance, and nonviolent popular resistance. Where the focus may initially seem far-reaching, the work narrows in on the overlap and relationships between these groups. It is the points of intersection of the leadership groups that lie in focus. The concept of legitimacy is used as a tool for exploring the web of Palestinian leadership channels in an attempt to provide a more concrete analysis of often unarticulated relations.

My research does not aim to prescribe a leadership programme for the Palestinians. As the quotation at the beginning of this chapter begins, “freeing themselves”, this project places strong importance on Palestinian ownership. However, enabling a deeper understanding of the current processes and tensions at play in the leaderships of the Palestinian national movement is an important contribution in itself. My research will not analyse all factors pertaining to a national liberation movement, but rather delve into the interactions of leadership within the Palestinian context. This research will contribute in a number of areas: firstly, the research will examine how different forms of legitimacy were initially perceived amongst the key leadership groups and the basis of these vis-à-vis the national movement processes; secondly, it will fill an empirical gap concerning how the BDS movement operates both within the Palestinian territories and how it perceives leadership – critical for examining it as a form of political leadership alongside the other groups. Following on, recent processes of legitimisation within the Palestinian national liberation movement are examined contributing empirical material on self-perceptions and, perhaps more crucially, inter-relational legitimacy; and finally, the research seeks to deepen understandings of the role of relational processes across multiple leaderships within the Palestinian national movement in order to piece the complexities back together and open the space for future dialogues on Palestinian leadership.
1.5. The Approach

Whilst the primary objective of this research is empirical, there must be a back-and-forth between the empirical and theoretical in order to capture and analyse the empirics in a way that is both meaningful to the Palestinian case and beyond it. There must be a secondary theoretical development alongside the Palestinian case where shortcomings in leadership approaches are incurred. Movement between the theoretical and research observations is key to the development of both as “theoretical questions help to deduce critical areas of inquiry, and detailed field research of an inductive nature allows us to investigate concrete dynamics” (Lund, 2014, p. 231). This iterative approach is reflected in the structure of this thesis, as it is an iterative approach that will be critical to being able to develop a nuanced understanding of the Palestinian national movement leadership. In this section I will provide a brief outline of why there is a need to develop leadership theory and how a relational approach could be key in doing so for this research.

I believe the iterative approach is especially important for research focusing on Palestine as it has been asserted that whilst Palestinian society is one of the most researched societies, it has “remained so poor in the theoretical treatment of its subject” (Tamari, 1994). There is a need to develop the theoretical analysis alongside that of the empirical in order to address this issue. Additionally, Qumsiyeh (2015, p. 92) has lamented of the Palestinian case that:

Very little research has been conducted on these [grassroots] movements compared with the wealth of publications on the political factions; in-depth empirical analysis would be required to scrutinise the financial and political ties between political and civil society mobilisation, and the comparative role of party officials and grassroots activists in leading popular resistance on the ground.

While this research does not set out to fill this specific identified gap, incorporating a relational approach to leadership could be an important step to unpacking the above problem. Analysing the networks between the organisations across different levels and their processes of legitimisation requires an approach that looks beyond traditional conceptions of leadership. In the case of Palestine, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement alone demonstrates that conventional theories based upon hierarchy do not capture modern leadership groups who do not seek formal political authority.

A relational approach to leadership sees the analytical focus switch from essentialist static structures to ever-changing relational dynamics that incorporate the wider organisation and context – from the individual to the collective (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 662). Analysis of the leadership process becomes
focused on relations – critical for the case of Palestine. Murrell (1997, p. 35) sums this up in writing that “leadership is a social act, a construction of a ‘ship’ as a collective vehicle to help take us where we are as a group, organization or society desire to go.” The examination should no longer be on leaders, but on leaderships and the different forms this can take. This sees political leadership expand to organisations and processes outside of formal positions of power and state-based authority, such as the BDS movement. Furthermore, using a relational approach that focuses on processes can be extended into the concept of legitimacy. In order to understand leadership as a process and to be able to access the questions of power and authority, these are dissolved into an examination of how legitimisation is sought. Understanding legitimisation of the leaderships requires examining their relations with each other and also how they themselves perceive such an issue that is central to their authority and role in the national movement.

If we begin with approaching leadership from a relational perspective, leadership is viewed as “the processes by which social order is constructed and changed” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 664). This approach has commonly been engaged with in regards to leadership within an organisation. However, what happens when relational leadership is extended beyond this? A relational approach has been applied to leadership in numerous cases already, but a relational approach to leadership has not been used before in such a context as presented here. I seek to extend the scope of analysis for the relational approach in order to continue the developments in reorienting the field of leadership studies. In the case of Palestine there are the ongoing, unfulfilled national liberation and state building processes that are incorporated within the social order – both affecting and being effected. There are numerous leaderships with distinct relationships to the processes of the national movement and differing claims to authority. To say there is a lot going on is an understatement and there remains a need to be able to unpack this analytically. It is therefore necessary to include an examination of how we can understand the leadership process of (re)constructing social order in the circumstances of the Palestinian national liberation movement.

I propose that leadership legitimacy is a critical factor in influencing social order, and thus the concept allows us to examine the contestations and reconstructions occurring. But the question remains of how to address and understand legitimacy amongst the process of leadership. Rather than leadership existing as an actor or status (i.e. an entity) alongside national movement processes, in the relational approach leadership is a processual element interacting to (re)construct social order. Therefore, it is within these interactions that legitimacy must be situated if we are to be able to map the network of processes of the Palestinian national movement leadership. It is not enough to draw a link of legitimacy between leadership and the national movement processes. It also is not enough to solely determine typologies of legitimacy (as currently exist), because it is the relational
interactions that we must unpack. Thus to be able to understand interactions, legitimacy must also be taken as a process amongst processes; it is the ongoing, dynamic process of legitimisation that becomes critical to breaking down the interactions both within and amongst the leadership groups, and the national movement processes that are a basis of legitimisation. Engaging a relational approach allows us to access the processes of legitimisation within the Palestinian national movement that sees a redrawing of legitimacy relations reflective of the current situation. In the literature fields reviewed throughout this thesis there is an analytical separation between leadership and legitimacy, and between Palestinian leadership and the national movement. My relational approach to leadership links the three desired elements cited at the beginning of this chapter (leadership, legitimacy, and the national movement processes) and brings them into one analytical frame in order to provide a new perspective to understanding Palestinian leadership.

Processes, be it those of leadership, legitimisation or liberation etc., are by definition dynamic. Examining specific intersections amongst these processes is key to providing a more nuanced understanding of both the processes themselves and the Palestinian national movement. The statement and actions of the leadership groups are a performance of the leadership process and thus the ongoing (re)constructing of social order. This opens the scope of leadership research to be able to examine the interactions of processes beyond direct relationships between leadership groups; a process of legitimisation for one leadership group affects social order and thus raises the question of how it affects legitimisation for the others. If leadership is a process of (re)constructing social order, and the national movement processes are part of this social order construction, then legitimacy provides a link for analysis. For the case of Palestine, the study of leadership must go beyond essentialist traits or structuralist determinations, and we need to ask how we can understand leadership legitimisation alongside the liberation, peace, and state building processes.

This approach seeks to unpack the oft-stated but under-analysed ‘legitimacy crisis’ so that understandings of recent Palestinian leadership dynamics incorporate the interacting processes at play. If indeed the process of legitimisation is embedded within the processes of the national movement, this raises the issue what the interactions between these processes central to that of leadership are, and how we can understand these within the wider national movement setting. This thesis will analyse how conceptualisations of legitimacy can be expanded beyond present categorisations, and how legitimacy can be analysed as a process of seeking legitimisation in order to access the critical points of processual interactions between leadership and the national movement.
1.6. **Outline of the Study**

The process of writing a thesis, especially a monography, is one of ongoing development and the structure of the thesis partially traces this process. The analytical findings of each chapter provide a natural launching pad and space for the ensuing chapters to move into and focus upon. The structure of this monography reflects such a development process with the analytical levels building as the material is able to be increasingly broken down in tandem with my own academic progress. True to the iterative approach, this allows the clear tracing of how I have arrived at my approaches to each chapter. In line with this, chapter two introduces the approach towards building the theoretical foundations of this study. The chapter provides an overview of the ontological foundations of relationality, the use of a relational approach is assessed as to how it can be utilised in developing leadership theory. The specific concept of legitimacy vis-à-vis leadership is introduced and the current typologies of legitimacy existing in the literature are extracted. The limitations of existing approaches to internal legitimacy within both the fields of leadership and the Palestinian case are reviewed and problematised. The chapter then develops how the relational approach is applied in this thesis with regards to understanding both leadership and legitimacy for the Palestinian national movement.

In chapter three, I describe and assess the methodology of the thesis as a means of moving forward with the research approach of my study into the Palestinian case. This chapter emphasises the interview method and ethical considerations of fieldwork in a conflict area. The method of analysis develops a conceptual framework table for reconstructing internal legitimacy. There is significant crossover between the content of methodology and theory chapters due to the nature of the relational approach. In the words of Hatch and Yanow (2008, p. 24), methodology is “applied’ ontology and epistemology”; in this way relationality contributes as an ontology, a theory, and a methodology.

The focus then turns to the case of Palestine in providing an overview of the history of the Palestinian national movement. Chapter four moves through the national movement processes of liberation, peace, and state building, before ending with the unfulfilled nature of all three. There is a key focus on the leadership groups that emerged during these periods and how they are organised. Arranged chronologically, the starting point is 1958 and the formation of Fatah. This is followed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1964, Hamas in 1987, the Palestinian Authority in 1994, and lastly the re-emergence of popular resistance as represented by the launch of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement in 2005. There is significant overlap between certain leaderships over time so this chapter provides an initial reference point. The aim is two-fold: to build the foundation for examining in greater detail the specific circumstances of
each group’s founding in a later chapter; and also to provide a guide as to how these groups have been previously examined within the Palestinian national movement processes.

Chapter five begins the analysis of Palestinian national movement leadership. This chapter follows a chronological structure; as the leadership groups (Fatah, PLO, Hamas, PA, and BDS) and new forms of legitimacy emerge, these are examined in specific time periods. The types of internal legitimacies each can be seen to claim and the sources these derive from are developed and summarised drawing on both existing and original material. The starting points for both the materialisation of the different legitimacies and the processes they relate to can be identified. The continuation of these legitimacies is a matter for subsequent analysis as the three processes have come to overlap.

In order to bring the material up-to-date in the constantly changing Palestinian political environment, chapter six begins with an overview of key developments post-Oslo¹ before examining the 2016-2017 in detail. The second half draws on new empirical material and unpacks the relations underlying key leadership events during this period. This chapter introduces the relational approach to examining Palestinian leadership, setting the basis for scrutinising the leadership processes in the next chapter. Chapter seven picks up from the assessment of 2016-2017 and examines how the leadership groups seek legitimisation in this period. Legitimisation is analysed as a process that is relational to both the other leadership groups and the ongoing liberation and state building processes; for the most recent analytical periods the peace process is considered to have become dissolved into the other processes. The influence of these multiple sets of processes upon that of legitimisation provides both theoretical and empirical contributions.

Lastly, chapter eight brings this research to a conclusion as we revisit the aim and research questions of this thesis, tracing how these have been addressed through the gradual building of the analytical process and then finally pieced together. This final chapter then takes the findings of the research and discusses the wider implications of these for the Palestinian national movement. This chapter situates the findings of the research within the relational leadership approach to discuss the process of reconstructing as a way forward for both the Palestinian national movement and the development of leadership research.

¹ The term post-Oslo refers to the ongoing effects and legacies of the Oslo peace process and its resulting agreements that remain in place today.
2. Relational Approach to Leadership and Legitimacy

The relational approach offers new perspectives which allows leadership theory to move beyond traditional conceptualisations, reframing the analysis of leadership towards interactional processes and relationships. The relational approach can appear extremely intangible when examining it only in theoretical terms. Therefore, this chapter serves as an outline explanation of relationality and it is in the later empirical analysis that the relational approach becomes more tangible in the way it contributes to new understandings of the Palestinian leadership. Through the developments of this thesis, it will be demonstrated that the relational approach opens a new means of conceptualising legitimacy reflexive to the Palestinian case and thus opens up the analytical scope for leadership. This chapter will outline the limitations that staying within the confines of traditional approaches to leadership and legitimacy holds for the Palestinian case. We cannot adequately explain the current situation within the Palestinian national movement without firstly rethinking the analytical, and thus conceptual, framing. The foundations of the relational approach for the research are laid here to allow the empirical analysis to shift from the limits of the existing conceptualisations through to engaging a relational approach that is reflexive to the case. It is through the gradual tailoring of analytical building blocks alongside the case material that the relational approach provides a way of linking and explaining leadership, legitimacy and the national movement processes. Furthermore, relationalism provides a strong constructionist theoretical approach to the study of political leadership, which also has important implications for methodology and elements of this discussion will flow through into the next chapter.

This chapter begins with an examination of the relational ontological approach, establishing the foundations for applying this specific perspective to the research agenda of this thesis. Following this, the second section outlines the leadership studies landscape, focussing on how leadership theory is developing with regards to new approaches and relational leadership in particular. The third section narrows in on to the central theoretical concept of legitimacy. The issue of legitimacy emerges across both areas of political and non-state leadership theory. How legitimacy is currently conceptualised with regards to forms of political leadership is presented. This section also includes reviewing existing approaches to Palestinian leadership legitimacy, focusing on the theoretical contributions to conceptualising legitimacy specific to the case. I believe it is important to establish this prior to delving into the analysing the case as this is a critical contribution to the reframing the conceptual approach to leadership and
legitimacy. In order to do so, the chapter then returns to the relational leadership approach posited in the first sections. It is proposed how the relational approach can be specifically applied to the work of the thesis and the resulting potential analytic implications. This is done with regard to both reframing the approach to leadership and the current framework surrounding types and sources of internal legitimacy – a matter central to all national movement leaderships. It is critical to question how a relational ontological approach can reconstruct conceptualisations of legitimacy to provide a new means of examining leadership processes.

While it appears that this chapter attempts to draw from numerous weighty theoretical fields in examining legitimacy, there is an intersectionality that exists amongst them. This is also reflective of the Palestinian national liberation movement to which these approaches will be primarily applied. Therefore, not only is it near impossible to examine one in isolation, but in this case it would be remiss to do so, as each contributes an additional analytical layer. The research adheres to Rhodes’ (as cited in Lowndes, 2010) belief that “No theory is ever true, it is only more or less instructive. You can learn much from the critical assessment of one theory; you can learn much more from a comparative critical assessment of several theories brought to bear on a single topic.” Therefore, I seek multiple perspectives on legitimacy in order to broaden the discussion and serve as a foundational point for subsequent reconstructions to legitimacy. The relational approach can contribute to developing new understandings for leadership and legitimacy and this chapter seeks to tailor an approach for the Palestinian case.

2.1. The Relational Approach: An Overview

Relationalism was initially developed in the sociology discipline, but it is an ontological approach that can be customised as to where and how it is applied in combination with other fields, literatures and methods. For this thesis, relationality provides the lens for re-examining political leadership in theory and in practice. Where essentialism centres itself on objects and stasis, relationalism begins with processes and dynamism. In his foundational ‘Manifesto for a Relational Sociology’, Emirbayer (1997, p. 281) states there is an increasing desire for an analytical approach that views social reality in “dynamic, continuous, and processual terms.” Similarly, without even referencing relationality, Danermark et al. (2002, p. 91) perfectly motivate this emergent field in stating that “social scientists do not discover new events that nobody knew about before. What is discovered is connections and relations, not directly observable, by which we can understand and explain already known occurrences
in a novel way.” This quote emphasises my approach that I am not uncovering new situations previously unbeknown (especially to Palestinians), but instead engaging a different perspective that allows me to analyse the relational interactions in order to better understand the events of Palestinian leadership. How this can be done within this thesis will follow an examination of the foundations of the relational approach, first in itself and then with regards to leadership theory.

It is useful to begin with definition and clarification of the words deriving from ‘relation’. Ospina and Uhl-Bien (2012, p. xix) summarise this perfectly:

**Relation:** an aspect or quality (as resemblance) that connects two or more things or parts as being or belonging or working.

**Relational:** characterized or constituted by relations.

**Relationality:** the state or property of having a relational force; the state or condition of being relational.

**Relationship:** the state of being related or interrelated; the relation connecting or binding participants in a relationship; a state of affairs existing between those having relations or dealings.

Relationalism is a further derivative featured in this chapter and can be taken as the approach centred on relationality — a constituted field of relationships. Furthermore, before delving into the specifics of relationality there is Dachler and Hosking’s (1995, p. 4) warning to heed that when it comes to the relational perspective “the borderline between epistemological and other kinds of arguments (often thought of as content issues) becomes very blurred. This is because talk about social relations and social processes is also talk about knowledge, shared understandings, and truth.” The flexibility of the relational perspective is both a strength and an issue to be addressed.

I focus on the Palestinian national movement and the relational approach directly critiques how such wider bodies have been framed. Emirbayer (1997, p. 285) explains how underlying substantialist assumptions about structures and societies are problematic in approaches examining these larger ‘systems’ as they hold that:

Such entities possess emergent properties not reducible to the discrete elements of which they consist. Not individual persons, but groups, nations, cultures and other reified substances do all of the acting in social life and account for its dynamism. In some cases,
even sequences of actions may discharge from such a function: social movements or nationalist struggles, for example, are seen as propelling themselves along trajectories “that repeat ... time after time in essentially the same form” (Tilly, 1995a, p. 1596). Processes as well as structures thus appear as self-acting entities in many concrete instances of social inquiry.

The result of this is a variable-based approach. A national movement is an entity with interacting variables to produce outcomes that equally can be measured attributes of ‘the movement’ (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 286). While such approaches have provided important contributions to the fields of social and national movements, relationalism holds that there is space, and indeed a need, to move beyond this approach that essentialises properties into a static state.

**A Focus on Processes – Dynamics and Relative Stabilities**

The central tenet of relationalism holds that everything is relational and dynamic. Where traditionally stability has been the presumption with change the analytical focus, relationality presumes motion and relative stabilities are the abnormality to be explained. Emirbayer explains that it is ‘trans-action’ that is the antithesis of substantialism. Dewey and Bentley’s (as quoted in Emirbayer, 1997, pp. 286-7) definition of trans-action is when:

systems of description and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to ‘elements’ or other presumptively detachable or independent ‘entities,’ ‘essences,’ or ‘realities,’ and without isolation of presumptively detachable ‘relations’ from such detachable ‘elements’.

From this, Emirbayer (1997, p. 287) deduces that the “very terms or units involved in a transaction derive their meaning, significance, and identity from the (changing) functional roles they play within that transaction”; the consequence being that the analytical focus centres on this dynamic process and not the components in and of themselves. This will become a useful tool examining historical legitimacies within the Palestinian case and how to move beyond these to the recent period. The transactional approach holds that individuals are embedded within webs of relations and this is important when considering societies. It is already clear to see how relationalism is an ontology that feeds into both theory and method and thus is a critical starting point for in this research.

In order to be able to work towards relative stabilities, boundary specification, as Emirbayer (1997, p. 303) labels it, is required. There is a stream of ongoing
transactions and boundary specification allows breaks in the flow so that areas may be delimited for workable analysis. Relationality is always at risk of ontological contradiction in its application. As relationalism holds instability as a central presumption, this naturally leads to an analytical issue when it comes to language, labelling and extracting. Hence, both delimiting the ‘cut in’ point for relational analysis and periodisation of relative stabilities are crucial. To apply a relational analysis across all points in time and areas of focus would be extremely work intensive to the point of impossible. Relationality should be applied at critical points where there is a need for a new analytical lens. I will return to the matter of boundary specification in the section focusing on the application of relationality, as this is important for delimiting its role in both the historical and recent periods of analysis. Somers and Gibson (1993, p. 35) write of examining actors that they are embedded “within relationships and stories that shift over time and space and thus preclude categorical stability in action. These temporally and spatially shifting configurations form the relational co-ordinates of ontological, public, and cultural narratives.” Their preclusion is categorical stability – an essentialist assumption. Applying a relational analytical approach is not to say that neither categories nor stabilities are excluded as a rule of thumb, but rather that “the classification of an actor divorced from analytic relationality is neither ontologically intelligible nor meaningful” (Somers & Gibson, 1993, pp. 39-40).

Hosking (2011, p. 59) continues the recognition of the contradiction that is at the heart of finding relative stability from a relational approach:

It is relational processes that actively construct and maintain stability in the relational constructionist view. In other words, stability is an ongoing achievement, in process. But at the same time, change is definitional of ongoing processes. Relational realities are viewed as always ‘in process’ and possibility-full rather than permanent, or trans-historical.

Stability itself is a process, but a process is defined by movement – the catch-22 of relationality. However, rather than become paralysed by the risk of ontological contradiction, it is the acknowledgement of the roles of relativity and relationality that is critical in advancing an analysis – both stability and change. Hosking (2011) explains that the focus shifts towards processes reproducing and changing relational realities and thus relationships. The consequence is that these relational processes provide both the analytical units and the site of stability and change.

The very nature of relationality means that there is always a multiplicity at play in perspectives – another element that will become critical to developing the
analytical approach for understanding the recent period of Palestinian leadership. Furthermore, within these perspectives there is an ongoing renegotiation as transactions continue to occur over time as perceptions of reality are reconstructed. Perceptions exist neither in isolation from each other nor from time. I readily acknowledge that relationality is not the most concrete ontological approach to work with given its space for interpretation and malleability. However, Hosking (2011, p. 57) summarises three features of relational constructionism, stating that it is: “(a) about how, rather than what, (b) about multiple, local realities and relations, rather than the one way things probably are (assuming some universal rationality), and (c) about ‘developing’ or ongoing rather than stable realities as ‘content’.” These are the basics of reorienting towards a relational perspective, but the degree and means of application are tailored to the research field and material in which relationality must operate. The following section introduces how the relational approach can develop the leadership theoretical field, before working through this approach with regards to the Palestinian case.

2.2. Advancing Leadership Theory

Leadership in itself is by no means an uncontested area. Therefore it is necessary to begin with an overview of approaches to leadership to establish delimitations. Assessing how leadership should be understood is extremely important when analysis of political leadership moves outside the established realm of formal politics and individuals. Leadership studies has emerged from the organisational/management and sociological disciplines – often drawing from psychology too. Within leadership studies there have been two main approaches: entity- and constructivist-based (from post-positivism and interpretivism respectively) (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012a). Where entity-based scholars begin with definitions of leadership, constructivists are interested in the deconstruction of our understandings of leadership in order to “uncover how leadership discourses and practices contribute to reproducing power and control in organizations and society” (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012a, p. 11). Ospina and Sorenson (2006) argue that the core of constructionism is based upon the primacy of relations and therefore has long focussed on so-called relational leadership. However, prominent scholar Uhl-Bien originates from an entity perspective and argues that both sides must be drawn from in order to develop the much-needed relational approach.

The entity-based approach to leadership focuses on attributes and practices in individuals, often resulting in a positivist measure of characteristics that allow leadership to be defined and thus identified and labelled. This approach has long
dominated leadership studies and indeed has been covered with regards to the case of Palestine (and Arafat). As mentioned above, a purpose of engaging a relational approach is to examine research material in a new perspective in order to provide novel analysis. Therefore, whilst individual leaders play an undeniable role, there is a need to shift the analytical focus within leadership studies beyond this. When pushed towards relationality, the entity perspective orients towards the skills and practices that are interactional (Fletcher, 2012).

This thesis aligns much more closely with the constructionist perspective on both leadership and relational leadership. Fletcher (2012, p. 84) provides a comprehensive summary of what this means:

Constructionist dimensions of leadership focus on understanding macro level contextual forces that operate on micro level interactions in which actors wittingly or unwittingly enact or “do” leadership. Constructionist dimensions of leadership are inherently relational in that they highlight the interactional processes through which leadership is socially constructed … Constructionist dimensions of relational leadership highlight the way a particular set of (relational) leadership practices in perceived, co-created, and “acted upon” by larger organizational and societal systems, including systems of sense-making and cognition, as well as systems of power and privilege.

The inherent connection between constructionism and relationalism is clear. The challenge comes in managing this expansion of focus to the interactions at the macro level. There are limits as to how far the research gaze can go while still providing case-based analysis of leadership. Fletcher’s writing begins to outline the necessary transition from examining the leadership interactions at the micro level and tracing these to the macro relations and this will be picked up again in sections scrutinising the means of analysing the case material.

The constructionist approach can struggle in answering the initial question of ‘what is leadership’ as this involves many contextual, processual factors. Barge (2012, p. 111) proffers that accounting for the dynamism of situations further complicates this matter: “While leadership actors act from context, they also act into context which means new contexts may be created through their talk that legitimate different understandings of leadership.” Here we can see that the process of legitimisation appears early in discussions of constructing leadership, hinting at its importance in deconstructing leadership. Leadership has not been defined in a traditional operationalisation in the thesis thus far. The focus is on deconstructing the approach to leadership and thus setting boundaries by which to contain the leadership scope is not necessary. I have outlined the leadership
groups I identify as key to the Palestinian case and the importance is on leadership as a process as opposed to the type of leadership or even one specific process. As stated in the introductory chapter, leadership is approached as “the processes by which social order is constructed and changed” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 664) in order to remain open to a multiplicity of processes. Shamir (2012, p. 486) engages a classic post-structural critique using a perspective that removes current constructs of leadership without providing possible substitutes, because of ontological contradictions, that is a “dead-end street” for the leadership research agenda. The constructionist approach to leadership is criticised for its lack of practical application; I seek to find workable middle ground where constructionism (and relationality) informs the ontology, but this is applied to a real-world case involving individuals and material analysis.

**Paving the Way for a Relational Approach to Leadership**

Alvesson and Sveningsson (2012, pp. 205-206) state the four main flaws with leadership studies are: leader-centrism – a primary focus on individuals and their traits/behaviours; entitism – leaders/followers as units with boundaries that can be isolated for analysis; romanticism – a rose-tinted celebration of leadership that does not account for conflict; and objectivism – measuring leadership in variables that does not account for the construction of realities underlying social interactions. These ‘flaws’ have been present within the study of Palestinian leadership: Arafat; Fatah and PLO leader-member determination; the current lack of analysis of claims of PA oppression and questioning of the multiple realities for Palestinians affiliated with numerous leadership groups; and assessments of both factionalism and nonviolent success based on structuralism. The keys for moving beyond these are: social and cultural context; social relations; acknowledging power and politics; and the processes of construction and re-construction (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2012, pp. 207-216). These four keys underpin the relational approach to analysing the recent period of leadership in chapter seven. It will become evident that these are tools for gaining a new understanding on the existing occurrences à la Danermark et al. (2002).

The field of leadership studies has begun in part to rethink the historical ontological dualism, broadening its view so that leadership is “no longer described as an individual characteristic of difference, but rather is depicted in various models as dyadic, shared, relational, strategic, global, and a complex social dynamic” (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009, pp. 422-423). This acknowledgement has given rise to a complexity-based leadership approach. Complex leadership theory (CLT) is a reflection of the environment in which leadership operates whereby “traditional, hierarchical views of leadership are less and less useful given the complexities of our modern world” (Lichtenstein, et al.,
Within this framework leadership is based on a dynamic system of agents that interact and feedback through complex networks (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009, p. 430). The developments within leadership research are increasingly shifting towards a holistic ‘whole-systems’ approach.

In their review of the state of political leadership literature, Möller and Schierenbeck (2009, p. 4) state that “A wide range of research in political science addresses the impact of political leadership, but research with leadership as the main question is scarce. Thus focus on political leadership is generally a by-product of research conducted for other purposes.” Furthermore, they are deeply critical of the approaches that have been taken when political leadership has undergone analysis: “The tendency in political science during the past decades to privilege structural explanations at the expense of political actors is one potential explanation for this neglect of leadership analysis” (Möller & Schierenbeck, 2009, pp. 2-3). When actors have been examined, rational choice has been the lens of choice at the expense of agency. Within the study of political leadership, structuralism has largely been the dominant approach. But rather than leaving structuralism altogether, Widzer (2015, p. 19) draws upon McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly’s approach that he labels ‘soft structuralism’: “the idea that structures are contingent rather than strictly determined in the sense that they are seen as being sensitive to the nuances of political [and other] processes”. But Möller and Schierenbeck (2009) remain critical of this contingency approach, arguing that it still does not capture the interdependency of leadership, structures, and context. They find that not only is there an agreed need to develop the political leadership field along the contextual approach, but also that of the relational. Rather than define leadership and leadership traits, my research approach aligns with “an analysis of in what ways and to what extent political leadership impacts societal change and political outcomes” (Möller & Schierenbeck, 2009, p. 22). It is the multi-directional interactions between leadership and context that are critical to developing an analysis based on leadership as a process.

**Relational Leadership Theory**

Relational leadership theory (RLT) draws heavily from the sociology and organisational disciplines. However, Uhl-Bien (2012, p. xv) advocates that “to advance relational leadership, we need to engage scholars across disciplines and perspectives.” RLT is centred on a constructionist perspective which “considers the processes of social construction and emergent practices that reflect common understandings through which leadership gains legitimacy and produces outcomes” (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012, p. xxii). Despite its name, relational leadership theory is much more an approach than a theory, in keeping with the relational approach it draws from. In the relational construction of leadership we
again see legitimacy feature as a critical concept centred within processes, constructions and understandings. The focus switches to ever-changing relational dynamics that incorporate the wider organisation and context – from the individual to the collective (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 662). This aligns with the closely related CLT approach that sees leadership as a ‘messy’ social process that goes beyond the individual, existing instead as a system phenomenon (Lichtenstein, et al., 2006, p. 3).

This shift towards complex processes and context is important for political leadership where historically the dominant focus has been on individuals. Here we return to Murrell’s (1997, p. 35) approach that critically poses leadership as “a social act, a construction of a ‘ship’ as a collective vehicle to help take us where we as a group, organization or society desire to go.” The examination should no longer be solely on either leaders or structures, but on leaderships and the different forms this can take. Hunt and Dodge expand this further in proposing that relational leadership allows analysis to become multi-directional. “It is not restricted to a single or even a small set of formal or informal leaders; and, in its strongest form, functions as a dynamic system embedding leadership, environmental, and organizational aspects” (2000, p. 448). This is an important foundation for both the development of political leadership research and the approach underpinning this research. All aspects of leadership have been constructed, therefore all aspects can be reconstructed as our view on what constitutes leadership widens. Though, for practical reasons, this research has set parameters of which leadership groups are within the analytical scope, the emphasis that leadership goes beyond specific determinations is an imperative development for leadership studies in broadening analyses to include contextual processes.

In her influential paper on relational leadership theory, Uhl-Bien states that a relational ontology fundamentally alters the questions for leadership studies.

It asks how the processes of leadership and management in organizations emerge – e.g., how realities of leadership are interpreted within the network of relations; how organizations are designed, directed, controlled and developed on the bases of collectively generated knowledge about organizational realities; and how decisions and actions are embedded in collective sense-making and attribution processes from which structures of social interdependence emerge and in turn reframe the collectively generated organizational realities.

(Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 662)
Uhl-Bien is careful to include the significance of context within her framework. Additionally, hierarchy is not a means of determining or defining leadership relations. Despite the name, relational leadership theory takes shape as a framework – a conception, not definition. Consequently, the purpose is to focus attention and provide perspectives from “multiple orientations” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 668). It is this framework approach that the research seeks to utilise.

Relational leadership theory also seeks to influence methodology. “Variables that are used should truly capture a relational understanding, and methodologies should provide richer insight into process and context than has been offered by traditional leadership approaches” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 671). The interpretation taken from this is that it is not necessary to dismiss all concepts that may be classified as ‘traditional’ e.g. legitimacy. But rather, these concepts can be re-examined when utilised in a relational setting that engages a multiplicity of perspectives. From existing theory we can see how leadership and concepts have been constructed. Through methods that provide ‘rich’ perspectives, the concepts are reconstructed in dynamic contexts. Thus the basis for transforming legitimacy from a fixed variable to a process of legitimisation (and thus with numerous interactions underlying this process) is established in the relational leadership approach that seeks new understandings centred in process and context.

In comparing approaches of relational scholars, Fairhurst and Antonakis (2012, p. 434) summarise Uhl-Bien’s analytical approach in her 2006 paper:

**Table 1. Summary of Uhl-Bien’s leadership approach adapted from Fairhurst and Antonakis (2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontological Units</th>
<th>Observational Units</th>
<th>Analytical Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership as social reality; a social construction made in ongoing local cultural processes; leadership as the process of organizing</td>
<td>Communication because “it is the medium in which all social constructions of leadership are continuously created and change”</td>
<td>Recommended: discourse analysis, modeling qualitative data, grounded theory, case studies; participatory methods and action science; intensive ethnographic and interview methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fairhurst and Antonakis highlight the multitude of interpretations of relational leadership in theory and practice, but it is Uhl-Bien’s alignment of ontology,
observations and analytics that best suits both the theoretical and empirical approach of this thesis.

**Research Implications**

Relational leadership informs my research approach. However, as with most theoretical foundations, what has been presented here is the ‘ideal type’. In practice, this is unlikely to be achieved and pragmatic limitations occur. Shamir (2012) warns of not ‘throwing the baby out with the bath water’ in using a constructionist approach to leadership; there must still be a degree of coherence with the leadership studies field and transferability. Relational leadership is an underutilised approach in political leadership studies, particularly if the field is to extend itself away from traditional conceptualisations of leadership. The approach of this research is to draw from the relational leadership framework in a political realm, but by no means perfect the practice. Relational leadership becomes part of the theoretical and methodological toolbox used to gain a better understanding of both the key leadership concept of legitimacy and the Palestinian national liberation movement itself.

An examination of relational leadership theory leads naturally to a discussion on the ‘boundaries’ of leadership, as the approach seeks to shift these away from traditional confines. Whilst RLT sees leadership as far more encompassing than the inclusion of informal along with the formal, this challenge to orthodox leadership approaches requires discussion even if just to clarify the distinction. The social constructionist perspective is critical of hierarchical limitations to leadership. Theory should not focus on formal positions as central to leadership, but rather “whether or not leadership emerges as an ‘overlay’ to whatever other formal or informal dimensions individuals use to think about their relationships” (Meindl, 1995, p. 332). The construction of leadership occurs beyond formal power differentials. As leadership theory shifts away from the individual, there is an equal need to investigate where leadership is identified beyond that of traditional hierarchies.

Though writing with regards to social movements, Tarrow (2011, pp. 129-130) argues that organisational forms have become broader. “They include a range of local, regional and national, centralized and decentralized, and membership and nonmembership organizations, and they draw on the new digital forms of media.” This should have a natural effect upon the study of politically-related leadership.

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2 This is echoed within CLT which holds that “leadership can occur anywhere within a social system. It need not be authority or position based, but is instead a complex interactive dynamic sparked by adaptive challenges” (Lichtenstein, et al., 2006, p. 4).
Writing in 1997, Murrell (1997, p. 39) saw relationships outside of traditional hierarchies and predicted “transformational phenomenon where the social change process occurs well outside the normal assumptions of command and control.” Uhl-Bien echoed the belief that non-hierarchical relationships should be included as a source of leadership, as the importance given to hierarchical positions and leadership is itself a social construct. Removing this allows us to “view leadership responsibility as lying with the collective and not just the individual leader” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 667). The formal/informal typology is also referenced in peace building leadership literature where Reychler and Stellamans begin to draw upon the concepts of authority and power. “Formal authorization brings with it the powers of office, but informal authorization brings with it the subtle yet substantial power to extend one’s reach way beyond the limits of the job description” (2005, p. 7).

In this thesis it is necessary to narrow the focus a little further, acknowledging that classifications come at the cost of relationality. By no means is political (or national movement) leadership limited to the confines used in this research; but this research provides a conceptualisation and constructed framework that is then open to reconstruction. Though Pielstick (2000, p. 100) writes with regards to individual leaders, his initial operationalisation sheds light on the informal/formal distinction:

Most research is done on formal leaders, those in a ‘position’ of leadership. This complicates the analysis of the process of leading due to ways that these leaders may use the various forms of authority and power (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Fairholm, 1998; French & Raven, 1959) available to persons in these positions: legitimate, coercion, and reward (specifically extrinsic reward). In other words, the formal authority of persons in positions of leadership may mask the process of leading. Informal leaders, those not in positions of leadership but recognized as leaders nevertheless, do not have such authority at their disposal. Accordingly, they must rely on ‘authentic leading’ rather than ‘power-wielding’ tactics available to formal leaders (Pielstick, 2000), although formal leaders may not necessarily use those tactics.

This approach can be expanded out beyond individuals, whereby a group can be formally organised but remain ‘informal leadership’ in the political context, as the group does not hold a formal position of authority. There is a differentiation between the organisation within the group, and the type of leadership it provides. In this thesis, in addition to organisations who hold official positions of power, those seeking office are also considered a source of formal leadership as they
desire to hold formal authority and the power associated with this. This mitigates issues of irregular election cycles and non-recognition of electoral victors.

**The Link to Legitimacy**

The concept of legitimacy becomes critical when we include an examination of informal leadership alongside that of formal. This is demonstrated in Pielstick’s (2000, p. 113) statement that “The difference between the process of leading and power-wielding needs additional investigation and differentiation ... Informal leaders demonstrate a higher level of authentic leading, providing lessons from which formal leaders can enhance their own leadership practice.” This is seconded by Möller and Schierenbeck (2014, p. 8) who observe of the divide:

> Political leadership is commonly separated into two categories: formal and informal leadership. Individuals either possess authority through a formal position at a high level in society or are considered leaders, even in the absence of legally ascribed positions in society. Informal leaders gain their authority on the basis of sources of legitimacy other than legal.

This question of sources of legitimacy will be examined in greater detail in the following section.

Before fully entering the discussion on legitimacy, it is useful to review Möller and Schierenbeck’s (2014) work that specifically analyses leadership theory alongside cases – of which Palestine is one. Möller and Schierenbeck focus on the intersection of nation and state building – termed ‘nascent statehood’. Specifically interested in democratic state building, they propose three types of leadership: symbolic, strategic, and relational. They work with all three leadership types within cases to analyse the success of democratic state building. Of symbolic leadership they proffer:

> In order to convince the people of the prospects for, and legitimacy of, political independence, political leaders must establish a sufficient intensity of national dedication among their followers ... While political leaders might be purposeful in their use of symbolic resources, they also operate within certain limits and constraints that emanate from their interaction with those in whose name they strive for power.

(Möller & Schierenbeck, 2014, p. 6)
The authors not only articulate the tensions between nation and state building, processes that often end up occurring simultaneously, but exactly where this has the potential to detrimentally affect leadership.

Of strategic leadership, Möller and Schierenbeck (2014) find that management of elites by political leadership has a partial impact upon democratic transitioning outcome. They argue that a greater degree of elite cohesion is useful during national mobilisation, but this should be tempered post-independence in order to build a functional democracy (Möller & Schierenbeck, 2014, p. 8). This strategic leadership analysis speaks to the questions raised above regarding elite factionalism within the nation building phase of the Palestinian movement – an issue that is continually raised within Palestinian leadership. However, tempering of cohesion and disunity are not synonymous and thus the relations between leadership groups is again recurring as a key analytical question.

The final leadership type Möller and Schierenbeck use is relational. There is an important distinction to make here as they use relational leadership as one of three types of leadership, rather than a relational ontological approach to leadership. The leader-follower approach is given more weight in conceptualising leadership as leadership is not merely decided by formal roles or those ascribed to leadership positions themselves, for authority is also relational (Möller & Schierenbeck, 2014, p. 8). The relational refers to the relationships between the leaders and society. The authors situate this type of leadership in the classical theories of transactional/transformational leadership (see Burns, 1978), and Weber’s legitimacy typology (legal, traditional, and charismatic). Möller and Schierenbeck (2014, pp. 9-10) then transpose the shifts between leadership and legitimacy type across to the democratic process and state the need for re-examining “the sources of legitimacy for political authority”. Why? Because the case is presented that different periods in statehood building and development require different types of leadership, which in turn require forms of authority and legitimacy in order to be successful.

This multiplicity of leadership types and sources of legitimacy provide a highly useful base from which to further explore the issue, particularly as Möller and Schierenbeck (2014) have applied their framework to the Palestinian case. Especially insightful is the correlation of nation and state building processes with leadership dimensions; although for those cases in which a peace process is wedged in between the two, the clean-cut lines of the framework become blurred. However, the authors would argue that overlapping nation, peace and state building processes is exactly why democratic transitions fail, as political leadership needs to operate differently in all three areas. Where questions remain is in regards to the rigid, classical conceptualisations of legitimacy and whether these truly capture relational leadership. Möller and Schierenbeck establish the
intersection of two processes as the critical juncture in which the leadership must transition. The leadership of Palestine is taken primarily as Arafat as the study is limited to the transitional period that emerged out of the Oslo agreements. Möller and Schierenbeck begin with the processes and deduce what is required in order for democracy to be a successful outcome from nation and state building. I propose going back a step further in order to examine legitimacy, and not purely in the Weberian sense, in regards to the processes. In order to understand the relationship between leaderships and national movement processes, the process of seeking legitimacy is critical and thus requires room beyond pre-set legitimacy typologies.

Relational leadership and the expansion into informal leadership are used as an ontological foundation to inform the research approach. However, it is important to note that this is not as a straight substitute for traditional leadership theory and practice. What may be seen as formal leadership organisations with traditional hierarchies are equally included in the field of analysis. Furthermore, traditional conceptualisations can still offer important contributions. Rather the relational approach applies not only to the ‘who’ of leadership, but also the ‘how’. This ‘how’ extends into the ways of knowing which sees a multiplicity of perspectives resulting from changing contexts and constructions become an important feature in developing and reconstructing leadership theory.

2.3. Leadership Legitimacy as it Stands

The centrality of the concept of legitimacy to the relational construction of leadership has become increasingly clear. Prior to examining legitimacy vis-à-vis relationality, this section examines pre-existing notions of legitimacy as a foundation for the analysis and development of perceived sources of legitimacy in the Palestinian case. However, before even coming to the concept of legitimacy, it is necessary to briefly situate it amongst its antecedents of power and the related authority. Those who analyse legitimacy in the national liberation, resistance or social movement fields often use nonviolence scholar Gene Sharp as a starting basis. Sharp holds the view that “Political power is the totality of means, influences, and pressures – including authority, rewards, and sanctions – available for use to achieve the objectives of the power-holder, especially the institutions of government, the State, and groups opposing either of them” (Sharp, 1973, p. 27). While he differentiates between political and social power, political power is still inherently linked to the social in that it is a “kind of social power which is for political objectives” (1973, p. 7). In a pluralistic model of power, there are multiple loci of power, power is fluid and fragile, and therefore
tied to consent and cooperation. Sharp (1990, p. 4) thus identifies authority as one of six sources\(^3\) of political power.

Möller and Schierenbeck (2009, p. 22) provide a succinct rationale as to why it is that legitimacy should be the primacy of the study in relation to authority:

> Despite the widely acknowledged status of Weber’s work, not much analysis of political leadership has recognized the usefulness of examining the sources of legitimacy upon which a political leadership gain authority. Arguably, an analysis of political leadership needs to take into account, not necessarily personal skills, and not necessarily all contextual circumstances, but the sources that condition any given political leadership authority.

Authority is a source of power; legitimacy is a source of authority. So what are the forms and sources of legitimacy for political leaders\(^hip\)? This is clearly not a new question in the field of political science. However, this theoretical approach is lacking in when it comes to understanding national movement leadership dynamics. Furthermore, the classical conceptualisations of legitimacy have not analysed perceptions of legitimacy that I propose underlie its (re)construction. Nor has the potential of both concurrent and contesting legitimacies been addressed.

**Conceputalisations: From Weber and Onwards**

Weber’s (1947) typology has already been mentioned and I will outline it here as it continues to underpin much of the existing literature on legitimacy. Based in a statist approach, Weber determined that there were three ideal types by which leaders could gain legitimacy: legal authority – a formalised set of rules that determines power structures e.g. governing systems; traditional authority – an historical form of authority that is inherited e.g. nepotistic or patrimonial systems; and charismatic authority – attributed to a personality of an individual leader e.g. cult leadership. There is necessary movement between these three types when an existing authority type fails. Despite criticism of Weber’s approach (for example Grafstein, 1981; Hekman, 1983), his work definitively shaped subsequent literature on political authority and legitimacy as we will see throughout this section.

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\(^3\) The other five sources being: human resources; skills and knowledge; intangible factors; material resources; and sanctions (Sharp, 1990, p. 4).
Kraus provides a starting point for discussing the concept of legitimacy: “political legitimacy is a kind of public illusion, a shared and often fragile understanding that a regime is somehow appropriate, fitting, and in some vague sense a part of the natural order of things” (as quoted in Johnstad, 2012). In this sense, legitimacy is built upon perception. Suchman (1995, p. 574) explicitly states that legitimacy exists as a form of perception: “legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.” Despite the use of ‘actions of an entity’ here, Suchman touches upon the relationship with constructionism and the importance of perceiving for forms of legitimacy. Specifically drawing from a constructionist approach to legitimacy, Bukovansky (2002, p. 211) proposes that “beliefs about legitimacy are forged through cultural discourse, and without legitimacy power cannot endure.” This approach of ‘legitimacy as perception’ has received less attention in the political leadership arena.

There are many approaches to political legitimacy which view it as having concrete sources. Building from Sharp’s typology, Helvey links authority to legitimacy, with elections as the common claim to authority to govern. “Internally, the loss of apparent legitimacy may become a major factor for the legitimization of political opposition” (2004, p. 4). Where the end is internal legitimacy, the tangible means is elections. We can see that Helvey views the dynamics of legitimacy movement as external between two groups with a direct increase/decrease relationship. From a liberal justice perspective, Buchanan (2002) argues that legitimacy should be limited to democratic means and anything more is actually political authority. He states that “an entity has political legitimacy if and only if it is morally justified in wielding political power, where to wield political power is to attempt to exercise a monopoly, within a jurisdiction, in the making, application, and enforcement of laws” (Buchanan, 2002, pp. 689-690). There are two issues with this statement: the link between monopolised power and moral justification; and the extremely narrow view of what constitutes political legitimacy. ‘Political’ is to mean formal electoral politics and a monopolised use of force. In line with this, Buchanan (2002, p. 689) also holds that “where democratic authorization of the exercise of political power is possible, only a democratic government can be legitimate.” This can be viewed as ‘democratic legitimacy’, also achieved through an electoral-based source.

Call approaches legitimacy in a similar manner with nation states. He argues firstly that legitimacy is objective, but “rests on subjective evaluations” (Call, 2012, p. 42). This is a clear entity-based approach in that legitimacy is a thing that exists and can be measured or assessed, but this assessment has a contestable basis. However, he follows this up with the assertion that legitimacy is indeed a social construct and it exists at the collective level. It is only to be understood
within temporal and spatial contexts as “understandings and assessments of legitimacy can and do change over time and space” (2012, p. 42). As agreeable as his latter statements are, there seems to be an ontological clash with his first where he characterises legitimacy as objective. Following his logic, legitimacy is a construct that exists and it is only our interpretations of it that change, not the legitimacy itself. Thus he argues there are three main perspectives on the nature of legitimacy as opposed to three types of legitimacy. These are: pragmatic – from the self-interest of constituents; moral – normative appeal; and cognitive – appropriateness or embeddedness (Call, 2012, p. 42). This typology is to apply to states and regimes regarding authority and coercion. The issue of how to analyse, or even approach, the changes in understandings of legitimacy over time remains unaddressed within the literature.

Call’s work on state authority is based upon Suchman’s review of organisational legitimacy types. I am not going to into great detail here as Suchman’s work is centered in the organisation management field (and I wish to keep the discussion of legitimacy as relevant as possible to political leadership), but his identification of moral legitimacy is of interest to briefly discuss. This legitimacy type “reflects a positive normative evaluation of the organization and its activities” and is “sociotropic” in that it assessed from a wider perspective based on whether actions are ‘right’ (Suchman, 1995, p. 579). I believe this is an interesting notion that could be developed into the political leadership field as we increasingly include non-traditional forms of leadership. Where I disagree is with Suchman’s subsequent proposal that all forms of moral legitimacy can be aligned with Weber’s work on legitimate authority. There is a tendency in work seeking to develop the concept of legitimacy, regardless of field, to situate it within Weber’s typology and thus mitigate new contributions.

Continuing with classically established forms of legitimacy, international recognition and law are two of the most commonly cited sources. Wilson (1988, p. 127) applies this specifically to national liberation movements: “The right of self-determination may legitimize the recognition of a government or a provisional government which otherwise would be premature. National liberation movements can have international legal personality.” Such an approach focuses on the legitimate use of force. Wilson continues that “a large number of States now maintain that national liberation movements may legitimately use force to secure the right of their people to self-determination” (1988, p. 127). She argues that since 1960 there was an increased acceptance of this legitimacy in the following two decades.
Critiquing the Classical Conceptualisations

Questions remain surrounding cases where democratic authorisation is not possible. Is there a lack of political legitimacy, or may different forms then exist? Held (2005, p. 185) asks this very question of the Palestinian case when she raises the issue that groups involved in armed struggles generally cannot establish a definitive assessment of popular support. Where regular democratic processes do not exist the chicken or the egg problem arises. What comes first – use of force or political legitimacy? The case of Palestine presents many challenges for conceptualisations of legitimacy based on democratic authorisation as the Palestinian system accounts for the inability to hold elections – as will be explained in greater depth later. Podder (2017) addresses the issue of legitimacy for groups who do not always align with democratic approaches. She proposes, like many others, that the concept of legitimacy can be approached from a domestic (internal) and international level. But it is her basis for analysing legitimacy that is more interesting. Podder (2017, p. 687) argues that the legitimacy of armed groups can be assessed by two means: a normative approach using a “set of ‘right standards’”; and an empirical approach that is based upon perceptions and consent within the society in question. These two approaches stem from the state-building literature, with Andersen (2012) presenting them as two sources for legitimacy which developed out of the division of external and internal legitimacy types – a dominant binary.

The so-called ‘empirical’ understanding of legitimacy is based upon processes and practices – relational elements. Andersen (2012, p. 207) categorises this means of analysis as inductive and one that results in legitimacy becoming “a qualitative practice phenomenon specific to distinct communities and their actions.” This can be seen as partly a critique of the potential limitations that he sees with this approach. However, he summarises that there remains an inability to shift away from the historically dominant normative approach to legitimacy and Weber’s legal-rational type within international relations scholarship. “Contextual knowledge, being sensitive to local conditions and processes, is in many cases combined, explicitly or implicitly, with normative goals and starting assumptions” (Andersen, 2012, p. 208). These latter elements are built upon Western assumptions (and thus preferences) about both the state and legitimacy. Due to this, Andersen (2012, p. 217) concludes that in fact “relationalism is an untapped resource” and one that may “open up new facts, and a new, comprehensive explanation of state-building and legitimacy” – a notion I will return to and develop later in the chapter.

Held (2005) also examines legitimacy and violence, but she makes critical points that can be carried across to wider discussions of legitimacy. As a starting base, there is room for a post-colonial critique of legitimacy: “We might do well to avoid
automatic legitimacy to existing boundaries and political arrangements, since the origins of all states in force and fraud make the facts of existing power so morally questionable” (Held, 2005, p. 187). In existing approaches to legitimacy there is a bias towards the state system. Established state actors do not have questions of legitimacy raised in the same manner of those seen as non-state actors. Held uses Bukovansky’s (2002, p. 3) central tenet of ‘the people’ as the “ultimate source of political authority.” One proposition that critiques the classical concepts of legitimacy is that in not restricting legitimacy to democratic governments, some groups “may actually meet the basic requirements of legitimacy better than many deemed legitimate by dominant discourses” (Held, 2005, p. 185).

Pearlman (2011, p. 9) invokes the concept of legitimacy when examining leadership in self-determination movements:

I assess leadership by assessing if a movement has one unified leadership body rather than several. I also gauge the extent to which that leadership is perceived by movement adherents as legitimate. Leadership contributes to a cohesive organizational structure by clarifying goals and inspiring people to cooperate for their achievement. In game-theoretic terms, leaders are ‘agenda setters’ who use political skill and artistry to influence people’s preferences. They thereby produce collective choice equilibriums where they might not otherwise occur. This function of leadership comes to the fore in critical choices made at particular turning points.

Though engaging with a structural and rational approach, Pearlman points towards the need to be perceived as legitimate but does not explore what this means.

Where Pearlman situates the source of legitimacy as coming from within the movement, Widzer (2015, p. 26) draws upon traditional external and legal origins arguing that because a movement’s aim lies in “achieving recognition of its cause as legitimate within the eyes of external audiences, it is incumbent upon a movement’s leadership to rally those forces that have not as yet recognized the movement’s legitimate legal status by whatever means available.” This is unsurprising as Widzer places the international political and legal system as the most important factor in national liberation. However, to focus primarily on the external loses important insight from the internal. Where a movement has competing forms of internal legitimacy, primacy cannot be placed solely on the external when there are likely to be significant consequences of the former upon the latter. As with the Palestinian case, it is not enough to measure legitimacy through the external approach. It is of course an important issue to analyse, but the binaries often present in international law and recognition do not provide the
space for a nuanced analysis of the internal leadership of a national liberation movement.

Zweifel (2006, p. 21) directly links transparency to creditability and therefore can be extended to legitimacy. The purpose is not to remove decision-making ability or external influences and political pressures, but to have them be discernible. The above reflects ‘input-oriented’ legitimacy as opposed to ‘output-oriented’ which would see a much more strict measure of performance against the final objectives (for example the three non-negotiable goals in the case of the BDS movement). Zweifel (2006, p. 25) argues that the latter type of legitimacy cannot occur without the presence of the first and therefore this is not needed as an independent measure – “greater accountability and independence at the input stage enhances greater output accountability; inputs and outputs are directly linked ... we don’t need a separate output accountability indicator.”

Though developed for nation states, Holsti’s conceptualisation of legitimacy is a useful way of splitting levels of analysis. Vertical legitimacy is based upon the general “appropriateness of the state and its functioning ... [and] the degree to which the state is appropriately intervening, regulating, representing, or advancing the interests of society” (Call, 2012, p. 43). Horizontal legitimacy focuses on the extent of acceptance and tolerance of social groups and communities within a state/territory and refers to “the socially differentiated perceptions of social groups about one another and their relation to the state” (Call, 2012, p. 43). These two dimensions do not operate in isolation from each other (Ohlson & Söderberg Kovacs, 2011). This division of how legitimacy can be measured allows a more nuanced analysis, given that this research focuses on different levels of analysis, and Call (2012) argues that state-building has often overlooked such intricacies of legitimacy.

Jones et al (OECD, 2009, p. 77) further break down legitimacy into three internal types: embedded legitimacy – pre-existing factors and historical dynamics; performance legitimacy – effective delivery of service expectations; and process legitimacy – the perceived acceptance of procedures and institutions of governance. We could situate historic examples from Fatah with these. The Battle of Karama (outlined later) inferred a level of performance legitimacy and there are obvious parallels with Arafat’s legacy and embedded legitimacy. However, retroactively aligning Palestinian events against a fixed list of legitimacies does not reflect Palestinian perceptions of legitimacy and nor provide a means of analysing leadership that does not match these typologies. While internal legitimacy is acknowledged to be the primary source, Call also explains that external sources of legitimacy also play an important role (especially so for the case of Palestine):
For all states, internal legitimacy, whether vertical or horizontal, can be enhanced, generated, or undermined by external actors. Colonialism and its aftermath did much to destroy or distort structures of authority in the colonies, and constructed ephemeral institutions or rules that were not consistently implemented and systematically undermined the ability of national or local elites to build relationships of representation and accountability with their populations.

(Call, 2012, p. 45)

Of course legitimacy can also be viewed in terms of effects, as is frequently the case when the concept is applied in tandem with nonviolence. Also drawing from Sharp’s view of legitimacy and political power, Johnstad (2012) examines legitimacy with regards to the outcomes of protest upon against a regime. Johnstad’s application of legitimacy is unidirectional (the effect of the regime’s legitimacy on nonviolent resistance) and thus framed as nonviolent resistance against the legitimacy of the opponent. The literature largely regards nonviolent resistance as seeking a government alternative and therefore often frames legitimacy in terms of a state’s instruments of power:

Nonviolent resistance campaigns are more likely than violent campaigns to attract mass participation, enhancing the legitimacy of the challenge group and making it more likely that the opponent’s use of violent repression against members of the resistance will backfire. The systematic withdrawal of consent and cooperation by large numbers of people undermines the opponent’s social, political, economic, and even military sources of power.

(Stephan, 2009, p. 4)

However, such an approach is not within scope of this research. The question of legitimacy is raised within the Palestinian national liberation movement – which does include nonviolence. But in this case the effects of legitimacy are multidirectional and the focus is not on the actual opponent (Israel), but on other leadership organisations with the same alleged ‘opponent’. Attention has not been given to the area of intra-movement legitimacy vis-à-vis nonviolence.

**Problematising Representation within Legitimacy**

There remain questions for cases where there are multiple leaderships claiming to act on behalf of a people with differing perceived means of legitimacy. Even
with removing the more contentious issue of the use of force, how can we account for multiple legitimacies? Representation beyond elections becomes an important aspect in reviewing legitimacy. We can see parallels with Holsti’s concept of horizontal and vertical legitimacy in representation. “Given the importance of both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of democracy, it is not surprising that Esman and Uphoff (1984) found that representative organisations were closely associated with multiple channels for voice and representation” (Fox, 1992, p. 5). Fox also states that the practice of leadership often sees a merging of instrumental means with normative ends. For example, movements for democratisation may not always adhere to ideologies of full participation, and correspondingly, movements which promote full participation and collective identity may still fall into trappings of an oligarchical nature.

Non-electoral representation claims become contested and even more so when external recognition is used as a source of legitimacy. Wilson (1988, p. 138) writes that “recognition of an entity representing a people is still a very primitive tenuous development for which definitive rules do not appear to exist.” National liberation movements by their very nature are often unelected – they are not functioning states. Held (2005, p. 184) problematises that upon recognition a group can then of course draw upon the conventional pillars of constitutions and elections, but “there will often be a prior stage at which those using violence should not be excluded from consideration as legitimately representing a group of people.” Legitimate use of force underpins the foundations of nation states so naturally this issue comes to dominate much of the national liberation movement legitimacy discourse. However, the issue goes beyond that of legitimate force and speaks to the issue of representation and recognition.

There remain significant questions about determining claims to representation. This applies to both external recognition of a representative authority, but also to internal claims of representing the people. For the external, Held (2005, p. 186) finds that despite a lack of formal criteria for recognising ‘legitimate representatives’ for liberation movements, “implicit standards” do by and large exist, generally from the regional governance level. But this still does not address the issue of a divided movement, or those featuring multiple claims to representation. Even provisional governments of national liberation movements are beyond question as “often there is more than one resistance movement, for instance” (Held, 2005, p. 186).

The relationship between representation and authority is also central to investigating internal sources of legitimacy. For example, one view of ‘moral authority’ is the representativeness of the organization vis-à-vis the community. In this form, the “authoritativeness” or ‘legitimacy’ of the non-state organisation would be an index of its relationship with the cause mediated through the will of
the community on whose behalf it claims to act” (Finlay, 2010, p. 306). This aligns with Valls’ (2000, p. 71) view that:

If an organization claims to act on behalf of a people and is widely seen by that people as legitimately doing so, then the rest of us should look on that organization as the legitimate authority of the people for the purposes of assessing its entitlement to engage in violence on their behalf.

Whilst applying legitimacy in regards to the use of violence, this approach does open up sources of legitimacy beyond that of elections or external recognition. Of course there are issues in assessing when the claims of an organisation align with ‘widely seen’ amongst the populace.

**Summarising Legitimacy Conceptualisations**

Claims to representation are imperative to both external and internal sources of legitimacy, yet in both areas representation struggles to find solid conceptual ground outside of an electoral mandate. Where external recognition is extremely narrow in its approach, internal recognition is vague. There are clear issues in the current approaches to legitimacy when there are multiple leaderships present at differing ‘levels’ and engaged with numerous national movement processes. The relational approach requires both leadership and legitimacy to be understood as dynamic processes and thus opens the potential to examine the complex interactions involved and expand conceptualisations. The following table summarises the existing types of legitimacy extracted within this section. This provides a starting point for expanding the ‘internal’ column in more depth in the upcoming chapters and is not typology to be applied. Instead the table demonstrates a lack of development in regards to approaches to internal legitimacy; this analytical work seeks to broaden the scope of this beyond what is already present in the literature in order to be able to understand the legitimacy crisis in the Palestinian national movement.
Table 2. Summary of existing conceptualisations of legitimacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of legitimacy</th>
<th>Means</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Electoral mandate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representative claims</td>
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<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>International law</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International recognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weberian</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
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<td>Personal following</td>
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<td>Traditional</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inheritance</td>
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<td>Legal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Constitutional arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Elections</td>
</tr>
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</table>

2.3.1. Approaches and Limitations to Palestinian Legitimacy

Before fully switching to examining the case of the Palestine, this section extracts the specific issue of legitimacy in Palestinian leadership and how it has been approached previously. This is done to reinforce the previous section which looked at how legitimacy has been conceptualised to date across the field of leadership literature. This section will highlight the limits to understandings of Palestinian legitimacy specifically and how the national movement has been incorporated into the analysis thus far. This is critical to establish before examining how a relational approach can move beyond this in reconceptualising legitimacy. As explained throughout this thesis, many have looked at leadership legitimacy within the Palestinian national movement leadership. However, legitimacy has primarily been used as a concept to examine Palestine; I believe that the case of Palestine can also be used as a way to examine legitimacy. Thus, I situate the discussion of legitimacy and the Palestinian national movement here to ground the upcoming sections on how to develop the concept of legitimacy for this study.

From Charismatic to Alternative Sources of Legitimacy and Divisions in Leadership

As expected, Arafat quickly becomes a primary focus across examinations of different Palestinian leadership groups due to his domination of Fatah, the PLO and the PA. Despite essentially having controlled all three, legitimacy becomes a point of tension between individual and organisation.
The PLC is prevented from affirming its authority by the dominant and charismatic personality of Arafat and the multiple sources of legitimacy he enjoys in exercising his individualistic style of leadership. Arafat holds all the strings in his hands ... If the PLC is an embodiment of institutionalization, Arafat’s style of leadership is the antithesis of this institutionalization and the concepts of the separation of powers and power sharing.


Weberian theories of charismatic legitimacy are commonly applied to Arafat and the development of the institutions he led (see Jarbawi & Pearlman, 2007; Calas, 1993; Ghanem, 2010; Pradhan, 2008). Arafat’s leadership fits into both individualistic, hierarchical conceptions of leadership and legitimacy.

Shikaki introduces the question of legitimacy amongst the divisions of leadership. In his astute analysis he identifies links between the national movement processes and changing sources of legitimacy.

The emergence with the peace process of a new political order, based on independence and state building as the goal and negotiations as the means to attain it, has not achieved consensus. Indeed, even as the PA and its institutions were being established, many Palestinian political factions, both inside and outside the PLO, saw the emerging body as illegitimate. The bloody confrontation in Gaza in November 1994 between the PA security forces and supporters of Hamas exemplified the depth of the gulf between an order claiming legitimacy and contending forces refusing to acknowledge its legitimacy. Still, even while the peace process dealt the final blow to the old consensus, it provided the basis for a new source of legitimacy: the popular will and the elections through which that will could manifest itself.

(Shikaki, 1996, pp. 9-10)

Twenty years later, and while the friction between the national liberation and state-building moments is acknowledged, this important connection between multiple processes and related legitimacies of the fractured leadership has not been further developed. Given that the peace process is cited as being ‘dead’, it is crucial to reassess these interconnected relationships and the resulting effects upon Palestinian politics.
Shikaki gives extensive coverage to the role of elites in Palestinian leadership. Interestingly, during the periods that preceded Oslo, Shikaki categorises grassroots resistance leadership as ‘elite’. He states that during the 1960s and 1970s there was an “emergence of the Palestinian national bourgeoisie, whose nationalist agenda and opposition to the occupation gradually gave it popular legitimacy” (Shikaki, 1996, pp. 14-15). This was replaced by ‘popular’ leadership that emerged at the grassroots level from student and worker organisations, with lower to middle class origins – the leadership that drove the first intifada. However, Oslo began to change the relationships and legitimacies of the elite leadership:

The peace process in the early 1990s led to the creation of a coalition between the grass-roots leadership that effectively controlled the street and the national bourgeoisie that received the media attention. While the former’s legitimacy derived from popular support, the latter had to rely on PLO backing for legitimacy.

(Shikaki, 1996, p. 15)

Jamal (2005) also does a thorough assessment of the changing power dynamics amongst the elite through the stages of the national liberation movement and broadens the discussion to “the theoretical point that elite disunity in a situation of growing socio-political differentiation is disastrous for any political movement seeking to achieve collective national goals” (2005, p. xv). Jamal takes a strong structural-determinism approach. He employs the concept of legitimacy, arguing that the second intifada was the result of a legitimacy crisis, but space is not given to questioning how potential different sources of legitimacy for elite over time are actually understood or have come to be perceived.

In his later work Shikaki (2002) invokes the issue of legitimacy in examining the divisions in national movement leadership during the second intifada. Shikaki questions Arafat’s actions with respects to his hold on legitimacy.

The young guard has assumed de facto control over most PA civil institutions, penetrated PA security services, and forced Arafat to appease newcomers for fear of losing his own legitimacy or bringing a Palestinian civil war. In fact, at this point only the prospect of a truly viable peace process and a serious PA commitment to good governance can provide Israel and the old guard with an exit strategy for their current predicaments.

(Shikaki, 2002, pp. 89-90)
The work describes where potential problematic tensions lie within differing approaches amongst the leadership levels and makes tentative links to the challenges surrounding legitimacy in multifaceted leadership. However, the concept of legitimacy is not scrutinised; it treats Arafat as an individual authority. Legitimacy is framed as something of a zero sum game for the national liberation movement. Shikaki (2002, p. 91) states that following the 1996 elections, the Palestinian political system had “real legitimacy”. Given that this assertion is followed by electoral turnout statistics, the implication is that democratic voter participation denotes ‘real’ legitimacy – echoing the dominance of democratic legitimacy from the above section. Shikaki follows this up by stating that the political establishment derives its legitimacy from the PLO’s historical legacy and the Oslo peace process and resulting outcomes. Context must be allowed for, as this was during the honeymoon period of the Oslo peace process where there appeared to be a unified Palestinian liberation movement with solid momentum.

Brown (2003) situates the state of Palestinian politics post-Oslo, arguing that Palestinians did not view the negotiations or accords as conferring legitimacy in themselves – even for the PNA. “Many saw those agreements as important steps in obtaining Israeli and international recognition but did not see them as constituting Palestinian politics. Nor did they wish the content of the agreements to shape Palestinian political development any more than necessary” (Brown, 2003, p. 7). With the conference of legitimacy, or rather lack thereof, Brown is referring to internal Palestinian legitimacy, as opposed to his reference to recognition and the implication of the concept of external legitimacy. From this we can see that the matter of internal legitimacy is important to examine given that there can be are contestations occurring both within this and against other approaches e.g. external.

Unlike Shikaki, Brown attempts to disconnect the peace and state-building processes from sources of legitimacy.

What legitimacy the PNA claimed domestically came from its derivation from the PLO. The task of the PNA was therefore not to build new institutions from the beginning – indeed, the predicament for Palestinian politics was that there were so many diverse and overlapping institutions. Instead, the task was to knit together a disparate set of institutions that had grown up in different settings.

(Brown, 2003, pp. 7-8)

Some, such as Brown, examine legitimacy and its sources; others have analysed legitimacy against nation and state building processes. Elgindy (2015, p. 138) strongly criticises the PLO using a mixture of the processes as basis for legitimacy,
stating that “whereas the PLO once has a reasonable claim to all three legitimacy criteria – national liberation, services delivery, and representation – the current leadership can barely lay claim to one.” Without specifically coupling the national movement processes and their relation to means of leadership legitimation, Elgindy’s assessment of different ways of claiming legitimacy indicates interaction between these processes.

There were perhaps more clear correlations between the different leaderships and legitimacies in the pre- and Oslo period. But as the nation, peace, and state-building processes have all remained unfulfilled, the question of legitimacy no longer has clean cut associations even in the most established Palestinian political organisations. Where the problem lies is in the amount of time that has passed since overarching analysis of the movement that encompassed multiple movement processes – and the question of the current relevance of Oslo. However, the works from the Oslo period provide invaluable foundations and insights for renewing a relational approach to leadership of the national liberation movement. Furthermore, as Lindholm Schulz (1999, p. 3) writes, “it is of substantial importance that these contributions are from Palestinians.” There is an inherent worth to including the works and analysis of Palestinian authors on conceptualisations of legitimacy.

**Analytical Points of Departure**

If it is acknowledged that the divided Palestinian leadership garners legitimacy from different areas, the perceptions surrounding the holding of different legitimacies requires examination. The multiplicities of leadership and legitimacies in the Palestinian national liberation movement have by no means held constant; accepted assumptions around sources of legitimacy warrant contemporary analysis. Whilst associated concepts of national identity and nationalism, factionalism and elites, and institutionalism have been used as key foci in problematising the Palestinian national movement, the many faces of legitimacy have been taken for granted. It is clear that there are a number of different areas that could be developed for a framework of national liberation movement leadership, but I propose that the classical political concept of legitimacy intersects all of these. There is a need to go further and break down leadership ‘legitimacy’ into a relational process of seeking legitimisation within the context of the dynamic national movement processes. In doing so, this allows the space different forms of legitimacy to emerge beyond the Weberian and a subsequent further extension to examine the role of the national movement processes upon processes of legitimisation. This issue is highly relevant, especially for later analysis of political context and relationships in which the relationality of processes is central. For example, it is argued of Hamas that “the
relationship between the state and armed group can no longer be understood as zero-sum or oppositional ... [as] there is a strong link between political and social identities and political practices” (Podder, 2017, p. 697). In developing the concept of legitimacy through a relational approach, it can be moved beyond the established formal political leadership realm and relate directly to the many areas contributing to national movement leadership scholarship.

Because legitimacy has been viewed as ‘internal’, when conceptualising the relationships it can be drawn as such:

![Diagram of Legitimacy as a linear process]

**Figure 1. Legitimacy as a linear process**

The first task is to expand the understandings of legitimacy that currently exist for the bottom box, in order to be reflexive to the Palestinian case in which leaderships were emerging alongside the each of the national movement processes - as will be done in chapter five. The second task is rethinking the relationships presented in the above figure to then shift to be reflexive to the current context of the Palestinian movement, in which there are concurrent national movement processes creating points of tension for leadership and legitimacy. While redrawing these relationships will be informed by the empirical analysis for the Palestinian case, it is a relational approach that will open the space for transforming understandings of legitimacy for the recent period of the Palestinian national movement.
2.4. Engaging a Relational Approach to Leadership

Uhl-Bien and Ospina (2012, p. 575) acknowledge that the relational approach is exceptionally difficult and indeed that irony that relationality is “the greatest challenge of relational leadership.” To find the middle ground requires ‘cherry picking’ ontological elements and applying these tenets to a theoretical literature – in this case when political leadership theory incurs a relational approach. Before addressing the question of how to do this, the use of theory must always begin with the question of ‘why do this?’ Relationality holds connections and processes at its core – elements that I believe are central to analysing Palestinian leadership in an ever-changing environment filled with contesting claims. A relational approach opens up the scope for examining leadership beyond the traditional conceptions and boundaries. However, relationality is still a relatively new approach. “Bringing relationality to the leadership field means viewing the invisible threads that connect actors engaged in leadership processes and relationships as part of the reality to be studied” (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012, p. xx).

Though the approach has predominantly featured in sociology, when it comes to national movements and more specifically multiple leaderships, relationality can contribute much to the orientation of these studies. Indeed, specifically writing on state-building and legitimacy, Andersen has critiqued that:

> The almost exclusive reliance on an ontology of entities and their attributes hampers other foci on practices and relations as constituting both the “inside” and the “outside” in state-building, and on legitimacy as important in its own right as ongoing public contestations, rather than as an epiphenomenon.

The relational approach will allow us to centre the focus on the relations underlying legitimacy.

The developments in the leadership literature vis-à-vis relationality have already been outlined, but there is a strong empirical focus in this thesis which requires more than the developments of theoretical re-orientation; the relational approach merged with leadership theory must provide the grounds for analysis of the Palestinian national movement leadership. The question now remains of how the relational approach will be utilised within this thesis as there are many avenues available within leadership, legitimacy, and the Palestinian movement. As with any approach, when taken in its purest and fullest sense relationality becomes demobilising, as there would be no feasible end point for research – there would always be a new set of relations to account for and a new level of analysis. Therefore, utilising relationality requires boundaries; it is not necessary to apply relationalism to the entirety of a research project both in theoretical and empirical terms.
**Selecting the Boundaries of the Relational Approach**

Reification is a core issue for consideration in using a relational approach. Ascribing words, labels, concepts to the assessment of real world processes becomes problematic in imbuing stability; in writing something down, this freezes the process at a certain point and risks a relative stability taking an essentialist nature and then becoming an assumption built into research. Patrick Jackson (2018) presents arrestation as a means of avoiding the reification pitfalls. Arrestation is to note the relative stabilities without these then becoming core assumptions of the research. There are arrangements, not structures, observed in points of arrestation and to identify these empirically need not be reification. As with the other elements of the relational approach, this is a difficult balancing act when it comes to implementation and how this is expressed. Abbott (1995, p. 863) states that “previously constituted actors enter interaction but have no ability to traverse the interaction inviolable. They ford it with difficulty and in it many disappear. What comes out are new actors, new entities, new relations among old parts.” An equilibrium must be found between the last sentence and practicalities of research, because the continued use of names and labels risks implying stability over time. But rather, in the case of the leadership groups involved, self-ascribed labels are kept for the sake of clarity and instead the analysis must make clear how change is continually taking place through transactions within and amongst the leadership groups. There is not a static structure to be assumed within the Palestinian national movement. The processes and interactions of processes of the leadership groups is the key focus. Indeed at the core of the research are these ‘new relations among old parts’.

Relationality operates at the meso analytical level and thus it becomes a question of determining where the ‘cut in’ point should be. What is the critical area of the research where a relational lens should be applied? Delimiting the degree to which relationality is applied will always be open for criticisms from both ends of the spectrum – if too limited, why bother with it at all; if too much, ontological cohesion risks curtailing practical analysis. The relational approach is used as an explanatory tool in that it seeks to provide a means of new analysis for other theoretical areas. Therefore, there are two cut-in points for relationality in the research: political leadership and legitimacy. The relational approach is applied to legitimacy in order to expand our understandings of Palestinian leadership. This means that strategic essentialism will be accepted outside of these two areas. For example, concepts such as a national movement or state will be utilised without undergoing a relational analysis. The strategic application does not mean that where essentialist language appears there are essentialist assumptions built

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4 Using an essentialist approach in a strategic manner for specific areas of the research so that a spiral of constructionism does not paralyse the analysis.
into the research, but rather that one must ‘pick your battles’ or risk having the research become debilitated by negotiating language.

Along with conceptual limitations, it is also necessary to discuss the temporal boundary specification of the relationality within the study. The approach of this research is to build up to the engaging a relational analysis. This means that relationality is not explicitly invoked in the initial analytical chapter examining the historical foundations of Palestinian legitimacies. In the historical assessment we can already begin to expand conceptualisations of legitimacy that reflect the Palestinian case. This does not preclude the emergence of relational links being found, but it is not the central analytical lens. This analytical work (chapter five) contributes to the expanding understandings of legitimacy in: a theoretical capacity shifting beyond the existing typology; and in a critical empirical capacity to provide the basis for moving beyond this approach as it hits its historical limits in explanatory ability.

What is important to note with historical period and relationality is that the analysis can only ever be viewed from the point in time at which it was written. For example, statements from interviewees that reference historical events are actually perceptions from the recent period and thus analysis must account for this. Hence, there is already a natural inclination to apply the relational approach to the 2016–2017 period in which the fieldwork took place from a methodological point of view. However, I also argue that relationality is bound to this period because, as the following chapters will demonstrate, this is a critical point of overlapping processes in which a new means of analysing such is required and in which a relational approach is best equipped to do so. Given how the previous discussion of the relational approach has outlined its potential complications, application must be delimited to the area best suited and in most analytical need. Finally, the limitation of the relational approach also allows the identification of how the approach influences the analytics of the research; there is demonstration of where and how the approach sheds new light on Palestinian leadership.

2.4.1. A Relational Approach to Legitimacy

As written in the earlier section reviewing approaches to leadership, the constructivist approach informing relationism seeks to deconstruct understandings of leadership. I propose that this must involve deconstructing understandings of legitimacy – a key element in examining leadership. Drawing upon a relational ontological approach provides a means of developing understandings of legitimacy – namely internal. The beginning of section 2.3 premised that perception underlies legitimacy. In order to examine legitimacy, it is therefore an examination of perception that is required. The relational
approach involves including multiple perspectives; where there are multiple perspectives, it is likely we can find multiple internal legitimacies. Invoking relationality allows the reconceptualisation of legitimacy that moves beyond expanding forms of legitimacy; it focuses analysis on dynamic processes, of which legitimacy is one, in order to better comprehend leadership.

It is important to firstly acknowledge that relationalism filters across to conceptualisations of power. Bourdieu stated that he saw power as “relations of force” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 229), and Elias (as quoted in Emirbayer, 1997, p. 291) explicitly argues that power is “transformed from a concept of substance to a concept of relationship.” Mattern (2005, p. 590) also echoes these views on power, stating that is a social relationship. This view of power means that it is not attributable to actors in themselves, but rather the constructions of relationships and the subsequent patterns that may be observed (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 292). This research does not focus on power in explicit terms, as power is dissolved into the examination of relational legitimacy. Power is figurations of relationships, and since relationality can be difficult to both grasp and apply, this research further breaks this down analytically to the concept of legitimacy.

The use of concepts, such as legitimacy, has been examined through a relational perspective. Writing on historical sociology, Somers (1995, p. 136) states that there has been a shift away from concepts being viewed as single categories and towards the assumption of concepts as “embedded in complex relational networks that are both intersubjective and public.” She expands that:

> Concepts cannot be defined on their own as single ontological entities; rather, the meaning of one concept can be deciphered only in terms of its ‘place’ in relation to the other concepts in its web (Levi-Strauss [1964] 1969; Polanyi, [1944] 1959; White 1992). What appears to be autonomous categories defined by their attributes are reconceived more accurately as historically shifting sets of relationships that are contingently stabilised.

(Somers, 1995, p. 136)

In examining concepts the idea of contingent stability is repeated. Concepts are relational and thus shift over time as relationships do, but there are moments of relative stability which provide the grounds for an analytical distillation. From this perspective we can view legitimacy as a changing set of relationships in which points of relative stability allow us to analyse those intersecting relations.

Continuing to build on the review of relationality, we continue to see the foundations of how it can provide a useful approach to legitimacy. Examining G.
H. Mead, Joas deduces that values do not have an essentialist property, existing independently. He continues that values are also “not merely the product of the subjective evaluation of objects which are essentially neutral with regard to this evaluation. Rather, says Mead, the evaluation is the result of an ‘interaction’ of subject, object, organism and environment.” (Joas, 1985, p. 131). Emirbayer (1997, pp. 309-310) further expounds that values are:

by-products of actors’ engagement with one another in ambiguous and challenging circumstances, which emerge when individuals experience a discordance between the claims of multiple normative commitments. Problematic situations of this sort become resolved only when actors reconstruct the relational contexts within which they are embedded, and in the process, transform their own values and themselves.

Now instead of thinking about the concept of values in the above quotes, what if the subject at hand were legitimacy? Legitimacy thus becomes relationally embedded; a circumstance of continual reconstructions. Furthermore, leadership groups must themselves continually engage in a process of reconstruction in order to resolve tensions arising from multiplicity.

In her relational approach, Mattern (2005) expands explicitly on legitimacy. She builds from Risse to construct legitimacy as a core process (one of attraction) and that this is itself a socially constructed ‘reality’. This culminates in the view that realities of legitimacy are therefore cultures, and cultures are “intersubjectively constructed matrices of beliefs through which a population signifies things, people and ideas” (Mattern, 2005, p. 596). This approach complicates legitimacy far beyond the identified current conceptualisations. If legitimacy realities are cultures, and cultures are intersubjectively constructed matrices, then through deduction it can be simplified that realities of legitimacies are intersubjectively constructed matrices. The end of Mattern’s quote and the construction of values above demonstrates a link back to original conception of political leadership centred upon reconstructing social order; relationalism and constructions of leadership and legitimacy begin to reinforce each other. Podder (2017, p. 687) affirms this relational approach to legitimacy stating that the relational approach focuses “on practices and relations constituting how legitimacy is constructed...” for her study of armed groups in conflict situations.

Möller and Schierenbeck (2014, p. 11) emphasise the importance of employing the concept of legitimacy in assessing relational leadership:

Successful nation building depends on whether the national leadership receives recognition from followers of their political
guidance on behalf of the nation. This acknowledgement of leadership can be achieved primarily on the basis of sources of legitimacy other than the legal. In contrast, successful state building depends on the establishment of a political leadership on the basis of formal institutions and positions. This creates a dilemma for political leaders at nascent statehood, in the sense that the informal sources of their success during national mobilisation are not necessarily sufficient or appropriate to facilitate democratic state building.

There are two issues in this statement that can be examined. The first regards the assumption of ‘the national leadership’. What if national leadership can be found in multiple sources? Of course there is in most cases a designated recognised representative organisation. But in the case of Palestine, should we then limit discussion to the PLO in nation building, and include the PA in state building? The second issue is related in the question of sources of legitimacy. Does the general reliance of the literature upon a small typology accurately capture perceived forms of legitimacy? In expanding how we conceive of national leadership, this requires rethinking how we conceive of legitimacy.

Podder (2017, p. 690) incurred a similar line of questioning in her examination of armed groups using relational legitimacy, with “plural authority structures” requiring practices to be negotiated. However, I think the process of seeking legitimacy can be examined for those both inside and outside of formal authority structures; there is a two-way interaction between leaderships that affects the legitimacy process for all involved – not just those incurring established governing networks. Podder was able to conclude that the relational approach “offers key insights into the process of construction and deconstruction of armed group legitimacy vis-à-vis key domestic, national and international audiences.” I now wish to expand the scope for the process of legitimacy construction to include the multiple types of groups we see within the Palestinian national movement, limiting the relations to only domestic in order to make this feasible. Furthermore, within existing relational approaches to legitimacy, the relationships in question have been those of inter-group ‘connections’ – both leaderships and followers. These are extremely important, but I believe the relational element can be extended further both to intra-group and so that the role of all of these relationships are taken as one part of the process of constructing legitimacy.

In this thesis legitimacy is taken as the ‘commonplace’ to be examined. A commonplace can be defined as a weakly shared notion that then can be examined through actual articulations (Jackson, 2018). As there are no essential properties of commonplaces, rather infinite interpretations, the focus shifts to
how the commonplace is used and the actions produced in the relational context. A relational approach would encourage examining the deployment of legitimisation, i.e. the public justification of a course of action (Jackson, 2018). All of the leadership groups use the word legitimacy with loosely shared foundations of this commonplace. However, the commonplace is interpreted and utilised in different ways by these groups based off the constellation of relations and corresponding perceptions; the processes and perceptions that underpin the concept of legitimacy are contested.

**Employing Legitimacy to Analyse Palestinian Leadership**

Legitimacy is used in two ways in my research. In the first instance where the relational approach is not the dominant analytical lens, legitimacy is used as a noun in the examination of the foundational legitimacies for the Palestinian leadership groups. However, this research still takes a constructionist approach to building ‘types of internal Palestinian legitimacy’ during this chapter and does not ignore the implications of relationality. Leadership is a process and performance (and often by multiple leaderships), therefore using temporal binding allows the identification of different forms of legitimacy at different periods to appear relatively stable and thus extracted. Identification of such are the result of analysing existing material in combination with interpretations of fieldwork interviews. This approach to legitimacy in chapter five will expand conceptualisations of legitimacy for the Palestinian case. However, as we transition to the more recent period of the national movement, this approach hits its limitations in developing understandings of the processes underlying the perceived legitimacy crisis. In situations of divided and multiple leaderships, “formulaic approaches to legitimacy are difficult to implement” and instead it is a relational approach that “offers flexibility in analysing the important relationships and how these shape legitimacy over time” (Podder, 2017, p. 701).

Legitimacy is a constant negotiation of powers and perceptions and is therefore dynamic and multiple in nature. The legitimisation process can be arrested at defined points to note relative stabilities of what appears to be forms of legitimacy. Relationality recontextualises fractured leadership to the dynamics of legitimisation between claimants and the Palestinian national movement processes. Examining leadership processes across temporal periods at the meso-level provides the needed ‘cut-in’ points for analysing any apparent stability of legitimacy. In this sense, temporal binding is instrumental not ontological. What is important to note, is that the meaning the analysis extracts is never historical; this research is situated in current commonplaces and constellations that cannot be avoided or reversed to present a true historical account. Relationality reverses assumptions of stability, instead presuming motion with the premise of
explaining relative stability. This is a logical approach for the case of Palestinian leadership where stability cannot be not taken for granted and points of crisis where renegotiations are seen to occur frequently. Therefore ‘impressions of stability’ become an interesting point of focus in the process of leadership within Palestine vis-à-vis contestations of legitimacy.

The second instance transforms legitimacy into the relational process of legitimisation. This occurs for the 2016-2017 period in which a relational approach is utilised as discussed above. In order to move beyond points of identified legitimacies during bound periods, the process of seeking legitimisation is crucial to deepening understandings of Palestinian leadership in recent times. Shifting legitimacy into process of legitimisation opens the space for questioning how the processes of the national movement influence legitimisation in an ongoing dynamic interaction. When we focus on process, this shifts the examination to centre upon what underlies the constructing and reconstructing i.e. the interacting processes in legitimisation. Engaging a relational approach to legitimacy, and indeed leadership, allows the points of intersection amongst these processes (and those occurring alongside) to be incorporated into an analysis that builds a needed depth on the current Palestinian leadership situation. The relational approach provides a means of not only working with the cited complexity, but breaking it down into analysable form.

The iterative approach is critical here in being able to develop a relational approach to legitimacy alongside the empirical material. So while I have introduced ‘legitimisation’ here, it is in the later analytical sections that I will demonstrate the value of this for the Palestinian case. Switching to a process of legitimisation becomes necessary if we are to be able to examine ‘legitimacies’ when there are concurrent national movement processes, as there are in the contemporary phases of the Palestinian movement. Additionally, approaching legitimacy as a process of legitimisation allows us to access another critical process that occurs alongside and is necessary to understanding complexities and fluctuations – delegitimisation. Delegitimisation is not synonymous with illegitimacy. The former is a process of varying degrees of loss of once-held legitimacy; the latter is the state of absolute lack of legitimacy. Writing on social movements, Kelman (2001, p. 58) explicates that:

"Processes of legitimization or delegitimization are societal phenomena, which are caused and propelled by forces operating throughout the society and spread through a variety of channels of communication and influence. However, they are generally set into motion – or at least accelerated – by the actions or pronouncements
of authorities of one or another kind, such as political, judicial, religious, institutional, medical, or scientific authorities.

Furthermore, the process is relational in that “legitimization and delegitimization processes generally operate in tandem. As a policy or practice (such as South African apartheid) loses its legitimacy, a previously illegitimate leader and movement (such as Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress) gain legitimacy” (Kelman, 2001, p. 58). Therefore, it is useful to consider the process of delegitimisation alongside that of legitimisation; one group’s engagement with legitimisation does not occur in isolation from the processes of the others.

Were we to keep the examination to legitimacy in a more traditional sense this would limit us to viewing it as a property. This essentialist approach does not allow for the incorporation of the above tandem, as ‘delegitimacy’ is not a state that can exist, which is why illegitimacy is the present partner concept for legitimacy. Currently leaderships are imbued with having legitimacy or not; having delegitimacy is not possible. In analysing processes of legitimisation, not only does this allow us to examine the occurrences within these processes, but it encompasses the tandem of delegitimisation. Within a relational approach there is potential for the legitimisation-delegitimisation tandem to occur at multiple levels and this is critical for analysing the intersecting relations of the Palestinian movement. This will be returned to in chapter seven where I examine the relational processes of legitimisation in-depth for the Palestinian case. Development of the legitimisation-delegitimisation tandem will occur alongside the empirical material so that we can better understand both the Palestinian case and what this tandem approach offers as an analytical approach for the concept of legitimacy. This empirical analysis will determine the shaping of how legitimacy relations can be reconceptualised.

2.5. Conclusion

A relational approach holds both important and interesting potential for leadership research. The limitations of traditional approaches to political leadership are being increasingly recognised in the field. Relationality, as the name suggests, shifts the unit of analysis to relationships and the construction of the ‘ships’ that feature in the terminology; the focus is on the collective dimensions of leadership. As Ospina (2012, p. xvi) argues, relational leadership

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5 Delegitimisation is not used in the sociopsychological sense as a deliberate negative categorisation of one group (as also features in the Israel-Palestine dynamics – see Oren & Bar-Tel, 2007).
can be seen as operating in-between the dyads of the individual/collective and agency/structure – the cut-in at the meso-level. Of course, this has its challenges in merging a seeming theoretical expanse with a concrete analysis. Relationality is taken as the underlying ontology for reframing the approach towards leadership and the related concept of legitimacy. Leadership theory needs to ask new questions of leadership in order to garner analysis that incorporates the interactions and relations that shape perceptions.

Leadership and legitimacy are social constructs, therefore context becomes important in developing and expanding how these are interpreted – there are no fixed typologies to cover all. External legitimacies have an undeniable impact upon political leadership and national liberation movements. But as the focus of this research is the internal dynamics of national movement leadership, there is a corresponding narrowing of interest to internal legitimacy. Both external and Weberian forms of legitimacy have received considerable attention; competing forms of internal sources of legitimacy have not been scrutinised to the same degree. As has been demonstrated, in the absence of elected representation, internal legitimacy is extremely evasive in the literature. However, an absence of elections is not synonymous with an absence of internal legitimacy. Using an approach that draws from perceptions means a framework with a discrete number of forms internal legitimacy is not possible. But what is possible, and furthermore much needed, is an expansion of the ways internal legitimacy is conceived of beyond the current democratic statist approach.

The relational approach allows me to question how there have come to be meanings of legitimacy in Palestinian leadership, and furthermore, how these meanings are reproduced. It is in the relative stabilities that legitimacies are captured, but the more prevalent periods of instability are reshaping the meanings. Meanings and claims are always ongoing performances and lack an essential ‘truth’. Tangible through statements and actions, these performances take place in a relational context with connections and transactions and therefore a relational approach can allow us to probe processes of legitimisation. Connections need to be unpacked in order to be able to analyse where and how the transactions occur. Such demonstrations never occur in isolation; a leadership group is not speaking about their own legitimacy in a vacuum. Furthermore, in addition to leadership groups interacting with each other, leadership is also a process interacting with the processes associated with the national movement. Through a relational approach we can access the intersections of processes and thus reorient and expand the means of analysing the complexities of Palestinian national movement leadership.
3. Methodology

3.1. Approach

The topic of Palestinian leadership, as with Israel/Palestine more broadly, presents a set of interesting and related methodological challenges for the researcher. Pearlman (2011, p. 3) succinctly captures both the difficulties and possibilities of studying Palestinian politics:

The Palestinian case is anomalous in many respects, such as its diasporic dispersal, complex interpenetrations by Middle East regional politics, and attraction of vast attention from across the world. Compounding this is the particular intractability of the conflict between Israeli and Palestinian claims to a nation-state in the same land. Given its peculiarities, much of the research on comparative conflict processes does not address the Israeli-Palestinian situation. At the same time, the literature specifically on this case tends to fall in the realms of journalism, history, and policy analysis more than in that of the social sciences. These tendencies forfeit valuable opportunities to scrutinize the Palestinian experience for generalizable insight.

The most recent approaches to Palestinian leadership have largely featured these same problems. We have already seen how this has limited understandings of legitimacy for the Palestinian national movement and thus forfeited contributions to the theoretical field from this case.

The qualitative method encapsulates meaning, process and context (Devine, 2002, p. 199), all of which are foci of my research. There are many ways to approach case studies, as discussed below, but simplified this research takes elements from both intrinsic and instrumental methods of case studies. An intrinsic case study seeks understanding of the case in itself; an instrumental case study aims to inform an issue or theory (Punch, 2014, p. 121). This research seeks to better understand the Palestinian national movement leadership, but also to understand it with regards to developing leadership theory. Engaging with both intrinsic and instrumental methods through an iterative approach allows greater development of each, as one informs the advancement of the other. The goal is not to generalise from the Palestinian case study in itself, but for transferability of the development of theory in the analysis of the case study. It is Lund’s (2014, p. 226) concept of ‘resonance with other cases’ that research aims for, in that these cases need not have exact similarities in order to speak to each other. For example, the Kurdish nationalist movement could be one case where the theoretical findings of this research could resonate in understanding a complex
movement with multifaceted leadership which traditional notions of legitimacy cannot capture. Rather than following case similarities, “it may be the difference in contexts that make the particular qualities of organization, dynamics, and relations resonate and be mutually illuminating” (Lund, 2014, p. 226); context is central to the relational approach in developing understandings.

Though the conceptual tools are drawn from established literature, an inductive process allows a re-examination of the meanings of the concepts. The concepts are not tested as there is no right or wrong interpretation of them, rather meanings are fluid and rich. My analytical approach holds that:

> Concepts illuminate certain dynamics, processes, and relations, while they occlude others. Hence, concepts are politically charged by the simple fact that they orient our inquiry. This requires explicit reflexivity so that the reader is made privy to our generalizations, abstractions, and theorizations.

(Lund, 2014, p. 226)

The analysis of concepts provides the bridge between the statements and observations of the research material and the abstractions that are subsequently generated. This research views concepts as relationally embedded (Emirbayer, 1997). From examining different perceptions of concepts, the analysis can transfer and contribute to expanding the scholarship on the use of the concepts in new situations as the meanings both within and outside of the case and constantly reconstructed.

Palestine presents a case study that is surrounded by conditions for which any framework is unlikely to provide a perfect fit. A post-colonial perspective would hold that application of Western theory is an inappropriate approach to studying this non-Western phenomenon. The current form of the Middle East is a product of colonialism and borders that European states constructed. Edward Said argued that the study of the East can never be objective when produced by those embedded in colonialism, and even the categorisation of the East and West aims to polarise the two (Said, 2003). Theory must be adaptable and tailored to the Palestinian environment, as to impose the opposite would be a misrepresentation of Palestinian leadership. An iterative approach between empirics and theory seeks to have the Palestinian case inform theory in order to avoid this one-way theory application. Additionally, objectivity is not the goal of this research as that it is my view that this is unattainable. Rather, an acknowledgement of biases is more important than an attempt to eliminate them. This is derived from Schlenker’s (1982, p. 205) view that “a bias in the interpretation and explanation of events is a subjective tendency to prefer one interpretation over another; such
an interpretation may or may not be an error according to some ‘objective’ criterion for assessing the event.” The BDS movement in particular is described as a “qualitatively new stage” in the history of Palestinian popular resistance (Barghouti, 2011, p. 61). While qualitative research is never perfect in practice, a quantitative approach would not provide the nuanced analysis required to examine the complexities of the relationships between the state and non-state actors involved in Palestinian leadership. Therefore, while subjectivities are inherent, it is my goal to make them transparent.

Conducting research in conflict zones raises an additional field of issues to be considered, as will be expanded upon in the ethics section. However, there is a larger question of why research? In a place like Palestine which has had an abundance of foreign research conducted upon it, what good does one more do? Wood (2006, p. 383) reflects that:

In carrying out research in conflict zones, the researcher inevitably comes to wonder why the research is worth pursuing over purely humanitarian relief work ... Some researchers take the long view and argue that research is nonetheless justified because a sound understanding of conflict is essential to successful intervention and the recreation of social fabric (Smyth, 2000, pp. 3-4). I agree with that but note that my own belief in the value of what I was doing was sustained by the ongoing endorsement of the project by rural residents willing to spend many hours telling me the history of their families and communities.

I, too, have had similar questions and always approached my fieldwork with the acknowledgement that there has been a never ceasing request for interviews about Palestinian politics. But like Wood, I received both generosity and affirmations from those I interviewed as they felt this was an important issue to be examined. In the introductory chapter I quoted Tamari who critiqued the inadequacy of theoretical development on the Palestinian case. I cannot speak for Palestinians, and do not wish to, but this research can provide a space for discussions around political leadership and legitimacy to be built that can contribute to this underdeveloped element in the study of Palestine.

3.2. Case

The use of a case has implications. Abbott (1992, p. 65) states that the case/narrative approach is “thus a move first to a new way of regarding cases – as fuzzy realities with autonomously defined complex properties – and a move
second to seeing cases as engaged in a perpetual dialogue with their environment.” In line with this, Hull (1975) adds that cases continue in time which allows us to also acknowledge previous states during fixed periods (periodisation). This approach aligns with the relational approach of this research in both the assumption of constant interactions and the ability to ‘cut-in’ at specific analytical points within the case. Dumez (2015, p. 47) states that in this situation critical questions must be asked:

Where exactly are located the boundaries of my case? Should I expand my field of study, or restrict it? How far should I go back in time? What should I study in my case, and how? How to bring together the elements that I find?

This is a mirroring of many of the questions and challenges posed by the relational approach in the previous chapter – all of which directly relate to the research focus of this thesis.

In order to begin clarifying the case and its scope, two areas must be identified: the empirical and the theoretical categorisations (Dumez, 2015, p. 48). These two areas relate to Punch’s (2014) aforementioned intrinsic-instrumental binary. The empirical refers to other empirical cases with which the case in question may be compared. For this research, the empirical case is political leadership (of Palestine). Political leadership is not a discrete and obvious event, instead falling under the category of an “aggregated and abstract” case in that there are no self-presenting boundaries and is a construct (Lund, 2014, p. 224). While political leadership is the overarching category, the areas of interest in the case further narrow the scope. This research focuses on leadership legitimacy within a national movement. This is where the theoretical categorisation begins to enter. Identifying what ‘the case is a case of’ largely follows the completion of the analytical sections of the research – where the material and theory intersect. Already elements of multiple political leaderships and legitimacies enter the fray and the subsequent analytical chapters will develop the theoretical side of the case.
Lund (2014, p. 225) provides a quadratic analytical matrix for case types:

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<tr>
<th>Analytical Matrix</th>
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<td>Concrete</td>
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**Figure 2.** Lund’s case-type matrix

This research aligns with the combination of specific and abstract. The study is limited to fixed parameters of Palestinian political leadership but focuses on constructed concepts. Where political leadership is a ‘general’ case, political leadership legitimacy in a national movement is a specification. However, as with most matrices, Lund acknowledges the dimensions are not discrete but rather provide a workable spectrum. For social science research he states it is the “generalizing, abstracting, and theorizing” that become important for cases (Lund, 2014, p. 226). There are multiple purposes for cases and, moving beyond the descriptive empirics, the central one here is “to redefine a concept, in identifying its range of validity, its contexts of application” (Dumez, 2015, p. 54).

### 3.3. Method

The central method of empirical data collection for this research is interviews. Interviewing provides information outside of the experiences of the researcher and gives insight into other people’s environments, perceptions and interpretations (Weiss, 1994). The interview is a two-way process of questioning and listening and is not ‘neutral’ in that it is created by two people. Therefore, interviews produce “situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes [that are] influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer, including race, class, ethnicity, and gender” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 47). The interview methodology builds into the relational foundations of the research. Although relationality is not concerned with individuals in and of themselves, individuals are “constituted within ‘circles of recognition’, while interests (a secondary construct) ‘grow out of different positions in the[se] networks and circles’ (Pizzorno, 1991, p.219)” (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 296). Interviews with individuals provides expressions of recognitions and relationships. The
analytical focus is not on individual motivations, a’ la rational choice, but the figuration of relations in which the individual is situated in which they have made their statements. This is reflective of Fletcher’s (2012, p. 84) belief, outlined in the previous chapter, that “Constructionist dimensions of leadership focus on understanding macro level contextual forces that operate on micro level interactions in which actors wittingly or unwittingly enact or “do” leadership.” Interviews are one means of translating these relations into a more analytically tangible form.

Given that I do not speak Arabic, this made participant observation and relying solely upon documents inaccessible. Instead, interviews allowed ‘thick’ information and specific probing of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of leadership organisation and interactions. As this research focuses on those involved with specific areas of Palestinian leadership, surveys were unlikely to yield either a high enough response rate or in-depth answers. Email and post are not effective means of communication in Palestine; information is most readily available in-person. Though it may appear that the selection of the interview method is a process of elimination, interviews are indeed advocated by related research fields as highly constructive:

Relational leadership exploring structuring would benefit from qualitative approaches that ‘uncover the invisible assumptions that generate social structures’ (Bradbury & Lichenstein, 2000, p. 557). Overall, this type of work benefits from intensive ethnographic and interview-based methodologies (Barley, 1986; Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2004).

(Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 672)

The use of interviews is therefore a combination of both practical limitations and the actual suitability of the interview method.

While no interview is completely unstructured, the format differs depending on the purpose of the research and therefore interview. This research utilised semi-structured interviews in order to provide a guide of areas to cover for the interviewer (myself), particularly regarding the conceptual focus, whilst also allowing the development of a natural flow of conversation. Semi-structured interviews are frequently used as a sole data source in qualitative research, using pre-set open-ended questions and then following up or probing in reaction to the emerging dialogue (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). This is not to say that the semi-structure approach mitigates the issues that arise with the context and very act of interviewing:
Ignoring social differences neglects the fact that the respective social roles always shape the interview process and that the act of interviewing is invasive. For this reason, reflexivity on the part of the researcher is essential. In this process, the researcher gives thought to his or her own social role and that of the interviewee, acknowledging power differentials between them and incorporating reciprocity into the creation of knowledge.

(DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 317)

Such issues are highly applicable to this research where the interviewer is a young, Western female academic (and thereby an outsider) and the interviewees are mostly middle-aged Palestinian men. The Palestinian territories are a Muslim majority. However, particularly in Ramallah, a very moderate form of Islam is practised and is unlikely to have an impact upon both interview access and content as previous experience indicated that I would be treated as an honoured guest.

The questions of power and creation of knowledge are again raised with regards to language. English is both the preferred interview and publishing language of this researcher and the academic environment more broadly. English was unlikely to be interviewees’ first language and therefore a judgement was to be made by both parties as to which languages would be spoken in the interviews. The use of a translator was a possibility but not used as that also would have entailed a new set of issues to be considered such as: identifying the act translation in the research; who translates; and how far the translator goes into analytical process (Temple & Young, 2004). Transcription of interviews also presents issues and these risk amplification where the interview is conducted in the researcher’s first language, but interviewees’ secondary language:

Transcribing tape-recorded interviews into text is a process that remains relatively unexplored ... Transcribers often have difficulties capturing the spoken word in text form because of sentence structure, use of quotations, omissions and mistaking words or phrases for others. Because people often speak in run-on sentences, transcribers are forced to make judgement calls.

(DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 318)

In general, sample sizes in qualitative research are smaller than those of quantitative. Dworkin (2012, p. 1319) explains that this is because:
Qualitative research methods are often concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or are focused on meaning (and heterogeneities in meaning) – which are often centered on the how and why of a particular issue, process, situation, subculture, scene or set of social interactions. In-depth interview work is not as concerned with making generalizations to a larger population of interest and does not tend to rely on hypothesis testing but rather is more inductive and emergent in its process.

For the focus of this research there is a natural sample size limitation, however qualitative interviews also often operate under the concept of saturation. The law of diminishing returns sees that the more interviews conducted beyond a certain point, the less new material obtained (Mason, 2010). However, claims of saturation by the researcher are subjective. Given the research focus at hand, saturation becomes tempered by questions of access and availability. Saturation can be effected by uncontrollable factors such as selection criteria, budget, timeline, stratifiers, and experience (Dworkin, 2012, p. 1319). This is echoed by Morse who states that several factors must be accounted for, including: data quality, scope of study; nature of topic; study design; and, shadowed data (Morse, 2000, pp. 3-5).

The concept of saturation applies to both the actors and the themes. This research targeted specific individuals and required physical presence in the West Bank for the interviews; saturation was less likely to be achieved. Indeed, saturation of actors was not the goal of the fieldwork; it is the themes that hold importance for the issue of data analysis. There is value in concurrent qualitative collection and analysis. This allows the researcher to deepen their understanding and subsequently develop both sampling and questions. When no further developments occur, saturation has been reached (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 317). Given the geographical and practical limitations of the interview method in this case, it is analytical saturation that is a greater driver of the methodology. It is the repetition of analytical themes in the research material that signifies the diminishing returns associated with approaching relative saturation and indeed this occurred within my fieldwork.

This is a qualitative study examining the leadership dynamics of the Palestinian national liberation movement, with a particular focus on informal leadership and the BDS movement in the first round, and set formal political organisations in the second. This provided pre-set participant selection parameters as my research involves individuals who are politically active in Palestinian politics and the BDS movement. Selection occurred through an informal process similar to the ‘snowballing’ approach (Merriam, 2009). The first period of any fieldwork involves active networking in order to establish additional contacts and identify
potential interview subjects. Selection then occurs consecutively with the interview process as new participants are identified through network building. It is also important for the first period of fieldwork to identify ‘gatekeepers’ to the political system, contacts, and potential interview subjects, and build a relationship with these people in order to obtain access. In this initial period of fieldwork, personal contacts were drawn upon in order to broaden networks and contact those of interest to this research as outlined above.

The interviews included the role of interviewees and their reflections. The interviews focused on perceptions within and amongst leadership groups and how the interviewees interpret the commonplace of legitimacy. Both historical and recent reflections are of interest, with the acknowledgement that the ‘historical’ is expressed from the present in line with the relational approach. Questions were set as open as possible in order to allow the participant control of their answers and the direction of the result of the research. The material from the interviews was aggregated into general themes to be analysed. Quotes from the interviews were used in order to strengthen certain themes and provide emphasis in presenting of research results. When interviews are the methodology employed, the use of quotes is highly promoted:

Because the fuller responses obtained by the qualitative study cannot be easily categorised, their analysis will rely less on counting and correlating and more on interpretation, summary, and integration. The findings of the qualitative study will be supported more by quotations and case descriptions than by tables or statistical measures.

(Weiss, 1994, p. 3)

The degree to which quotes would form the basis for analysis was dependent upon who is interviewed and how the interviews went – both elements which had uncertainties. However, as the material from the interviewees was equally well-articulated and illuminating, long quotes became the foci of analysis. The use of long quotes contributes in two ways: it presents perceptions in the interviewees’ own words; and demonstrates where the subsequent interpretation and analysis was derived from. There is an acknowledgement of how the researcher and their choice produces one out of many possible interpretations.

Additionally, primary and secondary sources are used to strengthen the research where required. These may include, but are not limited to: official reports, academic articles, speeches and other official materials. Such material is used to gain a broader perspective on the political situation and leadership organisations. For the periods of Palestinian leadership that fall outside of the fieldwork,
secondary sources provide the main basis of the historical analysis. They also complement the 2016-2017 period in which original material is highly drawn upon, in acknowledging that there are always areas not covered within the fieldwork. Primarily utilising qualitative material and sources for this, secondary analysis can function as a means to “investigate new or additional research questions” (Heaton, 2008, p. 35). However, when it comes to relying on secondary sources for historical analysis Kipping, Wadhwan & Bucheli (2014) write that there will always be questions remaining about how and why material was collected/analysed and in comparison to other potential sources. Furthermore, even if robust material is available, “researchers would face the challenge of understanding the motives and meanings of actors and actions in the past in ways that avoid imposing assumptions and categories from the present” (Kipping, Wadhwan, & Bucheli, 2014, p. 306).

While it is my approach that researcher bias can never be eliminated, there is of course the need to minimise this where possible and acknowledge where not. Additionally, the relational approach argues that it is only possible to examine the past from the standing point of the present. That is to say, that the past is always viewed through the current perspective as it is not possible to undo developments and lose the gift of hindsight. As Lindholm Schulz (1999, p. 19) wrote of her work on Palestine:

Texts (including the interviews) are reproduced in the process of reading and interpretation, and not only the context in which a text is written, but the context in which it is read, contributes to the production of meaning of the text.

In order to engage with historical sources Kipping et al. (2014) propose validation, triangulation and iteration be employed where possible. The latter specifically highlights the context in which texts where written and situating them within this. Therefore, the use of such secondary sources is critical to engaging with the historical periods of Palestinian leadership, but it is always acknowledged that the piecing together and subsequent analysis is a result of both my selection of sources and interpretation. Having researched Palestinian politics for a long period, I am very familiar with the literature that exists across the different periods and those that are widely acknowledged as key authoritative works. Moravcsik (2014, p. 48) has criticised qualitative political science research as “authors rarely cite sources verbatim and almost never copiously enough to judge whether specific lines were cited in context.” As with my analysis of original interview material, I choose to utilise quotes from secondary sources where appropriate in order to increase transparency for how I arrive at my interpretations and summaries.
3.4. Ethics

Israel/Palestine is one of the longest ongoing conflicts and therefore has many political sensitivities attached to researching this subject. There remains an Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, with the Fatah-run Palestinian Authority responsible for remaining Palestinian territory in the West Bank that does not fall under direct Israeli military control. The Gazan territories are controlled by Hamas. However, there is not homogeneous leadership within the Palestinian territories as factionalism occurs within the formal political system, and there are also numerous forms of informal leadership which occur outside this system – such as the BDS movement. The Palestinian Authority does not support all operations of popular resistance and has arrested activists on numerous occasions. There are therefore, political risks with regards to both the Israeli occupying forces and within the Palestinian political system. Ethics approval has been granted by the Umeå regional board.

The research follows the CODEX guidelines (see Swedish Research Council, 2018) as well as the UNESCO ‘Code of conduct for social science research’. The interviews were audio recorded and notes were made at the time of interview. Following this, the interviews were transcribed into digital notes. In the transcription process, minor editing occurred for the sake of clarity. A key to participant-alias information was kept securely on my computer. Once the audio recordings were transcribed and checked, and no longer required for the purposes of this thesis they were deleted. Transcription occurred sequentially as I worked in the field. Notes taken during interviews were also transferred to digital format. Once this process was complete then the original copy notes were destroyed. The raw material is archived as per Umeå University’s archiving policy.

Informed consent is a crucial to undertaking research. Participants must be aware of the nature of the research and any associated risks and benefits. Prior to the interviews an informal meeting occurred where information on the project (see Appendix A) was provided to potential participants. Email was also used to transmit the information. The material was provided in written form in English, with the offer for Arabic translation and additional oral presentation (by myself or through a translator). However, no participant required these options. The individual was given time to process the information provided. Upon the next meeting, and prior to the interview, I discussed the background, aim and risks of the project with the individual. In addition to this, it was important to explain my approach to research and why interviews and quotes were central to this. In providing the material in the first meeting, individuals were able to read and make decisions without additional pressure or on the spot. However, in some circumstances, it was not be possible to provide the material in an initial meeting.
and therefore this process took place before a potential interview. Individuals were always given the opportunity to ask any questions about the project and their participation. The use of anonymity was discussed with all participants declining the use of this or an alias. An understanding of the project and participation in the research was taken by oral consent. As the participants are politically active they have a better understanding than myself of the social/cultural/political environment in which they are placed and so can assess associated risks. Consent was obtained individually. A written consent form was not used as it would be less appropriate for this research and research setting. A participant was able to revoke consent at any time and this would apply to any previous material they had provided. Participants were also able to request anonymity at any point. No participants wished to receive a transcript of their interview, however some did request that I email them with the quotes I have extracted and wished to use. This was an ongoing process throughout the thesis.

This research focuses on those openly involved in the political system and in political activism. There should be minimal risks to these persons as they are already involved and participating in such areas. However, individuals were further informed on potential risks associated with their participation in this research through the informed consent process. The researcher is responsible for assessing the risk vs benefits calculation, and where the risks outweigh any benefits then the research with the participant should not go ahead, even if the participant wishes it to. The agency of the participant should be respected, but it is my responsibility to ensure risk management. The first meeting with the potential participant provided an opportunity for initial risk assessment. I was accountable for the different political and cultural contexts in which they operate. I followed the advice of both locals and participants with regards to issues such as interview location, precautions over sensitive subjects and any potential risks. Participants were given the choice of where the interview took place and whether anonymity was used.

### 3.5. Fieldwork

Two rounds of fieldwork were conducted. The first began in November 2016 for three weeks, based independently in Ramallah. This first round focused solely on the BDS movement and its activists. The second round of fieldwork began September 2017, running for seven weeks, based at the Kenyon Institute in East Jerusalem. The focus was expanded to formal political organisations and their relationships. Of particular interest was those who were or are involved with multiple of the organisations in question. Overall 21 formal interview recordings were made. This was supplemented with meetings without recordings, off-the-
record interviews, and attendance at conferences, roundtables, and talks where figures of interest spoke. While recurring themes began to emerge signifying that this research was moving towards analytical saturation, ideally more interviews would have been conducted. Operating as a ‘free agent’ not aligned with any university or organisation working in the area naturally increases the initial threshold for connecting with potential interviewees from which the research can snowball. Scheduling interviews in Palestine can be a challenge at the best of times, but often there are both political and personal emergencies which saw cancellations. At the same time, not being associated with an organisation other than Umeå University could be seen as having some benefits, given how divided and highly politicised the internal affairs of the Palestinian territories are; there can be an unspoken ‘marking’ based on what sector and network you are in. There is a balance to be struck between access and free movement and only hindsight shows how these best could have been weighted – towards greater access in my case.

Due to my position as a PhD student, those higher up in political organisations were less inclined to arrange interviews unless I was assisted by a personal connection. Lastly, during both trips significant political events occurred – the 2016 Fatah congress and the 2017 Hamas–Fatah reconciliation. Whilst there were of great interest, political figures were immensely busy during this period – even those not directly involved. Another critical issue was the absence of female interviewees. Though gender is not a primary focus of this research, it is always a useful intersectional addition. There was an overall lack of women identified as potential interview subjects – as with most areas of the world, men dominate the political arena. Of those identified, a number had been detained by Israel and others did not schedule interviews.

3.5.1. First Round: November-December 2016

As expected in Palestine, the identifying and snowballing of persons of interest occurred through informal channels. This took longer than initially planned during the first round of fieldwork as primary contacts were not in the country during my trip. However, through informal networks I was referred on to increasingly relevant people. Email is not a preferred method of contact in Palestine and it was the obtaining of cell phone numbers that provided best results. Meetings are largely unstructured in Palestine and so it was not possible to organise meeting times more than a few days in advance. This resulted in certain interviews not coming to fruition as I had fixed departure dates. Conducting interviews in this context requires travelling there and then relying on either running into people or informally being referred onto relevant persons. The cities and towns in the West Bank are relatively small and personal networks
are very large, meaning that it is very common for those not involved in the area of interest to nonetheless know people who are.

Due to the organisational structure of BDS it is not possible to provide a fixed number of ‘potential interviewees’. BDS is a coalition of coalitions with associated individuals having varying degrees of involvement at different levels of BDS. However, the BNC consists of 29 members and the upper secretariat of 11. Members of the BNC are located worldwide as these include coordinators for Europe etc. who were not relevant for this trip. Members of the secretariat were identified as more relevant and useful for providing information for the more active and central elements of BDS. There are very few paid employees of BDS and the vast majority are volunteers who therefore have other work as their primary daily focus. Due to the political situation, those who are active in BDS are at high risk of detention (and imprisonment) by Israel. One of the notable members of the secretariat was detained at the time the research was conducted. Seven BDS-related interviews were conducted, lasting between 45 minutes and two hours. Interviews were also conducted with those not directly involved with BDS for use in future thesis work. Interviews were conducted at the interviewees’ choice of location and ranged from offices, cafes to homes. The actual meetings often lasted longer than the formal interview time as meals were involved and a lot of informal conversation both before and after.

There was an initial roadblock when a central figure of the BDS movement declined to be interviewed. This did come as a surprise, however the person is increasingly being monitored and restricted by the Israeli state and as an unknown researcher in the field they may have not felt comfortable with me. Other key persons at the same level were happy to be interviewed, which helped to mitigate this. Of the interviews that did occur, the semi-structured approach was well suited to the environment (see Appendix B for interview guide). The open questions provided initial prompting and then participants spoke freely and naturally covered many of the research foci without specific questioning on these. As I was not interviewing elected politicians, the interview environment was very relaxed in all cases. There were mutual acquaintances with all research participants which allowed a quick building of rapport and level of trust. The level of English proficiency was high enough amongst interviewees that it was deemed unnecessary to use a translator. The transcribing of interviews incurred minor difficulties where sentences were not fluent and the accents were not familiar to me. However, as the purpose of the research was what was being said as opposed to how it was being said, and therefore not a discourse analysis, this did not have a significant impact upon the results of this research. The absence of a translator may have actually had a positive effect. It is easier to build rapport in an informal setting where no third party is present; it allowed the interviews to be very conversational and wide-ranging. It also may have allowed interviewees to speak
more freely than if there was to have been an additional external person in the room.

One of the key participants, with whom a good relationship was built, provided politically sensitive and emotionally distressing information. Neither of these was unexpected but did require processing. The politically sensitive information required careful handling and judgement as to what would be written in the research and how; all interviews were stored securely regardless. As I am familiar with the Palestinian political and cultural environment, the participant trusted my judgement to divulge on record what they normally would not state officially. Another participant spoke of politically sensitive information but this was done off the record. Recording was paused while they spoke freely and then resume when we returned to interview questions. Any material provided that was not formally recorded was not used for analysis, however it was kept in mind as added context based on my judgement. While it cannot be stated that my status as a Western, female academic did not have any effect upon the interviews, it is my judgement that the impact of this was minimal. I was treated as a respected guest and the sharing of personal connections (through a previous private trip) helped to lessen my ‘outsider’ status and build trust. Indeed, in certain situations the outsider status allows access and benefits that may not have otherwise occurred. It has been proposed that “an outside observer has the benefit of distance, being apart from the movement and its political discourse” (Lindholm Schulz, 1999, p. 18). This sentiment was expressed to me by an interviewee as we discussed the matter of my being another Western academic researching Palestine, drawing on the knowledge of those who live in the situation and have a deep understanding of it. While there are obvious disadvantages and power dynamics to take into consideration, my lack of affiliation to the politics and groups of Palestine was also viewed as positive in the highly partisan environment.

3.5.2. Second Round: September-November 2017

Upon advice from a fellow Palestinian politics researcher, the decision was made to make a longer trip and stay at an academic institution in East Jerusalem. There are much larger researcher networks in East Jerusalem than Ramallah. East Jerusalem also provides a very different political environment than that of the West Bank, and being situated there for nearly two months provided an additional layer of context. While the situation in the West Bank is far from ideal, Ramallah exists in much more of a ‘bubble’ than the daily realities of East Jerusalem. Despite having now made several trips to Israel/Palestine, each remains a process of learning. The second round of fieldwork made much quicker progress due to the initial groundwork of the first and larger contact list. There was a period of stagnation in the middle, and then one meeting towards the end
which opened up a wealth of new contacts. However, at this point I had very little time remaining so it was a matter of organising what was possible in combination with schedules.

As with the first round, interviews varied from 45 minutes to 2 hours (see Appendix C for interview guide). However, as I was in the region for a longer period I had the opportunity to both meet with and interview the same people several times. This allowed for reflection and follow-up questions. Prior to interviews I was offered opportunities to visit villages and refugee camps to gain both personal and political context, I was grateful for the generosity of the time and sharing of personal information that this involved. Some of the interviews were of a more formal nature due to seniority of some of the figures involved. The interviews took place in both East Jerusalem and Ramallah at locations of interviewees’ choice. Also as before, the interviews were conducted in English without a translator. The interviews were semi-structured, with very little prompting required. This round of fieldwork saw a wider range of material and methods drawn upon as there were more informal meetings and attendance of political and academic events. Notes were taken in all instances. Politically sensitive information was divulged off-the-record. This is not included in the research material, but provides me with additional context.

Spending nearly two months situated in East Jerusalem was at times both isolating and overwhelming in ways that the West Bank was not. Lindholm Schulz (1999, p. vii) best captures this when she writes:

> In dealing with protracted and violent conflicts, however, it is inevitable that the researcher if affected or intrigued by the conflicts themselves. No writer/researcher on the Palestinian movement is unaffected by, or is able to stand completely aside of, the overall conflict … Living the conflict for one year, not like Palestinians or Israelis, but as an outside observer, caused emotional stress and despair many times.

The dehumanisation and humiliation that the conflict has seen become a daily occurrence. But equally, as Lindholm Schulz (1999, p. viii) continues, it is important to note that:

> Most of the time, however, life is not nearly as dramatic as described above or as displayed on the news. In the midst of conflict and traumas, people go on, leading their own lives, struggling for employment to make ends meet, to get the olive harvest done in time, to achieve education for their children without constant reflection on the conflict which determines their lives.
The ‘everyday’ of this conflict should not be lost amongst the grandiose.

### 3.6. Analysis

There are two main analytical stages of this research. The first is an examination of historical forms of internal legitimacy within the Palestinian national liberation movement. From the previous chapter there emerged two means of achieving internal legitimacy – electoral mandate and representative claims. The period of Palestinian politics in question (1950s-2000s) is well covered in the literature, so secondary sources will provide a foundation for reconstructing the concept of legitimacy for the main leadership groups. The types of internal legitimacy and the sources these are derived from will be examined during critical foundational points in time for the leadership bodies. The complexity leadership approach advocates a method of identifying ‘episodes’ leadership and the interactions and interrelationships that occur within these. “Since interactive dynamics are processes that place over time, we need methods that attend to the longitudinal and dynamic nature of interactive events and the relationships that construct them” (Lichtenstein, et al., 2006, p. 5). Where in this research the relational analytical approach follows the establishment of ‘episodes’, these are crucial in incorporating the aforementioned longitudinally and interdependence of relationships to the examination of the current dynamics of the Palestinian national liberation movement.

As the discussion above in section 3.3 explains, analysis from secondary qualitative sources has its own challenges. However, this should not preclude its usage. This research spans across works to focus on accounts and analysis of Palestinian leadership during specific periods to construct a typology of internal legitimacies. This process will be uninhibited by existing typologies or frameworks and instead be responsive to the Palestinian case and the legitimacies found to emerge for each leadership group. However, being ‘responsive to’ still requires a coherence in analysis that is achieved through searching for patterns within the differing secondary sources. It is common that legitimacy in the singular is referred to in texts and thus it is my job, in compiling material, to extract the intricacies of internal legitimacies and the interactions with the national movement processes.

The forms of internal legitimacy in the existing literature are extremely likely to feature, but the following table provides the space for reconstructing legitimacy without a pre-set list of ‘types’. The first column denotes the leadership groups identified in the scope of the study. Listed here once to illustrate, groups that present or have presented multiple legitimacy types will feature multiple times as
this changes over time. The ‘period’ refers to the years in which the specific legitimacy in question was present for – with the table arranged in chronological order. The ‘legitimacy type’ is the internal legitimacy that has been identified and labelled in the analytical sections e.g. democratic. Any new forms of internal legitimacy will be reflexive to the analytical process. This column has no pre-set list to draw from and remains open to new types, as well as the existing types identified in the previous chapter such as democratic legitimacy. The ‘source’ column provides the space to identify the basis of the type of legitimacy presented, providing a greater level of detail and also accounting for the possibility that similar legitimacies may stem from different sources. Where the type of legitimacy is a conceptual categorisation, the source of legitimacy is directly empirical; the sources are to be more specific and tangible in nature that ‘legitimacy type’ e.g. an electoral victory. The final column references the three critical processes the Palestinian national movement engages with – national liberation, peace, and state building. By relating back to these process, this situates the groups’ legitimacies back into the wider focus of the national movement and how this is affected by multiple leaderships. The table below will be filled out accordingly following the analysis of historical legitimacies.

**Table 3. Internal legitimacy conceptual framework table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Legitimacy Type</th>
<th>Legitimacy Source</th>
<th>Effected Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The historical foundations of internal legitimacies established in the first section through the above table provide an important context in which the current legitimacies and relationships between the groups are examined. There is room for expansion when following a more traditional approach to leadership legitimacy – as will be demonstrated through the analysis and subsequent completion of the above table. This analytical entry point into the case will advance understandings of Palestinian legitimacies, and thus the concept of
legitimacy, in order for it to be able to develop in tandem with the empirics, beyond the pre-defined. However, as focus shifts onto the most recent periods of Palestinian leadership, such an approach stagnates and the above table does not capture the processes of (de)legitimisation to varying degrees, nor the processes underlying such, that are central to answering the research questions and advancing a nuanced understanding of Palestinian leadership. Instead a relational approach is employed, with the second pillar of analysis drawing heavily from the empirical material obtained in the interview method. It is important to remember Dewey and Bentley’s framing of ‘systems of description’ in the relational approach from the previous chapter which allowed Emirbayer (1997, p. 287) to reason that the “very terms or units involved in a transaction derive their meaning, significance, and identity from the (changing) functional roles they play within that transaction.” Within this research terms are ascribed to legitimacy in order to produce a meaningful analysis. However these do not transform to fixed entities and instead are constantly viewed as constructions emanating from transactions.

As outlined in the previous chapter, this research undergoes an analytical shift towards examining the process of legitimisation and the interactions this has with the national movement processes. This analysis is also supplemented with secondary material in order to broaden perspectives beyond those presented in personal interviews, as views, relationships and concepts are dynamic beyond one point in time. The focus shifts more heavily towards the relationships between groups and legitimacies, acknowledging that an interview from one member of a group does not reflect a homogenous position for that organisation. Where this could be seen as an obstacle to drawing conclusions, the relational approach takes a myriad of perspectives as central in developing frameworks. Themes can still emerge, as they often do, meaning analysis can shift beyond that of the individual. Within the interviews there were clear patterns that emerged regarding both questions of legitimacy and relations between the different leadership groups irrespective of interviewee affiliation. Analysis is possible beyond the individual level despite this being a critical means of material collection, with the use of quotations aiding in the transparency of the links made between interviews and broader analysis. In employing a relational approach to leadership and legitimacy this research seeks to examine intersections and interactions in the dynamic processes at play within the Palestinian national movement. The relational analytical chapters demonstrate how this approach provides a new lens to develop understandings of the process of leadership which traditional theory has not been able to capture.

It must be acknowledged that in examining the same case as Möller and Schierenbeck (2014) there will inherently be significant crossover, particularly as their unique theoretical approach provides a point of departure for this research.
However, there remains a lot of space in the literature around the issues of multiplicity of both leaderships and legitimacies. The theoretical focus of this research is not underpinned by the tracing of the national movement processes in themselves. Rather the three processes (liberation, peace and state building) serve as initially distinct periods by which to examine the question of legitimacies present. I subsequently merge these processes, proposing that the peace process now lies within both the national liberation and state building processes. A relational leadership approach is beginning to cross over into the political leadership theoretical field. However, this has yet to been applied to traditional leadership concepts nor filtered through to a methodological approach drawing upon perspectives. Additionally, the national liberation movement literature as a whole focuses the question of leadership upon the assumption of assuming formal political power. In light of the formal/informal leadership discussion and relational leadership approach, this limitation requires rethinking as not all cases can align with this traditional view of national leadership. This is an issue that crosses into conceptualisations of legitimacy. There is a struggle to account for multiple leaderships, especially in the presence of less traditional forms of political leadership.

Meindl et al (1985) have warned against what they term ‘the romance of leadership’. This romanticisation sees a top-down focus with the aim of establishing leadership as an explanatory factor, which arguably loses the complexity of the systems in which leadership is one of the factors. In order to study leadership without over-elevation, a social constructionist approach is recommended where “the concept of leadership is a perception that plays a part in the way people attempt to make sense out of organizationally relevant phenomena” (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985, p. 79). While chapter five follows a traditional approach to leadership and legitimacy, the subsequent chapters utilise a relational approach in order to further the analysis and the implications for methodology will be discussed here.

The relational discourse approach works well as an analytical vehicle for this research. This research is interested in how the different groups view their own and others’ leaderships and legitimacies. My analysis is based upon statements – both interviews and secondary sources – and also the visible actions taken. The original interview material is presented in italics throughout the research text. Lindholm Schulz (1999, p. 18) accurately portrayed the dilemma between the outsider interview method and subsequent research analysis is expounding that:

On the one hand, I seek to describe Palestinianism from the actors’ point of view, that is, to understand and interpret, rather than to explain or seek to master the Palestinian discourse. On the other hand, my intention is to analyse critically, and my interpretations
may not correspond with respondents’ interpretations. The question of what ‘right’ the distant observer has to describe a complicated political process and interpret and critically examine the actors’ points of view is thus legitimate.

Thus it has been important to keep this in mind throughout this research process; to balance giving voice to Palestinian perceptions with my own situational analysis. The need for give and take between the two must be acknowledged, whilst keeping the integrity of both elements.

The analytical focus lies in the flow of interactions between the groups and, as previously outlined, the overlaps but also the gaps. Whilst the statements come from individuals, the level of analysis is not on the individual. Similarly, the purpose of examining statements is not to analyse a ‘deep structure’; the statements are always relational to the context. As leadership is a process, what is said is important regardless of what is typically viewed as ‘intent’ because the statements (and of course actions) are performances of leadership relational to the other actors. In the same vein, as legitimacy has no essential properties, the focus is on examining the multiplicity of interpretations of this commonplace by analysing how legitimacy has been used and the actions this produced. Although relationality is an ontology, and therefore ‘neutral theory’ that does not prescribe specific methodologies, the approach marries well with interviews in this case. Interviews were conducted with individuals from the different leadership groups, but it is not the individuals in themselves who are the point of interest.

Here the network aspect of relationality enters the picture. In most cases the network linkages between the selected groups is extremely high – a common feature within Palestinian society. Therefore many of those interviewed are active across multiple leadership groups and provide an additional layer of relationality to examine given the multiplicity of legitimacy. So this research does not use a formal network analysis, but networks are a key foundation for the research by the very definition of relationality. This research aligns with network analysis in that social interactions and relationships at the meso-level is the point of interest. The connections between these are critical for any examination of Palestinian leaderships and often has been overlooked in the past despite the prevalence. This research adheres to the theory behind network analysis but this does not translate across to a network analysis method. The first reason is practical: Palestinian political networks are extremely dense and complicated. I have neither the language skills nor embeddedness to unpack these into a formal mapping. The second reason are the goals of this research. The rationale behind relational networks was starting point the development of this research. However, as the perceptions of legitimacy has become an empirical focus, the relational discourse approach proves more useful in combination with thick
qualitative data that allows examination of the negotiations behind the processes of leadership and legitimacy. This relational analysis will allow the reshaping of legitimacy relationships to develop beyond that presented in the previous chapter. This relational approach allows both the methodology and analysis to be reflective to the dynamics of the Palestinian case as will be presented in the forthcoming chapters.
4. Reviewing the Case: Palestinian Leadership 1958-2005

This research focuses on numerous leadership groups that have emerged at different political periods. The purpose of this chapter is not to provide a complete history of Palestinian politics since the 1950s, but rather to present an overview of the foundations of each of the groups – when and how they originated, and their operational structures. Palestinian politics has a long history with numerous groups, involving many similar acronyms, and it is therefore useful to provide a basic outline of the groups before proceeding further. The specific context surrounding the groups will be examined in detail in the later analytical chapter on their legitimacies and relations. As per the contexts in which the groups were founded, this chapter is structured by the three central processes of modern Palestinian politics. Following the end of the British Mandate period and creation of the state of Israel, and during a stage of Arab unity, the Palestinian liberation-based nation building process took shape. It was during this process (1958-1987) that Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) emerged in quick succession. Yasser Arafat purposefully embraced Palestinian nationalism, shifting away from the Arab unity in the region. The engagement with the start of the peace process in the late 1980s coincides with the development of Hamas. Resulting from the Oslo peace agreements is the state building process\(^6\) that mandated the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA). However, power struggles have persisted between Fatah and Hamas in the divided West Bank and Gaza territories over governing mandates.

Recent shifts back to the issue of the failed peace process and talks have seen popular resistance regain footing in the political scene in the early 2000s, with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement formalising during this period. Where the other leadership groups are well covered in terms of their history, structure and ethos, more background information is required of the relatively recent addition of BDS. This section draws from original fieldwork in order to increase the available empirical material necessary for building a more detailed examination of the BDS movement. As the newest leadership group included in this research, the organisation and principles of the movement are described in greater depth as a necessary foundation for the later analytical content.

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\(^6\) The state building process in Palestinian politics typically refers to the post-Oslo phase, in which the PA enters the fold as a statist governing institution. The term post-Oslo refers to the ongoing effects and legacies of the Oslo peace process and its resulting agreements that remain in place today.
Furthermore, the other leadership groups feature in works analysing them alongside the nation and state building processes of the Palestinian movement, but BDS has yet to feature in such assessments. Building the background material for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is deemed necessary as this is an area of empirical development for the thesis.

It was previously stated that although the Palestinian movement has received an abundance of scholarly attention, theoretical development has been lacking at times. So in addition to providing an historical overview, this chapter seeks to assess what foundational analysis already exist within the literature for examining the wider relationship between Palestinian leaderships and the processes of the Palestinian national movement. Leadership is the central focus of both this thesis and chapter, and thus provides the scope of the review. Much has been written on the selected leadership groups involved in the Palestinian national liberation movement and this chapter does not seek to summarise the entirety of Palestinian leadership literature. Instead analysis of the individual leaderships is woven into sections of the thesis that build the background foundations of the groups. Naturally sub-themes, such as factionalism and resistance in this case, will emerge and there are issues that could be examined in numerous fields. These are acknowledged where relevant, but it is not the intent to enter into each of these in detail given the amount of potential conceptual and historical areas this thesis is encountering. What is of specific interest is how leadership analysis has been approached and, if engaged with, how the relational elements of movement leadership have been viewed. In the Palestinian case there are blurred boundaries between the leaderships and the national movement processes – and the engagement with such in regards to seeking authority. A clear relationality between these elements emerges when the different approaches within the literature are pieced together, rather than opposed against each other. In reviewing the history of the national movement leaderships, we begin to see how engaging a relational approach to leadership and legitimacy becomes necessary as the overlaps increase.
### 4.1. Leadership and the National Movement Processes

#### Table 4. Timeline of Palestine political history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Formation of Fatah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Establishment of the PLO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Official launch of Fatah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Six Day War (Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Fatah and other independent guerrilla groups enter the PLO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Arafat elected as Chairman of the PLO with Fatah the majority faction of the PLO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>PLO declared ‘sole legitimate representative’ of Palestinian people by the Arab League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Formation of Hamas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-93</td>
<td>First Intifada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2</td>
<td>Peace process attempts through the Madrid Conference and Washington talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Mutual recognition between State of Israel and PLO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oslo I Accord (Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Establishment of the PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Oslo II Accord (Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>First PA presidential and legislative elections (Arafat; Fatah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-05</td>
<td>Second Intifada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Death of Arafat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Launch of the BDS movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Election of Abbas as PA president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Hamas legislative election victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Attempted Palestinian national unity government;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fatah-Hamas conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Division of West Bank-Gaza governing systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salam Fayyad appointed PA Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Establishment of BDS BNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>National unity technocratic government formation (Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation Agreement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>National unity government dissolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Fatah-Hamas Agreement (unimplemented reconciliation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before proceeding with reviewing the developments of Palestinian leadership it is important to outline here the context of the occupation. The conflict with and occupation by Israel spans across the periods of Palestinian leadership examined and has had a significant role in shaping Palestinian politics. From the Zionist movement the state of Israel was declared in 1948 in territory that had been the British Mandate of Palestine. The events of 1948 are known by Palestinians as *al-Nakba* – the catastrophe – as the result was mass exodus that can be seen in the still present refugee camps within the current Palestinian territories and neighbouring countries. It was during this period that the initial West Bank and Gaza Strip (then under Jordanian and Egyptian control respectively) borders came into recognition. The 1967 Six Day War saw Israel capture these territories and begin occupation with military control. Although Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 it is still considered as occupied due to the imposed lack of freedom of movement through controlling land, sea and air access (along with southern border country Egypt). The creation of the Palestinian Authority from the Oslo Accords was, in theory, to provide a transition to Palestinian control of the West Bank. However, the division of the territory into three categories (only one of which is under full Palestinian control) sees Israel maintain occupying power over the majority of the West Bank. Those in the area of Palestinian control do not have freedom of movement and the economy remains bound to Israel; all imports and exports and tax clearance are subject to Israeli control and thus suspension. This is a brief overview and from here on the specifics of this history will only be recounted in regards to the development of the Palestinian leadership groups as necessary.

### 4.1.1. The Emergence of Fatah, the PLO and National Liberation (1958-1987)

Fatah was formed in exile in 1958 by a small group, including Yasir Arafat. Originally titled the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, it now exists as both a movement and a political party. Fatah currently has its main operations in the West Bank and Gaza. However from the outset, geographical divisions were present in Fatah and these went on to cause outsider/insider tensions as leadership existed both in exile in Kuwait/Syria/Tunisia and within the Palestinian territories. Headed by an internally elected chairman, Fatah has two leadership bodies: the executive Central Committee and legislative Revolutionary Council. Fatah has had significant armed wings and while the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade still exists, it is categorised as a terrorist organisation separately from Fatah. Fatah joined the PLO in 1967 and soon after in 1969 Arafat was elected Chairman of the PLO, with Fatah remaining the dominant faction since.
Fatah officially launched in 1965 and truly gained momentum following the 1967 war which was deeply unsuccessful for the Arab forces. The PLO was functioning at the time, but remained a pan-Arab project; the differentiation between Fatah and the PLO was at its most prominent. “To Arafat and Fatah, the PLO was a competitor. PLO had the blessing of the Arab states – most prominently, Egypt – and none of Fatah’s delegates were nominated for membership of the first PLO Executive Committee” (Möller & Schierenbeck, 2014, p. 141). This was to change in 1968 as the Battle of Karama gave Fatah the impetus to claim the Palestinian national movement. The success of the Fatah guerrillas at Karama gave them a popularity that contrasted with the ineffectual sitting PLO leadership, creating “an irresistible momentum that quickly led to their takeover of the PLO” (Parsons, 2005, p. 23). Karama was central to the development of Fatah’s role in nation building and subsequent control of the PLO. Fatah emerged to counter the premise of Arab unity preceding a Palestinian state, instead putting Palestinian nationalism at the forefront (Smith, 2013, p. 271). It also set itself in a centrist political position in order to appeal to a much wider base within Palestinian society than those aligned with the previously dominant Arab unity movement (Baumgarten, 2005, p. 31). Fatah sought to generate and combine the construction of identity with liberation.

In 1964 the creation of the PLO quickly followed the establishment of Fatah, but the two were unrelated at the time and Fatah was not a part of the founding PLO structure (Parsons, 2005, p. 21). The PLO was initially a creation of the Arab League that viewed Palestinian liberation from a pan-Arab perspective. Egypt’s Nasser established Arab unity and Palestinian liberation as parallel aspirations (Becker, 2014, p. 47). The Palestinian National Charter forms the ideological document of the PLO. The first Palestinian National Council (PNC; the legislative body of the PLO) adopted the Charter in 1964 that articulated the aims of the PLO, amended in 1968 to reflect greater independence and nationalism (Parsons, 2013, pp. 209-210). Following the Oslo peace process, the Charter was reviewed again in 1996 so as not to contravene agreements with Israel. The Fundamental Law, drafted in 1963 and revised in 1968, serves as a constitutional document for the functioning of PLO structures. Where the Charter centres on ideology, the Constitution focuses on PLO operating structures and means of representation via elections.

The PLO is representative of Palestinian people inside the Occupied Territories and in the diaspora (namely in exile and refugee camps). The PLO has numerous leadership structures comprised of members from the different political factions that constitute the PLO. The main body of the PLO is the Palestine National Council (PNC) with 740 members. It is the legislative body of the PLO and the effective national parliament, comprised of representatives from both within the oPt and diaspora, and has convened in numerous Arab cities. Alongside this
exists the Executive Committee (18 members) as the executive body, and the Central Council (124 members) which sits between the PNC and the Executive Committee as an intermediary body (see Appendix D for structure diagram). The Executive Committee (EC) elects the Chairman of the PLO – currently Mahmoud Abbas. The Committee also carries out all international representative duties (Masri, 2006). Political factions have allocated seats within the EC, with minor factions holding observer status, and the remaining seats are contested by independents who may also be faction members (Parsons, 2013, p. 212).

As the PNC is representative of all Palestinian people, elections have never been held due to the insurmountable administrative and political challenges regarding a multi-state constituency. New PNC members are nominated from within PLO bodies and technically must be approved by a PNC majority vote. As the PNC struggles to convene, in practice the Executive Committee approves new members. The PNC has its main office in Amman, with a significant branch in Ramallah. A definitive feature of the PLO leadership during its early stages was the diaspora which saw the Palestinian national movement “led from outside” (Parsons, 2005, p. 17). The organisational structure of the PLO articulated divided management institutions situated under a hierarchical umbrella leadership. To provide a clear overview of the structure and function of the PLO, the below table is taken from PASSIA (2014, p. 7) and the information is correct for 2015.
As the main identifiable forms of Palestinian political leadership, there is a wealth of literature on Arafat, Fatah and the PLO and their roles in national reconstruction. There is a strong linkage amongst the three, with Arafat leading Fatah and Fatah leading the PLO post-1969. The literature traces the main developments from guerrilla leadership through to nationalist leadership in exile, and finally institutionalised leadership within the oPt. Sayigh (1997) provides

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**Table 5. PASSIA overview of the PLO (2014)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Established in 1964; recognized as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people at the Arab Rabat Summit, Oct. 1974, and by the international community, including Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seat/Headquarters</td>
<td>Tunis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Chairman (Mahmoud Abbas) Head of the Executive Committee elected by the PNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Executive Committee elected by the PNC 18 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>Palestinian National Council (PNC) Parliament in-exile. headquartered in Amman (with a branch in Ramallah) headed by Salim Zanoun de facto mostly appointed by the Executive Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electorate</td>
<td>All Palestinian people worldwide (approx. 11.12 million) will directly elect (never to place until this day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties &amp; Factions represented</td>
<td>Fateh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PFLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DFLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palestinian People’s Party (PPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FIDA (Palestinian Democratic Union)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PFLP – General Command (PFLP-GC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al-Saïqa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arab Liberation Front (ALF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palestine Popular Struggle Front (PPSF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional Platform/“Mandate”</td>
<td>Palestinian National Charter (constitutional document of the PLO, which defines the ideological platform)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fundamental Law (Bureaucratic-institutional regulations, which establish the rules, authority, duties and roles of the various bodies that comprise the PLO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) (outside the occupied Palestinian territories, although some forces have been absorbed in the PA security apparatus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Relations</td>
<td>Conducts foreign relations and related activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>The Palestine National Fund receives all revenues of and finances the PLO according to an annual budget prepared by the Executive Committee and approved by the PNC; it develops the Fund’s revenues; and it supervises the expenditures of the PLO and its organs. The Fund’s Chairman is elected by the PNC. The members of the Board of Directors are appointed by the PLO Executive Committee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 As the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, superior to the PA and its term of reference.
one of the most comprehensive analyses of transformation of the Palestinian national movement from the creation of the state of Israel until Oslo. Where Pearlman (2011) links nonviolence and national identity, Sayigh uses armed struggle as the dominant perspective to frame his work, arguing that armed struggle “provided the political impulse and organizational dynamic in the evolution of the Palestinian national identity”. These effects extend from the initial guerrilla leadership, where armed struggle was a self-evident tool, through to the formation of political institutions and diplomatic engagement that saw a new class of bureaucratic elite establish authoritative leadership (Sayigh, 1997, p. vii). Sayigh frequently cites legitimacy in his seminal work. Though not a key focus, he provides an interspersed picture of the changing authority of the leaderships in regard to the sources and strengths of their legitimacy.

Following a pan-Arab defeat (the 1973 Yom Kippur/October War) Arafat provided decisive nationalist leadership during a fraught period for the PLO. However, leadership of the PLO came with direct challenges regarding the future direction of the organisation and Palestinian national movement. The shift towards institutionalism and diplomacy began with the Ten Point Program that resulted from the 12th meeting of the PNC in 1974. The program built upon the idea of a provisional national authority, which Parsons (2013, p. 215) argues provided “the conceptual bridge to diplomacy”. By 1974 the Arab League declared the PLO to be “the sole legitimate representative” of the Palestinian people and soon afterwards, the third PLO chairman Yasir Arafat addressed the United Nations General Assembly (Parsons, 2013, p. 217).

A national identity framework has been applied to this period of Palestinian leadership, with the PLO credited with the task of reconstructing Palestinian national identity (Parsons, 2013, p. 214). Khalidi (1997) argues that attempts to rebuild Palestinian identity and nationalism was as much an Arab enterprise as it was Palestinian; there were a number of Arab parties competing for control of the Palestine issue. Parsons (2005, p. 25) posits that the PLO provided “institutional coherence” despite initially lacking authoritative leadership – later provided by Arafat and Fatah. Whilst engaging with national liberation and construction processes, an institutional character is proposed as developing what could be seen as a form of authority for the PLO that differed from its original radical armed resistance; the PLO provided a Palestinian leadership institution to engage with nation building independently from neighbouring states. Muslih (1990, p. 4) reiterates the importance of nationalism to the success of the PLO, asserting that the PLO has been synonymous with Palestinian nationalism since 1969 – when Fatah became the majority faction in the PLO, remaining so since.

By the 1980s the PLO was well established, as were its affiliated political organisations – Fatah, the PFLP, DFLP, ALF, As-Sa’iqa and others. Following its
relocation from Beirut to Tunis in 1982, the PLO increasingly focused on the oPt in an attempt to retain leadership relevance (Parsons, 2013, p. 216). Hamas, under its Muslim Brotherhood precursor, had a strong foundation and latent potential that would become apparent early on during the first Intifada. Though sparked by uncontrolled events in 1987, the foundations of the first Intifada had been well established in the preceding years through both the Tunis-based PLO and a grassroots movement. Prior to the Intifada, intellectuals and activists were distributing material on nonviolent protest amongst the Palestinian population (King, 2007, p. 4). “Grassroots leaders shaped within these civilian movements expressed novel ideas about pressing for civil and political rights. They challenged monopolies of power and truth based on armed struggle, viewing nonviolent sanctions as a more realistic alternative.” (King, 2007, p. 2). A Palestinian nonviolent movement was seen not only as a way of achieving rights, but also as a means of providing new leadership and power relations.

Leadership from the Arab states was hindered by self-interest and began to splinter, with Arab states entering into diplomatic talks with Israel e.g. Egypt and the condemned Camp David Accords. In the lead up to and initial stages of the Intifada, the PLO had been weakened by its distance from Palestinians and challenges to its power through the creation of the Rejectionist Front coalition in 1974. However, the PLO used the latter half of the Intifada to increase its standing as the authoritative Palestinian leadership and institutionalise its power, mainly around the central figure of Arafat, as it sought to control the Palestinian national movement and re-establish itself within the oPt (Parsons, 2005, pp. 26-34).

The Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) formed in the early years of the Intifada and was originally composed of the grassroots leadership and popular committees. Although the UNLU was composed of Fatah, the DFLP, PFLP, and later PCP factions, the leadership maintained a grassroots character as these affiliations were not primary motivators (Robinson, 1997, p. 97). However, as the Intifada progressed, the popular committees and UNLU underwent a professionalisation that saw their leadership further absorbed by political factions of the PLO and thus lost their popular social base (Robinson, 1997, p. 95). This structural change arguably diminished the power and popularity of the UNLU and any associated campaign, as those on politically-funded salaries were determining the strikes for a populace already inundated by economic hardships (Robinson, 1997, pp. 98-99).

The PLO worked to undermine Intifada efforts administered beyond its control to prevent a haemorrhaging of leadership authority. “The whole structure of alternative grassroots authority, in particular the popular committee framework, was a development beyond Tunis’s reach, and therefore it was viewed as a potential political threat.” (Robinson, 1997, p. 99). It must be noted that the
professionalisation of the grassroots movement that saw leadership shift back into the hands of the PLO was also a response to the environment. The pressure Israeli policies (curfews, economic war, and “bone-breaking”) were exerting upon the Palestinian populace limited those both willing and able to participate in the leadership of the grassroots movement (Bargouti, 1990, p. 112); there were severe repercussions against those involved in the popular committees. Power was transferred away from informal grassroots leadership and into institutionalised PLO structures. The presence of inside and outside leadership of the intifada, including its boycott dimension, resulted in destructive tensions between informal and formal leadership sources that culminated in the secret Oslo channel and the ill-fated Declaration of Principles in 1993.

In the transition that shifted from national liberation towards diplomacy and the state building process, the PLO, and indeed Fatah, underwent significant changes. This transformation aligns closely with the Weber-Michels model of organisation transformation. This model premises that as an organisation “attains an economic and social base in the society, as the original charismatic leadership is replaced, a bureaucratic structure emerges . . . The participants in this structure have a stake in preserving the organization” (Zald & Ash, 1966, p. 327). Three changes occur with this process: goal transformation, which commonly sees a “diffusion of goals” due to pragmatic leadership and conservatism; organisational maintenance that shifts the focus towards maintaining membership and resources, thereby adhering to societal norms; and oligarchisation, or in many cases bureaucratisation (Zald & Ash, 1966, pp. 327-328). Arguably this transformation took place three times: once during Arafat’s leadership as the PLO transitioned into a diplomatic player; again following the Oslo Accords and establishment of the PA; and lastly as Abbas struggled to wield power at the end of Arafat’s charismatic rule. This organisational approach to leadership leaves questions regarding the processes with which the leadership is interacting, and indeed the other leadership organisations that have shared network relations within the national movement. The model provides a useful angle for understanding the historical developments of the PLO and Fatah, but the current situation is viewed as long-stagnated and therefore analysis must question concepts such as leadership and authority beyond how groups are structured.

Sayigh focuses on the increasing neopatrimonial character of Palestinian politics during the period following the construction of a national narrative. The increase was driven largely by Fatah and thus affecting the PLO. “Deepening bureaucratization facilitated political management and propelled statist transformation, but the particular mode of the centralization owed much to the unique role of Arafat, who strove to concentrate the key means of control in his own hands.” (Sayigh, 1997, p. 454). Sayigh’s state-centric approach has been
criticised as not distinguishing clearly enough between the widely different political environments of the 1950s and the 1970s-90s. While Sayigh proficiently identifies the vacuum within Palestinian leadership during the earlier pan-Arab approach and contrasting state-building focus of the PLO post-1968, Masalha (1999, p. 142) believes the state-centric framing obscures these crucial differences. Questions have also been raised as to whether it is indeed necessary to categorise and view the PLO as a 'statist' entity despite its central role in state building (Barnett, 2000, p. 171). Here we can see the overlap between the national liberation and state building processes before there has even been an official transition between the two.


Hamas was founded in 1987 as an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which gained prominence in the Palestinian territories during the Six Day War (1967) and Yom Kippur (1973) (Chehab, 2007, pp. 18-19). Based upon the ideology and teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sheik Ahmed Yassin established the Islamic Society in 1976 which continued evolving until the formation of Hamas in 1987 (Chehab, 2007, p. 19). During the first intifada the Islamic Resistance Movement, Harakat al-Maqawama al-Islamiyya (HAMAS) was officially established using followers of Yassin’s previous movements (Chehab, 2007, p. 23). Hamas’s identity and aims were articulated in its 1988 Charter, linking Palestinian nationalism with Islam and calling for the obliteration of Israel (Hamas Convenant 1988, 2008). Yassin had four defined stages to the development of his movement: institution building through the use of charities; strengthening the roots of resistance within households and improving its political credibility; developing military capabilities; and moving beyond Palestine to establish relations with Arab and Islamic neighbours (Chehab, 2007, pp. 21-22).

Hamas is structured into three interdependent wings. The social welfare and political wings undertake the administration and propaganda of these areas. Within the political wing sits the Majlis al-Shura - the General Consultative Council that provides political direction. The council is elected from representatives from local consultative councils with members in Gaza, the West Bank, Israeli prisons, and exile. The General Consultative Council then elects the Political Bureau with both these leadership structures based outside of the oPt. The head of the politburo is the primary leader of Hamas, generally performing the role in exile. Ismail Haniya is the current head of Hamas. Additionally, an Executive Office consists of the members of the politburo, the chair, deputy-chair and secretary of the Consultative Council, and a small number of elected members from the Consultative Council (Mash'al reelected leader of Hamas,
politburo, 2009). The military wing (the al-Qassam Brigades formed in 1992) undertakes more covert independent activities and is largely associated with ‘terrorism’ from the Western perspective. The classification of Hamas as a terrorist organisation, and thus blacklisting, by states is important in their functioning as national movement leadership. Acknowledging that Hamas is often conceived of as a terrorist group in Western societies, this thesis focuses on its leadership role.

Berman (2003) argues that despite widespread secularism among Muslims in Palestine during the 1970s, Sheik Ahmed Yassin gained support for his Islamist movement due to the establishment of a social service network. This network provided the resources for civil society that the Palestinian economy could not and the Israeli government would not. Initially the PLO offered seats to Hamas on the PNC but the conditions set out by Hamas caused an insurmountable incompatibility. This divergence only increased as the PLO became further engaged with the ill-fated peace process and subsequent institutionalisation. Hamas does not face the same limitations and complications that other sources of Palestinian leadership do; rather, the difficulties incurred by the Fatah-run PA and PLO have at times provided fertile grounds for Hamas’s expansion and counter-movement. However, the 2014 national consensus government deal that Hamas signed did tie it in part to the formal governance structures in the West Bank briefly, before the agreement disintegrated.

During the early stages of the peace process, the formal PLO leadership undermined the oPt leadership on an international stage by privately negotiating on behalf of Palestinians accords that would shape the peace process for the following two decades. The multi-lateral 1991 Madrid Conference and subsequent Washington talks that involved an oPt-based Palestinian delegation became irrelevant with the signing of Oslo I. Robinson (1997, p. 176) argues that the outcome of Oslo was that it put into power “a political elite geographically and politically removed from the realities of post-Intifada Palestine”. The Tunisian-based PLO leadership returned to the Palestinian territories, solidifying the shift away from the grassroots leadership that drove the first Intifada. The Oslo peace process saw mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO and resulted in two main accords: Oslo I (Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements) in 1993; and Oslo II (Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) in 1995. It was the first of these that signified a transition towards state building with Arafat and the PLO front and centre.

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7 Terrorism is a highly contested term with an agenda of legitimising the use of force by state actors compared with non-state actors.
It is important to note that Jamal (2005) is highly critical of the destructive role of Israeli politics upon the Palestinian national liberation movement, especially during and soon after the Oslo peace process. However, he moves beyond this to state that:

Although we cannot ignore the impact of Israeli policies, the internal dynamics of Palestinian politics, especially the constant competition between elites and political factors and their inability to reach a common strategy based on a minimal common denominator, contributed much to the crisis that all Palestinians faced. Elite disunity and constant competition between factions were characteristic of Palestinian politics from the early days of the Palestinian national movement. Historical developments have not altered the impact of factionalism on Palestinian politics and the inability of the elites to achieve some of the goals shared by most Palestinians, such as independence, security, stability, and even safety.

(Jamal, 2005, p. xiii)

Jamal believes examining this factionalism through an elite competition/unity theoretical perspective deeply contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the issues within the Palestinian national liberation movement.

Hamas also enters the narrative on nation building as the peace process began to emerge within the framing of Palestinian national movement. Ramahi (2014) reviews the relationship between Hamas and the PLO. Hamas distinguished between the PLO as a national framework and the PLO as a political structure. The PLO as a national framework was accepted by Hamas in the Charter, but the political strategy of diplomacy and engagement with Israel was rejected (Ramahi, 2014). The process of nation building was separated out from the leadership of nation building; thus we see an emergence of multiple processes involving different dimensions and relations, even if not expressed in such a way in the literature. Mishal and Sela (2000, p. vii) categorised Hamas as a social movement due to community provisioning emphasis. It was predicted that so long as peace negotiations failed to reach any agreement and do not provide material gains, Hamas would maintain a political vitality and represent Palestinian nationalism. Despite stating that Hamas is a social movement, Mishal and Sela emphasise the degree to which Hamas is able to operate as a political actor. “Hamas is fully acquainted with and adaptable to the political world, driven by primordial sentiments, conflicting interests, and cost-benefit considerations, a world of constant bargaining and power brokering, multiple identities and fluid loyalties” (Mishal & Sela, 2000, p. viii). Herzog (2006) uses a political framework to reach
similar conclusions, arguing that Hamas entered the process of evolving from “radical rejectionism to mainstream politics” – though this process is far from complete.

4.1.3. Creation of the PA and State Building (1994-2006)

The Palestinian Authority (then named Palestinian National Authority or PNA\(^8\)) was a creation of the 1993 Declaration of Principles. Oslo II (Interim Agreement) split the governance of the occupied territories into three categories: in Area A (18%) the PA has complete security and civilian control; Area B (22%) is limited to civilian control by the PA; and Area C is exclusively Israeli controlled. As the agreement suggests, the PA was intended to be an interim body until final status negotiations and subsequent transfer of power. State building truly emerged when the Oslo Accords provided the grounds for the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, which was to provide the Palestinians with a measure of self-government. The PLO was in charge of the PA until the main body of the PA, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), could be established. Where the PLO’s PNC is parliament for all Palestinians, the PLC (currently 132 members) is parliament for the occupied territories (see Appendix D). PLC elections were held in 1996 in which Fatah won a large majority. The PA is semi-presidential with an appointed prime minister role established in 2003. The positions are currently held by Mahmoud Abbas and Mohammed Shtayyeh respectively. Where the previously mentioned Fundamental Law relates to the PLO, the Basic Law came about through the PA via the Legislative Council. The Basic Law provides the constitution for a Palestinian state (the PLO and Fundamental Law extend beyond the Palestinian territories). It was originally established in 2002 but then amended in 2003 in order to authorise the addition of a prime minister (2003 Amended Basic Law, 2008). Below is a summarised overview of the structure and functions of the PA taken from PASSIA (2014, p. 7) and the information was correct for 2015.

\(^8\) I use the acronym PA throughout this thesis but keep references to PNA when this version is used in direct quotes.
Table 6. PASSIA overview of the PA (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PA</th>
<th>Established on the basis of the Palestinian-Israeli <em>Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Authority (DoP)</em>, Washington DC, 13 Sept. 1993 and the subsequent Oslo I and II Accords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ramallah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>President</em> (Mahmoud Abbas) ex-officio member of the PLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>elected</em> by the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cabinet</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>appointed</em> by the President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parliament, 132 members,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>headquartered in Ramallah (with a branch in Gaza)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>headed by a speaker <em>(Aziz Dweik)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palestinian people with a valid address in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem <em>(4.4 million)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fatah – 45 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PFLP (ran as “Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa”) – 3 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PPP/DFLP/Fida (ran as “The Alternative”) – 1 seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hamas (ran as “Change and Reform”) – 74 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Al-Mubadara (ran as “Independent Palestine”) – 2 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Third Way – 2 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Independent personalities – 4 seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Interim Agreements</strong> <em>(constitutional framework for the Palestinian Self-Governing Authority as laid down in the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995 and based on the 1994 Gaza-Jericho Agreement and 1993 DoP)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Basic Law</strong> <em>(provisional constitution of the PA. Was affirmed by the PLC in October 1997, but only ratified by Chairman Arafat in May 2002 and reintroduced with several amendments – especially regarding the position of Prime Minister upon international pressure in February/March 2003.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Palestinian Security and Police Forces</strong> <em>(inside the occupied Palestinian territories, currently divided between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Has no official foreign relations powers</em> <em>(issue to be settled in the final status negotiations)</em> but conducts <em>de facto</em> foreign relations and has a Foreign Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ministry of Finance</strong> <em>(in charge of: Controlling financial activities of the PNA and its expenditure; paying salaries of government employees; managing and settling employee salaries and retirement of civil administration and compensation; scrutinizing and overseeing all financial transactions; monitoring the implementation of the provisions of financial legislation in force.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Palestinian Monetary Authority</strong> <em>(issues and manages national currency and implements a sound monetary policy to ensure monetary stability and keep inflation under control, and provides a safe, sound and secure banking and national payment system, along with exercising the role of economic and financial advisor to the Palestinian government.)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Given the seeming duplications between the PLO and PA (and amount of similar acronyms), also provided is a comparative chart of the two bodies. It is useful to clarify the boundaries and differences between the two before moving into their analyses. Given that both have been led by the same individual and party consecutively the confusion of the roles of each body is an important element in examining the functioning of the leadership of the Palestinian national movement. Indeed, the redrawing of such roles and powers of the two becomes critical in questioning the leadership relationality. The figure below is also taken from PASSIA (2014, p. 6) and the information was correct for 2015.

Figure 3. PASSIA comparison of the PLO and PA (2014)

Just as the process of state building influenced the ongoing national liberation process, the issue of nation building has been viewed as remaining central to the progression towards state building in the case of Palestine. Khalidi (1997) puts Palestinian identity at the forefront of national liberation movement. Writing on national identity, Khalidi (1997, p. 209) asks:
Whether this very limited success can be turned into the basis for building something lasting, something that will perhaps make possible a reversal of some of the failures of this past century, and finally allow the achievement of self-determination, statehood, and national independence the modern world has taught us is the ‘natural state’ of peoples with an independent national identity like the Palestinians.

In this period directly following the Oslo agreements, the national reconstruction process was seen as both proceeding and succeeding the peace process. The continuity of national identity was to be the dominant factor.

A strong power structure was built around Arafat, President of the PA, and his movement Fatah in the hopes of providing a legitimate Palestinian government to secure a peace deal. Le More (2005) finds that as a result of this, the EU and international donors fostered an environment of authoritarianism and repression, failing to support the development of a democratic, transparent, accountable PA. Whilst the establishment of the PA was a key marker of the state-building (and thus democratic) process, it has been argued that “the PA adopted undemocratic policies aimed at ‘protecting’ the peace process and the process of national reconstruction” (Shikaki, 1996, p. 9). The peace process and strengthening of state capacity purposely defaulted towards a “strong central authority” at the price of civil society (Shikaki, 1996, p. 9). Literature critiquing the PA in this manner often overlooks, or rather does not emphasise enough, the severe limitations to the PA’s operating abilities resulting from Israel’s occupation e.g. the withholding of Palestinian tax revenues channelled through Israel. Turner (2006, p. 747) has scrutinised this, writing that the economic problems the Palestinian Authority has faced were not due to government intervention and market distortion, but rather a result of “asymmetrical containment” owing to the power imbalance between Israel and Palestine.

The second instance of the Weber-Michels model of transformation was notably much more dramatic and can be clearly traced through Parsons’ (2005) work on the PA and the development of Palestinian statehood. Parsons uses a conceptual framework to trace the development of the PLO from a liberation movement to institutionalised national authority during the state building process. He combines a historical-structural and transition approach in order to analyse both the progression from PLO to Palestinian Authority (PA), and PA towards statehood (Parsons, 2005, p. 4). The first intifada proved a challenge for Arafat and his failure to apply the intifada to the fight for self-determination forced Arafat to “manipulate social divisions through patron-clientelism instead, in order to secure a ruling coalition for the PA.” (Parsons, 2005, p. 6). Power was concentrated in the hands of the elite as the PLO’s focus shifted inwards and it
became more conservative. With Arafat at the helm of both Fatah and the PA, the same transformation also took place amongst these organisations. The PLO leadership reasoned that Palestinian self-determination was to be achieved through a diplomatic institutional solution (Parsons, 2005, p. 55). Parsons’ (2013, p. 209) analysis shows that over time the PLO shifted its basis away from a radical anti-colonial approach to nationalism towards diplomacy. The leadership was therefore actively seeking engagement with one process of the national movement (state building) in order to feed back to another (national liberation), again demonstrating the interactions of processes. Leadership groups have engaged with the national movement processes concurrently and conversely and thus managed multiple relations to legitimacies.

Brynen (1995) also examines the formation and effects of the Palestinian elite within the PA. Brynen uses a number of frameworks with which to analyse the elite: primordial perspective, social change perspective, and an organisational perspective. The social change perspective views the formation of the elite in terms of modernisation and the changing socio-economic and political context. The social changes that occurred during the generational shift of leadership to Arafat and the guerrillas “sustained the emergence of a new Palestinian nationalist leadership” (Brynen, 1995, p. 35). This perspective ties the leadership structure of the PA to changes that took place in Palestinian society 20 years prior. This model demonstrates the interrelated nature of Palestinian leadership and why examination of leadership sources must be situated in the broader historical context. The organisational perspective emphasises the role of institutions and identifies how the structure and functioning of the PLO saw Fatah concentrate its power through the bureaucratisation of the PLO (Brynen, 1995, p. 37). This elite formation perspective aligns very closely with the Weber-Michels model highlighting how, despite the unique environment in which Palestinian leadership operates, it follows traditional leadership framework patterns.

Arafat led Fatah until 2004 and it has been headed by Mahmoud Abbas since then. Abbas was elected PA president in early 2005. With decades of power concentrated solely in Arafat’s leadership, political institutions were structured specifically around Arafat and required Abbas to attempt to reform the system to shift away from reliance on personal power (Jarbawi & Pearlman, 2007, p. 15). Abbas had three established institutions to negotiate, where Arafat initially had one (Fatah) and was able to directly influence the establishment of the latter two (the PLO and PA). Abbas’s struggle to govern post-Arafat has been viewed as a factor in Hamas’s successful electoral bid.

Literature focussing on Abbas and his attempts at state building has emerged, particularly with regards to ‘good governance’. Such an approach has shifted beyond purely the process of state building, with the assessment of achieving a
'liberal democracy' as is assumed to be the goal of state building. Schanzer's (2013) book on Arafat, Abbas and the failed Palestinian state is the first to qualitatively assess Palestinian leadership and good governance. While Abbas does not have the charismatic rule that Arafat did, Schanzer argues that there has in fact been continuity between the two leadership regimes due to Abbas’s autocratic tendencies and lack of institution building (Barnidge, 2014, p. 92). These similarities are identified through the lens of good governance, with Abbas inheriting “the mess that his predecessor had created” (Schanzer, 2013, p. 108). While beneficial outcomes for the Palestinians are equally lacking from both Arafat’s (namely the latter half) and Abbas’s rule, the leadership and legitimacy of each is markedly different. Abbas may use autocratic measures and institutionalise power, but he does not have the personality and following that Arafat did as sole leader of the Palestinian national movement. This assessment relies on an individualistic approach to leadership and on the Weberian legitimacies.

As the process of state building continued, democracy and elections became central issues. There is extensive agreement among the literature regarding Hamas’s development and 2006 electoral victory as a consequence of the growing dissatisfaction with the Fatah-run PA and failing Palestinian economy. Hamas’s growing popularity and strength reflected the lack of effective Palestinian nationalist leadership during the post-Oslo period prior to the 2006 elections. The literature forms a strong consensus not only on the claims of Palestinian Authority corruption and funds mismanagement prior to and during the second intifada, but also how these eventually came to influence the 2006 elections (Bouris, 2010; Grynkewich, 2008; Le More, 2006; Levitt, 2006; Phillips, 2009). While the PA was relying upon donor funds for budgetary support to pay civil servants, Hamas was building ground support by supplementing the welfare system. The Oslo Accords had initially threatened Hamas’s power by removing the decentralised power model that was operating in the Palestinian Territories, but the long-term outcomes of the peace process ultimately provided an economic operating platform for Hamas prior to the second intifada. “Hamas operates in a context of opportunities and constraints, being attentive to the fluctuating needs and desires of the Palestinian population and cognizant of the power relations and political feasibility” (Mishal & Sela, 2000, p. viii). As allegations of corruption and elitism grew, the Hamas leadership used this to their advantage, increasing popularity through basic welfare provisioning. The leadership groups were consistently developing relative to each other and the ongoing processes.

Shikaki (2002) highlights how there was a double division that emerged: within the nationalist movement (young vs. old guard) and within the liberation movement (nationalists vs. Islamists). While both divisions have remained in the national liberation movement, the analysis of the former speaks volumes today:
The old guard is composed of the founders of the Palestinian national movement, together with the leaders of various guerrilla organizations and the PLO bureaucracy. These men, few of whom are under 50, have spent most of their political lives outside the Palestinian territories. This political establishment dominates both Fatah and the PA... The young guard is composed of newly emerging local leaders as well as the leaders of the first intifada. Most are no older than 40. A few serve in the PA cabinet and the PLC, and as heads or senior members of different security services. But as a whole, the group lacks cohesion, leadership, and formal authority.

(Shikaki, 2002, p. 94)

Over a decade later and the figures of the old guard such as Mahmoud Abbas and Nabil Sha’ath still remain, and the local leadership remains largely outside the government bureaucracy without formal authority. Furthermore, Shikaki (2002, p. 95) explains that where the PLO and PA have the resources of formal legitimacy (deemed as international recognition, financial control, security services), the ‘new’ leadership invoked the second intifada and public dissatisfaction with negotiations and nation-building as a means of challenging this power. The pattern of factionalism in the Palestinian movement had a repetitive nature.

Where others focused on Palestinian dynamics, Brown believes the movement and subsequent institution building should be placed firmly within the Arab context; the state-building process was reflective of Arab norms and not competing tensions between the peace and liberation processes. However, Brown (2003, p. 10) does identify where friction was to occur in the emergence of the state-building process:

For many Palestinians (especially, but not exclusively, for those outside the official PNA positions), the establishment of an autonomous authority provided a signal to resume normal political life, emerging after the decades-long dominance of the politics of national liberation. No longer were nationalist concerns and demands for unity to determine all aspects of Palestinian politics.

Hindsight shows that such autonomy was not to occur and thus the national liberation process remained alongside that of state-building. In fact, as nationalist issues remained, Brown (2003, p. 10) asserts that the nationalist approach came to view institution-building as a means against the peace process and its conflicting restrictions upon sovereignty. Critically, Brown identifies that both officials and institutions are never independent from their antecedents. And while these antecedents never provided fulfilled national reconstruction, they
were a constant basis from which further developments occurred; the implication being that the interconnected relations have always been a feature of the evolution of the Palestinian national liberation movement.

4.1.4. The Ongoing Processes and BDS Resistance (2005-)

State building was severely hindered in development following the administrative division of Gaza and the West Bank between Hamas and Fatah respectively. The critical state function of elections had exposed significant problems in the implementation of democracy in Palestine – both from the Palestinian leadership and external actors. Unity governments have been attempted in 2007, 2011 and 2014 but failure to hold elections meant all were short-lived. The period saw numerous devastating military operations on the Gaza Strip (2008, 2012, & 2014) as tensions and conflict between Israel and Hamas continually escalated. The leadership groups were then struggling simultaneously with national liberation and state building. Despite already having numerous political parties and governing institutions, civil society experienced a resurgence in providing leadership at the local level.

The result of the peace process was a centralisation of power that directly fed into the state building process. Pearlman believes the consistent presence of factionalism in Palestine has been used as a challenge to centralisation – namely that of concentrating power within the biggest faction, Fatah. She shows that the non-dominant factions employ the most effective tactic available to them against Fatah and the PLO’s autocratic consolidation of power. For the periods examined, that tactic is violence and military rhetoric. Questions around the nature of democracy and leadership begin to emerge when examining power relations. “The organizational structure of the national movement was wrought by a contest between those who justified fragmentation in the name of democracy and those who justified autocracy in the name of cohesion” (Pearlman, 2011, p. 229). The current popular resistance presents an interesting variation to this trend (outside of the Fatah-Hamas contention). In order to circumvent the Fatah-dominated factionalised formal leadership, the most powerful tactic to do so is by a nonviolent method that moves the discourse outside of the national realm. Pearlman concludes that research should “examine this friction between democratization and centralization, as well as its ramifications for movement strategy” (Pearlman, 2011, p. 229).

One of the more recent approaches to examining the leadership relations of the Palestinian national liberation movement has come from Bröning (2011). With the exception of the second intifada, popular resistance has been decreasingly included in leadership analysis following the Oslo peace process. Bröning
reintroduces and updates the connections between the two. However, Bröning errs on the descriptive side and does not introduce theoretical components to analysis. His unquestioning use of legitimacy is problematic, especially when referring to “illegitimate forms of resistance” without elaboration (2011, p. 7). Resistance by its very nature is ‘contentious politics’. The use of legitimacy judgements with regards to resistance is equally contentious.

There is one final leadership group this research includes in a modern assessment of the Palestinian national liberation movement. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is taken as one representation of grassroots popular resistance. Although an international network, the BDS movement has its core leadership in the Palestinian territories which sees it engage, both symbiotically and contentiously, with the other leadership groups already presented. This section draws on fieldwork conducted in 2016 with key figures in the BDS movement in the West Bank. This is necessary to introduce here in order to be able to build a more detailed understanding of the BDS movement and its organisational operations.

Where the inclusion of the BDS movement may seem less clear compared to the other leadership groups thus far, Ghanem (2013b, p. 5) explains the deep linkages between social and national movements:

> Like national movements, social movements aim for social and political change; thus they bear at least some similarities to national movements. Moreover, social movements generally use non-establishment forms of struggle and political participation, just like national movements ... the achievement of the objectives of a social-or political-change movement may be influenced by its profile (internal strength and solidarity), the nature of its objectives or goals, the group or groups that oppose it, and the third parties interested in the conflict between the movement and its opponents. Of special importance is the strength or weakness of the movement itself. These characteristics can also be applied to national movements.

There is a space and need to include the BDS movement in the realm of national leadership despite its self-proclaimed desire to remain outside the realm of political leadership. Of course claiming to be apolitical and operating in contentious national movement grounded in politics is not necessarily a coherent duality. This is an important issues that will be taken up later in this thesis when the relationality of the process of leadership within a national movement will critically question assumptions of the BDS movement to be separate from political operations.
Established in 2005 and set amidst a rich history of popular resistance, the BDS movement presents an extremely effective popular resistance campaign, and does so through a unique leadership structure that combines elements from each of the following areas: distributed leadership\(^9\), transnational social movements\(^{10}\), nonviolent popular resistance and civil society – all within the national liberation realm. The movement is based upon three goals (Israeli obligations) which are non-negotiable: ending the occupation and dismantling the wall; equality for Arab-Palestinian citizens in Israel; and the right of return for Palestinian refugees as per UN General Assembly resolution 194 (Palestinian Civil Society, 2005). The model draws strongly from the South African anti-apartheid movement which saw international pressure aid the cessation of apartheid policies. The BDS movement labels Israel an apartheid state. The movement purposely limits itself to its three objectives, claiming to not engage with Palestinian politics beyond self-determination. It must be noted that part of this semi-apolitical approach includes not specifying the form self-determination should take, and therefore does not necessarily imply an independent Palestinian state as per the two-state solution. Its distributed leadership model has provided an alternative outlet that circumvents the restrictive formal political process; but BDS does not seek the institutionalised power that any future Palestinian state requires. As Erakat (2012) writes of the BDS rights-based approach, “[it] provides for a compass but does not provide a destination.” BDS has developed a global presence with organisational networks on numerous operational levels. The central command of the BDS movement is located within the occupied Palestinian territories and predominantly in the West Bank. There are two levels of management/organisation: the broader BDS National Committee (BNC) and the smaller elected secretariat of the BNC.

After several years of build-up and individual campaigns, the BDS movement was formally launched in 2005 by 170 Palestinian unions, organisations, parties, networks and civil society organisations. Despite the international nature of the BDS movement, Palestinian ownership remains a core principle with the BNC based in the West Bank. One of the most significant steps in the movement’s development was the establishment of the BNC in 2008. The effects of this were threefold: it gave the movement formal and more centralised leadership; the identified purposes of the BNC gave the movement increased coherency and

\[^9\] A shared, collective approach to leadership (see Yukl, 1999; Gronn, 2002)

\[^{10}\] Diani (1992, p. 11) defines social movement actors as being “engaged in political and/or cultural conflicts, meant to promote or oppose social change either at the systemic of non-systemic level.” Globalisation has seen the development of social movements into a transnational realm whereby there is an “interplay of actors at different geographical levels, going beyond disciplinary borders between internal and international politics” (Della Porta, 2011, p. 2440)
strategy; and the BNC confirmed Palestinian ownership of the BDS movement. The BNC acts a general assembly and is not composed of individuals instilled with power, but is rather a collection of principal Palestinian-based BDS organisations. The relationship between the BNC and the overall BDS movement is summarised by Hallward and Shaver (2012, p. 397): “While the BDS movement is quite loosely organized, the BNC does serve as a focal point for coordinating various BDS campaign efforts, organizes a yearly conference, formulates strategies and programs, and acts as the Palestinian reference point for global BDS activities.”

There are 29 members of the BNC, each representing a wider coalition or union rather than individual interests. The main foci of the BNC are strengthening the movement, strategising and coordination, and Palestinian ownership. Much of the work of the BNC, like the BDS movement, is done on a voluntary basis. However, there are a limited number of employed staff including the BNC coordinators. There are general, local and international outreach coordinators located in the West Bank and Gaza, and international coordinators located in Europe (2), the United States (1), Latin America (1), and the Arab region (1) with establishment work currently being done in India with the aim of expanding throughout Asia.

Within the BNC sits the secretariat. The secretariat started as nine seats and expanded with the addition of the women’s unions to become 11, elected every two years by the BNC. Within the secretariat are two subcommittees: the local and Arab committee; and the international committee. Two international secretariat members follow up with international members PACBI (the academic and cultural boycott campaign) and Stop the Wall. There are a further two secretariat members working on international outreach, including BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti. Two secretariat members on the local committee work with local outreach and activities (Jamal Juma and Salah Khawaja), but general coordinator Mahmoud Nawajaa is also on the local BNC subcommittee. There is also a seat on the secretariat for the coalition of all Palestinian political parties. It must be noted that nearly all members of the secretariat have double or triple roles due to many of them running or organising other resistance organisations and campaigns, in addition to their work with BDS. For example, secretariat member Salah Khawaja is the representative for the political parties (he is in the Palestinian National Initiative) and a central figure in the Stop the Wall campaign.
The following constructed figure provides a summary of the organisational levels of the BDS movement from conducted fieldwork:

**Figure 4. Overview of the BDS movement structure**

The BNC, with influence from the secretariat, sets the strategy for the BDS movement. Often this is formalised at the annual national conferences and can filter down from the secretariat. Mahmoud Nawajaa, BNC General Coordinator, explains:

> It's usually the BNC itself that will decide our strategy. It could be by a suggestion from the secretariat and then it will be approved by the BNC and there will be an adoption of the strategy. And usually we have, we lead a discussion with our partners of the strategy with the BNC.

(personal interview, 2016)

The BNC decides upon and leads the campaigns, however context sensitivity is always accounted for. There are normally 3-5 primary ongoing campaigns and within this mix the local BDS groups may select those that are appropriate for the context of their country. The BDS movement allows for a combination of major and local campaigns in order to maintain overall cohesion and strength, but allow levels of autonomy for international BDS signatories (in line with the BDS principles).
The BDS movement is a reaction; a reaction to the Israeli occupation, but arguably equally a reaction to the internal Palestinian political situation. The model and ethos of the BDS movement are antithetical to the political developments borne of the Oslo agreements. The BDS movement simultaneously reflects the successes of the first Intifada and the failings of the current formal leadership. The first Intifada is often cited as one of the most effective resistance campaigns in the long history of Palestinian popular resistance, and the BDS movement seeks to draw elements from it – nonviolence, popular committees, and everyday resistance. The BDS movement aims to add another stepping stone to the cumulative Palestinian national liberation movement. The other aspect of the BDS organisation is built upon reactions to the problematic institutionalised formal leadership – hierarchy, corruption, normalisation, and most importantly, factionalism. This seemingly polar relationship between the two channels of leadership is not uncommon, as Tarrow (2011, p. 129) observed in other case studies that “each move toward institutionalized movement organizations triggered contrary moves in the direction of grassroots models of organization.” While Israel provides the rationale for the existence of the BDS movement, it is the crippled Palestinian political system that has profoundly shaped the movement.

Pearlman argues that too often forms of protest are sectioned into separate literatures e.g. nonviolence and social movement theory, armed resistance with the field of conflict. “Neither mass political violence, nor terrorism, nor peaceful protest, nor nonviolent resistance can be explained in vacuo” (DeNardo as quoted in Pearlman, 2011, p. 25). This is of significance, especially with regards to national movements that have used all such forms and even more so when these actions have not been clearly differentiated amongst groups involved. Pearlman (2011, p. 25) makes an important contribution in stating that “just as violence is not simply a result of a high intensity of conflict, so nonviolent protest is not simply the product of a low intensity.” The above sections have demonstrated that the persistence of a factional elite recurs, causing Palestinian leadership to be vulnerable to bureaucratisation and clientelism in order to maintain a monopoly on power, ultimately increasing the chances of a power vacuum once this ‘strong-man’ politics ceases. Abbas has struggled to retain this monopoly, despite his use of autocratic leadership, creating the political space for the operations of the Hamas and BDS movement leadership.

Nonviolence is not synonymous with a lack of anger. But again, Pearlman attributes the choice of strategy to organisation structure. There is a strong argument to be made that nonviolent popular resistance such as the BDS movement exists and operates as a result of failure of the formal peace process and related Palestinian political actors. To examine the structure of the BDS movement in order to assess its choice of nonviolence is an injustice to the
complex history and relations of the Palestinian national liberation movement. Norman (2011, pp. 2-3) begins to capture a different approach in questioning “how do power dynamics among and between different groups affect understandings and applications of nonviolence?” Through this approach, she states that this is not to place normative value on types of resistance, but rather to delve into the broad and complex concept of nonviolence and its resulting controversies that have been overlooked in the field. Norman’s questioning of power dynamics can be extended out beyond the issue of nonviolence resistance, and applied to national liberation movements more broadly using a relational leadership approach.

As the BDS movement is the newest source of Palestinian leadership, originating in 2005 and gradually increasing in international attention and influence since then, there are limited academic studies on the movement. With a few notable exceptions, the sources that do address BDS detail its history and both the internal and external politics of the movement, but fail either to employ a conceptual framework of analysis or to examine BDS from the wider perspective of Palestinian leadership. Qumsiyeh (2011) is one of the few exceptions to the second charge, providing a comprehensive examination of the BDS movement and situating it in the context of Palestine’s history of popular resistance. This allows Qumsiyeh to draw wider leadership inferences regarding the political system and legitimacy. Focusing on the nonviolent methods employed in the struggle for Palestinian freedom, he deduces that the popular resistance is often overlooked by foreign states who instead favour the ‘legitimate’ leadership of the PA. His work also emphasises the need for interconnectedness between the different sources of leadership of the Palestinian national movement, noting that each “forms just one factor in inducing political and social change” (Qumsiyeh, 2011, p. 226) – aligning with the relational approach of chapter two. Qumsiyeh’s work points to a gap between those examining the formal leadership groups and those examining popular resistance; the issue of legitimacy crosses between these two and must be considered by both researchers, and as Qumsiyeh stresses, the leadership groups themselves as they do not operate in isolation.

Erakat (2012) positions the development of the BDS movement against the “collapse of the PLO and PA”, arguing that the Oslo Accords left a power vacuum for Palestinian leadership. Erakat believes that every renewed peace negotiation process the PLO enters into signals regression from a possible strong national liberation movement on an international stage. The Oslo Accords have weakened the PLO and thus associated Palestinian leadership, resulting in a lack of a national liberation strategy (Erakat, 2012, pp. 1-2). The literature on the PLO and associated leadership frameworks highlights the tensions caused by the elite leadership structure and bureaucratisation transformation, and the Oslo Accords have served only to exacerbate these issues. “This inevitable rivalry intensified as
the Palestinian Authority has gradually replaced the PLO as a political structure and the nature of the Palestinian question was significantly reduced.” (Dana as quoted in Erakat, 2012, p. 2).

The BDS movement provides an alternative source of Palestinian leadership and liberation strategy. Erakat (2012, p. 2) writes that “by providing a central Palestinian reference point and authoritative guidance to global solidarity, the BNC [BDS National Committee] has partially filled a void left by the disappearance of a once commanding PLO, even though it has no claims to do so.” Ananth (2013) focuses on the strategy employed by the BDS movement and the international reaction to it. Ananth (2013, p. 130) defines BDS as a movement because there is a coherency that extends beyond its dispersed nature, composed of Palestinian leadership and international solidarity. Ananth (2013, pp. 130-131) states that because of the BDS movement’s “heterogeneous and variegated” nature, it is a crucial element for Palestinian freedom. These characteristics open power-sharing arrangements not present in formal Palestinian leadership which are necessary to place the movement beyond the control of the Israeli occupation.

An important part of any movement is the framework that the leadership constructs. Ananth (2013, p. 136) argues that the BDS movement has used its three demands to highlight the framework of the Israeli oppression. The demand for the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees and end to colonisation demarcates colonialism; the demand for full equality of Palestinians in Israel reflects apartheid; and the demand for the end of the occupation and removal of the separation wall represents occupation. The BDS movement’s framing of the Israeli oppression is designed to manufacture frame resonance, particularly in countries associated with colonialism and with those who campaigned for equal rights. Erakat (2012, p. 3) similarly identifies the use of the movement’s three demands to provide a framework but, unlike Ananth, draws international law and human rights frames from the demands. Ananth (2013, p. 137) states that the BDS movement is a shift towards “a transformative praxis of emancipatory resistance that matches the evolving socio-spatial apparatus of oppression.” Ananth (2013, p. 137) also emphasises the transnational role of not just the movement, but also the oppression, stating that the political and economic sources of oppression are present far beyond the geographies of Israel and Palestine. The limitations of the movement are also highlighted, listing a lack of political programme beyond liberation, the North-South divide, and heterogeneity as a double-edged sword, as potential difficulties (Ananth, 2013, p. 141). These identified limitations parallel those proposed by distributed leadership and social movement frameworks.

Bakan and Abu-Laban (2009) provide a comprehensive overview that incorporates the history of boycotts and sanctions against Israel with the present-
day BDS movement. Like Ananth, Bakan and Abu-Laban also focus heavily on the framing of both Israel and Palestine and how the BDS movement seeks to challenge and reframe the occupation. Bakan and Abu-Laban (2009, pp. 31-33) draw upon Charles Mills’ racial contract theory to explain the hegemonic framing of Israel as an unchallengeable victim. Mills’ theory proposes that there is an accepted racial hierarchy that permeates western ideological norms. This concept influences the construct of a “Gramscian framing of elite hegemony in the extension of European imperialism.” (Bakan & Abu-Laban, 2009, p. 33). With regards to Israel-Palestine, this racial contract theory sees Israel privileged with its European roots and colonial character in the Western-dominated international arena, whilst Palestinians’ non-white rights are neglected. Drawing from Said’s post-colonial theories, Bakan and Abu-Laban (2009, p. 33) are highly critical of mainstream academic and policy discourse stating that there is a “near absence of normalised discourse regarding Israel-Palestine . . . the charged atmosphere of dialogue and critique is significantly rooted in an ideology of entrenched Orientalism.” By this they mean that the human aspects of the Palestinians have been overlooked in their framing as “‘non-white’ and stateless”, and the difficulties incurred in opening dialogue critical of Israel. The authors argue that the development of the BDS movement requires expanding this discourse and the movement has indeed aided generation of a normalised reasoned debate around the Israel-Palestine situation (Bakan & Abu-Laban, 2009, p. 46).

Where the literature that examines the PLO and PA provides thorough analysis of the organisations through applying frameworks that incorporate the historical contexts, the works dedicated to the BDS movement are largely interest pieces aimed at generating awareness (e.g. Generation Palestine and The Case for Sanctions against Israel). Critique of the BDS movement and its organisation and role in Palestinian leadership is largely absent outside of those opposing the movement for political reasons. The focus of the majority of the BDS movement literature is on quantifiable events and successes and does not examine the actual process of leadership for the movement. Furthermore, given that the basis of the rejuvenation of popular resistance, and thus BDS movement, is strongly connected to the interactions of the leadership groups and the national movement processes, there is a need to situate BDS amongst this. There remains a space to examine the relationship of BDS with the other leaderships in a multidirectional manner, but also the interaction of BDS and the national movement processes in spite of claims of being apolitical.
4.2. Identifying Interacting Processes

Moving beyond the analysis of specific groups, returning to an older work highlights the key area of focus that has both implicitly and explicitly resonated through the works on the Palestinian national movement. Writing at the height of the Oslo peace process, Shikaki (1996) identified the interaction of three processes: the peace process, national reconstruction and state-building, and the democratic transition process. With all three present at the same time, the strength of one was to effect the others. Shikaki (1996, p. 8) linked this to the increasing divisions within Palestinian political leadership:

The peace process has had a negative impact on national reconstruction by leaving unresolved the major issues of the conflict ... deferral of these issues to future negotiations has created defects in the state-building process and deepened Palestinian divisions regarding the Palestinian political order and the consensus on which it was built.

The tensions between these processes have remained at the heart of the still unfulfilled national liberation movement. In the current situation the issue of ongoing national movement processes must be questioned as to how this is influencing the process of leadership.

Shikaki (1996) argues that leadership issues are inherently bound in national liberation movements involved in multiple processes at one time. He believes national reconstruction can be countered by the requirements of democracy and that “in the early stages of state building it is more important to assert the state’s rights to monopolize power and eliminate competitors for the people’s loyalty than to democratize the political system” (Shikaki, 1996, p. 9). A national movement will come to encounter democratic state building processes and this is not an uncontested transition – echoed in Möller and Schierenbeck’s (2014) work. There is a clear overlap between the process of leadership and the processes of national movements in that there is interaction amongst all processes and a necessary dynamism to this interaction. However, this processual nature of leadership has not been taken as the point of departure in examining the Palestinian national movement, rather it has been the organisation and structure of leadership and the process of nation building.
4.3. Conclusion

The formation of the key leadership groups examined has often been the result of tumultuous times and dissatisfaction with the then political leadership situation. Fatah was a reaction against the Arab transnational approach to rebuilding Palestine and the PLO followed suit as it came to be ruled by Fatah. These two groups firmly situated themselves amongst the liberation process both through clear signalling such as their names (Fatah was previously the Palestinian National Liberation Movement) and the actions they took during this period. As the liberation process began to transition towards that of a peace process, Hamas emerged as a reaction against the seeming monopoly of these two institutions and their engagement in the peace process. Although Hamas initially established itself with a basis of social service provisioning, the organisation’s principles remained centred upon an uncompromised peace. The PA became the next addition to the leadership field as a result of the 90s peace process. The PA was a bureaucratic creation of the Oslo Accords that, following the institutionalisation of the political system, now dominates the internal political environment whilst still never fully moving beyond its interim power status. As the peace process was mandated by the PLO leadership, so too was the PA as a product of such. The PA transitioned into the vehicle for Palestinian state building. With increasing dissatisfaction within Palestine over the resulting environment of this approach by the governing bodies, civil society and popular resistance has regained a foothold. The BDS movement is representative of the reinvigoration of the grassroots civil society activism that had been severely hampered following the peace agreements and subsequent centralisation of power.

This chapter provides the basic overview of the Palestinian leadership groups and just in this short introduction it is clear that there is a relational element between the leaderships groups and the national movement processes occurring at the time of their founding. Indeed, these relationships continue to develop over time as the political landscape changes and the leadership groups have increasingly complex affiliations with each other. Although this chapter’s key purpose is to introduce the history of the Palestinian national movement leaderships to provide an elementary grounding for readers, questions can already be raised as to how the progression through the different liberation, peace and state building processes affects the process of the leadership for the groups that have been embedded within these processes. Furthermore, the indicated levels of intersection between the leadership groups and these processes becomes even more critical to examine given that we know that none of these three processes are viewed as having come to completion, and all leadership groups remain seeking forms of authority.
Works examining the Palestinian national liberation movement and leadership relations have a dominant theme in that they emerged out of the historical context of the Oslo peace process – a period where much space was given to the national movement processes. Even prior to this, there were still large bodies of work examining the relationships between resistance, leadership, and the national liberation movement (e.g. Amos II, 1980). Following Oslo the focus shifted from the macro to micro with leadership analysis shifting to the individual level to reflect the dominance of Arafat. The state building process and questions of institutionalisation have remained a central focus in the decades following the Oslo process. What emerges from researchers who tackle the issue of leadership in the Palestinian national liberation movement is that multiplicity of leadership processes has been a near constant of the movement and, when combined with section 2.3.1, these leaderships have engaged with different forms of legitimacy. The multiple national movement processes interacting with the process of leadership can be identified when we begin to apply a relational lens in examining the literature.
5. **Foundational Leadership Legitimacies**

In order to grasp the different holders of Palestinian leadership and the initial bases of their legitimacies, it is necessary to trace their emergence chronologically in the historical context of the conflict. This chapter examines Fatah, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Hamas, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. These groups do not form a homogeneous representation of Palestinian leadership, with each organisation differing in its goals and means of goal achievement. The separate channels of Palestinian leadership arose under (and often as a result of) disparate political, economic and social conditions. There are, of course, numerous political parties and grassroots organisations who have both official and unofficial leadership capacities. However, the bodies listed above are those with high stakes in the current political climate and whose relationships are particularly central to the issue of understanding Palestinian leadership. It is important to build an understanding of how their legitimacies were initially internally perceived to be situated as the Palestinian national movement progressed through different stages. Furthermore, it is also important that examining legitimacies not be restricted to existing understandings as such previous analysis and discussions have been. Instead forms of legitimacy must be responsive to the Palestinian case, as it has already been shown that there are gaps in the current limited approaches to internal legitimacies.

In her examination of phases of nationalism in Palestine, Baumgarten (2005, p. 26) laments that in over half a century the national movement has not managed to achieve even a pared back version of the desired independent state. She rightly acknowledges that “the failure to achieve Palestinian goals is due first and foremost to the overwhelming balance of power in Israel’s favour” but continues, nevertheless, in saying that in the face of decaying opportunities, in this period it is important “to take a critical look at the history of the Palestinian national movement from 1948 to the present” (Baumgarten, 2005, p. 26). I believe there is a need to add the subsequent peace and state building processes into the analysis alongside that of the national liberation process during this period. Whilst the processes do not have fixed time periods as none have reached a true conclusion, they do have distinct starting periods. The beginning of each marks an important juncture in the liberation movement leadership which has then had an impact upon the leaderships’ relationships legitimacy. This chapter focuses on the emergence of legitimacies amongst the phases of the different national movement processes. Legitimacy is frequently mentioned in the literature examining the different groups during these periods. However, internal legitimacy has often been used as a coverall term. As will become clear, the internal legitimacies of these groups have decidedly distinctive characteristics.
upon establishment. The differences in types of internal legitimacies have important implications for any transitions attempted by groups, both within one of the three processes, and between these processes. The question of the persistence of these legitimacies, given the continuation of all three processes, will be examined in subsequent chapters.

Acknowledging the long history of the Palestinian people, the modern period of the national liberation process is taken from the 1950s when Palestinian leadership sought a shift away from Arab nationalism. This still leaves 70 years of a national liberation movement to cover. However, the focus of this chapter is the origins of the leadership groups in question and the relation between the liberation, peace and state building processes and resulting legitimacies. The history of Palestinian politics from the 1950s is already well detailed in the literature and does not need to be replicated. The groups have been outlined in the initial background chapter of this thesis and a summary of context at the junctures will be provided where necessary in order to situate the conceptual discussion of legitimacy. As written in chapter two, many have looked at legitimacy of leadership groups within the Palestinian national movement. However, there are two reasons for re-examining legitimacies here. Firstly, I am focussing solely on the concept of internal legitimacy, i.e. intra-Palestinian, and this is my entry point into Palestinian leadership. I examine the Palestinian leaderships over the history of the national movement for the purpose of developing how we conceptualise internal legitimacy and the underlying bases of such. Secondly, this chapter addresses the first part of research question one that asks what the bases of legitimacy are for the Palestinian leaderships during key historic foundational periods. As will become increasingly clear later, the analysis within this chapter is a necessary step to be able to both access and address the more recent period – the second part of the question.

This chapter begins with the legitimacies of the leaderships that emerged during the liberation process, starting with the establishment of Fatah in 1958 and moving to that of the PLO in 1964. The Oslo peace process overlaps with the first Intifada and continues through the 1990s. During this period the key changes that occurred both with Fatah and the PLO are examined, as well as the increasing presence of Hamas and its subsequent foundational legitimacy. The state building process was a direct result of Oslo, marked by the creation of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. The final group emerges beyond any one distinct national movement process, with the BDS movement launching in 2005. Empirical material for BDS is further developed here in order to be able to conduct analysis in line with the other established and well-researched groups. The years in the subheadings that follow refer to when claims to legitimacy are first identified (and not the formations of the groups). This chapter examines both initial legitimacies from when the leaderships were first established, but also
any changed basis of legitimacy as the groups have interacted with the changing national movement processes. The legitimacy types that are described within this chapter stem from a combination of: engaging with the established traditional legitimacy types where relevant and examining these within the Palestinian context; and from my empirical analysis, utilising the perceptions of those interviewed and within existing sources. The legitimacy types derived in this chapter are a result of observation and analysis, which both draws on and deviates from existing literature. This chapter contributes both empirically and theoretically with specific regards to internal leadership legitimacy, but also provides a critical grounding necessary for developing the later relational analysis of recent legitimisation processes in order to move beyond a traditional and historical discussion as features here.

5.1. Revolutionary Legitimacy

5.1.1. Fatah: 1968

Fatah has had significant changes in its leadership approach as it has been directly involved in all three processes. Legitimacy has played a crucial role in these periods. At times, legitimacy has been reconstructed to support a developing process and at other times existing legitimacies have impeded transitions. A leadership group can seek to greatly influence the type of legitimacy it lays claim to, but ultimately legitimacy is not a tangible reality that can be controlled. The embedded relationship between Fatah and the PLO is illustrated, for example, by The Routledge Handbook on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (2013) where the section on ‘Domestic Actors’ lists Hamas separately but not Fatah. Instead Fatah is interwoven in the sections of the PLO and PA. Though officially distinct organisations operating at different institutional levels, reviewing Fatah and the PLO independently becomes increasingly difficult beyond their initial stages. This is symptomatic of one of the large issues in Palestinian politics, but it important to attempt differentiation of the two as their representative claims and mandates are, at least in theory, divergent.

There was a strong involvement of neighbouring Arab states in the issue of Palestine both during and following the British mandate period; Palestine was viewed to be part of the pan-Arab project. However, not all Palestinians were content with such an approach. Constantin Zurayk (1956), a proponent of Arab nationalism, wrote in The Meaning of Disaster of the Arab leadership during this period:
Seven Arab states declare war on Zionism in Palestine, stop impotent before it and turn on their heels. The representatives of the Arabs deliver fiery speeches in the highest international forums, warning what the Arab states and peoples will do if this or that decision be enacted. Declarations fall like bombs from the mouths of officials at the meetings of the Arab League, but when action becomes necessary, the fire is still and quiet, and steel and iron are rusted and twisted, quick to bend and disintegrate.

Arab leadership of Palestine was often self-interested and viewed as lacking in progressing a Palestinian state. Fatah was created in 1958 by activists in Kuwait with the original name of Harakat al-Tahir al-Filastiniya (the Palestinian Liberation Movement). The acronym reversed becomes fatah which means ‘conquest’ (Schanzer, 2008, p. 17). Fatah leaned in to Marxism and ‘third world’ radical nationalism (as did subsequent Palestinian political movements) to frame its revolutionary approach (Rubin, 1994, p. 8).

Fatah initially viewed the establishment of the PLO in 1964 negatively. There was a competition between Fatah and the PLO during this initial stage. Where the PLO viewed itself as a representative body for Palestinians, “Fatah thought it could win that mandate through political and military action” (Rubin, 1994, p. 8). Credibility and legitimacy became founded upon the independent armed resistance that Fatah was willing to provide as they advocated guerrilla warfare. Fatah saw this as its winning formula for mobilising Palestinians and sought to entrench a revolutionary legitimacy based upon armed resistance:

Fatah aimed to turn the Palestinian refugees of 1948 into a people revolting against their fate, taking up a struggle of national liberation, and in the process, transforming themselves from despised refugees into proud revolutionaries fighting for the liberation of their homeland. Revolution for Fatah became synonymous with national liberation, itself interchangeable with armed struggle.

(Baumgarten, 2005, pp. 33-34)

Furthermore, Rubin (1994, p. 22) writes that a Fatah platform stated armed revolution was “the definite and exclusive way to the liberation of Palestine. The armed struggle is a strategy, not a tactic.” This was not a nationalist legitimacy, but one surrounded in revolutionary discourse as part of a national liberation project. The reconstructing of Palestinian national identity was an important part of this project, but it was not the source of legitimacy from which Fatah launched.
From his leadership role within Fatah, Yasser Arafat sought to reorient Palestinian liberation as intra-Palestine. He asserted that:

The Palestinian cause must now emerge on the international scene as a liberation struggle between the Palestinian people and an occupying state. All that we ask of the Arab governments is that they should be able to protect their own frontiers and to permit and support Palestinian action inside the occupied territories.

(as quoted in Rubin, 1994, pp. 9-10)

Fatah’s desire for a revolutionary legitimacy through armed resistance came to fruition in the Battle of Karama in 1968. In the year previous, the Arab states had experienced a humiliating defeat during the Six Day War which had seen leadership of the PLO shift from pro-Arab Ahmad Shuqaryi to Yahya Hammuda who was more sympathetic to the guerrilla approach (Parsons, 2013, p. 211). Following this, Fatah launched armed action against Israel in Karama that eventuated in an Israeli withdrawal. This drew attention due to the mismatched forces of the two sides weighted against Fatah. It was this armed resistance that “catapulted” the standing of Fatah and provided a mandate for assuming PLO leadership (Sayigh, 1997, p. 19). However, Baumgarten (2005, p. 35) proposes that the victory and subsequent transition was a double-edged sword in that “Karameh imposed on the young movement, and even on the entire Palestinian national movement, armed struggle as the only viable strategy against occupation.” This issue also became inherent within the PLO who also adopted armed violence to its charter with the joining of Fatah.

5.1.2. PLO: 1969

The question can be raised about the inclusion of Fatah and the PLO with identical legitimacies during the initial development of the Palestinian national movement; the reason being that there were actually two processes at play. Parsons (2005, p. 21) captures this in his assessment of how authoritative leadership was established: “first the ascension of Arafat and Fatah within the PLO, and second the consolidation of the PLO’s leadership within the Palestinian polity.” Despite the clear linkages, it remained a two-step process in which Fatah and the PLO were engaging separately. As already explained above, the two groups started from very different places and therefore means of seeking legitimisation. Although these increasingly coalesced as Fatah took control of the PLO and their forms of legitimacy overlapped in the means of achievement, the processes were not identical between the two groups.
The PLO was established in 1964 as part of the pan-Arab project and Parsons (2005, p. 12) states that during this initial period the PLO was “lacking legitimacy”. Following Fatah’s joining of the PLO in 1967, Arafat became PLO chairman in 1969 and inherited a “hitherto ineffectual organization created by the Arab League in 1964 that paid only lip service to ‘liberating’ the lands that Palestinians coveted” (Schanzer, 2008, p. 16). However, this changed as Arafat amalgamated the PLO under Fatah. Arafat quickly asserted a Palestinian nationalist approach for the PLO that was built from Fatah’s belief in liberation preceding Arab unity (Muslih, 1990). As with Fatah, the emphasis placed on Palestinian national liberation over the dominant pan-Arab narrative provided the origins of the PLO’s legitimacy. It can be argued that the PLO situated itself more firmly in a nationalist discourse than that of the revolutionary Fatah. Shikaki (1996, p. 8) states that “its legitimacy derived from a Palestinian consensus on ‘national liberation’ as the goal and ‘armed struggle’ as the means to achieve it – core values expressed in the Palestinian national charter as amended in 1968.” Former member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Dr Azmi Shuaibi, labelled this “revolutionary legitimacy” (personal interview, 2017). This use of revolutionary legitimacy is echoed by Jamal Zakout (personal interview, 2017), a leader in the first intifada and former senior official, who proposed that this form of legitimacy was actually present until Oslo.

The case could be made that this first stage in PLO legitimacy be labelled ‘nationalist’. But I propose that nation building was the wider process at hand, with a nationalist legitimacy holding greater importance in regards to external factors – namely the Arab region and Israel, whereas internal legitimacy aligned with Fatah in the dependence on armed resistance to source a revolutionary legitimacy. In 1969 Arafat asserted that “we do not have an ideology – our goal is liberation of our fatherland by any means necessary” (as quoted in Rubin & Colp Rubin, 2003, p. 27). It is important to acknowledge that this led to the PLO and Fatah committing acts of violence against the state of Israel under this revolutionary approach that have been labelled as terrorism. For the internal Palestinian political dynamics, revolutionising the system was the central focus: to firmly leave behind the British mufti system and the detrimental cleavages colonialism created, and to seek internal ownership of the Palestinian movement beyond the control of Arab states.

For Palestinian liberation Sayigh (1997, p. 23) states that armed resistance was the “necessary mobilizing theme ... the defining dynamic that drove the reconstruction and reorganization of Palestinian national politics, and that allowed the search for the state to proceed.” By this logic it was the initial creation of a revolutionary legitimacy in the national liberation process that should have paved the way for a transition to state building. It is a safe assumption that a revolutionary legitimacy based upon armed resistance is not a natural match for
a state building process, and indeed Fatah and the PLO ran into issues when they continued to engage with this established form of legitimacy that they knew to be effective. The use of the term ‘revolution’ also links to the underlying social revolution that was taking place during the height of the PLO’s nationalist development. Robinson (1997) argues that the revolution met a premature end when the PLO subsumed civil society – a process that began in the following legitimacy phase of the PLO.

5.2. Representative Legitimacy

5.2.1. PLO: 1974

The Role of External Legitimacy

Before examining the PLO’s claims to internal representative legitimacy, it is important to acknowledge the foundational role of external recognition. There is no denying the inherent link between internal and external legitimisation during this period. Representative legitimacy was first externally bestowed by the Arab region when in 1974 the Arab League declared the PLO to be “the sole and legitimate representative” of the Palestinian people. Soon afterwards, the third PLO chairman Yasir Arafat addressed the United Nations General Assembly (Parsons, 2013, p. 217). In his speech Arafat asserted that:

The PLO has earned its legitimacy because of the sacrifice inherent in its pioneering role, and also because of its dedicated leadership of the struggle. It has also been granted this legitimacy by the Palestinian masses ... the PLO has also gained its legitimacy by representing every faction, union or group as well as every Palestinian talent, either in the National Council or in people’s institutions.

(United Nations, 1974)

Finlay (2010, p. 287) advocates that Arafat’s rhetoric was angling towards claims of moral legitimacy due to the non-state violence with which it was involved. The engagement with the UN provided a second external source of representative recognition. The final piece came when the PLO recognised the state of Israel in
1988, establishing the PLO as a representative negotiation partner\textsuperscript{11}. The bestowal of representative legitimacy has clear external sources. But as the PLO itself relies on its claims of representing the Palestinian people, the internal aspect of its legitimacy requires further examination.

**Internal Legitimacy**

There have been significant distinct periods within the organisation with a clear shift from guerrilla-in-exile tactics to diplomacy, and changes in legitimacy have reflected this. However, the first attempted legitimacy transition demonstrated what was to become a problematic pattern in managing multiple forms of internal legitimacy. In this period Fatah is situated within the PLO as the ruling faction. Hilal’s (1993, p. 47) words accurately summarise the period: “the process by which the PLO acquired the legitimacy to represent the Palestinian people is historically complex and politically intricate.” Where books have been written on these intricacies, my focus here will attempt to be limited to the basis of representative legitimacy. Armed struggle had been the source of the revolutionary legitimacy which resulted in Fatah maintaining this discourse whilst its practice was shifting towards diplomacy. This had severe consequences upon developing diplomacy as a means of liberation. Fatah had continued to advocate armed struggle whilst denigrating an engagement in formal politics and diplomatic efforts. But this outward display did not reflect the actions of Fatah. “Diplomacy was pursued, but in secret, thereby depriving it of legitimacy and preserving the almost sacred nature of armed struggle” (Baumgarten, 2005, p. 36). Baumgarten (2005, p. 36) argues that Fatah itself had created this perception of competing sources of legitimacy; other liberation movements had not seen the need to create a hierarchy as a means of revolutionary legitimacy.

Examining Fatah’s views on legitimacy begins to demonstrate why shifting sources of legitimacy would become problematic. Liberation meant revolution, and revolution meant armed struggle. But the national liberation movement was changing in nature whereby liberation of Palestine meant alongside the state of Israel. “No support strategy was ever developed for the politico-diplomatic struggle” (Baumgarten, 2005, p. 36). Fatah became the dominant faction of the PLO in 1969 and has remained so since. This would eventually go so far as Arafat and Fatah dominating the PLO to the point of being “virtually and deliberately indistinguishable from each other and the national movement as a whole” (Khalil, 2013). Because of this, the changes that have occurred within Fatah have then

\textsuperscript{11} The PLO was a negotiation partner during this period, but was still not officially recognised by Israel as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people – a recognition that did not occur until 1993.
translated across to the PLO – namely problematic issues of centralisation of power around an elite, bureaucratisation and neopatrimonialism (Sayigh, 1997). However, both can be credited with constructing the Palestinian national liberation movement and reconstructing a national identity (Parsons, 2013). Leadership of the PLO came with direct challenges regarding the future direction of the organisation and a Palestinian national movement. The shift towards institutionalism and diplomacy began with the Ten Point Program that resulted from the 12th meeting of the PNC in 1974. The program built upon the idea of a provisional national authority, which provided “the conceptual bridge to diplomacy” (Parsons, 2013, p. 215).

The PLO lays claim to representation of all three ‘groups’ that make up the Palestinian people: within the occupied territories, Arab-Israelis, and the refugees and diaspora. The PLO therefore claims representation across multiple sovereignties. The PLO claims to be an ‘umbrella organisation’ in its representation of Palestinian people and the subsequent parties, movements, and organisations that contribute to the Palestinian national liberation movement – “all sectors of the Palestinian community worldwide” (PASSIA, 2014). However, PLO claims to representative legitimacy do not align with a traditional electoral-based precedent. Article 5 of the Fundamental Law stipulates that the PNC should be directly elected by the Palestinian people. However, Article 6 provisions that if elections are not possible then the current PNC remains acting. Elections have never been held and when members have been elected or replaced, this has occurred through an internal PNC process. Where the PNC should convene formally every two years and hold responsibility for electing the Executive Committee (EC), due to the lack of elections it is the EC that now appoints new PNC members. The EC holds representing the Palestinian people as one of its four primary functions. Appointments to the PNC do occur along a proportionality quota system. However in parliamentary terms, the executive is appointing the legislature who then claims representation of the Palestinian people. Where at best the PNC could be seen as functioning directly following its establishment, it has not convened since 1998 and no member has been popularly elected (PASSIA, 2014).

In spite of this Elgindy (2015, p. 137) maintains that:

this form of representational pluralism remained central to the PLO’s legitimacy until the late 1980s. Thus, while the PLO had never been a democratic institution, and Palestinian politics had always been notoriously fractious, the PLO was a highly pluralistic and genuinely representative body throughout most of its early history. Indeed, the lack of a state and a territorial base forced Palestinian politics to place greater emphasis on both pluralism and consensus.
From this perspective it can be argued that the unfulfilled liberation process required adherence to different approaches to representation because functioning democratic processes were not yet possible to provide the electoral basis that underlies existing approaches to internal legitimacy.

Although the representative basis of the PLO does not derive from a traditional electoral basis (for a number of reasons), this is not to say that the PLO is devoid of representative legitimacy within the Palestinian movement. The issue of the PLO’s representative basis was raised whilst it was at its most functioning, with Hamid (1975, p. 90) querying the “extent to which the PLO is representative of the Palestinian people” and why this matter receives little attention. Hamid (1975, p. 108) finds that it is the umbrella nature of the PLO that provided representative legitimacy, arguing this development beyond its revolutionary basis was needed:

Had the PLO been simply the military movement of a limited number of Palestinians it might not have survived. But its strong political roots among the Palestinian people, and in the Arab world, had made it too established and accepted for its elimination to be possible ... it attracted the active support of the Palestinian community and sympathizers throughout the Arab world, and this body of opinion constituted a powerful source of pressure on Arab governments.

There is an implication that it was not simply external recognition that provided the PLO with representative legitimacy, but that the internal popular support pressured the former – a notion also supported by Hilal (1993). Popularity of the PLO has naturally shifted over time, but in this period prior to Oslo there was little internal contestation of the representative legitimacy of the PLO. Of course the Islamic faction was yet to rise to prominence to challenge this notion of umbrella inclusivity.

The question of representation did however become an issue with the first intifada (1987-1993). The intifada began with the decidedly decentralised grassroots leadership of the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) that utilised popular resistance. The hierarchical body of the PLO subsumed leadership in the later stages of the intifada. Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, p. 141) argue this was problematic:

The PLO was dominated by one political factions (Fatah), which weakened its claim to represent the entire Palestinian people. With the exception of the PCP [Palestine Communist Party], the PLO factions followed different external chains of command. The UNLU
as a body did not have a direct relationship with the PLO leadership in Tunis. The persistence of PLO splinter groups and a ‘rejectionist front’ undermined its ability to achieve centralized command and control. The leading Islamic factions, Islamic Jihad and Hamas, never joined the PLO’s centralized command structure and never bought into the PLO’s negotiating strategy. The local leadership of the uprising, including UNLU and popular committee leaders, deferred to the outside PLO leadership on issues of strategy and policy.

The further that the PLO sought to extend the scope of its leadership across the different areas of the national liberation movement, the more issues this presented to claims of representation.

Oslo also continued to raise challenges to the level of representative legitimacy the PLO held within the Palestinian population. PNC member Jamil Hilal (1993, p. 46) stated the onus rested on the PLO to “prove that it is still able to represent, defend, and further the interests, aspirations, and rights of the entire Palestinian people, and not just a portion of them.” During this period it is proposed that the issue of legitimacy can be extended as far as questioning the presence of any form of legitimacy. Shikaki (1996, p. 8) argues that the change in approach by the PLO didn’t simply alter the form of its legitimacy, but rather destroyed it:

Cracks in the structure began to appear in the mid-1970s when the PLO embarked upon the path that eventually led to its formal embrace of the two-state solution at the Palestine National Council (PNC) of November 1988. The internal erosion of legitimacy that accompanied this evolution was compounded by the Gulf War of 1990-91, which not only ended the PLO’s funding sources but tremendously weakened its status and legitimacy at the regional and international levels.

The acceptance of the two-state solution may have caused issues for the standing of the PLO’s legitimacy – namely revolutionary – but it also paved the way for development of the peace process. This, in turn, provided the grounds for a new source of internal legitimacy that sought to benefit from the changes in legitimacy the PLO was undergoing, and to oppose the peace process related to such.
5.3. Oppositional Legitimacy

5.3.1. Hamas: 1991

Since the occupation, the lack of infrastructure, functional institutions, and economic growth in Palestine had provided the Muslim Brotherhood (precursor to Hamas) with the opportunity to establish its own welfare system. As Berman notes, “the Brotherhood is so efficient and honest that it was often used by humanitarian agencies to distribute aid in the West Bank and Gaza.” (2003, p. 1). Berman (2003) argues that despite widespread secularism among Muslims in Palestine during the 1970s, founder of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, gained support for his Islamist movement due to the establishment of a social service network. This network provided the resources for civil society that the Palestinian economy could not and the Israeli government would not. Yassin funded the movement’s activities through zakat and Arab donors (Berman, 2003, p. 8). The first intifada lasted until 1993, during which Hamas not only used the subsequent dire economic conditions to increase its services and boost its popularity, but also began to use the economy as a means of resistance. Hamas called for the Palestinian population to observe general commercial strikes against the Israelis (Berman, 2003, p. 9). Reuveny (1999), and Grynkewich (2008) all acknowledge the extreme impoverishment that occurred in the Palestinian Territories during this period as providing a platform for increased radicalisation, as Palestinians sought a political and economic solution to the dire situation.

Despite a clear economic and social operating program that saw a pragmatic approach to gaining popularity in the occupied territories, it is proposed that Hamas’ modus operandi and legitimacy do not derive from this. Hamas is based unquestionably on Islam, but a pragmatic Islam (Baumgarten, 2005, p. 38). The Muslim Brotherhood chapter from which Hamas emerged aligned with the al-Mujamma’ faction based on reformism and “envisioned a transformation of the society from below through the creation of an Islamic space” (Mishal & Sela, 2000, p. 32). The above operations begin to demonstrate the oppositional nature of Hamas’ legitimacy in that it stood as an alternative to the diplomatic approach of Fatah and the PLO, and the subsequent engagement in the peace process. I use the term jihad as the source of Hamas’ oppositional legitimacy within the Palestinian national movement. The term jihad constitutes both elements central to Hamas operations – Islam and resistance.

Jihad is a highly politicised word and concept and requires clarification as to its employment in this research. Jihad has been misconstrued to denote ‘holy war’ and has been used by many sides as a political tool. However, the meaning of jihad is much more wide ranging, with an infinite number of interpretations. The
interpretation of jihad “depends on the identity, as well as the political and social agenda, of those who hold a monopoly on the term’s meaning at any one time” (Kepel, 2006, p. x). Jihad often references self-defence (not individual) and can denote nonviolent means as well as armed. Even within groups invoking jihad as a central principle there is no one agreed approach – as occurred within the Palestinian Islamic groups (Mishal & Sela, 2000, p. 31).

Jihad and its relationship with legitimacy also has connections to colonialism. Bassiouni (2007, pp. 136-137) finds that

The nationalist movements in Arab countries between 1920 and 1960, as well as in Asian Muslim countries, were not based on Jihad. Thus, jihad in the de-colonization period was not a salient part of the discourse legitimizing violence against foreign oppressors – national liberation was all the legitimacy needed.

Hamas can thus be situated amongst a wider trend in the framing of legitimacy and armed resistance in national liberation movements, making it appropriate that jihad emerge as a potential source in the reconstructing of legitimacy. Mishal and Sela (2000, p. 30) propose that the modern Islamic groups engaged jihad with a new discourse that “reflected a struggle between rival social and political viewpoints” in which examining state-society relations is necessary.

Baumgarten (2005) categorises Hamas as a face of nationalism and thus the national liberation process. Though potentially controversial, I situate Hamas in the peace process period due to the oppositional mandate it gained during this period. This is not to deny Hamas’ ambitions or role in national liberation development. Nor should this imply that it is oppositional to peace per se, but rather to the Oslo peace process of the time – though it is important to note that Hamas’ original 1988 charter did state objections to peaceful solutions, calling for Palestinian liberation through jihad alone (Hamas Covenant 1988, 2008). In doing so, Hamas did seek to engage with armed means of jihad. Shikaki (1998, p. 30) made the predication that:

As the grand old man of Palestinian nationalism, Arafat’s personal influence and political wiles have let him dominate and change Palestinian politics in a way no other figure could. But Arafat will not live forever, and Hamas will not stay on the sidelines forever. If the peace process flags, Arafat falls, and Hamas rises, the nationalist center could indeed lose its hold on power to the Islamists. Palestinian politics, increasingly, are the front line of the peace process.
This was written after the Oslo agreements and as the implementation dragged on, but the gift of hindsight allows us to situate Hamas within the earlier stages of the peace process.

Baumgarten argues that Hamas emerged to fill the armed liberation void that Fatah and the PLO left as they abandoned this strategy. But Hamas does not draw upon revolutionary rhetoric in the same manner and thus this is not where their legitimacy emerged from. Instead Baumgarten (2005, p. 26) proposes that while Hamas was not dominant in Palestinian politics for a long period after its creation, it did lead a new movement from the failure of Fatah’s nationalism. Context becomes important because where Fatah developed as the Palestinian national liberation movement, Hamas developed within the movement as an alternative approach.

As Hamas garners its legitimacy in opposition, it was the 1991 Madrid Conference (a concrete precursor to the Oslo accords) that provided the most solid grounds for this.

Although Hamas had never officially recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, after the PLO consented to participate in the Madrid peace conference, Hamas claimed that the majority of the Palestinians rejected the ‘conference of wholesale of the land’ and denied the PLO’s legitimacy to represent the Palestinian people … Hamas gained momentum by its clear and unreserved adherence to the armed struggle as the essence of the Intifada and an antidote to the moribund Madrid process espoused by the PLO.

(Mishal & Sela, 2000, p. 93)

As the PLO (and Fatah) moved further into diplomacy, Hamas increasingly advocated the role of Islam and armed resistance as the means of Palestinian liberation. The more the PLO transitioned away from its original revolutionary legitimacy, the more space this opened up for oppositional legitimacy within the national liberation movement. Elgindy (2015, p. 138) argues that “The Oslo process, which began in 1993 and technically remains in effect today, radically redefined Palestinian leadership structures and strategic priorities, and with them its main sources of legitimacy.” However, the diplomatic route and peace process also created a new leadership body with institutional legitimacy in support of it – the Palestinian Authority. The first years of its operation also provided an antagonism for Hamas to rebound off. But like the other Palestinian leadership organisations examined thus far, Hamas too has undergone a
transformation which raises questions over the state of the internal legitimacy established during the above formative period.

## 5.4. Institutional Legitimacy

### 5.4.1. PA: 1994

The Oslo peace process was not simply about peace, there was a strong state building directive for the Palestinian side, the most notable of which was the creation of the Palestinian Authority. It was the PLO who signed the agreements and mandated the PA, and in theory it is solely the PLO from whom the PA should derive its power and legitimacy. The establishment of the PA was provisional, but with the failure of permanent status negotiations the PA has evolved out of its original role – an issue with important ramifications that will be examined in the following chapter. However, in 1994 the PA held an institutional legitimacy whose source lay in the PLO. Dr Ghassan Khatib, former PA minister and negotiation delegation member, explains:

> The source of legitimacy for the PA is that it was established by the PLO, which is legitimate as being the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It has a Palestinian legitimacy and it has an international legitimacy. And also it was recognised to be representative, and it signed legal agreements with Israel and these agreements stipulate the creation of the PA. And the PA was created by a resolution in the Palestinian central council of the PLO. So the PNA is legitimate.

(personal interview, 2017)

While the PA’s institutional legitimacy within the Palestinian national movement is relatively uncomplicated, the development of the legitimacy built in a state building process across an incomplete nation building and peace process quickly complicates the role of the PA in Palestinian leadership. This also is a well-covered period of Palestinian politics and a full history will not be provided here. However, the interactions between the processes and legitimacies become increasingly important during this stage and will be briefly outlined as this is a central issue in examining the recent relationships and legitimacies in the following chapters.

Like the PLO, the PA was a governing institution, but the PA’s mandate is limited to within the occupied territories as a limited form of self-government. Where
the PLO appertains to the overarching nation building process, the PA and state building were to be subsidiaries of this. What actually occurred was quite different. Brown (2003, p. 90) writes that the PLO became reduced into “a state of institutional decay after the creation of the PNA” with its organs remaining in some critical roles where the PA did not have legal power. Khalidi concurred with the rapidly altered circumstances between the PLO and PA. The ongoing nature of both the nation and start building processes did not hinder the PA as even though “not sovereign or independent, and indeed although bound by myriad restrictions imposed by the agreements with the Israelis, the new Palestinian Authority has more power over more of its people in more of Palestine than any Palestinian agency has had in the twentieth century” (Khalidi R., 1997, p. 203). The boundaries of leadership were once again redefined through transitioning to a new national movement process – state building.

The legitimacy of the PA has been a significant ongoing point of contention, and from the very beginning it was also critiqued from within the Palestinian national movement. In the PLO’s signing of the Oslo accords and mandating the creation of the PA, this simultaneously acknowledged Israeli authority within the Palestinian territories as the co-signatory power. So whilst it was the PLO who created the internal legitimacy for the PLO, this internal legitimacy only came into effect because Israel had essentially bestowed some of its authority into this new Palestinian governance system. Therefore, although the name asserts Palestinian Authority, it is a Palestinian and Israeli authority. Thus the very formation of the PA has been part of a wider criticism surrounding the authority rights of Israel\textsuperscript{12} and the PLO’s recognition and engagement of such – an important background frame of reference.

The view was held that the PA existed due to the occupation and not in opposition, thus being “devoid of legitimacy” (Lindholm Schulz, 1999, p. 133). The existence of the PA as a result of the occupation raised questions about whether it even had a place in the Palestinian national liberation movement:

Intricate relations between ‘us’ and ‘them’ were also underlined: to be Palestinian was to be against the Israelis. To the Palestinian opposition, the newborn alliance between Israel and the Palestinian Authority represented a decline of Palestinian-ness and a surrender. Therefore, no longer was the cause the same, and therefore the PNA and the opposition suggested different collective entities and

\textsuperscript{12} This is a point of contention as in order for Israel to have the authority to delegate powers to the PA, there is a necessary implication that Israel already held those rights prior to these agreements. Such an existing right to authority is not agreed upon within Palestine.
identities. They used to have the same enemy, but this was no longer as certain.

(Lindholm Schulz, 1999, p. 134)

The legitimacy of the PA derived from the PLO and thus Palestinian national movement. Yet at the same time, the PA's legitimacy could be seen to stand in contradiction to national liberation. There was a malignment between forms of legitimacies derived from the liberation and state building processes.

The tensions between competing national liberation and state building projects went beyond that of the PA. Where the PA was deeply criticised, it was the legitimacy of the PLO that was believed to have suffered as being responsible for its creation:

The PLO was no longer legitimate, as the current leadership had ‘sold out’ both territory and principles, both ‘right’ and ‘struggle’ … The whole foundation of the PLO as the embodiment of Palestinian-ness had crumbled through the making of the PLO itself, and the PLO could no longer represent Palestinian identity. If there was no more struggle, then the legitimacy of the PLO could be questioned in 1994-95.

(Lindholm Schulz, 1999, p. 135)

I propose that since the basis of the PLO’s legitimacy lied solely within the liberation process, the shift to state building would make this redundant – and with it the PLO. The dominance of Arafat across all three major leadership groups contributed greatly to the tensions between the leadership authorities of the liberation and state building processes. Arafat played his double presidencies against each other. “To PLO dissidents he presented himself as president of an embryonic state; to the PNA rivals he asserted that his position in the PLO made him a representative of Palestinians everywhere” (Brown, 2003, p. 72).

However, it was predicted that there would be consequences for the PA that the PLO did not face. Khalidi (1997, p. 203) wrote:

One unique circumstance is that although not sovereign or independent, and indeed although bound by myriad restrictions imposed by the agreements with the Israelis, the new Palestinian Authority has more power over more of its people in more of Palestine than any Palestinian agency has had in the twentieth century. With this power has come responsibility and accountability,
which cannot be shirked or shunted off onto another actor. In these circumstances, although the Palestinian Authority can and undoubtedly will blame others for its failures, using the PLO’s old scenario of Palestinians facing insuperable odds to explain away failures or describe them as triumphs, it is possible that for the first time this strategy will not work, and that the Palestinian leadership will be held accountable for its actions by its own people.

The PLO, and its legitimacy, had been operating under the liberation process; the PA was directly incorporated within the state building process and this meant different conditions attached to leadership. Indeed this was an accurate foreshadowing of the issues the PA has incurred in managing legitimacy relations.

As the peace process weakened and dragged on this required bolstering centralised state-building – a process which in practice ran in contravention to that of democracy. Shikaki (1996, p. 10) explicitly states an inverse relationship between civil liberties and democracy and that of centralised PA control in an attempt to preserve the peace process. State-building became a tool of the peace process, and not that of democratic transitioning. Indeed, instead of the processes building from the foundations laid by each other (as is idealised practice), they were manipulated in competition which was then reflected in the state of Palestinian leadership. However, alternative factors beyond those directly resulting from the competing processes also played a role:

Needless to say, the PA’s antidemocratic trend goes beyond the constraints of the peace process and the requirements of national reconstruction. Deeper dynamics, such as socioeconomic development and political culture, are clearly also at work. Public opinion, the nature of the emerging ruling elite, and the structure of the new electoral system also play a significant role in the transition process.

(Shikaki, 1996, p. 11)

Where the development of Palestinian leadership was at the time a tool of the processes, the processes have increasingly become tools of the Palestinian leaderships. There are already clear issues surrounding both the institutional relationship between the PA and the PLO, and the legitimacy derived from this. These critical threads will be picked up in the following chapters. There is one final form of internal legitimacy in the state-building process and it arose directly from the PA: Palestinian Legislative Council electoral-based legitimacy.
5.5. Democratic Legitimacy

5.5.1. Fatah: 1996

Fatah gained a traditional form of internal legitimacy in the 1996 Palestinian Legislative Council elections. This is not an analytically new aspect of legitimacy as it aligns with the normatively favoured liberal democracy framework. However, it is important still to acknowledge this additional form of internal legitimacy in the existing mix, especially as this gave Fatah specific claims within the occupied territories and PA. The creation of the PA in 1994 prepared the grounds for a new form of internal legitimacy at the political party level – democratic legitimacy within the occupied territories. Where the PLO claims a mandate for all Palestinian people, the PA is solely the West Bank and Gaza. Political figures had re-entered the occupied territories upon the establishment of the PA and the changes in potential sources of internal legitimacy this developed.

The Palestinian elections institutionalized the domination of the national political elite that crystallized after the return of the Fatah/PLO leadership to the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1994 and the establishment of coalitions between external and internal leaders in a new matrix of power under the auspices of Yasir Arafat.

(Jamal, 2005, p. xi)

Fatah already had comfortable control of the PLO and sought the same for the PA, as it was after all, the PLO who legitimised the PA. It is important to acknowledge that PLC elections require Israeli approval so there is a large external factor for the existence of elections and thus democratic legitimacy within the occupied territories.

This first round of elections saw a direct connection to the results of the peace process. Fatah won a clear majority, but Hamas did not participate. Hamas did not contest the 1996 elections for a number of reasons, one of which aligns very closely with this competing legitimacies proposition. Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy leader of the Political Bureau, argued that Hamas did not participate “because we didn’t want to provide the Oslo Agreement with any legitimacy at that time” (as quoted in Hovdenak, 2009, p.66). The democratic legitimacy pertains to the PA, and the PA is a creation of Oslo. Democratic legitimacy was a result of the peace process, and democratic legitimacy could not align with Hamas’ then sole reliance on oppositional legitimacy. However, as with peace, it was not that Hamas was opposed to democracy in itself. Hamas boycotted the elections without resistance or interference as it was not the democratic elections that they viewed as the issue
The boycott was a means of controlling legitimacy for both the Declaration of Principles and internal role of Fatah and the PA. Of course this raises questions as to the authenticity of a democratic legitimacy in which the main opposition party did not stand. However, Hamas neither denounced nor obstructed the holding of elections, so there are valid grounds for allocating Fatah democratic legitimacy based on their electoral victory.

Democratic legitimacy deriving from fair elections appears to be the least complicated form of internal legitimacy for any political leadership, let alone a national liberation movement. However, when situated amongst a field of alternatively developed internal legitimacies, democratic legitimacy does not exist in a vacuum without implications for the national movement and its engagement in processes. Shikaki posits that this seemingly least problematic form of internal legitimacy had important consequences for those that preceded it. A zero sum approach to legitimacy is invoked; where elections create new legitimacy, an old source is forgone. “By consecrating the new political order, elections deny legitimacy to the use of violent and nondemocratic means, hitherto deemed legitimate under the Palestinian charter” (Shikaki, 1996, p. 17). Democratic legitimacy would be seen to compete directly with both the earlier revolutionary and oppositional legitimacies.

In removing a zero sum approach, this proposition still holds consequence for both Fatah and Hamas. Parsons (2005, p. 13) goes as far as saying that in 1996 the PLO was “recast as PA” and Legislative Council elections provided both internal and external legitimacy. Previously the difficulties in separating out Fatah and the PLO for analytical purposes were highlighted. Now the PA is added to the fray, causing an even greater degree of institutional blurring. In an interview Dalal Salameh, Fatah and Revolutionary Council member, explained that:

There was a feeling that Fatah was the PA, and the PA was Fatah. The concern was building state institutions and distributing the benefits that flowed from them, as if it was the movement’s due. We lost the connection with our base and the people more broadly.”

(International Crisis Group, 2009, p. 2)

The impact upon Fatah in its role across organisations and national movement processes was also identified by Lindholm Schulz (1999, p. 104) who wrote that “The Fateh movement in the interim period thus represents a dichotomy. It is the state-building party, but also contains many frustrated, opposing and critical voices and discourses.” There was not only a heterogeneity within the Palestinian movement, but within the individual leadership groups too as they engaged with
reconstructing their approaches and roles. Whilst electoral-based legitimacy is granted to the leadership bodies during this period, Parsons (2005, p. 14) believes that the wider national project still lacked legitimacy.

5.5.2. Hamas: 2006

**Context and role of the external factors**

Although the second intifada (2000-2005) was triggered by specific events, Hammami and Tamari (2001) name the Oslo peace process, economic failure, and Israeli occupation as the clear underlying causes of the violence. The Second Intifada was inarguably economically detrimental, and by 2002 Palestinians were estimated to be earning 40 per cent less than they were in 1999 (Ajluni, 2003, p. 67). 2002-2003 saw a number of changes in the economic management of the Palestinian Territories that effectively gave Hamas the opportunity to change its focus and operations from that of a somewhat underground religious actor, to that of viable economic and political contender. With the Oslo Accords, donors had been overly eager to see the development of the PA into a strong self-sustaining institution with which to foster future negotiations and stability. Severe corruption and financial mismanagement had been ignored until the 2002 budgetary conditionality. Damage to the PA was irreparable by this stage, as it had lost the ability to provide security, credibility and legitimacy (Le More, 2006, p. 92). In the donors’ haste to set up and bankroll a governing institution of their choice, the PA was unintentionally set up to fail.

The Second Intifada saw Hamas able to increase and validate both its violent and social welfare activities. In 2002 the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA – created following al-Nakba) had a budget deficit of $20 million that widened that gap in the services provided – a gap filled by Hamas (Levitt, 2006). Around one in every six Palestinians was receiving assistance from Islamic social welfare organisations (International Crisis Group, 2003). Although the PA was providing more services overall than Hamas, notions of corruption and inefficiency tainted views of the PA (Levitt, 2006). As the Fatah-run PA was the democratically legitimate Palestinian government, the PA was held accountable for its provisioning shortcomings. Hamas was not expected to provide a social welfare safety net so therefore it was celebrated for anything it did provide, and was void of accountability for shortfalls (Levitt, 2006, p. 238).
Zweiri (2006) outlines that in the lead up to the 2006 national elections Hamas’s campaign focussed on social and economic issues while Fatah did not, further fuelling claims of a corrupt ruling elite. Fatah had undergone a leadership change when the long-standing Arafat passed away and was replaced with Mahmoud Abbas. Zweiri argues that the loss of Arafat’s charisma harmed Fatah’s election performance, but the damage to the image of the Fatah-led PA occurred long before this, due to poor financial performance. In 2005 the PA had a budget deficit of $700 million and a debt of $1.3 billion (Phillips, 2009, p. 87). Hamas published the Electoral Platform for Change and Reform which gave the appearance of a moderation of the party as it campaigned on economic reform and good governance policies. Hroub (2006, p. 11) stresses that these reforms upon which Hamas campaigned and was elected align almost identically to those demanded of the PA by Western governments and financial institutions. Le More (2006, p. 92) articulates that Hamas's rise to power was not on the basis of its Islamic religious credentials, but rather because it represented the sole alternative to a corrupt and discredited regime. Crooke (2006) believes that by electing Hamas, the Palestinian people were voting for self-reliance after witnessing the failure of the US and the EU efforts.

Hroub (2006), Levitt (2006), Shikaki (2006), and Hovdenak (2009) all assert that Hamas’s 2006 electoral victory came as a surprise to observers and the party alike. However, in Chehab’s (2007) interviews (echoed in Crooke (2006)) with Hamas leadership it becomes clear that the victory came as no surprise to Hamas - it had been part of its campaign strategy all along. Hamas used the economic situation created by the international donors and Israel to gain electoral victory. Ferguson (2006, p. 19) goes as far as claiming that “Hamas is an endogenous response to the environment. A Hamas voter is created, not born.”

**Legitimacy Implications**

Hamas underwent a transition that saw it contest and win the next round of PLC elections in 2006. Where Fatah had been attempting institutionalisation for over a decade prior, the addition of democratic legitimacy for Hamas holds different implications. Elgindy (2015, p. 138) argues of the period leading up to the second round of elections that:

If anything, PA elections have helped undermine Palestinian pluralism and national cohesion. Elections for the PA could temporarily mask the stagnation of the PNC and other PLO institutions, but only as long as the PLO and PA leadership remained one and the same, which ceased to be the case after the 2006 PA election.
The Palestinian electoral system has come to be viewed with a ‘winner takes it all’ mentality. Whilst there remains a space for opposition in the PLC, this is an increasingly irrelevant role held by the minor leftist parties. Through convention, not constitution, the Palestinian political system has defaulted to a one-party state. Therefore, the Hamas electoral victory sought to remove Fatah’s remaining democratic legitimacy.

The ensuing civil war was a clear demonstration of the problem of singular ownership of democratic legitimacy. But interesting questions also arise with regards to the state of Hamas’ legitimacy within the Palestinian national liberation movement. There are extremely strong external influences surrounding the question of Hamas and legitimacy due to its engagement with armed resistance. But if internal legitimacy is not a matter of either/or, the addition of democratic legitimacy alongside the established oppositional legitimacy of Hamas requires examination. Hamas’ electoral contestation has commonly been assessed with regards to questions of political moderation, external actors in the democratic process, and the (non)functioning of Palestinian institutions prior to the elections. The multiplicity of legitimacy has been a latent underlying factor in these analyses, but due to the accepted singular nature of ‘internal legitimacy’, the question of Hamas and legitimacy has seen an explicit foci on external legitimacy and the use of force.

Engagement in the elections contradicted the basis of Hamas’ previous oppositional stance and the legitimacy it derived from this. Hamas was entering the political arena derived from the Oslo peace process and this was of consequence. Hamas was then standing in elections “for an authority it did not recognize and which came about through a peace process (Oslo) that it completely, and often violently, rejected” (Elgindy, 2015, p. 139). Elgindy deems the decision to be a critical element in Hamas’ “set of legitimacy problems and internal contradictions” (2015, p. 139). This is an important issue with implications that will be returned to in later chapters. As Hamas won the elections, it has been ascribed democratic legitimacy for that specific point in time. The implementation of the electoral results did not follow a democratic process and the period following fell into disarray.

Hamas won a ruling majority in the 2006 PLC elections. However, the result was not recognised as both the refusal to recognise Israel and previous calls for the destruction of the state of Israel meant that numerous international bodies and states categorised Hamas as a black-listed terrorist organisation (Tocci, 2007). The EU and partners saw democracy as a means to achieving a peace settlement and sought to democratise the Palestinian Territories. The problem was that the 2006 elections resulted in the wrong kind of democracy. The party to which they had provided extensive financial support was not the victor, a ‘terrorist
organisation’ had won the popular mandate to govern. The EU’s and international community’s refusal to deal with Hamas and suspension (and later rerouting) of financial assistance to the Palestinian Territories did not weaken Hamas, but rather weakened the institutions and democratic processes that were crucial to any hope of achieving a viable peace deal. External and internal conceptualisations of democratic legitimacy clearly did not align.

The Quartet embarked upon a ‘West Bank first’ policy whereby the Fatah-led government was to be seen as the legitimate PA and institution building was to take place solely in the West Bank. The theory was that this unofficial policy would cause the Palestinians to revolt against Hamas and reintegrate with the Fatah-led PA (Tocci, 2007, p. 37). But once again, the EU and The Quartet misread the situation and used dangerously ineffective policies. External financial backing removed any incentives for the PA security forces to unite, with them instead being split along political divisions. Civil war broke out in Palestine in 2007 when Fatah forces entered the Gaza Strip. Despite the significant amount of international backing the West Bank PA (Fatah) had received, Fatah militants were defeated, leaving Hamas with near-complete control in Gaza. The governing situation has remained divided since, with the Fatah-led PA controlling the West Bank and Hamas largely controlling Gaza.

5.6. Moral Legitimacy

5.6.1. BDS: 2008

As it is the most recent source of leadership, the BDS movement is comparatively under-analysed. Therefore, prior to the question of legitimacy, it is necessary examine how the BDS movement operates within the Palestinian territories to build both empirical and conceptual depth. This aligns with Uhl Bien’s (2006, p. 662) desire for better understanding of

how realities of leadership are interpreted within the network of relations; how organizations are designed, directed, controlled and developed on the bases of collectively generated knowledge about organizational realities; and how decisions and actions are embedded in collective sense-making and attribution processes from which structures of social interdependence emerge and in turn reframe the collectively generated organizational realities.

The complexity leadership approach also includes “a descriptive analysis examining the conditions and dynamic processes” (Lichtenstein, et al., 2006, p.
3). Accordingly, before the BDS movement can be placed within the wider dynamics of the Palestinian national liberation movement, organisation of BDS must be explored.

While this paper treats BDS as a nonviolent movement, it would be remiss to not first examine the implications of this categorisation. Nonviolent resistance is largely viewed in positive terms, particularly with regards to national liberation movements and as the alternative to violent resistance. One need only compare the discourse surrounding the First and Second intifadas to see this. Nonviolent resistance is commonly examined in terms of its effectiveness in weakening or delegitimising an opponent, or in its advancement and legitimisation of a liberation movement. The use of terminology inherently creates an ‘other’ against which to situate nonviolence. Like other dichotomies, the nonviolent vs armed resistance binary must be problematised if it is to be meaningfully employed.

Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, p. 12) summarise a useful foundational definition:

Sharp defines nonviolent resistance as “a technique of socio-political action for applying power in a conflict without the use of violence” (1997, 567). The term resistance implies that the campaigns of interest are noninstitutional and generally confrontational in nature ... Although institutional methods of political action often accompany nonviolent struggles, writes sociologist Kurt Schock, nonviolent action occurs outside the bounds of institutional political channels.

In keeping with other national liberation movements, nonviolence is not a homogeneously accepted concept in Palestinian society; ‘nonviolent’ can be a loaded concept when used as a central labelling tool. Questions arise as to what qualifies as violence and whether the presence of violence is then seen to undermine nonviolent resistant. For example, stone throwing can be a common occurrence at the weekly ‘nonviolent’ demonstrations in the West Bank. Does the stone throwing against armed combat soldiers register as violent resistance and do such acts require the weekly demonstrations to be denied the label of nonviolent?

Qumsiyeh (2015, p. 78) illuminates the issue of the label ‘nonviolent’ in Palestinian resistance by explaining that common categories in Palestine are: Mugawama Sha‘ibiya (civil or popular resistance) emanating from Sha‘b – resistance in which the wider population participates; this is contrasted with Mugawama Musallaaha (armed resistance) which is specialised. Despite his examination of the nuances of Palestinian resistance, Qumsiyeh still returns to the problem of how stone-throwing, or indeed boycotts, should be categorised.
It would be futile to portray them as falling into two camps that support either violent or nonviolent resistance, because polls indicate that the majority generally supports a combination of both – with some variations according to circumstances (Kohanteb, 2012) ... Claiming a schism between both clusters of tactics only exists in academic discussions.

(2015, p. 93)

An additional issue which arises is that those involved in nonviolent resistance do not necessarily denounce violent resistance, are not adherents to pacifism, and worry that such labels can be used to delegitimise violent resistance. Jamal Juma’, BDS co-founder, BDS National Committee member and coordinator of Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, states:

All us of refuse to, strongly, to call ourselves nonviolent. Simply because we know there are political things behind that ... When you call yourself a nonviolent movement, it means that you are justifying yourself in front of somebody and I want to distinguish myself from the violent movement on my side. I will not delegitimise any Palestinian’s existence.

(personal interview, 2016)

Juma’ presents a pragmatic view of nonviolence. However, BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti advocates the recognition of BDS as a nonviolent movement due both to the fact that all of BDS’s resistance tactics are strictly nonviolent and as a means of frame resonance to garner international support. The BDS movement aligns with Sharp’s (1999, p. 567) definition of nonviolent resistance, with BDS relying on ‘acts of omission’.

While the constructed division between forms of resistance is problematic, this is not to say that this negates the identification and examination of nonviolent resistance. Nonviolence has a unique means of challenging power and authority, and it is worth examining this notion in regards to the authorities within national movements. In their exploration of resistance, Baaz et al (2016, p. 142) write that “it is important not to dichotomize resisters and dominators since that would mean to ignore the multiple systems of hierarchy and that individuals can be simultaneously powerful and powerless within different systems.” This approach is central to the Palestinian case where we see these multiple systems of hierarchy and power, and therefore multiple levels of resistance to above powers.
In her critical work on Palestine and nonviolence, Norman (2011, pp. 2-3) directly questions “how do power dynamics among and between different groups affect understandings and applications of nonviolence?” Through her examination Norman states that this is not to place normative value on types of resistance, but rather to delve into the broad and complex concept of nonviolence and its resulting controversies that have been overlooked in the field. Nonviolence has been isolated within social movement theory, which itself has been kept apart from mainstream politics. However, Palestine presents a clear case for reconsidering both the theoretical approaches in themselves and their application alongside other literatures. Qumsiyeh (2015, p. 78) states that given the length and nature of Palestinian oppression, relatively few Palestinians engage in violent resistance; nonviolent resistance has been a much more common feature of the self-determination movement.

The following discussion of the BDS movement is situated from 2008 when the BDS National Committee (BNC) was established – as outlined in the previous chapter. This development was critical for the BDS movement and its engagement with leadership and legitimacy. As with the other leaderships featured, legitimacy is not necessarily aligned with when a group was first founded. There needs to be developments that led to a perceived claim towards legitimacy; for the BDS movement, the creation of the BNC was critical for the movement’s leadership role within the Palestinian national movement. Restating the effects of the establishment of the BNC, these were: providing the BDS movement with formal and more centralised leadership; the identified purposes of the BNC gave the movement increased coherency and strategy; and the BNC confirmed Palestinian ownership of the BDS movement.

On the surface the BDS movement appears to adhere to the inclusionary conception of representation by arguing that the three objectives of the movement speak to every element of the Palestinian population – the West Bank and Gaza, within Israel, and refugees/diaspora. Jamal Juma’, BNC member, states that:

*Ending the occupation of Israel represents 38% of the Palestinian population. Ending the racial discrimination against the Palestinians inside the 48’ borders – 12%. And the right of return of refugees which is 50% of the Palestinian population. By this we cover the Palestinian people’s existence, in the diaspora, inside historical Palestinian people.*

(personal interview, 2016)
Within the BNC and secretariat are representatives from all major sites in the West Bank and also Gaza. With no quota system or formalised mirror system of representation, representation of the three elements of the Palestinian population defaults to representation by proxy.\textsuperscript{13}

The BDS movement views representation as pertaining to the wider Palestinian population with regards to the national liberation movement. This is an issue that has been questioned of the formal leadership, with Falk (2013, p. 78) asking:

Given the widespread perception of a quasi-collaborative and subordinated relationship with Israel and the United States, can the PA and the PLO be the authentic and inclusive voices representing Palestinians in foreign refugee camps and living in countries throughout the world?

There are links within the numerous signatories of the BDS movement to these three different Palestinian populations, as the 2005 BDS call itself states that the signatories represent all three parts. However, if we look at the large refugee groups in neighbouring countries, BDS claims of representation fall to representation by proxy. Numerous refugee rights organisations are listed as BDS signatories in Lebanon and Syria (Aidun Group, Palestinian Return Association etc.), with the implication that alignment to the BDS movement equates to representation by the BDS movement. Refugees do not elect or nominate representatives; the wide range of signatories is assumed to adequately capture representation of the refugees. This is one level by which the BDS movement perceives representation.

The functioning of representation within the BDS movement is the second element contributing to its conceptualisation. For the BDS movement representation becomes a means of implementing and managing a consensus organisational model, in turn with strong ties to the concept of cohesion. Representation is managed by the consensus principle. In order to achieve a level of general Palestinian representation, the BDS movement is built upon the main coalition bodies that represent Palestinians and not individual organisations. 171 of these signed the BDS call and 29 now sit on the BNC. These representative coalitions include refugee offices, unions, women’s unions, youth, grassroots movements and political parties. Elements of this model can be seen to align with consociationalism (see Lijphart, 1969).

Aware that the BDS movement cannot work with the thousands of individual organisations, the leadership aims to incorporate the main bodies of Palestinian

\textsuperscript{13} Proxy here is used in the non-legal sense and does not imply formal authorisation.
representation. For example the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) is a BNC member and itself consists of, and therefore represents, 135 national NGOs. Juma’ presents the reasoning behind the set-up:

_We start mobilising the community and making organisations, and we are not talking about individual organisations, when we address the Palestinian organisations, we address the coalitions, the networks, the unions. So the major bodies representing the Palestinian majority of the people. Because you have thousands of organisations and we can’t reach all so we want to reach the main bodies that are representing Palestinians – refugee offices, unions, women’s unions, youth, grassroots movements, political parties. So we bring 171 bodies that signed this. That’s why we call this a consensus movement of the Palestinian people._

(personal interview, 2016)

The BDS model of representation becomes a coalition of coalitions and therefore avoids traditional leader-follower patterns as there are no individual mandates. Representation aims to increase dialogue participants at numerous levels in order to provide a stronger foundation for claims of consensus.

Representation occurs at two levels due to the dual nature of the movement: the Palestinian level as part of the national liberation movement; and internal signatory coalition representation as a social movement. The assumption is that the internal representation by coalitions captures the necessary elements of the broader Palestinian representation and therefore argues the existence of a consensus model at both levels. While it is harder to demonstrate that the movement is truly a consensus of the Palestinian people, as this is by proxy at best, this approach is more a reflection of past and present issues of the Palestinian national liberation movement. The divisions within both the wider liberation movement and different groups with claims to this movement have shaped the BDS movement’s perception of representation to attempt to create intra and inter consensus.

From the BDS perspective, in order to have responsibility (and thus accountability), leadership must first be legitimised. Juma’ explains that:

_In order to open the secretariat, you need also a wider body to legitimise you. So internally here in the West Bank and in 48 we were bringing the main bodies that signed the BDS call and we told them we want to form the secretariat to follow up. And we want to be responsible for following them up._
Functions of accountability are innately tied to the maintenance of legitimacy. The BDS perceives legitimacy as a precursor to accountability; in order to be held accountable, it is necessary to first have a mandate from which to authorise responsibilities. Traditional conceptions of legitimacy see this relationship primarily flow the other way – accountability sustains legitimacy (Wallis & Gregory, 2009, p. 253).

Legitimacy provides the grounds for mandates and responsibilities for the central leadership process. Mahmoud Nawajaa, BNC General Coordinator provides another view of this:

*The secretariat has its own mandates and there is a mandate within the BNC, the general assembly itself. Let’s say we will have a statement against normalisation happening somewhere – this is a secretariat mandate. But let’s say we have something like a major, something related to policies, we have something difficult for the BNC approval, not the secretariat. This should be approved by the BNC entities and sometimes we need a majority within the BNC entities.*

Within the central BDS leadership, traditional accountability is to the entities that sit within the BNC as these are all broader coalitions that incorporate many elements of the Palestinian populations. There are annual or bi-annual meetings with the BDS general assembly, but information is disseminated more often than that. Due to every member of the secretariat and BNC representing a coalition, these members are responsible for reporting back to their own coalitions on the issues and decisions taken at the central leadership level. Additionally, the yearly (or intended yearly) BDS national conference takes place in different Palestinian cities or districts in order to increase the involvement of the different organisations and people involved with BDS in these areas. In this sense the BDS movement seeks to include elements of a participatory democracy model as a means of maintaining accountability of the central leadership to both the wider BDS movement and the Palestinian population.

According to BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti (2010) “the entire Palestinian conceptual framework and strategy of resistance must be thoroughly and critically reassessed and transformed into a progressive action program capable of connecting the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and justice with the international social movement.” Whilst Barghouti (2011) proposes that the
strategy to pursue should be that which is based upon “gradual, diverse, context-sensitive, and sustainable campaigns of BDS”, this does not imply that the BDS movement should provide the dominant Palestinian leadership. The model of the BDS movement appears to have a double purpose: to provide the most effective means of managing a broad transnational social movement within a national liberation movement; and to also quietly provide a blueprint for the development of Palestinian political leadership. It is the decision-making structure in which leaders operate and the movement’s organisational constitution that significantly affect the success and capabilities of movements involved with national liberation (Widzer, 2015, p. 22).

As the BDS movement purposely attempts to operate outside of the formal political system, any internal legitimacy should not come from a political basis. It could appear as though the BDS movement is slightly oppositional in this sense, as it has emerged out of ‘negatives’: “The BDS movement, launched by Palestinian civil society groups in 2005, is a response to the repeated failures of the U.S.-led peace process as well as the inability of Palestinian actors to effectively challenge the Israeli occupation” (Elgindy, 2015, p. 144). However, the BDS movement does not actually advocate an oppositional stance towards either the peace process or the political leadership (given that BDS states to be apolitical). Rather the BDS movement is steeped in a long history of Palestinian popular resistance that has seen a reliance on grassroots leadership to outside of factionalism. When asked what legitimacy means with regard to Palestinian leadership, prominent grassroots activist Bassem Tamimi (personal interview, 2017) stated resistance, elaborating that “because of the occupation, the most effective issue is resistance.” Resistance has once again entered the internal legitimacy realm and this time due to the failure of the peace process and the need to re-engage with liberation.

Furthermore, BDS states it is a human rights based movement. Whilst involvement in a national liberation movement is by definition political, BDS can be seen to seek an authority above politics. The 2005 launch of BDS directly stated its desire for “the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression” (Palestinian Civil Society, 2005). The human rights approach is equally based upon a “morally consistent application” (Barghouti, 2011, p. 218). The use of nonviolence resistance is thus linked to moral legitimacy within Palestine. This is not to say in any way that armed resistance is immoral, but the use of violence falls into a statist discourse and the BDS movement seeks to move beyond the statist approach; states do not have a monopoly on nonviolence. As discussed in chapter two, Suchman (1995) proposed the concept of moral legitimacy in a management field with very different contexts and few parallels here. However, I believe this type can be developed for the leadership and legitimacy presented here. Existing legitimacy
types struggle to account for leaderships that claim to not seek political power or involvement and thus for BDS there is a need to expand legitimacy conceptualisations. Where the other leaderships have tied armed resistance as a source of legitimacy linked to the liberation process, the BDS movement engages nonviolent resistance. Furthermore, the BDS has positioned much of organisation and operations in regards to the perceived current failings of the formal Palestinian leaderships. The combination of these has resulted in the BDS movement seeking a moral legitimacy within the Palestinian national movement.

The central basis of cohesion for BDS is the decision to define the movement as human rights based. Were the movement to assume an overtly political character, the one-state, two-state question would arise as would political divisions. Any member of the BDS movement must agree to the three objectives as well as the BDS principles and these are human rights-based. The BDS leadership sees this as the most important element in maintaining unity of the BDS movement. Nawajaa explains:

\[\text{We do not have a political mandate and this is one of the most important things. Many of them are one-state and others are two-state solution. And because we do not have that, we have the three objectives that everybody agreed on, every Palestinian agreed on. And then we can use the tactics and everything. And because of this there is a consensus behind the BDS movement. Because we stick to our three objectives we do not cause political mandates. And when there will be a contradiction or argument, anything, we just stick to our mandates. The BDS movement has nothing to do with this argument, you can discuss this argument away from the BNC, do not discuss it as a BNC entity, you can discuss it as a political party or anything.}\]

\(\text{(personal interview, 2016)}\)

The use of nonviolent popular resistance is often viewed as a means of moral recourse against the Israeli occupation, but it also seeks to do the same within the Palestinian national liberation movement.

The PA, and thus Fatah, became marred with issues of corruption and clientalism as the state building process increased the divide between the elite and ‘the rest’. The organisational structure of the BDS movement is important to note here. Devoid of hierarchy, with power structures reliant on consensus, the moral element is built into the organisational principles. The BDS movement seeks to end the occupation and thus effect the liberation process. The apparent disengagement with formal politics removes it from the previous statist process.
The BDS movement does not hold a one- or two-state position meaning its interest in liberation lies outside of the state building realm. The BDS movement’s approach to resistance (and thus liberation) is steeped in a human rights approach that seeks a moral legitimacy above the statist-based Palestinian political system.

5.7. Conclusion

*Table 7. Updated Summary of Palestinian internal legitimacies 1958-2015*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Year of First Claim</th>
<th>Legitimacy Type</th>
<th>Legitimacy Source</th>
<th>Effected Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td><em>Revolutionary</em></td>
<td>Armed resistance</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td><em>Revolutionary</em></td>
<td>Armed resistance</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Popular support</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td><em>Oppositional</em></td>
<td>Jihad</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td><em>Institutional</em></td>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>State building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Electoral victory</td>
<td>State building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Electoral victory</td>
<td>State building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td><em>Moral</em></td>
<td>Nonviolent resistance</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*new types*14

The first part of research question one asked what the bases of legitimacy were for the Palestinian leadership groups during key historic foundational periods and the above table presents a clear summary of the findings. In examining the emergence of internal legitimacy for each of the selected groups in the Palestinian national liberation movement, we see a mixture of existing legitimacies, along with a need to expand the conceptualisation in different directions. Phases of movement leadership have aligned with traditional politics and thus have reflected the established representative and democratic forms of legitimacy. However, it is proposed that revolutionary, oppositional, institutional and moral forms can also contribute to ways of thinking about internal legitimacy within a national liberation movement when we expand beyond formal leadership definitions. Additionally, in order to understand new types of legitimacy, it is important to identify the source as there are important implications for the

14 The asterisks denote new inclusions to types of internal legitimacy. Representative and democratic internal legitimacy are pre-existing in the legitimacy literature as demonstrated in Table 2.
maintenance and reconstruction of respective legitimacies. This is a critical issue for the current state of the Palestinian national movement and its leaderships. Thus, examining the ‘bases of legitimacy’ has required both developing conceptualisations of internal legitimacy and what then underlies these. Chapter seven will reflect upon the sources identified here as a means of assessing existing legitimacies alongside the perceptions of the groups. The years in the table display when legitimacies emerged, and the question of their on-going presence is an issue to be examined in subsequent chapters. In the same manner, the beginning of national liberation, peace, and state building processes can be identified and thus legitimacies are paired with these during these periods of emergence. But again, the status of these processes and related legitimacies over time, is a matter that must be probed in subsequent analysis examining the recent state of affairs.

Even before the more recent political situation is presented, inherent problems in certain internal legitimacies can already be identified. For example, the PLO claims to legitimacy expose two main areas of critique. Firstly, there is the lack of elections and lack of convening. The Basic Law does stipulate that elections are not necessary for the PNC and PLO to remain legitimate – there was an acknowledgement from the point of formation that holding elections was likely to prove an ongoing difficulty. However, this does mean that for years numerous members of the councils and committees have passed away without removal from lists and subsequent replacement. That the PNC is literally partially dead speaks volumes. Secondly, while there are obvious and accepted issues to the inclusion of Hamas in the PLO, the fact that in 2006 Hamas won the Palestinian Legislative Council elections and were to form a national government but did not feature within the PLO is a significant point of contention to the PLO’s representative legitimacy claims.

Additionally, the merging of leadership groups and overlapping of legitimacy claims can also begin to be identified. A convergence of roles between Fatah, the PLO and PA raises questions around potential relatedness of legitimacies. Furthermore, Fatah and Hamas have claimed the same internal legitimacy through elections and whilst this is a common occurrence in democratic politics, the incomplete nature of the three processes have seen a breakdown in democratic practice and thus contested claims of democratic leadership. The engagement of Hamas in electoral politics seemingly contrasted with its original legitimacy foundations. Hamas operates on the principles of resistance (of all forms) and Islam. But it can be argued that Hamas gained legitimacy due to its oppositional position – to both the peace negotiation concessions and to the single dominance of Fatah. Whilst contesting against Fatah in elections holds for the second premise, engaging with the PA can be seen as a recognition of the diplomatic peace process.
That Hamas is the only group in which the peace process features within a legitimacy type is an interesting finding. While this may seem intuitively contradictory, this finding demonstrates the need to delve more deeply into the concept of internal legitimacy. If it we were to examine external legitimacies, I believe we would see the peace process feature differently. However, through my analysis focusing on intra-Palestinian legitimacies we find only an oppositional form of legitimacy alongside the peace process – which speaks volumes. Moving beyond this, Hamas' changing approach, in the somewhat pragmatic manner through which it has always operated, has been recognised for some time. However, the questions of the basis of its legitimacy vis-à-vis both its original form and the wider dynamics of the national movement require further assessment utilising this broader scope of internal legitimacies. And indeed the same holds true for every group featured here. Context is central to legitimacy, and context is ever-changing; legitimacy is dynamic relational concept.

Despite labelling itself apolitical, the BDS movement is centrally engaged with the Palestinian national liberation movement and the forms of internal legitimacy that exist within it (and thus Palestinian leadership). BDS seeks a reinvigoration of civil society and grassroots resistance in order to advance the liberation movement outside of the formal political system. In combination with a human rights framing, the BDS movement draws from a moral legitimacy to move beyond the approaches of the other political leadership groups. Unsurprisingly however, the relationships between BDS and the political organisations are not clear cut by any means. The types of internal legitimacies presented in Table 7 never existed in perfect form in reality, but increasingly the basis of their existence must be reassessed in examination of the complex relations between the groups. The question of BDS within the Palestinian national liberation movement moves us quickly into the present-day relations and legitimacies of chapter seven where the political realities of BDS are given more space.

Upon establishment of both the different processes and their related leadership groups and inferred legitimacy, there were relatively clear relationships and separations of alignment. However, with the passing of twenty years since state building was embarked upon, there is no longer a single straight line of connection. Each process has lingered and, as is almost inevitable over such a period of time, the different sources of leadership within the same national liberation movement now have a complex network of relationships amongst them. This leaves the question of if these connections have become increasingly blurred, what are the current conceptualisations and perceptions of legitimacy? In the next two chapters I will examine this issue as we shift to analysing the relations and legitimacy process of the recent 2016-2017 period.
6. Leadership Relations Re-examined

All of the leadership groups examined in this research were established to have relative levels of independence from the outset. Each group emerged in a different phase of one of the three processes (national liberation, peace, and state building) and related to these processes differently depending on how they sought legitimisation as a national leadership body. However, the leadership groups now have highly interwoven relations – both with each other and the different processes. Brown (2003, p. 12) has summarised the state of Palestinian politics as:

characterized by overlapping institutions, confused chains of command, and a multiplicity of authorities. Indeed, Palestinians frequently complain, with considerable justification, that this situation is more than a historical accident; it is a strategy by the leadership to maximize maneuverability. The complicated and ambiguous set of institutions is not simply a political strategy, however; it is also a product of the Palestinian political experience over the past several decades.

This assessment situates the issues both as a result of the environment in which Palestinian politics has been operating and as motivated by the leadership – dynamic social processes. 15 years have passed since Brown’s summary and the issues raised have not simplified and indeed speak even more to the constantly changing relational dynamics that shape the dialogue around Palestinian national leadership.

This complex network of relations must be the starting point for re-approaching how legitimisation can now be understood in the Palestinian national movement using a relational approach. This chapter builds the foundation for reassessing legitimisation as the reconstructions and destructions of the leadership groups must first be expounded. The chapter covers important developments underlying the most recent period, before using key events during 2016-2017 as critical performances of leadership that also present important points of tension within the national leadership. The multiplicity of perceptions is introduced as a crucial means of developing understandings of the Palestinian political leadership – one that has previously been absent from analysis. This an important basis if we are to probe the commonplace of legitimacy and both how it is perceived within Palestine and how it can be understood as a process. The interactions of the groups within themselves, other groups, and the multitude of processes constituting the Palestinian national movement are dynamic in nature.
and demonstrate the need for applying a relational approach to leadership and legitimacy.

6.1. Post-Oslo Leadership

6.1.1. The Changed Landscape

The Oslo agreements had an immense impact upon the Palestinian leadership landscape, both directly and in the emergent post-Oslo phase. Where peace eluded the Oslo process, it left a clear imprint on the state building process and internal relations. The effects of Oslo on both civil society and popular resistance are well articulated. Leone (2011, pp. 13-14) presents a succinct overview of flow-on effects. As NGOs conformed to donor institutions, both the grassroots and nationalistic approach were shut out. The discourse of alternative and appropriate resistance was thus confined and narrowed. Before the Oslo period, resistance was once so broadly defined as to include a range of activities from nonviolence to martyrdom. Yet, in this post-Oslo atmosphere, where large components of civil society are entangled with foreign donors and beholden to their development priorities, the space between the personal and the national continues to widen.

(Leone, 2011, p. 28)

The result was a dramatic reduction in space for the grassroots resistance.

The legitimacy of the PLO has already been examined with regards to the shift from ‘terrorist organisation’ to official negotiation partner, largely with respect to international legitimacy. However, Kelman (2001, p. 63) makes an interesting point in saying that why the PLO was central to negotiations was that “they had widespread support in their respective communities; they enjoyed a high level of legitimacy in the eyes of their populations.” The concept of legitimacy within Palestinian leadership was a fundamental element underpinning the peace process. Within the national liberation movement the key to legitimacy was the Palestinian people and subsequent representation of them. Previously Arafat was able to proclaim legitimacy of the PLO as the sole and unique representative of the Palestinians due to ‘sacrifice’ and ‘dedicated leadership’ and had been ‘granted’ it by the choice of the Palestinian people as a whole. Legitimacy also rested on the PLO’s capacity to ‘represent’ all factions, unions and groups within the Palestinian people” (Finlay, 2010, p. 287). Alaa Tartir (2017) asserts that Oslo
was marked by parallel and conflicting projects – liberation and state-building. While the dominance of Arafat post-Oslo saw this tension momentarily suppressed, the problem has resurfaced and can be examined through the current nonviolent popular resistance.

Despite the support for the PLO, Oslo was not entirely unopposed. Edward Said (2001, p. 109) wrote that “those of us who criticized it from the start were a tiny minority of Arabs and Jews who grasped its ungenerous, essentially humiliating implications for the Palestinian people. This view has since acquired considerable support.” The leftist opposition (DFLP and PFLP) within the PLO did not support Oslo despite their support towards a two-state peace (Shikaki, 1998). Polling is one means of indicating public perspectives and in November 1997 34% of Palestinians opposed the Oslo agreement (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 1997). However, polling in December 2016 showed 62% now supported abandoning the Oslo agreements (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2016). That same survey showed that Palestinians view the most effective means for the establishment of a Palestinian state as: armed action – 37%; negotiations – 33%; popular nonviolent resistance – 24%. However, with a cessation of negotiations then support for popular nonviolent resistance is 62% and armed resistance is 53% (polled in separate questions). The impetus of the legitimisation of the PLO, and its negotiation of the peace process, came from the authority it held within the Palestinian population. Its support (and faith in the peace process) has diminished.

Munayyer (2014) identifies two shifts occurring in the Israel-Palestine issue post-Oslo. The first is the reverse movement from states to civil society after years of states failing to provide any tangible progress. Falk believes that the Palestinian leadership has begun to address this shift through Abbas’ seeking of statehood measures. “Palestine is continuing its state-building project on the West Bank coupled with the realisation that the political energy of its national movement has shifted to a combination of civil society activism and Hamas resilience and resistance” (Falk, 2014a). This caused a second shift away from a statist partition approach towards that of a rights-based one. “Civil society actors are far more inclined to focus on people and their rights rather than borders and the brokering of political power between factions or states” (Munayyer, 2014).

Jamjoum also argues that Oslo transformed the character of the Palestinian national movement – from liberation to limited state-building. However, state building proved problematic for the PA as mismanagement claims increased and the diplomatic process stagnated. It is asserted that this had a flow-on effect for Fatah and their legitimacy in that their two bases “– that it could govern through the PA and could achieve political progress through negotiations – were gravely
undermined” (International Crisis Group, 2009, p. 2). Furthermore, and critically for the question of resistance and legitimacy:

   Since the Palestinian leadership itself was engaged in direct and public relations with the state of Israel, how were supporters of Palestinian rights supposed to take a position that was ‘more Palestinian than the Palestinians’ in working toward the isolation of Israel?”

   (Jamjoum, 2011, pp. 134-135)

While Jamjoum angles this issue to external supporters of Palestine, the question is one that plagues Palestinian society, particularly with regards to popular resistance. This question is central to the recent internal relations and legitimacies where the discord between the Oslo-established leadership (the PA) and the civil society resistance (BDS) challenges understandings of legitimacy. During this post-Oslo phase it already reveals how the overlapping processes of liberation and state building presented different bases for legitimisation for the different leadership groups. Not only were the roles within the leaderships a matter of contention, but increasingly the roles of the processes vis-à-vis the leaderships was adding an increasing tension within the Palestinian movement. The intersections, and thus interactions, between the leaderships and processes were occurring at multiple levels and this has transferred into contentious processes of legitimisation over time.
6.1.2. Recent Events and Developments

Table 8. Updated timeline of Palestine political history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>Operation Cast Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Fatah 6\textsuperscript{th} General Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Fatah-Hamas Cairo Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Fatah-Hamas Doha Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fatah-Hamas Cairo Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Pillar of Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Rami Hamdallah appointed PA Prime Minister (previously Salam Fayyad 2007-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Operation Protective Edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National unity technocratic government formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>National unity government dissolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Fatah 7\textsuperscript{th} Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Hamas present new charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ismail Haniyeh appointed head of Hamas (previously Khaled Meshaal 1996-2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fatah-Hamas Agreement (unimplemented reconciliation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section provides a descriptive overview of the key events for the Palestinian leadership bodies in the post-Oslo period. Picking up from where the previous chapter ended with the establishment of the BDS BNC and moral legitimacy in 2008, violence quickly escalated with the launch of Operation Cast Lead by the Israeli military on Gaza. Spanning a few weeks over December 2008 – January 2009, the Palestinian casualties were estimated at around 1,400 and Israeli at 13 (Human Rights Council, 2009). The build up to this devastating military operation was a combination of local and external factors. Hamas had won the 2006 legislative elections which saw the Quartet (the United States, Russia, the United Nations, and the European Union) impose conditionality upon recognition of Hamas’s government: renouncement of violence; acceptance of previous Palestinian signatory agreements; and recognition of Israel (Tocci, 2007, p. 2). Given that individual political parties should not be tied to international government agreements and recognition, Hamas did not agree and the Quartet ceased relations. An attempted Palestinian unity government was
formed with Ismail Haniyeh (Hamas) heading it as Prime Minister. The United States was pushing for an Abbas-Fatah controlled PA to have full power over the territories, which resulted in rising security force tensions between Fatah and Hamas; a conflict between the two parties saw the administrative division of the two territories (Rose, 2008). Hamas was excluded from international talks and conflict erupted when Israel conducted a raid into Gaza where six members of Hamas were killed in late 2008. The ceasefire was broken with Hamas retaliating to the raid by rocket attacks into Israeli territory and thus Israel launched the military operation (McCarthy, 2008). A ceasefire was agreed between the two sides and Hamas looked to the election of Barack Obama as a possibility for re-engagement with the US.

In 2009 Fatah held a General Congress for the first time in 20 years (International Crisis Group, 2009). The International Crisis Group (ICG) published a report on the Fatah congress and presented a critical summary of the trajectory of Fatah that had led to the current situation. While noting that Fatah has obviously incurred issues beyond its control, they embody the Palestinian dilemma - the concurrency of occupation and state-building, and armed struggle rhetoric and peace negotiations. The ICG report holds Fatah accountable for embracing the deficiencies in the Palestinian political environment when beneficial, and doing little to mitigate the issues even when not:

The movement allowed its institutions to wither and rank-and-file militants to drift, as its elite sought perks and privileges of government positions. It sought hegemony over the PA even as it paid lip service to pluralism. It did not bring its political agenda up to date or adapt it to a shifting environment. It resisted renewal of its leadership, marginalising generations of activists and depriving the movement of necessary lifeblood. Worst of all, it failed to respond to or learn from a long list of devastating setbacks: the second intifada and the ensuing devastation of the PA; Hamas’s electoral victories, beginning with municipal elections in 2004 and 2005 and culminating with the parliamentary elections of 2006; the Islamist’s takeover of Gaza in 2007; and the bankruptcy of the peace process.

(International Crisis Group, 2009, p. i)

Where the PA has received much criticism for its handling of advancing (or rather lack thereof) all of the processes in which Palestine is involved, Fatah has driven the PA since its establishment.
The summoning of a congress for the first time in decades raised the question of whether Fatah finally sought to mobilise change. Brown (2003, p. 253) asserts that in the period directly following Oslo “leadership calls to close ranks were regarded by many as cynical maneuvers to use nationalism to silence dissent.” Fatah did deliver change in many ways. Local elections were held to rejuvenate leadership, shifting it from the older exiled generation to those within the occupied territories. Abbas used Fatah’s much delayed sixth General Conference in 2009 to revitalise national leadership and assert authority. Parsons (2013, p. 213) identifies the revival of the PLO’s Executive Committee following the PNC’s 2009 special session as Abbas “invest[ing] in the PLO leadership as a source of additional legitimacy.” Bröning (2011) also emphasises 2009 as a point of departure for the leadership with Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad implementing a Palestinian state-building programme through the PA. However, it is explicitly stated that Fatah failed to “clarify its political purpose and project as well as relations with the PA, President Abbas and Hamas” (International Crisis Group, 2009, p. i). This question of relations emerges repeatedly with the Palestinian leadership bodies as it is central to both their own development and also that of the wider movement. Yet also there is a repeated avoidance of critically analysing these relations. The number of recurring Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreements is also a clear demonstration of this. Agreements occur based on the bare minimum cooperation, and the more difficult issues of examining and managing relations between the parties and the governing institutions are delayed for a later date, at which point these agreements collapse. This cycle has recurred for nearly a decade.

In 2011, four years after the governance division, Fatah and Hamas sought to reconcile. This had also been attempted in 2009 but did not come to fruition. Egypt facilitated the groundwork for the creation of a transitional government on the condition of elections one year later (Agreement between Fatah and Hamas, 2011). National elections is the ever-present clause in reconciliation agreements, which has yet to be realised, contributing to the dissolutions as the sides fail to make progress and frustration for all parties involved increases – including the Palestinian population. Only a few months after the signing of the agreement, disagreement over which party would hold the prime ministerial role saw the talks deteriorate. It should be noted that the international disapproval of Hamas’s presence in a Palestinian government adds an additional challenge to any potential functionality of said government. Talks between the two sides were resumed in early 2012 and the Doha Agreement was produced. Abbas was appointed Prime Minister and again elections were a condition (Abbas to head Palestinian unity government, 2012). This agreement was followed with an additional election-focused Cairo Agreement with Abbas stating “without elections there will be no reconciliation” (as quoted in Rudoren & Akram, 2012).
Abbas, acting as PLO, re-entered US-led peace talks in 2013. Hamas denounced this stating that Abbas lacked the legitimacy to represent the Palestinian people. The talks were fruitless and came to an official end when in June 2014 a Palestinian national unity government was formed. 2013 had begun with promising progress between the two parties with each attending the other’s rally within their administrative territory. Eventually in 2014 there emerged significant agreements between Fatah and Hamas that resulted in the establishment of a unity government in June, 2014. This time elections were premise within a six month timeframe. Additionally, the PLO, of which Hamas is not a part, would maintain its role as negotiation partner with Israel (Hatuqa, 2014). The formal leadership sought to unify its command of the Palestinian national movement, whilst simultaneously engaging in the divisive peace process.

The national unity government immediately contended with numerous issues, not least of all deep Israeli government antipathy to the project: Hamas was viewed as ceding power to a Fatah-loyal government; Abbas faced pressure to reconstruct the national liberation strategy to reflect the popular movement; the PA was bound by Oslo to cooperate with Israel; and the PA condemned Hamas’s aggression towards Israel in Gaza (Joudeh, 2014). All the while, questions were raised over the PA’s role and power. Khaled Elgindy (as quoted in Joudeh, 2014), former advisor to the Palestinian leadership on status negotiations, stated that the PA is “completely irrelevant. It cannot influence the United States, it cannot influence Israel, it cannot influence Hamas, it cannot influence Egypt.” When scrutinised, the ‘unity’ of the formal Palestinian leadership appeared to be a façade. The April 2014 deadline that had been set for the round of Israel-Palestinian peace talks passed without progress and the talks collapsed again (Williams, 2014). Shortly thereafter, simmering tensions spilled over from the West Bank and East Jerusalem to the Gaza Strip as Israel launched the phenomenally destructive Operation Protective Edge in July.

Almost exactly one year after it had formed, the technocratic Palestinian Unity Government was dissolved. Hamas had criticised the lack of electoral progress and Fatah had admonished its limited powers in Gaza (Palestinian unity government resigns, 2015). Hamas then denounced Abbas’s decision to dissolve the government without consultation or talks – a denouncement regarding power politics and not concern for the functioning of the government. A new government was created which was much more political in nature and lacked Hamas involvement, resulting in the party refusing recognition of the new ‘consensus government’. Hamas’s desire was for any Palestinian unity government to go beyond being a political entity and instead consult all factions (New cabinet reshuffle on consensus government, 2015). It stated that Abbas’s changes to the government composition “proves that the Palestinian government is run by Fatah and is not linked to national accord [with Hamas]” (as quoted in
Toameh, 2015). Indeed the issue of legitimacy was invoked with an ex-minister from Fatah, Hasan Asfour, claiming that Abbas’s actions transpired to a “hijacking of Palestinian legitimacy” (as quoted in Toameh, 2015).

The role of Hamas sitting outside of the PLO incurs multiple issues: if it is included, Israel and the US would likely push to suspend relations with the PLO as Hamas is classified as a terrorist organisation; if Hamas remains outside the PLO, how can consultation and decision-making rights be codified?; and lastly, as per Hamas’s stipulation, how would an apolitical Palestinian government form and operate? Relations between the two are therefore often unclear. In 2014 Mousa Abu Marzouk, then Deputy Chairman of Hamas’ Political Bureau, stated that Hamas’ recognition of the PLO’s status as legitimate representative was premature:

> Our recognition of the PLO prior to becoming members therein was a historical mistake. The second mistake is the fact that President Abbas alone can call for the Provisional Leadership Framework to convene, which he only did three times. We want the Provisional Leadership Framework to unify the Palestinian people and be the decider in future political decisions, now that the PLO has grown old and is no longer relevant on the Palestinian scene.

(as quoted in Balousha, 2014)

Hamas’ popularity had begun to decrease markedly during this period following its hindered electoral victory. In recent developments under prominent leader-in-exile Khaled Meshaal, Hamas has taken a pragmatic turn and addressed issues regarding the nature of the conflict (now political and not religious) and acceptance of 1967 borders (Younes, 2017).

As questions about Fatah’s factions and Abbas’s successor increased, he called the seventh Fatah Congress held December 2016. Prior to this both his and Fatah’s popularity had been decreasing in the West Bank – the traditional stronghold. A survey conducted in September, 2015 showed that 65% of Palestinians wanted Abbas to resign. The survey also showed a shift towards the PA being viewed as a ‘burden’ by the majority (53%) and 51% supported the PA being dissolved without a viable peace process. The PLO did not fare much better with it being viewed as inferior to the PA in multiple political and power processes (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2015). With local conditions not favourable, the 81 year old Abbas used the congress to solidify his power and quash planning for any future transitions within Fatah (Fatah reappoints Abbas as party chairman as 7th congress kicks off, 2016). The Fatah congress saw 18
members elected to the Central Committee (not including Chairman Abbas) and 80 to the Revolutionary Council by the wider General Conference (WAFA, 2016).

The Palestinian political scene remained in a familiar state: Fatah – entrenched in singular leadership with rhetoric of rejuvenation unfulfilled; Hamas – critical to governing but detached from formal intuitions which increasingly harmed their popularity and service delivery ability in Gaza; the PA – dominated by Fatah and increasingly transferring power away from the PLO, whilst also bound to the Israeli government; and the PLO – a sidelined institution that fails to provide the needed space for political pluralism. Nabulsi (2011) provides an important critique of the PLO in reference to its historical representative legitimacy, arguing that:

The PNC, as the parliament of the PLO itself, was once the heart of the Palestinian national movement; made up of the resistance parties, unions and independents, it could claim the legitimacy of a national liberation movement. But there have not been proper elections to it for decades: most of the seats are quotas, reserved for the factions; members have died of old age; there is not even a definitive list showing who the current members are. Those on the West Bank and Gaza legislative council are the only directly elected members of the PNC. No one understands how the legislature should now function: everyone agrees it doesn’t.

There is a clear indication that the PLO and its bodies are perceived to no longer fully engage with what was an historical basis of legitimacy, but neither has the PLO reconstructed an alternative approach to seeking legitimacy.

Elgindy (2015, p. 135) argues that the second national governing institution has followed in the path of the first in that similar to the PLO, the PA “is now run by a small clique of insulated, unelected, and unaccountable leaders.” This continual cycle of failed peace talks and lack of elections has arguably provided a greater mandate for the popular resistance that circumvents these approaches, to the point where movements such as BDS have been seen to sideline formal political leadership: “At this time governments have been temporarily marginalised as political actors in relation to the struggle. This is itself a momentous development” (Falk, 2014). The situations of each of these groups are relative to one another and I argue that the internal political situation must be critically examined before the broader questions regarding the Palestinian national movement can be approached.
6.2. In-depth Relations and Perceptions (2016-2017)

Provided with an overview of the main events in the Palestinian political scene during the past decade, this section delves deeper into the most recent years examining the relations surrounding the unfolding events and how these have been perceived by the Palestinian actors. Actions and statements are not always synonymous, thus it is important to examine the performativity of both of these elements in order to capture a more nuanced understanding of the relations that underpin the issue of legitimacy. This establishes a basis for questioning how there have come to be meanings of the commonplace of legitimacy and how these are reproduced through leadership processes. 2016-2017 is taken as the temporally bound period in which to utilise a relational approach. This period can be viewed as long for such an approach and while there is the practicality of matching the timing of the fieldwork, this duration allows this research to present a greater level of depth of the interactions between leadership and processes. However, the use of a specific period allows analysis to probe whether there are relative stabilities to be identified and thus questioned. As will become clear, there is a never-ending stream of events, actions, and opinions within the Palestinian national movement – even within a limited time frame. Therefore, key events and points of contention will be examined but these in themselves overlap, requiring a flexible approach in the analytical approach.

At the beginning of 2016 Amal Ahmad (2016) summarised the Palestinian political scene:

The Palestinian people began the New Year facing a bleak political situation, with a weak and compromised leadership, a geographically and administratively fragmented people, and a civil society increasingly marked by individualism and loss of political anchor. The state-building project that promised so much in the 1980s and 1990s is fast losing adherents ... Yet little has emerged by way of an alternative political goal that enjoys popular support.

Analysis like this hails popular resistance, specifically the BDS movement, as a means of advancing the Palestinian national movement whilst not having to rely on, nor wait for, reform of the formal political leadership. In addition to the formal leadership likely disputing such an assessment, it is important to consider the web of relations of the national movement and not single out one element; whatever potential the BDS movement has for the national movement does not lie in a vacuum.

What is deemed ‘the Palestinian national movement’ is indeed a set of relations in an ongoing dynamic process, in the very same way that leadership is a process.
While the leadership groups are treated as entities to allow a starting point for analysis, leadership and the national movement are examined as a process of relational discourses and performances. It is useful to return to Somers and Gibson’s (1993, p. 35) approach to analysing actors in that they are embedded “within relationships and stories that shift over time and space and thus preclude categorical stability in action. These temporally and spatially shifting configurations form the relational co-ordinates of ontological, public, and cultural narratives.” The points of intersection and interaction between processes are continually changing; a change at one set of relations induces a potential shift in another set due to the overlapping linkages within the Palestinian national movement leaderships and processes. An actor is always inherently tied to analytic relationality and, rather than categorical stabilities, which is a contradiction of the relational ontology, relational stabilities may be considered. What has been provided thus far in this chapter is a version of the background events that have contributed to the relational environment of Palestinian politics. However, in order to engage with a relational approach it is the key element of perceptions and their plurality that allows the analysis of the leadership and legitimacy processes to occur in an approach absent from Palestinian politics. This section examines the relations between the leadership groups, both through discourse and actions, and how these relations are perceived (through statements) by the groups.

February 2016 began with yet another round of talks between Fatah and Hamas, this time hosted by Qatar. Both groups were seeking concessions over the governing division: more influence in Gaza for Fatah; and guarantees for government apparatus employees in Gaza for Hamas. With the cessation of that round of talks, Hamas issued a statement affirming the progress towards the next steps in reconciliation. Fatah, however, did not issue any statement (Abu Amer, 2016). Within weeks statements had been made to the media by both sides that saw a deterioration in relations; further meetings were not held and the governing impasse remained. The deviations in approach between Hamas and Fatah towards the national movement have been argued as leaving fundamental differences between the two. Fatah began the path of state building and coordination with Israel, whilst Hamas remained committed to all forms of resistance and non-recognition of Israel. Such divided approaches have been reflected on the ground. In the January prior to the reconciliation talks, it was reported that 93 arrests were carried out by the PA of people pertaining to ‘resistance factions’ – predominantly Hamas (Abou Jalal, 2016). The inseparable link between the PA and Fatah constantly challenges the foundations for reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fatah; Hamas must negotiate with Fatah if it is to be able to begin to access the institutional leadership powers associated with the PA and PLO. On the other hand, Fatah faces immense pressure from external actors to keep Hamas from such state-based leadership structures.
Fatah is attempting to oscillate between its original liberation modus operandi and the statist role as it increasingly merges with institutional apparatus.

**Seventh Fatah Congress**

It is during the infrequent congresses that Fatah seeks attempts to remedy the discrepancies in its handling of multiple national processes. For example, during the sixth congress in 2009, Fatah made multiple statements regarding popular resistance (in translation of the full text of the ratified political programme):

The Fatah movement will adopt all types of legitimate struggle while clinging to the option of peace without depending solely on the negotiations to realize it. Among the forms of this struggle that can be practiced successfully during this phase to support and activate the negotiations or to be used as an alternative to them if they do not accomplish their objective, are:

- **a)** Reviving popular struggle against settlement activities ... Our mission is to mobilize all citizens to join in these activities and realize popular foreign and Arab participation in them, as well as offering all forms of aid from the Authority’s agencies to make them succeed. The official and popular leaders of the movement should spearhead the most important activities

- **b)** Creating new forms of struggle and resistance through popular initiatives by the cadres of the movement, as well as the insistence of our people on steadfastness and resistance through methods sanctioned by international laws.

- **c)** Boycotting Israeli products inside and outside the Palestinian territories through popular activity, particularly consumer products that have a locally produced alternative; practicing new forms of civil disobedience against the occupation, as well as working on escalating an international campaign to boycott Israel and its products and institutions by benefiting from the experience of South Africa.

(Fatah, eleven principles for negotiations, five options for the failure of dialogue, four steps to confront the siege, and seven forms of struggle, Bethlehem, 11 August 2009, 2009)

There was an attempted outward expression of how Fatah views its leadership role in regards to specific national movement processes. There was also a desire to straddle engagement with the historical liberation basis and that of peace
associated with both the Fatah-controlled PLO and PA. In the lead up to the seventh congress that was to begin 13 November 2016, analyst Daoud Kuttab (2016) wrote that “while the term ‘popular resistance’ was approved by the sixth congress, the movement has not done much to flesh out what it means and how to incorporate nonviolent resistance within a national liberation strategy.” This accurately summed up the approach of the seventh congress as well.

Director of the Palestinian Centre for Policy Research and Strategic Studies (PCPSR/Masarat), Hani al-Masri, asserted that the congress was:

A continuation of the old approach, where allegiance was pledged to Abbas though a standing ovation rather than a vote. He was re-elected as the movement’s sole leader without any elections, accountability or evaluation of the previous phase. While he emerged stronger than before, Fatah has taken a step backward after the conference.

(as quoted in Melhem, 2016)

The congress was seen as excluding those outside of Abbas’ circle in order to reaffirm his leadership with a perceived strong majority. Furthermore, Nabil Amir, Fatah member and former PNA minister, critised that the “hopes of change and renewal we have placed on Fatah’s seventh congress were hyperbolic. With the same language of optimism, the conference decided to leave the same status quo without any changes” (as quoted in Melhem, 2016). The approach of Fatah is viewed as purposefully stagnant whilst the environment in which it is operating is continually developing. This means that intersection point of Fatah with both the national movement processes and the other leaderships is in fact changing; both of these are dynamic elements shifting and so even if Fatah appears reluctant to alter its approach to leadership, its relational positioning continues to move.

One overt development in Fatah’s leadership relations at the congress was the presence of Hamas. A delegation from Hamas was present at the congress and spoke on behalf of leader Khaled Meshaal who framed the relationship between the two groups as a ‘partnership’ (Melhem, 2016a). Abbas responded in a similar vein imploiring that “Our national unity is the backbone of our cause. We call on Hamas to end the division through democracy, by holding the Palestinian National Council elections as well as presidential and legislative elections” (as quoted in Melhem, 2016a). As this was the Fatah congress, Abbas placed Hamas as responsible for democratic failings despite the fact that Hamas sits outside the PLO, of which the aforementioned PNC is the legislative body. The holding of any elections is deeply complicated due to the geographical and administrative issues related to the occupation. For example, elections for PA must take place in
Jerusalem and thus requires Israeli compliance. Hamas’ representative to the Palestinian Legislative Council, Ahmed Haj Ali, stated that the presence of Hamas at the congress “stems from its belief that no party can exclusively make Palestinian decisions, because unity is a must” (as quoted in Melhem, 2016). Analysis at the time predicted the groundwork was being laid for another attempt at a national unity government, which of course emanated a year later – as will be discussed later in this section.

The managing of relations between Fatah’s role in the PA and Fatah as an historical liberation movement grounded in resistance had not been articulated. A clear demonstration of this was the fact that the 2016 congress was held at the Palestinian Authority compound – a political party holding their conference with government resources. Despite this, in his speech to the seventh congress, Abbas went out of his way to highlight the independence of Fatah as a movement:

> We hope that all will accept our unique and special situation and respect the national Palestinian independent decision-making process, which we have extracted through huge sacrifices as Fatah has always remained a single unified body committed to its goal and attached to its Arab affiliation and depth.

(as quoted in Kuttab, 2016a)

Such claims of both the independence and unity of Fatah come under scrutiny when placed amongst the web of relations within the Palestinian national movement of which Fatah is deeply intertwined. There are obvious discrepancies between the statements and actions of the Fatah leadership process; which is not to say that this is unexpected, or by definition problematic, as Fatah is a multifaceted movement with a wide membership across the Palestinian territories. But this does flag itself as an additional component of the Fatah leadership to take into account and examine surrounding perceptions to be taken up later.

The seventh congress continued to pay lip service to Fatah’s support in building popular resistance. In his speech, Abbas said that “in every meeting, we repeat calls for peaceful popular struggle. This is our right to practice, and we don’t need one-upmanship on this score. We want popular peaceful resistance, and we

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15 The Palestinian Legislative Council is viewed as non-functional after the contestation of leadership following the 2006 elections. That election gave Hamas a majority in the PLC, however Abbas has enacted legislation via presidential decree to bypass the powers of the PLC (Presidential decrees: Issued on June - July 2007, 2007). Members of the PLC are also allocated seats within the PLO’s PNC, however this also did not occur following the 2006 election.
extend our hands for peace” (as quoted in Kuttab, 2016a). However, prior to the congress the PA was increasing arrests within the West Bank and even stopped a Fatah meeting in the Al Amari refugee camp (Gostoli, 2016). Here it is necessary to highlight the divide within Fatah between what is seen as two camps: Abbas and the exiled Mohammed Dahlan. Dahlan is from Gaza where he is viewed as having stronger support, alongside certain refugee camps in the West Bank and from Egyptian president al-Sisi. Pitted as a rival to Abbas for the Fatah leadership, this explains how the Fatah-run PA can clash with Fatah – it is Dahlan’s faction of Fatah. Therefore, the separation between Fatah and the PA often only occurs strategically.

It becomes difficult to determine where and when to differentiate between Fatah and the PA. Abbas articulated the desire of the Fatah leadership for peaceful popular resistance and cooperation for such, yet questions constantly arise over the degree to which the PA supports popular resistance. Fatah international spokesperson Ziad Khalil Abu Zayyad (speaking from personal perspective), argues that there must be a clarification of the role of the security forces being used against the popular resistance. Abu Zayyad that

There may be a kind of conflict, but I wouldn't say that it’s between the PA and popular resistance ... you may mean the security forces. The security forces: their position is that they don’t take their orders from the PA, they take it from the presidential office. The president makes the decision on the basis of his meetings with the Central Committee of Fatah. So the PA has nothing to say about that; the PA is, again, only ministers. The president is the one in charge of the security forces.

(personal interview, 2017)

According to this the security forces are presidential, the president is of the PA, yet the instructions come from the president with regards to Fatah. Like the location of the seventh congress, this is a concrete example of the blurred boundaries between Fatah and the PA.

Beyond the more tangible demonstrations of leadership entanglement, it is necessary to follow this with questioning how this is perceived and indeed handled – an issue that will also be taken up in the following chapter. Interviewee Munther Amira, also a high profile activist, is coordinator of the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (a coalition member of BDS), director of Aida Youth Centre (Aida refugee camp, Bethlehem), Fatah member, and in the department of popular resistance – as he describes it. Amira explained his positioning between the groups as separate, but related:
For me I’m trying not to be Fatah in the popular resistance. Not because I’m not Fatah, but the idea of the popular resistance we are trying to spread the idea all over. So working with the others in an independent way even though I’m Fatah and they know I’m Fatah; collecting them for this idea and for this strategy is more important than spreading the ideas of Fatah.

(personal interview, 2017)

Amira delineates Fatah and the popular resistance, despite his involvement in both, as his statement implies that the popular resistance should extend beyond any factionalism. We can see this directly reflected in the BDS movement’s attempted positioning as both apolitical and having a seat for a coalition representative from all the Palestinian political parties.

Nonviolence was problematised in the background chapter in the application of such a label/classification with regards to the BDS movement. In a similar manner, Abu Zayyad argues that term ‘popular resistance’ also incurs many issues in its application:

In the Palestinian community there is a kind of division in defining popular resistance. What is popular resistance? Is it something similar to the South African one? Or is it the popular resistance in Northern Ireland that was related to the IRA? Or is it a popular resistance that is being born now and is new? Or is it the BDS and the boycott? Or is it the diplomatic affairs to surround Israel from every corner in which they are alone in the international community and in which they withdraw from UNESCO ... So define popular resistance.

(personal interview, 2017)

This is important when examining the relations vis-à-vis ‘popular resistance’, which has shown to be perceived as an important point of contention amongst Palestinian leaderships. Who and what counts as resistance does not have a fixed answer in the approach of this thesis – it is relational. For example, Amira (personal interview, 2017) separated the statist approach from resistance: “popular resistance has its own way of work which can support the diplomatic fight. But until now we could not all work together.” He perceived the inability of the popular resistance and state institutions to work together as one of the key issues the national movement had faced. However, they very fact that it is relational is key to unpacking how the legitimisation process is perceived given
that resistance has been (and still is) a central component in the leaderships of the national movement.

**Updated Hamas Charter**

During this period Hamas’ actions raised questions over its approach towards the relationship between governance and resistance. In the years prior, Hazem Balousha (2014), founder of Palestinian Institute for Communication and Development, assessed that Hamas was changing its approach:

Hamas, which throughout the years of its reign was accused of lacking legitimacy to represent the Palestinian people and was dealt with only as a de facto government, is now more keen on joining the PLO institutions and imposing its conditions on the rules of the Palestinian political game. Hamas’ goal will be to end Fatah’s monopoly over fateful decisions relating to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

A definitive demonstration was the unveiling of a new charter by Hamas in May, 2017. The document was divided into subsections: the movement; the land of Palestine; the Palestinian people; Islam and Palestine; Jerusalem; refugees and the right of return; the Zionist project; the position toward occupation and political solutions; resistance and liberation; the Palestinian political system; the Arab and Islamic Ummah; and the humanitarian and international aspect.

The first section began by affirming Hamas’ identity as a “Palestinian Islamic national liberation and resistance movement” (Hamas in 2017: The document in full, 2017). Hamas had long faced criticism over the denied recognition of the state of Israel. The new programme for Hamas referred to a Palestinian state as per 1967 borders and clarified the war was with Zionism and not Judaism as per the following points of the document:

16. Hamas affirms that its conflict is with the Zionist project not with the Jews because of their religion. Hamas does not wage a struggle against the Jews because they are Jewish but wages a struggle against the Zionists who occupy Palestine. Yet, it is the Zionists who constantly identify Judaism and the Jews with their own colonial project and illegal entity.

20. [Abridged] However, without compromising its rejection of the Zionist entity and without relinquishing any Palestinian rights, Hamas considers the establishment of a fully sovereign and
independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital along the lines of the 4th of June 1967, with the return of the refugees and the displaced to their homes from which they were expelled, to be a formula of national consensus.


There was clearly a process and motivation behind the release of this new manifesto, but the document can be taken at face value as one expression of Hamas’ leadership. This can, of course, then be placed alongside other statements or actions from Hamas to provide a multi-dimensional examination for the ‘how’ of leadership.

The new document from Hamas also presented views on the Palestinian political system:

28. Hamas believes in, and adheres to, managing its Palestinian relations on the basis of pluralism, democracy, national partnership, acceptance of the other and the adoption of dialogue. The aim is to bolster the unity of ranks and joint action for the purpose of accomplishing national goals and fulfilling the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

29. The PLO is a national framework for the Palestinian people inside and outside of Palestine. It should therefore be preserved, developed and rebuilt on democratic foundations so as to secure the participation of all the constituents and forces of the Palestinian people, in a manner that safeguards Palestinian rights.

30. Hamas stresses the necessity of building Palestinian national institutions on sound democratic principles, foremost among them are free and fair elections. Such process should be on the basis of national partnership and in accordance with a clear programme and a clear strategy that adhere to the rights, including the right of resistance, and which fulfil the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

31. Hamas affirms that the role of the Palestinian Authority should be to serve the Palestinian people and safeguard their security, their rights and their national project.

33. Palestinian society is enriched by its prominent personalities, figures, dignitaries, civil society institutions, and youth, students, trade unionist and women’s groups who together work for the
achievement of national goals and societal building, pursue resistance, and achieve liberation.


Hamas states the importance of a pluralist democracy and also unity. The former speaks to the Palestinian state building process, whilst the latter, along with the constant references to resistance, aligns with its engagement in the ongoing liberation movement. Despite not being a part of the PLO, Hamas has highlighted the importance of this original liberation organisation. The PA features, but in a manner that places the emphasis on the PA’s responsibilities to the Palestinian society. Interestingly, Hamas states in point 21 that it rejects the Oslo Accords and everything pertaining to them – which should include the PA (as it also denounces security coordination). Where the PLO provides a space for Palestinian representation of the liberation movement, the PA is to serve the Palestinian constituency. Hamas also chooses to reference the role of resistance in this section on the political system, despite resistance having its own section in the document. Fatah also cited resistance frequently during the congress, but not with explicit reference to the formal political system which is under its control; Hamas linked the democratic rights under statehood and resistance. The document shows Hamas referencing all three process and nearly all other leadership actors. Yet Hamas does not link between leadership groups and their role in the processes as we can see contradictions on the positioning of these. The PA has the PLO-mandated peace process as the basis of its creation, yet Hamas seeks seats within the PA in reference to democracy. This raises many questions surrounding Hamas’ perceptions of its own process of legitimisation and that of the other leadership groups – this will be examined in detail in the upcoming chapter.

Despite the engagement with reduced historical Palestinian borders, Meshaal reaffirmed that “Hamas advocates the liberation of all of Palestine but is ready to support the state on 1967 borders without recognising Israel or ceding any rights” (as quoted in Wintour, 2017). The document sought to reorient Hamas away from its previously oppositonal stance to the peace process whilst not disengaging from its liberation foundations; there was recognition of a state alongside a Palestinian one, but there was no recognition of that state being Israel. Furthermore, the document made explicit statements about Hamas’ views on and relations to resistance:

25. Resisting the occupation with all means and methods is a legitimate right guaranteed by divine laws and by international norms and laws. At the heart of these lies armed resistance, which is
regarded as the strategic choice for protecting the principles and the rights of the Palestinian people.

26. Hamas rejects any attempt to undermine the resistance and its arms. It also affirms the right of our people to develop the means and mechanisms of resistance. Managing resistance, in terms of escalation or de-escalation, or in terms of diversifying the means and methods, is an integral part of the process of managing the conflict and should not be at the expense of the principle of resistance.


If we re-engage with the previous chapter’s assessment of Hamas’ foundational legitimacy, it first established an ‘oppositional legitimacy’ grounded in ‘jihad’. The document released in 2017 shifted away from oppositionality in that it provided the space for engaging with both the peace process and Palestinian political institutions, but it reaffirmed the original jihad basis – resistance and Islam.

The foundational legitimacies have provided a starting point for examining relational legitimacy in the modern period specified; the relational approach is not to update and re-label types of legitimacy, but to begin breaking down the process behind leadership and legitimisation. In just a single performance of leadership in the form of a document, it is demonstrated why there is a need employ an approach that centres upon the intersections and interactions between the leadership groups and national movement processes.

*Jerusalem Protests*

Two months later in July, 2017 protests erupted in Jerusalem. These protests stood out for many reasons, but primarily because success appeared tied to the fact that they were resolutely ‘leaderless’ in the political sense; none of the leadership groups examined here were attached to the protests. The protests occurred over increased security measures put in place by the Israeli government at Al-Aqsa in retaliation over the deaths of soldiers. Palestinians boycotted the security measures and instead held mass prayers in the streets in nonviolent protest – reported at levels of tens of thousands (Alsaafin & Hassan, 2017). The protests continued for weeks and the Israeli government revoked the increased security that had been deemed an arbitrary show of power. The protests had begun spontaneously and became increasingly supported at the local level. The political leadership groups had not been involved and attempted to regain footing in issuing statements of support. In President Abbas’ 2017 speech to the UN
General Assembly, using the voice of both the PLO and PA, he ‘saluted’ the nonviolent popular resistance that had taken place in Jerusalem vis-à-vis Al-Aqsa (Haaretz, 2017). Protestors chanted against Abbas due to a distrust of politicians using grassroots resistance for their own benefit, coming on board when protests appear successful.

This sentiment echoes those expressed in the long-running local demonstrations in Area C of the West Bank. Much of the grassroots resistance there originated as weekly protests against the occupation wall. The protests gained momentum and popularity which drew the attention of political leaders. However, it was frequently voiced to me the dislike of politicians turning up on the day for essentially a ‘photo-op’ and not using their power or resources to contribute. For example, Bassem Tamimi who led the demonstrations in Nabi Saleh explained:

“We fail to make a unified leadership for the activities; to make a programme and the programme be run through a unified leadership with a programme and the activists to do all this programme, as a strategy like the first Intifada for example. But we can’t succeed because still the people are controlled by Fatah, Hamas, PFLP, all of these parties. And until now their participation is weak and is not real participation – it’s just a show. It’s not real participation. For example Fatah: the leader of Fatah came to the demonstration, but did the main body of Fatah come to the demonstration? No. If we want a demonstration in this region, Fatah can bring 2-3000 members to participate.”

(personal interview, 2016)

El Kurd’s (2019) research has linked protest repression with PA control levels, quantifying the relationship between grassroots resistance and PA governance. In areas without direct PA control (Area B and C) resistance is less impeded by the PA. El Kurd argues that the PA reduces political mobilisation; Jerusalem, though under Israeli control, has a diminished PA presence. For this reason she argues that:

While the occupation can spur rebellion, the PA’s direct repression in the areas it governs exacerbates polarization and affects the ability of different groups to coordinate ... Until we see a change in the Palestinian Authority’s role, the locus of mobilization will continue to shift in unexpected ways.

(El Kurd, 2017)
The involvement of politicians in the leadership of popular resistance invokes mixed sentiments and in the case of Jerusalem their exclusion was sought.

It was not only that the protestors in Jerusalem had little desire for formal political leadership, but Fatah spokesperson Ziad Khalil Abu Zayyad, speaking from his personal perspective, stated that the clashes in Jerusalem were “something that neither Abbas nor the leaders of the Arab world can control” (personal interview, 2017). This was echoed by former senior advisor Jamal Zakout (personal interview, 2017) who asserted “the only successful party was the people of Jerusalem and nothing else. The others were competing, were in a rush to be a part of it.” The quick expansion of civil disobedience in Jerusalem caught the PA/Fatah political leadership in Palestine both unaware and unsure how to handle it given the coordination agreements with Israel.

**BDS & Resistance**

Bringing in the seeming outlier of the leadership groups selected, and thus the one with the largest empirical focus, BDS provides a useful point for unpacking the intersections of relations that constitute the national movement process. BDS is based upon a boycott of all Israeli companies and Israeli-produced goods; the PA is based upon economic cooperation\(^{16}\) with Israel. While numerous questions can be asked of the feasibility of BDS within Palestinian territories, by default the BDS movement opposes the PA’s governance. BDS co-founder Jamal Juma’ summarises the tensions between the two: “The Authority feels that any popular movement that can grow up and strengthen is a threat to them. So they want everything to be under control.” He continues, “the Authority, at least the regime, they don’t identify themselves as a liberation movement. They are acting as a state; a state is not existent. This is the irony” (personal interview, 2016). The peace process saw the formal political leadership shift away from a resistance movement and towards a statist entity through the administrative PA.

On boycott-based resistance Abbas stated in 2013, “We don’t ask anyone to boycott Israel itself. We have relations with Israel, we have mutual recognition of Israel” (as quoted in Kane, 2013). The PA instead endorses boycotts limited to products from West Bank settlements. Abbas’ position on the BDS movement caused internal divisions, with the South African Palestine Embassy releasing a statement declaring its support for BDS movement and clarifying that “The Palestine Liberation Organisation and the State of Palestine is not opposed to the

\(^{16}\) An acknowledgement must be made of the problematic use of the terms ‘cooperation’ and ‘coordination’ in this case. As Chomsky (1997, p. 249) writes, “The outcome of cooperation between an elephant and a fly is not hard to predict.”
Palestinian civil society-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel” (as quoted in Kane, 2013). Despite this, BDS activists have been arrested by the PA and nonviolent protests continually shut down (Abunimah, 2014).

The question of engagement with Israel is one of the most significant points of difference between the PA and BDS. Where the PA is contractually obligated in its relations with Israel, BDS takes a very firm position on anti-normalisation. The increasing tensions were exemplified through the Women Wage Peace march in Israel and Palestine in October, 2017. This time the discord was with the PLO, but with Abbas heading both the PA and the PLO, and the transfer of powers between the two, the actions between the two institutions are not always clearly separated. Thousands of women from both sides of the conflict walked across the territories for two weeks in a call for negotiations and peace. While Abbas supported the action, both BDS and Hamas did not, as it was viewed as an act of normalisation. The march can be seen as a form of nonviolent popular resistance, yet BDS went as far as calling for its sabotage (Carroll, 2017). The premises of re-entering into negotiations are based on both engagement and recognition of the Israeli state. BDS claims to be apolitical whilst positioning itself in a manner laden with political implications. Furthermore it is near impossible to see the achievement of the three BDS objectives without political negotiation. Though the BDS movement does not denounce negotiations, there is a clear critical stance towards the formal peace process.

The approach to handling nonviolence resistance also illustrates the issue of the blurring of the boundaries of formal political organisations. Abu Zayyad, Fatah spokesperson, highlighted this with the peace march: “The President sent a woman to say his speech, and one of the [Fatah] Central Committee is participating. And most of those who attacked it are coming from Fatah itself. They attacked the demonstrations – not physically. But most of them were Fatah.” (personal interview, 2017). Amal Ahmad (2016) argues that such cycles of confrontation are indeed necessary as they “help to break the monopoly over politics held by the Palestinian Authority and may help to hasten and legitimize the search for alternative strategies.” There has never been official support of the

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17 Juma’ (personal interview, 2017), BDS co-founder, expressed that not only was there official BDS opposition to the march due to the principle of anti-normalisation, but due to the hypocrisy that he believes was at the heart of this nonviolent protest. He believes preaching nonviolence and peace to the Palestinian population is akin to preaching to the choir. The march did not target this message to Israel, continuing the issue of the nonviolence discourse only focusing on the Palestinian side.
BDS movement by the PA and indeed statements can be read as more of a denunciation (see Sherwood, 2013).

Co-founder of Right To Movement, youth activist and BDS supporter George Zeidan perceived the relationship between the PA and popular resistance as ambiguous:

*In terms of the relationship between the PA and the grassroots organisations, I think this is one of the things that the PA has not really put a lot of thought into. It is unclear for me even if they support. I know for a fact they don’t really support the development of grassroots organisations.*

*It’s not even clear what they [the PA] want. It’s not even clear if they have security coordination with Israel or not. It’s unclear if they support the BDS movement or not. Why don’t we in Palestine, instead of encouraging people to boycott Israel, why don’t we boycott Israel? What is preventing the PA from boycotting Israel? The Oslo agreement? They’re [Israel] not binding to any of the articles of the Oslo agreement ... We live under occupation, there’s no further room for diplomacy. You’ve tried all diplomatic channels and where did it lead us? You’ve signed agreements and they’re not bound to it. What are you waiting for? You’ve put yourself aside from the people, your feet are not being burnt. I’ve even went sometimes to say they we have two occupations. Their existence is part of the existence of the Israeli occupation.*

(personal interview, 2017)

The contrived stance the PA has towards BDS and popular resistance are viewed as stemming from the state-building process and the resulting diplomatic approach tied to this.

Here is where it is crucial to look at the actual memberships and compositions of the leadership groups in order to provide another layer of relations, building upon what has been presented through the actions and statements above. There is seeming discord between the BDS movement and the PLO and PA, leaving the question of Fatah interactions and perceptions as necessary to unpack. Both the PLO and PA have a Fatah majority and Abbas is the head of all three organisations. The BDS movement has a seat on the secretariat allocated to a representative from the Palestinian political parties – including Fatah. The Women Wage Peace march provided a demonstration of the overlaps: BDS denounced the march; the PLO, with a Fatah majority, supported it; a member of
the Fatah Central Committee was sent by Abbas to deliver a supporting speech; many in Fatah denounced the march; Hamas denounced the march; both Fatah and Hamas are technically represented in BDS. The statement of support for the protest march was released from the PLO’s Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society (Carroll, 2017). Given the BDS’s founding principle of boycotting Israeli interactions and normalisation, there will remain different approaches to the process of the national movement.

What is interesting is not necessarily the divergent approaches between groups (given their differences in institutional power), but the difference in the discourse from the BDS movement expressing its perceptions of the PA and PLO as both groups formally engage with Israel. The PA is also viewed critically by the Palestinian population at large. In September 2017, 50% view the PA as a burden, 67% want Abbas to resign, and 59% believe it is not possible to criticise the PA without fear (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2017). Furthermore, in the December 2017 survey, 77% perceived the PA to be corrupt and only 34% believed it was safe to criticise the PA (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2017).

What can begin to be seen is how elements of BDS (composed of wider civil society) could be viewed as resistance leadership to the formal Palestinian political system and not just the officially declared state of Israel. This was illustrated in the 2017 protests over the security coordination between the PA and Israel in the arrest and killing of activist Basil al-Araj. Peaceful demonstrations at the court case were violently repressed by the PA. Thaer Anis, activist of the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (coalition member of BDS), stated that “in Basil’s idea, there is a new message. ‘We have two things we must struggle against: the politics in Palestine and the occupation’” (Gostoli, 2017). The discourse emanating from elements of the BDS movement sees the relation with the PA towards civil society as oppositional.

The following long quote from Munther Amira (BDS affiliate and Fatah member) begins to highlight the multi-layered relations between the PA and popular resistance and the complexity this brings in ‘perceiving’:

Dealing with the PA like there is no occupation, and dealing or struggling against the Israeli occupation like there is no PA. Which means that we have to struggle here to improve our lives and have our rights inside the areas of the PA, because always they will claim that there is an occupation, ‘you don’t have to do this, you have to struggle against the occupation’. So I say no, it is part of our lives and it affects our lives, no we have to struggle and we have to improve the way that they are ruling the area. And on the other
side sometimes some people would say that instead to fight against the occupation, you have to go against the corruption. So we are trying to go for both. It does not mean that they are equal – this is an occupation and this is our government that we want to improve their way of working.

This is the issue. Yes, it is complicated somehow. Sometimes you could not understand why they [PA] are standing there so as not to let you to do a demonstration here near Beit El. You could not understand, but it is the politics here. It is the pressure of the international community on the PA. Sometimes before it was the connection between the Israelis and the Palestinians. All these things I can understand and because of that all the time I am trying, or we if I would say as PSCC, we are trying to do our activities against the occupation far away from the PA - not to put them in our face. But there are some people, their target is the PA. If we could ask to have a demonstration to stand with the Palestinian prisoners, they would go for a place where there are Palestinian soldiers. For me, I would not do it. I would try my best to do it in another way, in another place, for the one who is arresting our children is the Israeli occupation. But like when we have the problem of Basil Araj, the court, you have no choice. The choice is to go to the Palestinian court ... But when we have the conflict with the occupation, let’s go to the occupation and not go through the places that there are Palestinian soldiers. It looks like that you want to do the problems here, not there.

(personal interview, 2017)

The Israeli occupation is one thing, but navigating the Palestinian leadership relations is becoming problematic for BDS-affiliated groups. As Amira explained, there can be means of not pitting popular resistance against the PA leadership approach. However, post-Oslo this is becoming increasingly difficult as the PA remains in a state-building process whilst still under occupation and civil society has rejuvenated around the unfulfilled liberation process.

Abu Zayyad provided another perspective on this situation, framing it in terms of the PLO and not the PA:

But did Fatah and the President say they are against it [popular resistance]? In the contrary. In their conferences (sixth and seventh) they said the minimum that we can do in forms of resistance is the popular resistance and all the options are on the
table. When we see that there is a need for this option to be used we will use it – by defining the option. For now we see that popular resistance is the right one ... But some of the left activists, who you may consider part of the grassroots, unfortunately because, and you can’t blame them because they are angry at the lack of democracy and the failure of the peace process and all of this, they directed their efforts and demonstrations towards the inside of the Palestinian society – against the PLO. Despite the fact that their leaders inside the PLO, like the leaders of the PFLP, ordered them not to do that, but they did that. And this is part of what I’m telling you, the new generation shifting and giving choice. So they were criticising the PLO and forgetting about Israel and concentrating on that. But I don’t see this as a solution.

(personal interview, 2017)

The contested relationship between ‘popular resistance’ and formal leadership organisations has been perceived in two ways: one relating to the PA; and one relating to the PLO.

With elements of stated discord between the PA/PLO and BDS movement, what of Fatah who has roles in both these organisations – and thus processes of liberation and state-building? Again beginning with the perceived relationship between the two, many interviewees held these multiple roles between Fatah, the PA and BDS. Well known activist Bassem Tamimi is a lifelong member of Fatah, deeply involved in advocating BDS and nonviolent resistance, and employed by the PA in the Interior Ministry. For clarification, Tamimi believes in BDS as a tool and not a movement per se. Tamimi reinforced the view that

*The PA don’t support directly the resistance. Also they don’t allow the people to talk freely about the social issues. They stop the demonstrations for a lot of things [and] this makes the legitimacy of the authority become weak and the people become unaccepting of what they are doing.*

(personal interview, 2017)

When then asked about perceptions about the PA vis-à-vis Fatah given their strong interlinking, he stated that “you can’t separate between Fatah and the PA, and you can’t also see it in the same way” (Tamimi, Personal interview, 2017). Perceptions are based on the assumption of multiplicity that comes through different contexts, histories and experiences. What is interesting here is that
within one perception, Tamimi advocates a duality in order to consider the
relations.

The relations between the political and resistance groups has naturally changed
over time. Tamimi states that during the Oslo period, the PA was composed of
those who had come directly from the resistance. After the 2006 election this
changed and a divide began between those working for the PA and those involved
with popular resistance and “for that the people start distinguishing between
Fatah and the PA itself” (Tamimi, personal interview, 2017) as Fatah remained
closer to what is seen as the resistance side. But this is an ever-changing set of
relations with only briefly identifiable points of relative stability. Tamimi
explained that most of the grassroots activists (in the West Bank) are indeed
Fatah, and when the negotiations stopped in the 2000s, Fatah went “directly to
the resistance”. However, it is also Fatah who support and defend the PA and
“maybe in this period of time there is more relation; they are more related
between Fatah and the PA, and become more and more” (Tamimi, Personal
interview, 2017).

**Hamas-Fatah Reconciliation Deal**

Interviewed three days prior to the announcement of the Fatah-Hamas
reconciliation deal on 12 October 2017 former member of the Palestinian
Legislative Council, Dr Azmi Shuaibi proffered:

> *Our practice it is very clear that if Hamas will continue outside the
  PLO, there will be a problem – in everything. If they had their
  special programme, political programme, national programme,
  and they can say that they are representing the Palestinian people,
  part of the people, half of the people, this means that we have two
  leaders, two programmes; this means that they must compete, in
  every area, in every field they will compete. So I don’t think that
  we can continue on this interim period by leaving them separated.
  But this does not mean that they must unite on everything, because
  they are different and they are representing different types of
  people, different ideologies.*

(personal interview, 2017)

A few days later Hamas and Fatah announced a reconciliation deal brokered in
Cairo. Whilst not addressing the PLO issue Dr Shuaibi sees as critical for the
national movement, the agreement was a step towards unifying the governing
institutions in the West Bank and Gaza – primarily the PA.
The deal was heralded as a breakthrough, however the achievement occurred primarily because the reconciliation was extremely limited in its scope. The deal saw Hamas hand over administration of the Gaza Strip to the Fatah-run PA. In line with other unity attempts, and related tokenism, the holding of elections was stipulated. Both sides had been under pressure in the lead up to the announcement. What can be seen as an economic suffocation of Gaza had hit a critical level. This was exacerbated by the crises in Egyptian and Gulf politics, which saw Hamas less able to rely on its traditional sponsors. However, this is not to say the deal was one entirely forced upon Hamas. In what was seen as an important gesture of good faith, Hamas dismantled its administrative committee. However, Hamas had only created it one month prior, allowing it to gain political credit without sacrifice. Additionally, the Hamas administration of Gaza in the absence of significant external funds was going to increasingly harm its popularity; responsibility for an electricity crisis without solution is a political liability. Fatah was also placed under pressure from Egypt. Mohammed Dahlan, who is viewed as leading a factional divide within Fatah, has repeatedly been used as leverage against Abbas (Collins, 2017).

Hamas and Fatah were under pressure in the lead up to the deal, however there were perceived benefits for each in entering the agreement and equally both sides were able to claim it as a victory. The deal was viewed as emanating through a lowest common denominator approach, whereby contentious politics was avoided. Dr Ghassan Khatib (personal interview, 2017), who served in 1990s negotiation delegations and as a previous PA minister, stated that “this is a cautious agreement in the sense that it does not have any political or security dimension – it’s related to services.” When it comes to the question of an actual unity government, Ziad Khalil Abu Zayyad who works as Fatah international spokesperson but was interviewed from a personal standpoint, explained that neither side is working towards this:

*It puts a sort of responsibility on them in front of the people. Fatah will be blamed for not providing the services. So the best way of dealing with this was to create this independent government which is completely under control of the president.*

(personal interview, 2017)

This is to say that Hamas should be perceived as accountable for service delivery as a partner alongside Fatah under this deal.

Whilst the populations of both territories were largely in favour of the deal, there was high scepticism about the depth and prospects – especially regarding elections. Polling two months later in December 2017 showed that numbers had
risen to 70% in support of Abbas resigning (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2017). That same month Yahya Sinwar, leader of the Gazan-based section of Hamas, came out stating that “the reconciliation project is falling apart. Only a blind man can’t see that” (as quoted in Almughrib, 2017). As predicted the reconciliation resulted in little and elections have yet to occur.

6.3. Advancing the Intersections

The groups have performed leadership during this period with regards to both their relationships with the other groups and the ongoing processes of the national movement. However, these have not always aligned in a consistent manner when both are taken into account. Themes have emerged in terms of the perceived changes in relationships between the leadership groups. The most articulated perceived deconstruction of boundaries between the different leadership groups was that of Fatah-PA-PLO:

*It’s funny. Same leadership of Fatah, same leadership of the PA, same leadership of the PLO. So they have to have the same agenda. They have the same agenda. Where is the voice of the opposition people?*

Zeidan (personal interview, 2017)

*As an institution you can say it [the PA] is part of representation. But even if you look to it, you will find most of the leaders of the PNA are PLO. And if we go to a national government in the PNA it will be composed of representatives of factions of PLO. It is very difficult until not to differentiate between the presence of PLO leaders and the PNA leaders.*

Shuaibi (personal interview, 2017)

There are also concrete examples of how the borders between the groups have shifted. For example, Bassem Tamimi (personal interview, 2017) who is employed by the PA stated that “in the past it’s the office of the PLO that controls the embassies everywhere for Palestine. Now it’s related with the Foreign Affairs Ministry here. It’s part of the change in that the PA starts to go directly to the political and the Palestinian issue itself.” Where the PLO is the recognised representation for the Palestinian people and has historically conducted both the negotiation talks and international relations, the PA has shifted responsibilities to what could be seen as attempts to strengthen the state building process. Thus
there is a tension: foreign affairs is the construct between states; the PA seeks increased statehood operations and recognition; the PLO is the international Palestinian representation.

A further factor is the previously outlined point that there has always been identical leadership of both from Fatah. The three groups have the same leader, but the three groups are composed differently within and have had distinctive origins in terms of their modi operandi – reflected in the divergent legitimisations from chapter five. Ramzy Baroud (2019) critiques that:

Since the Palestinian was founded in 1994, 17 governments have been formed, and every single one of them was dominated by the Fatah party, the largest faction within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Fatah’s monopoly over Palestinian politics has wrought disasters. Neither did the PA deliver the coveted Palestinian state, nor did Fatah use its influence to bring Palestinian factions together. In fact, the opposite is true ... Moreover, it also fell short of bringing the PLO factions closer together. Thus far, the second largest PLO faction, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) refuses to participate in a future government that will also be dominated by Fatah.

As the three groups have negotiated the ongoing national movement process, the relational positioning has continually shifted and therefore influenced the shaping of the narratives from the leaderships. This applies to all the leadership groups featured in this thesis.

Despite the oft-stated divisions, there are also significant interactions and overlaps between all five leadership groups, yet the coordinates of each differ as they are constantly renegotiated. In this chapter we see specific events that have been temporally bound in order to examine them within themselves. However, both the leaderships and national movement processes are in constant motion even if leadership can appear to be unshifting in approach. There have been clear demonstrations of groups attempting to engage with the developing national movement landscape, such as Hamas’ updated charter which mixed elements of the peace and state building processes in a new manner. What is also important, and often analytically overlooked, is the leaderships who appear to be stagnant. The relational approach holds a strong critique of assumptions of stability and the focus on instability. Therefore, questions must be asked of whether perceived stagnation is truly stability and if so, this must come into analytical focus as this counters the premise of the dynamism of processes. This is critical for groups such as Fatah where there has been a perceived status quo approach in regards to attempts to continue a dual engagement with liberation and state building.
narratives, due to its crossover roles in other leadership groups. However, the liberation and state building processes are ongoing in their developments through interactions with other actors (both other Palestinian leaderships and the wider external political environment). With these processes in a continual state of flux, points of intersection with the leadership groups are thus also shifting.

The next step is to further break down the intersecting points between the leaderships and the national movement processes. Rather than just identifying where these occur as critical points of tension, employing the relational approach to leadership as a process provides a way of examining the elements underlying this process. This means that the national movement processes are viewed as having an interacting role in the process of leadership, but in order to understand this the analytical focus turns to the process of legitimisation. The seeking of legitimisation presents a critical intersection between the leadership and national movement processes; examining this is a way of breaking down the interactions occurring between. Key performances of leadership by the groups have been examined in this chapter and the points of tension with the ongoing liberation and state building processes have begun to emerge. However, the process of leadership is conceptually broad and therefore requires an analytical entry point of which leadership legitimisation has been shown to be a pivotal issue for the Palestinian case.
7. Leadership Legitimacy: Rethinking the Process

In order to breakdown the tensions that appear to have arisen within and amongst the leadership groups of the national movement it is necessary to expand further into the relational approach. How can we understand the disputed leadership relations that have emerged in constantly changing constellations throughout this period? Emirbayer (1997, pp. 309-310) explains that

values are by-products of actors’ engagement with one another in ambiguous and challenging circumstances, which emerge when individuals experience a discordance between the claims of multiple normative commitments. Problematic situations of this sort become resolved only when actors reconstruct the relational contexts within which they are embedded, and in the process, transform their own values and themselves: “The appearance of . . . different interests in the forum of reflection [leads to] the reconstruction of the social world, and the consequent appearance of the new self that answers to the new object” (Mead 1964, p. 149)

The previous chapter demonstrated numerous cases of such ‘discordance’ with multiple relational reconstructions by the leadership groups. The analysis must now shift to examining the new relational contexts in terms of legitimacy; the actors are constantly interacting and renegotiating in a dynamic context and thus their values and approach to legitimisation is an ongoing process.

Chapter five began to expand the conceptualisations of legitimacy in examining the different ways the leadership groups engaged with legitimacy at key foundational points. However, this approach does not provide a means of understanding the processes occurring in the recent period and instead serves as a referential basis. Of examining concepts using a relational approach, Somers (1995, p. 136) explains that “What appears to be autonomous categories defined by their attributes are reconceived more accurately as historically shifting sets of relationships that are contingently stabilised.” These sets of relationships have continued to shift and therefore, in order to develop our understandings of the Palestinian national movement leadership, we must shift beyond forms of legitimacy. Even if we were able to apply to same approach as chapter five in identifying legitimacies, this would not explain the interacting processes underlying the ‘how’ of legitimacy in a manner that allows analysis of shifting, multiple legitimacies.
The previous chapter began developing the analytical basis for engaging with concepts as “embedded in complex relational networks that are both intersubjective and public” (Somers, 1995, p. 136). Building from the material provided in chapter six, the focus switches to further developing a theoretical approach as a means of making sense of the complex relational leadership environment in Palestine. Tangible through statements and actions, performances of leadership take place in a relational context with connections and transactions. Connections need to be unpacked in order to be able to analyse where and how these transactions occur in order to identify the relationships between intersecting processes. It is a relational approach that can allow us to probe processes of legitimisation. The means of doing this can be found in Alvesson and Sveningsson’s (2012, pp. 207-216) four proposals for advancing leadership studies: social and cultural context; social relations; acknowledging power and politics; and the processes of construction and re-construction. This chapter examines these elements within the Palestinian national movement to develop understandings of leadership legitimacy. The empirical and theoretical contributions occur alongside one another; the concept of legitimacy is advanced into a relational process and the actual process of legitimisation within Palestinian national leadership is explored. This chapter therefore addresses two research questions: What are the bases of legitimisation within the various Palestinian leadership groups during the 2016-2017 period?; and how can a relational approach to legitimacy deepen our understandings of recent Palestinian leadership?

7.1. Engaging the Legitimisation-Delegitimisation Tandem

Relational positioning can be traced through groups’ statements and actions vis-à-vis approaches towards each other and the ongoing national movement processes. These provide momentary relative stabilities at most, as the positions are in a constant process of development. Consequently, following this approach, legitimacy is not to be understood as an essentialist property. Instead, legitimacy is sought through a dynamic process of legitimisation; to seek legitimisation implies multiple actors and thus multiple understandings. Legitimacy as a relational concept links us to the negotiations occurring within leadership whereby, drawing again from Suchman (Call, 2012), legitimacy is a “generalized perception” within a constructed system of values – reflecting the intersubjective and public nature from Somers’ (1995). Bukovanksy (2002, p. 211) creates a relational triangle between perceptions, legitimacy and leadership in writing that “beliefs about legitimacy are forged through cultural discourse, and without legitimacy power cannot endure.” We must examine perceptions in order to access the narratives of legitimacy, and we must examine legitimisation as a
means of dismantling traditional approaches towards power in order to provide the space for relational leadership analysis. As explained, the concept of legitimacy is approached as sets of relationships that are constantly changing in composition that we can examine at points of conditional stability (Somers, 1995, p. 136). The traditional approaches to legitimacy that rely on binaries and limited categorisations do not capture the numerous and differing engagements leadership groups have with legitimacy and indeed the constant state of flux of this process. The figure below represents how the concept of legitimacy has been understood so far:

![Diagram of Legitimacy as a Linear Process](image)

**Figure 5.** Legitimacy as a linear process

In focusing on processes of legitimisation, the next step is to question the bases that underlie these processes. It is processes in plural as there is no singular standardised process of legitimisation, and groups can engage with multiple processes of legitimisation at any point in time. In order to analyse this, we can introduce surrounding processes and examine the interactions these have with legitimisations. For the case of Palestine we return to the national movement processes, now questioning the role of these upon how legitimisation is sought for the leadership actors. These three processes have changed over time, as have the groups’ engagement with legitimisation; analysis must be brought forward to the most recent period in order to develop a better understanding of what is deemed a very complicated situation. The interactions of processes with
processes is a complex network of moving parts, therefore the analysis is temporally bound and limited to specific points in time. However, when we take a step backwards there is a bigger picture that can begin to be drawn; for example, how changes in the state building process affect groups’ engagement with legitimisation.

Here it is necessary to revisit the notion of the legitimisation-delegitimisation tandem that was initially raised in the theoretical development chapter. It has been stated throughout this study that there is a symbiotic relationship between the empirical case and theory. In developing the understanding of the Palestinian case, the analytical approach towards the initial concept of legitimacy has been developed equally. Hence, it is at this point that there is a need to extend the latter further to be able to respond to the analytical findings thus far; the theoretical components of this research move in tandem with the empirical case. The importance of the process of delegitimisation next to that of legitimisation emerges as a finding within the Palestinian case, as will be demonstrated in the following analytical sections. Somers and Gibson (1993, p. 35) write of examining actors that they are embedded “within relationships and stories that shift over time and space and thus preclude categorical stability in action.” The legitimisation-delegitimisation tandem is a way of precluding categorical stability in line with the relational approach. In proposing an ongoing tandem, then we are forced to constantly re-examine the interactions occurring within legitimisation.

Refreshing what was initially mentioned of the concept, it was stated that delegitimisation is not synonymous with illegitimacy. The former is a process of varying degrees of loss of once-held legitimacy; the latter is the state of absolute lack of legitimacy. Kelman (2001, p. 58) proposed that “legitimization and delegitimization processes generally operate in tandem.” Therefore, it is useful to consider the process of delegitimisation alongside that of legitimisation; one group’s engagement with legitimisation does not occur in isolation from the processes of the others. There is potential for the legitimisation-delegitimisation tandem to occur at multiple levels in a relational approach. Delegitimisation has conventionally been conceived of as a process occurring between two groups. For example, the legitimisation of Hamas contributes to the delegitimisation of Fatah. However, given how the previous chapter detailed the multitude of factions, positions, and relations within the selected leadership groups, delegitimisation should be expanded as a process that can occur within groups alongside processes of legitimisation. It does not make sense to speak only of processes of legitimisation when an organisation like Fatah has elements deeply entwined with the PA and PLO, negotiating with Hamas whilst seeking to also position themselves as an electoral opponent, and participating in popular resistance. Each of these relates differently to liberation, peace and state building processes.
and therefore the tandem legitimisation-delegitimisation must be examined within groups, as this is a fundamental point of tension.

7.2. The Case of Palestine

Re-examining the concept of legitimacy within Palestinian politics is critical to advancing understandings of the dynamics of multiple leadership groups interacting with multiple processes. The indisputable complexities of the Palestinian national movement provide the perfect grounds for rethinking legitimacy as the current approaches do not fully grasp the dynamic processes and relational networks at play. National movements grappling with multiple leaderships engaged in multiple processes require a more nuanced means of thinking of leadership and legitimisation. Palestine presents a case with such requirements and one that will also provide a necessary challenge.

In a perfect system a national movement would develop from liberation resistance to a peace process, which would result in state building. There would be an overlap between these processes as they transition from one to the next. However, there should not be a residual liberation movement once state building has been engaged if it is assumed the nation state is the goal of national liberation. Of course in reality these processes are much more complicated and messy than any theoretical ideal; but the case of Palestine has resulted in all three processes being firmly present in the current period after decades of attempted transitions between and fluctuations within these processes. This requires the inclusion of delegitimisation as a tandem process to legitimisation as, for example, one group’s engagement with the state building process may contribute to a certain process of legitimisation, whilst also contributing to delegitimisation vis-à-vis their engagement with the liberation process. The difficulties present for seeking legitimisation in this environment are clear. The aim here is to unpack approaches to and perceptions of legitimisation amongst the leadership actors, engaging the three processes as factors in legitimisation.

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18 It is necessary to acknowledge that there is an important role played by external perceptions of legitimacy. Elgindy (2015) references the external actor of the United States when questioning how Palestinian leadership legitimacy is thought of and Israel can be seen to play an even larger role particularly with the groups it has direct relations with e.g. the PA. However, this is approach to legitimacy is not the focus of this research and remains an additional element that can be incorporated into the process of legitimisation in the future.
Where the peace process has been taken as a process in itself in the historical assessment of Palestinian leadership legitimacy, it can be argued that this process has been subsumed in different ways by the liberation and state building processes. With no formal peace process engaged in, the peace process has been heavily criticised by actors whilst the ‘peace’ narrative has also been integrated into both liberation and state building. This in itself creates tension over ownership of ‘peace’. Actors more heavily engaged with state building are faced with managing relations with coexisting popular resistance calling for liberation and peace. The de facto dissolution of the peace process has contributed to the ongoing changes within the liberation and state building processes, providing an additional reason to re-examine the Palestinian national movement with an approach that builds in dynamism.

Of the recent situation in Palestine regarding the institutional leadership bodies, Elgindy (2015, pp. 135-136) asserts that:

> While many in the international community remain keenly aware of the multiple crises within the Palestinian polity, few seem to grasp the seriousness or implications of the far more fundamental crisis of legitimacy that undergirds them all … Political legitimacy is always difficult to measure, but it is all the more so when the leaders in question do not have a functioning state and are responsible for a geographically dispersed population … The legitimacy of Palestinian leaders, contrary to what many U.S. policymakers may believe, is not primarily a function of services delivery and governance.

A ‘legitimacy crisis’ has been repeated as a way of describing the current perceived impasse within the Palestinian national movement. However, the analytical space remains for unpacking this assertion. The historical legitimacies of the leadership groups are often referenced, but these occurred via processes of legitimisation that are temporally bound. Examining engagement in recent processes of legitimisation is necessary in order to move beyond this and consider the relationality of leadership and legitimacy.

Bassem Tamimi proposes that there are parallels in delegitimisation amongst the leadership groups in the Palestinian movement:

> Because you know when everyone lose his goal he lose his legitimacy. Yes? For example when PLO go through the negotiation, Oslo agreement and they accept the two-state solution, they start losing their legitimacy inside of the Palestinian society.
And the people start going to Hamas and Islamic Jihad and their power with Oslo agreement, comes the change, and they have more support. The alternative, the other option for the Palestinian people, is coming through Hamas and they see that this is the alternative for the Palestinians. 2006, they are shocked by that; they are shocked because Hamas ride the same bus. From that we can't see the difference between Hamas and Fatah, nobody can. Now they are talking about the two-state solution and they re-read the same book written by the PLO before. For that, the Palestinian alternative, Hamas, it comes to the same direction.

(personal interview, 2017)

So often a comprehensive means of legitimisation is sought amongst contested leadership situations. However, perhaps it is the process of delegitimisation that provides a more coherent assessment for the question of leadership and legitimacy. The process of legitimisation is dynamic and deeply varied amongst different actors, but the problem within Palestine has been expressed as decreasing legitimacies.

This section will also draw on perceptions through statements in order to re-examine the shifting legitimisation process within Palestinian leadership. As Shakiki (2006) writes:

One should not underestimate the role of public opinion. Despite a narrow tolerance of dissent during the past decade, Palestinian public opinion played a significant role in empowering and constraining leaders. It gave or deprived them of legitimacy to act in ways that significantly affected the prospects for peacemaking and state building.

The analytical goal is not a concrete judgement as to who is legitimate within the Palestinian national movement, but rather a contextual examination of the legitimacy process across the key leadership groups. For the purposes of structuring, the groups will be loosely delineated. However, as will become clear, perceptions of legitimacy are often expressed relationally – in relation to the other groups and specific contexts.

7.2.1. Interacting Bases of Legitimisation

This section divides the leadership groups into different levels. However, this is not to reinforce a binary approach towards Palestinian leadership actors but
rather to provide a workable structure for building the relational analysis. The very term relational indicates the interconnectedness between the groups and processes, but it is not possible to write about all at once with coherence and clarity. As with this entire thesis, gradual steps must be added to capture detail before shifting to a broader perspective. Therefore, I begin with the overarching governing and representative bodies of the PLO and PA and how their engagement with the liberation and state building processes affects their respective legitimisations and delegitimisations. This is then broken down into the major political movements seeking governing control – Fatah and Hamas. The representative bodies of the Palestinian movement differ in their bases of legitimisations, leaving the question of how Fatah and Hamas engage with this alongside their own dynamic processes of legitimisation. Finally, the additional element of popular resistance examined primarily through the BDS movement is brought into the mix. Popular resistance has been critical throughout the history of the Palestinian national movement, but it is increasingly causing tensions within the national leadership and thus how this affects (de)legitimisation is a necessary analytical dimension.

7.2.1.1. Competing Governing Bases: PLO Liberation & PA State Building

The PLO and PA provide differing approaches to national leadership and governance. This is no surprise as they were constructed in distinct circumstances and in different stages of the Palestinian liberation and state building processes respectively. However both leadership bodies remain as do both of these processes, and legitimisation remains a central issue. The PLO and PA have correspondingly have divergent interactions with the liberation and state building processes and the recent relationships with these processes as bases of sought legitimisation will be examined.

Beginning with the overarching liberation organisation, there appear to be two dominant approaches to perceiving legitimisation of the PLO in the recent context. The first emanates from a legal standpoint based upon the PLO’s Fundamental Law (also known as Basic Law) that acts as a constitutional document. The Palestinian National Council (a parliamentary body) should sit for three year terms, however Article 6 states that “should it be impossible to hold an election to the National Council, the National Council shall continue to sit until circumstances permit the holding of elections” (The PLO Basic Law, n.d.). The Law was purposely written to accommodate the potential difficulties a transnational representative body would (and has indeed) incur. Fatah Spokesperson Abu Zayyad used this to frame the PLO’s legitimacy in relation to the PA and Fatah:
There was always a discussion about in the absence of an elected parliament and an elected president, what would happen if we wake up and there’s no president? ... The legitimacy doesn’t come from the PA, it doesn’t come from Fatah. The legitimacy comes from the PLO itself, not from the PA and not from Fatah, from the PLO. So even if there is no parliament or there is no presidential institution, in one moment you can declare that the PA was a temporary body formed after Oslo to administrate affairs of the people. And in the absence of the peace process, and the failure of the peace process, we just go back to the PLO and the PLO is the one who decides. So you don’t need elections, you don’t need anything to get the PLO back into the picture ... The chief of command who is the president of the PLO is the one elected and then comes the PNC. If the PNC is not held for any reason it is not a problem. It doesn’t say that for example if the PNC is not held in a matter of 4 years then the PLO is not legitimate. It doesn’t say that. It says if for difficult reasons and obstacles or for the vision of the president in which he sees it is impossible to hold the PNC, the PLO remains legitimate with the current PNC until it is available to hold one.

(personal interview, 2017)

In this sense, the PLO’s legitimisation is self-created through the provisions in the Fundamental Law. This contrasts with the PA whose existence, and thus process of legitimisation, stems from the Oslo agreements mandated by the PLO. This element of legitimisation for the PLO is interesting as the PLO currently only has one of its bodies operational (the Executive Committee) and even this has been deemed “little more than an appendage of the PA presidency” given that it is also ruled by Abbas (Elgindy, 2015, p. 135). Such an approach to legitimisation is not dependent on the actual functioning of the leadership; however this is not the sole means of examining legitimisation and contributes only one element of the way in which the PLO’s legitimacy may be analysed.

The second perceived approach to the PLO’s legitimisation is linked with its representative role for all Palestinians in the national liberation movement. Article 4 of the Fundamental Law states that “all Palestinians are natural members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, performing their duty to liberate their country in accordance with their abilities and qualifications. The Palestinian people is the base of this Organisation” (The PLO Basic Law, n.d.). The inclusive representativeness of the PLO is held as key element of any process of re-legitimisation. Munther Amira, coordinator of the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (a coalition member of BDS), director of Aida Youth Centre (Aida refugee camp, Bethlehem), and Fatah member states:
We need the PLO. Even if it would not have the legitimacy in you know as a term, but for us as Palestinians we would say that the PLO is our house. Yes it needs to fix so many things inside, but it still has the roof. So it will be our big house that we are trying our best to fix, we don’t want to demolish this house. So it is very important to deal with the PLO in a sensitive way. You know the political parties, the Palestinian political parties is very weak. We need to do all our efforts to empower them so as to lead the PLO. I think it is one of the most important organisations that we have, so we have to be very sensitive even with we have so many people say ‘the PLO, Hamas, we don’t need it anymore. The PLO is corrupted like the PA.’ But I think no, we have to struggle so as to rebuild it again and fix it so as to work in the better way I would say. Because it’s, it does not contain just the Palestinians in the West Bank and in Gaza. It has to contain all the Palestinians in the diaspora. So because of that it is very important that the Palestinian case is not just for the Palestinians here. It is for all Palestinians all over the world.

(personal interview, 2017)

However, as Amira continues, the management of this representation is not without issue:

No one of them [the parties] can claim that they are representing the Palestinian people. The only body that can say that they are representing the Palestinian people is the PLO – but it does not contain Hamas. But even Hamas is dealing with the PLO in a sensitive way and they are trying to enter into the PLO; they have all their own terms so as to enter into the PA.

There is a differentiation between holding the title of ‘representative of the Palestinian people’ and how this has developed in terms of executing this representation, as the situation shifted away from the leadership-in-exile model under which the PLO was developed. The issue of Hamas continues to be an additional thorn that “has undercut its [the PLO’s] claim to represent all Palestinians” (Elgindy, 2015, pp. 137-138).

The PLO’s perceived legitimacy-liberation relationship also serves to contribute to narratives of the PLO’s delegitimisation over time. Khalil (2013) argued that “while the composition, representation, and by-laws may have been justifiable for the ‘parliament-in-exile’ of a national liberation movement, the same cannot be said today” due to the creation of the PA and attempted state-building.
narrative claims of legitimacy have remained largely unchanged for the PLO, but both the political and leadership landscape has been highly renegotiated. The liberation process was the central basis of the PLO’s process of legitimisation during its establishment and role in the subsequent peace process. However, post-Oslo the impetus was placed upon state building, meaning the PLO’s parliament-in-exile was no longer the only representative Palestinian body\(^\text{19}\). The state building process provides a challenge to the PLO’s ongoing seeking of legitimisation as the Palestinian representative body. Elections are constantly referenced in regards to legitimisation of the PA leadership, but this emergence of elections rhetoric highlights the lack of PLO elections and thus raises the question of such a representative narrative actually contributing to a delegitimisation of the PLO. That said, the lack of elections or united governance by the PA could be seen to weaken this role of state building in delegitimisation of the PLO.

As indicated, an element that pervades the examination of the process of legitimisation for the PLO is how it is related to the PA – the vehicle for Palestinian state-building. Legitimacy is framed as either ‘above’ the PA, in that the PA is a creation authorised by the PLO, or as harmed by the PA regardless of this political arrangement. For example, Bassem Tamimi declared of the PLO:

\begin{quote}
It still has legitimacy. It’s weak, yes. The PA influence badly the legitimacy. But people, the Palestinian people, and all over the world know that the leadership for the Palestinian issue is the PLO. Who can make any agreement is PLO. Yes it’s controlled by Fatah movement, and as for PA it’s same for PLO. Because until now everyone in the world and every Palestinian would say that they see that the PLO is the only leadership for the Palestinian issue. And this is the legitimacy for the PLO.
\end{quote}

(personal interview, 2017)

Legitimisation is an ongoing process that any leadership is constantly engaged with. For the PLO, perceptions around the process are highly linked with the PLO’s relationship to the national liberation process and its claims of representative authority regarding such. Despite the degree and functioning of this representation coming under question, the unfulfilled liberation process holds significant weight as a basis of legitimisation for the PLO.

\(^{19}\) Of course noting that the PLO seeks representation of all Palestinians globally, whereas the PA operates solely within the Palestinian territories.
In spite of holding negotiation roles, the PLO’s authority is not tied to the status of the peace process; where contention emerges is in the relationship with the state-building process. This was a process mandated by the PLO and yet has had a significant impact upon how its claims to legitimacy are perceived in the most recent period. Dr Azmi Shuaibi proposed:

*Legitimacy of the PLO has been weakened for many reasons, not only because the legitimacy of the PNA is raised – this is very important. When we agreed on the agreement with the Israeli side we understood that while we are building the PA, towards a Palestinian state, this means that the leadership of the PLO will be less as we are building the PA – the PLO will become less. If we will have a state with the Israeli side, the role of the PLO will be a very minimised role in some areas that we didn’t solve with the Israelis or some Palestinians who are living outside the Palestinian state. So it looks like the inverse. It was clear for us that this would happen. But the legitimacy which we will build depending on civil life, laws, PNA, elections, this is what we called legal civil legitimacy. That’s maybe weakening national legitimacy or revolutionary legitimacy. So we are still in this interim period. We didn’t finish the revolution and we didn’t finish building the state. So we are in the middle.*

(personal interview, 2017)

Dr Shuaibi, who was a member of the Legislative Council from the outset during its development, implies that there was an awareness that the PA would have a delegitimising effect upon the PLO due to its role in the state building process. Such an assumption aligns with an expected transition from liberation led by transnational representation, to a state building process seeking an internal democratic governing system. The grounds were set to shift bases of legitimisation away from the liberation process and towards state building, mirroring the mandated shifts in authority.

What was not foreseen was the current situation where the liberation process, and thus PLO, has not become redundant and nor has the state building process, and thus PA, come full circle. Dr Ghassan Khatib states:

*However, there is now a crisis in legitimacy for two reasons. The first reason is that the PLO which is the source of legitimacy for the PNA is losing legitimacy. It’s losing legitimacy because it’s no longer having any role in leading the struggle which is the first source of its legitimacy. And at the same time the institutions of the*
PLO is no longer functioning. This is the first reason for the crisis. The second reason for the crisis is that we’re no longer having elections. Because the last election was 11 years ago. So there is a question mark about these two sources of legitimacy for the PNA - and the PLO by the way. Therefore we think there is a question mark about the legitimacy so we have, it has partial legitimacy I would say. President for example is elected. But his term is overdue. The Palestinian LC is overdue. And it’s not functioning. So we have a serious and a growing legitimacy crisis.

(personal interview, 2017)

There was to be a shift between the processes of legitimisation for these organisations, however this has stagnated in uncertain terms leaving both organisations to remain engaged in different processes of legitimisation.

The bases of legitimisation have increasingly become spread between the liberation and state building processes as the latter has failed to achieve the levels of progress expected by Palestinian society. The momentum has swung back towards rhetoric of liberation and subsequent peace, beginning a process of delegitimisation for the PA as its role in the state building process is deeply criticised. The basis of legitimisation for the PLO is ironically the result of a failed peace process it oversaw and the difficulties incurred in a state building process without an independent state. The largely inactive PLO has passively retained liberation as a key basis of legitimisation within the Palestinian national movement due to unrealised liberation. This demonstrates the importance of examining alternative processes and actors present in the movement as legitimisation is not necessarily a result of specific actions or performances by the leadership group in question. A large part of the recent process of legitimisation emanates from the wider interactions across multiple levels within the Palestinian national movement. In circumstances such as these, legitimisation is far from a linear process.

If the PA is integral to how the PLO negotiates (or rather struggles to negotiate) processes of legitimisation, it is necessary to examine how the PA is perceived in navigating its legitimisation as there is likely to be multi-directional referencing (to the PLO and Fatah) that situates it relationally. As seen with the PLO, there are different strands of approaching the legitimisation of the PA depending on how it is positioned. If it is viewed in relation to the PLO, then the legitimisation of the PA is not viewed favourably as expounded by Ziad Khalil Abu Zayyad:

The legitimacy remains in the hands of those who rule the PLO, it is not in the hands of the PA. That’s why there is a struggle also
between Abu Mazen and Fatah and movements trying to come into the PLO; the hesitation from the factions inside the PLO towards Hamas because the whole ideology the PLO is built upon is different from Hamas’ ideology. And if you want to go back to the PA and parliament, there’s none. No elections.

(personal interview, 2017)

We see legitimisation of the PA not only viewed with regards to the PLO, as will be examined further below, but also the two main parties of Fatah and Hamas and their relationships to the PLO. To speak of legitimacy for independent leadership groups does not reflect the approaches towards perceiving legitimisation within Palestine.

If legitimisation of the PA is approached with regards to its original democratic institutional basis, then this is perceived as a means for the PA to re-engage with the process of legitimisation through democratic elections – a central component of the state building process. The matter of PA elections and how this relates to its perceived delegitimisation has already appeared multiple times in the above quotations. When questioning the issue of legitimisation of the PA, the PLO mandate and elections often follow each other; the recent process of the legitimisation of the PA is often framed in terms of where legitimisation was perceived to have originated from, which is strongly tied to the state building process. However, Shikaki (2006) wrote over 10 years ago that there was a clear trend within the state building in Palestine in that “the PA has gradually lost much of its popular legitimacy”. In spite of this, recent approaches by the PA towards any means of legitimisation are reflected ‘backwards’ to a previous historically bound process of legitimisation as a basis for reconstructing such.

The relational approach is critical here in viewing legitimacy as a dynamic process of legitimisation that occurs alongside other processes that multiple actors are negotiating. At a certain point in time we can see the PA’s legitimisation as linked to the state building process. However, to attempt to replicate that process of legitimisation as a means of renewing the authority of the PA, is to ignore the changed relational positioning within the Palestinian national movement. This positioning refers not only to the specifics of the PA, but to the constellation of actors and processes in which it is networked. The process of legitimisation can be temporally bound at critical points of stability to identify ‘legitimacies’, but legitimisation can never recur in the same manner because the processes continue to develop and thus the environment in which actors operate is ever changing.
The referencing of historical processes of legitimisation of the PA has a significant impact upon the third articulated conception regarding the engagement of the PA with processes of legitimisation. If it is viewed in relation to the ‘Palestinian people’ there is a perceived lack of reconstruction within the PA to the constantly changing environment. George Zeidan, Right to Movement co-founder, argues:

Indeed they [the PA] have legitimacy. But it’s not sufficient for them to rule and decide on behalf of the Palestinian people. They have legitimacy because they established some mechanisms that are running ... But in terms of legitimacy in representing us, I don’t think so. They give themselves this legitimacy, we don’t give it to them, we don’t back them up.

(personal interview, 2017)

This last strand can be seen to mirror the critical view of the PLO’s lack of renegotiating its approach to legitimisation beyond historical foundations. The relational approach provides a clear reason that perceived stagnation within leadership is discordant with the process of legitimisation; stability is not the assumed state, but rather an abnormality to be examined.

As explained in the quote from Emirbayer (1997, pp. 309-310) previously, actors’ values are the result of engagement with one another and this can result in multiple claims emerging which then requires a reconstruction regarding the relational context in which the actors operate. The relational context is always present; however the process of actors engaging in reconstruction vis-à-vis this context is not always apparent and thus the discordance between the multiple claims remains. For the PA, the state building process as a basis for legitimisation has changed, and indeed diminished, since the PA first engaged in leadership legitimisation. To continue to lean upon state building in the same manner, constantly referencing non-occurring elections, could be perceived as have a delegitimising effect. Attempted engagement in a process of legitimisation that does not accommodate dynamism within a national movement, and the changing perceptions within this, where we see delegitimisation arise as a tandem process within a leadership organisation.

At this point it is important to examine further how the perceptions of legitimisation for both the PLO and PA are deeply embedded within a comparative context. Although Fatah is the common central political party for both, and the references to such will be seen in the following section, these two organisations are imbued with a greater importance given their governing statuses and current lack of functioning. Dr Ghassan Khatib argues:
I think that’s one of the mistakes of the Palestinian leadership that they were not balanced in giving attention and maintaining these two bodies. They focussed on the PNA at the expense of the PLO, so the PLO which is the source of legitimacy is weakened to a large extent. But I don’t agree that the PLO is still fully legitimate and the PNA is losing legitimacy. I think both are losing legitimacy, probably to different extents, but the two sources of legitimacy for the PLO are missing. The first one is their role in leading the struggle which was the original source of legitimacy. And second is the partial election and the functioning of the institutions of the PLO. The PNC which used to be called the parliament-in-exile for the Palestinian people, it used to function on the basis of partial election. Therefore, their members of that PNC were partially elected. They come from different factions; they come from different civil institutions, teachers, engineers, lawyers, doctors; they come from different areas of diaspora, of Palestinians. So there was a semi-election ways of constructing the PNC which used to meet and renew itself and elect an executive committee and a central council. Now this whole process is frozen. There is no functioning national council and there is no election for an executive committee or there is rare election for executive committee. So even the legitimacy of the PLO is also under question mark.

(personal interview, 2017)

Both organisations are perceived as being engaged in processes of delegitimisation, if in different ways. This is also reflected in external perceptions with analyst Ben White writing of a “legitimacy deficit” due to the overdue elections and lack of representation for the Palestinians outside of the West Bank and Gaza. He also argues that “the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) remains a potential vehicle for democratic decision-making, but serious reform is still not on the horizon” (White, 2011).

It becomes clear that processes of legitimisation for actors within the Palestinian national movement are complicated not only by the multiple ongoing liberation and state building processes, but also by the highly interwoven links between the actors; the legitimisation process of one is relative to the processes for the other organisations. Shuaibi proposes that this is an issue for the Palestinian national movement that will present a recurring problem:

As an institution you can say it [the PA] is part of representation. But even if you look to it you will find most of the leaders of the PNA,
they are PLO. And if we are, we go to a national government in the PNA it will be composed of representatives of factions of PLO. It is very difficult to differentiate between the presence of PLO leaders and the PNA leaders.

(personal interview, 2017)

The two governing organisations seek different bases of legitimisation while being composed of deeply intertwined networks. Both are lacking in reconstructing legitimisation beyond historically bound processes and this is escalating the process of delegitimisation.

7.2.1.2. Divided Political Strategies: Fatah & Hamas

Given the complexities of the processes of (de)legitimisation for the PA and PLO, it is necessary to shift down a level to the key political movements seeking governance in order to further break down these processes whilst building an additional relational analytical layer. Within the Palestinian national movement both Fatah and Hamas seek to relate upwards and downwards in regards to leadership levels. The PLO and PA can be seen as ‘above’, whilst popular resistance at the civil society level is ‘below’. Across these levels sit the liberation and state building processes, creating a multi-dimensional model of the Palestinian national movement that the relational approach seeks to capture at specific intersections.

Fatah is the social movement and political party underlying both the PLO and PA. Naturally this can lead to difficulties in delineating Fatah’s engagement in the legitimisation process as often the focus lies solely on Abbas, which then includes his role as President of the PA and Chairman of the PLO. Analysis of Fatah separate from the PA became increasingly difficult after the denial of what should have been a Hamas-run PA following the 2006 elections. The PA should be a function of those elected to its bodies, and it is Fatah who has continued to subvert this process and create a ‘defacto government’. Indeed Hoigilt (2016, p. 470) argues that the PA is “virtually indistinguishable from the Fatah elite.” However, despite driving both of these organisations linked closely to the liberation and state building processes respectively, Fatah is often framed in terms of the wider ‘national movement’ that encompasses the different processes. This provides an analytical gap for examining Fatah’s negotiation of processes of legitimisation with regards to its involvement in multiple elements of the national movement.
While Fatah’s leadership role within the governing institutions is commonly framed at an individual power level, this can be tied to the organisation’s engagement with legitimisation. The aim is to lift the focus of Fatah's legitimisation from leaders to that of leadership. Fatah is a movement with a wide membership base, but as legitimisation is used a means of examining authority and power relation in the Palestinian national movement it will be the elements of Fatah viewed as ‘leadership’ that are taken into account. Tartir argues that Fatah has actually harmed the Palestinian movement through the factionalism that has arisen both within the party and amongst the other Palestinian parties. He believes that this has resulted in a ‘legitimacy gap’ related to a lack of trust in Fatah and the lack of accountable leadership (Gostoli, 2016). This assertion brings the process of delegitimisation into question for Fatah at a dual level – internally and externally.

The seventh Fatah congress in 2016 was an event focussed, in theory, with Fatah as the primary actor – though as already highlighted, the space (substantial and otherwise) in which the event occurred contradicted that. Nabil Amr believes the congress resulted in two things: “It renewed the old legitimacy and displayed a show of force, whereby Abbas proved his absolute control of the movement after so much talk that the conference would bring in new blood” (as quoted in Mehlem, 2016). The ‘old legitimacy’ cannot reference the process of democratic legitimisation given the lack of elections both within Fatah leadership and the wider government system. Instead the referencing of legitimacy could be seen as being attributed to an old, dominant leadership group within Fatah – Abbas engaging with an individual legitimisation process. This is echoed in Professor Ahmed’s Rafik Awad’s assessment that “Fatah survived disintegration, collapse and schisms. It succeeded in renewing the legitimacy of its leaders and easing tension at the national level” (as quoted in Mehlem, 2016). Within the upper echelons of Fatah, perceptions of legitimisation are focussed upon the individual leadership. However, this is not necessarily aligned with other elements of Palestinian society’s approaches to the perceiving of Fatah’s legitimisation as integrated within the PA.

Questions remain over the degree to which responsibility and accountability should be attributed to ‘the PA’ or ‘Fatah’. The PA dominates the narrative in terms of both public actions, statements, analysis and perceptions in spite of it being controlled by an unmandated Fatah – both Presidential and Legislative Councils terms have expired according to the Amended Basic Law of 2005 (The Basic Law of 2005 A.D., 2005). The role of Fatah within the PA places the movement in a unique situation when it comes to processes of legitimisation. As the boundaries between Fatah, the PLO and the PA are unclear due to joint leadership of all three for many decades and the lack of functioning governing and legislative bodies, this affects how accountability is perceived.
Dr Abdul Sattar Kassem, political science professor, analyst, and PA critic described that:

*When the PA does something good, Fatah says ‘yeah it is us’. When they do the bad things, they say ‘well we are Fatah, they are the PA’. No, they are the same ... The PLO is Fatah. And if they are not Fatah, the whole structure is made in a way that Fatah will always have the majority. So when there is a vote, Fatah will win, that has been the case since Yasir Arafat.*

(personal interview, 2017)

The eschewing of direct accountability suggests some awareness from the leadership of how Fatah’s control of the PA has the potential to affect an associated delegitimisation. Despite the stated indistinguishability between Fatah and the PA, Fatah seeks to separate the processes of legitimisation for each. This could be attributed to Fatah’s multiple roles across both the state building process through the PA and its historical basis as a revolutionary movement in the liberation process. The Fatah membership base is a gradient between those on the PA payroll and those deeply involved in civil society resistance. When it comes to the wider Fatah membership, political analyst Nat al-Aqtash argues that “many of those on the street who support Fatah do so from an emotional perspective – for the slogans and the history of the movement – without really understanding what the movement’s current views are” (as quoted in Tahhan, 2017). Again, like the previous organisations, we see referencing of an historical process of legitimisation. But unlike the PLO and PA who adhere closely to the liberation and state building processes respectively, Fatah adheres to both and, as seen in the section above, these processes can be antagonistic bases of legitimisation.

Kuttab (2016a) contends that Palestinian liberation was the “top topic” in Abbas’ speech to the seventh congress. This is an interesting framing by Abbas if we situate it amongst Fatah’s historical legitimisation and the three processes the Palestinian movement has moved through. Abbas is referencing the original process of national liberation, while also insisting in the same speech that due to the UN recognition of the Palestine as an observer state the term ‘Palestinian Authority’ is defunct and replaced with ‘State of Palestine’. Abbas is leaning on the liberation process and yet presenting a statist discourse as he negotiates his multiple leadership roles. Fatah seeks to utilise both liberation and state building as bases of legitimisation, whilst also attempting to avoid what would be a problematic accountability, and thus potential process of delegitimisation, to each of these processes. There is an Italian saying about not having both a barrel
of wine and a drunk wife and the reliance on a performance of individual leader legitimacy indicates Fatah’s struggle to engage both the liberation and state building processes as bases of legitimisation.

Contrasting the difficulty in extrapolating the party of Fatah from the institutions in which it governs is Hamas. Where in the recent situation the perceptions of Fatah have become synonymous with the PA, Hamas has been continually excluded from the national governing institutions despite its shift towards engaging with legitimisation through elections. The two main strands of perceiving Hamas’ processes of legitimisation follow the pattern of tension between engaging both the liberation and state building bases. Like the other groups, the first leans on Hamas’ historical legitimisation through resistance in the liberation process. The second is a critical questioning of Hamas’ repositioning vis-à-vis elections and state building. In traditional approaches to legitimacy, electoral victory is a well-established path of legitimisation; for Hamas the contesting of elections has indeed affected perceptions of legitimisation, but in the negative – delegitimisation.

Resistance has played a central role in the Palestinian national movement since its inception. Even as the peace process was embarked upon, the question of resistance remained and was reframed in terms of levels, types, and associated actors. Dunning (2016) argues that within the Palestinian context resistance has a critical relationship to perceptions of legitimisation. Well-known Hamas researcher Khaled Hroub states that “resisting the occupation has become not only the instigator of many political and armed movements, but also the prime measure of popular legitimacy and the identification of their very purpose” (as quoted in Dunning, 2016, p. 7). Resistance, armed and nonviolent, is thus an important basis for legitimisation. Furthermore, resistance is not an exclusive means of liberation but is perceived as a central component of the liberation process in the Palestinian national movement. The liberation process and resistance have played critical roles in processes of legitimisation for almost all the leaderships examined thus far. However, Hamas has sought to keep this front and centre, whilst also demonstrating and stating significant shifts in its approach, such as its contending of elections and reformed charter. Where the other leaderships have attempted to cling to historical processes of legitimisation in changing circumstances, Hamas partially seeks this whilst also purposefully developing its approach alongside the dynamic national movement environment.

Interestingly, the dual approach of Hamas that is so often framed and critiqued as contributing to a process of delegitimisation, can also be perceived as interconnected processes providing building blocks for developing legitimisation.

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20 Non si può avere la botte piena e la moglie ubriaca
When asked what legitimacy means Bassem Tamimi replied that it meant resistance. However, when expanded upon this related to elections:


(personal interview, 2017)

Electoral victory is viewed as a traditional accepted means of establishing legitimacy and thus authority in a liberal democracy. In a national movement elections are central to the state building process. In the Palestinian context, electoral victory can been tied to engagement with the liberation process. This means that even the process of legitimisation through democratic elections can feature resistance, and thus liberation, as its basis. The Palestinian case again demonstrates the need to progress examinations of legitimacy into that of breaking down processes of legitimisation.

In specific reference to Hamas’ legitimacy, lifelong Fatah member Tamimi stated that if resistance is legitimacy then indeed Hamas has legitimacy:

*THEY ARE PART OF THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AND MOVEMENT. THEY HAVE A LOT OF SUPPORT IN THE PALESTINIAN POPULATION. THEY WON THE ELECTION 2006 AND THEY WENT ALSO THE ELECTION IN EVERYWHERE, IN UNIVERSITIES, CLUBS, A LOT OF PLACES, AND MUNICIPALITY, ALL OF THAT. FOR THAT THEY HAVE LEGITIMACY.*

(personal interview, 2017)

Hamas’ historical process of legitimisation through resistance is cited as having an impact upon later engagement with the dynamic process. Then Deputy Head of the Hamas Political Bureau, Dr Mousa Abu Marzouq affirmed that:

The concept of resistance is more comprehensive than the issue of politics, war and peace, and politics and economics. The issue of resistance is a comprehensive story and it also has a culture, which should be devoted and it should include politics, economics, living, and all these issues.
This view of the importance and permeation of resistance within the Palestinian national movement indicates why resistance has emerged as a key tension point in the most recent circumstances – as will be further examined later.

Hamas’ historical processes of legitimisation perhaps initially aided the movement as it developed along different strands reflective of the changing nature of the Palestinian national movement – namely the introduction of the state building process. However, Hamas’ foray into legitimisation approaches tied to state building has also been perceived adversely. Khalil (2013) argues that:

Rather than fulfilling its 2006 platform of “reform and change,” Hamas has emulated Fatah’s rule of suppressing political opponents and dissent while adopting even more conservative policies. Indeed, in the past two years Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who have attempted to conduct peaceful assemblies and protests have been subjected to violent suppression by the competing truncheon authorities. Moreover, the multiple agreements and initiatives to resolve the impasse between Fatah and Hamas that have been negotiated but never implemented since 2005 should make it abundantly clear that their only concern is acquiring and maintaining power.

Ghassan Khatib (2017) explained that “Hamas has been paying a very heavy political price for their governance role. The popularity that they gained as a result of their resistance role is being wasted as a result of their governance role.” The legitimisation-delegitimisation tandem plays out amongst Hamas’ dual bases of legitimisation.

Speaking personally, Fatah spokesperson Abu Zayyad went further in proposing that the revisions in Hamas’ charter examined earlier can be seen as an admission of failure in their previous strategy:

When you see Khaled Meshal on TV saying ‘we are accepting the basics of the Palestinians state on the ‘67 borders’ after the fact that they came out as a substitute for the PLO because it agreed on this. What does it mean? It means it took them about 20 years to understand that what they were calling for is not working.

(personal interview, 2017)
On the one hand Hamas’ reconstructed process of legitimisation is viewed as attempting to engage in processes associated with Fatah and the PA which contributed to a delegitimisation vis-à-vis their historical resistance-based legitimisation. On the other hand, the process of dynamic reconstruction is perceived as an indication that the changes made reflect Hamas’ response to the changed environment, in which an oppositional performance of leadership is to no longer be a means of legitimisation.

Where many frame the issue of legitimisation for Hamas in terms of both Fatah and the PA, Abu-Helal (2014) argues that the conflict regards the PLO in that:

This conflict started when Hamas became a part of the national resistance in 1987 and an important player in Palestinian politics and revolution, as well as a potential competitor for Palestinian legitimacy, which has been monopolised by the PLO since Fatah gained control of it in 1969.

Whilst this is an essentialist zero-sum approach to legitimacy, the framing of Hamas’ legitimisation in terms of the PLO is important. This was also affirmed by Dr Azmi Shuaibi:

*Our practice it is very clear that if Hamas will continue outside the PLO, there will be a problem. In everything. If they had xx their special programme, political programme, national programme, and they can say that they are representing the Palestinian people, part of the people, half of the people. This means that we have two leaders, two programmes. This means that they must compete. In every area, in every field. They will compete. So I don’t think that we can continue on this interim period by leaving them separated. But this does not mean that they must unite on everything. Because they are different. And they are representing different types of people, different ideologies.*

(personal interview, 2017)

In situating Hamas amongst the wider national liberation movement, the issue of balancing multiple leaderships with the question of unity becomes prominent. Hamas currently straddles dual processes of legitimisation: the first is centred upon the liberation process and engagement in resistance in which Hamas has long been framed as an alternative leadership; the second is linked to an institutionalised state-based authority through democratic elections. Where in the 2006 elections the former aided in building the latter, currently this presents as an issue for the wider Palestinian national movement. The desired, or even
necessary, degree of unity amongst the different levels of leadership is unknown, yet presented within Palestinian society as integral to advancing the movement. Examining processes of legitimisation are necessary foundations for being able to expand analysis into other key areas of national movement leadership.

7.2.1.3. Reinvigorating Liberation Resistance: BDS as Shifting the Landscape

It is necessary to further interrogate the role of resistance upon legitimisation processes as it is a recurring issue for the leadership groups examined. Much of the current popular resistance within Palestine is not emanating from the political parties, though many party members across the political spectrum might be involved. If resistance is most strongly linked to the liberation process, this immediately presents an issue for the state building process and associated legitimisation. Following the initiation of the state building process, civil society was severely curtailed in an attempt to shift away from the liberation-based legitimisation and authority to aid legitimisation of the PA. However, civil society and popular resistance has re-emerged in the space of a languishing state building process that has shown liberation to be incomplete. Using these processes as bases of legitimisation provides a clear means of understanding why this is so problematic for the Palestinian national movement and is resulting in the internal antagonisms. Popular resistance is an extremely important element of the most recent environment and BDS is used as a means of examining this within the network of Palestinian leadership relations.

Co-founder Omar Barghouti states that “BDS is a grassroots and civil society movement that is entirely independent of the official Palestinian structures and any government” (Younis, 2015). But herein lies the issue to examine. BDS does not claim to be political as it does not seek political power or status in any future Palestinian state – it holds no position on a state-based solution. It positions itself as purely human rights-based. However, with BDS reigniting the liberation process as a means of legitimisation within the Palestinian national movement with a method that purposively disengages from the formal political system, what effect does this have on the perceived legitimisation of the statist system? The BDS movement needs to be examined with regards to the process of legitimisation for the Palestinian formal leaderships.

Zaru (2008), writing on nonviolence and Palestine, believes nonviolence resistance threatens status quo power holders as nonviolence undermines their façades of moral authority. “Nonviolence reconceptualizes power and it gives the ordinary person power to effect change. Nonviolence exposes and then challenges the structures of domination and not just the overt symptoms” (Zaru,
It is clear how the nonviolence of the BDS movement challenges the Israeli regime and occupation. But what if the other actors within the Palestinian national movement were examined with this focus instead? How does BDS and resistance affect the legitimisation processes for the Palestinian leaderships? Analysis of the BDS movement is different from the other leadership actors examined here. Engagement with processes of legitimisation for the BDS movement is not explicitly related to political authority and power as it states that it seeks neither. However, this does not mean that the consequences of the BDS movement upon legitimisation of political authority should be bypassed; it is an actor within the Palestinian national movement and thus contributes to the constant reshaping of the political environment and specifically the fluctuating processes that contribute to legitimisation. Here I reorient the traditional theoretical approaches to nonviolent movements so that the internal dynamics of the wider national liberation movement are scrutinised using a relational approach to access the dynamics of de/legitimisation.

Officially the BDS movement does not have goals or rhetoric that speak to the Palestinian political bodies, but by default this form of contentious politics has challenged the formal political system. Interviews with key BDS figures evidence this direct questioning of the bases of the PA’s processes of legitimisation:

Unelected and unrepresentative Palestinian officials have gone way too far in conceding our basic rights – without any mandate to do so. Even if they had reached an agreement with Israel it wouldn’t be worth the ink it was written with, because it has no legitimacy from the majority of the Palestinian people.

Omar Barghouti (as quoted in Interview: Omar Barghouti on the boycott campaign for Palestine, 2011)

_The Authority became the obstacle; it means the Palestinian people have to decide whether they want to keep this Authority or get rid of it. So in a way, the Authority has turned the struggle internal and this is dangerous. This is the dark side of the whole issue and this is the difficulties facing the BDS and inside the BDS._

Jamal Juma’, BDS co-founder, (personal interview, 2016)

If we recollect Kelman’s approach to understanding Palestinian legitimisation and the peace process presented in the previous chapter, this was based upon the formal body (then PLO) having the essential support of the population and thus a claim to representation. This created a mandate for both the negotiation and implementation of the Oslo agreements. But two decades on the fallout of Olso
has seen diminishing levels of support for the leadership institutions. The PA now dominates internal politics and the President’s office has been inconsistent with its positioning on grassroots nonviolent resistance – and the BDS movement specifically.

While highly critical of the PA, those in the BDS central leadership perceive that the PLO still has some basis for legitimisation, but it is increasingly fragile:

*The PLO has legitimacy still, but very weak. It’s now decreasing and decreasing, they in the political powers didn’t stand up quickly and strongly.*

Jamal Juma’, BDS co-founder, (personal interview, 2016)

*They [the PLO] still have legitimacy, not for Palestinian people, for the people they pay their salaries. They have legitimacy through these employees only but not on the Palestinian people. Palestinians do not trust the PA because of the whole situation – the corruption, nepotism, clientalism – all these types of corrupted people in the PLO.*

Mahmoud Nawajaa, BNC general coordinator, (personal interview, 2016)

What is meant by legitimacy for the PLO is not made explicit. Instead the interviewees take legitimacy as a commonplace with a presumed shared understanding that we can situate amongst the perceptions and understandings of the processes of legitimisation for the PLO above.

There is a strong stated desire to reinvigorate the PLO and its ‘legitimacy’, but what is not acknowledged is how the BDS movement may have an impact upon the related legitimisation processes. Furthermore, there is a differentiation between the PLO and PA in this case. The PLO is viewed more favourably as a tool for the national liberation movement moving forward, as indeed it is the formal negotiating body, whereas the role of the PA garners little favour amongst the grassroots resistance. Senior advisor to Abbas, Mohammed Shtayyeh, has stated that the PA must be revised from “a service provider” to “a resistance authority” (as quoted in Qandil, 2014). Given that resistance is a central element of the Palestinian liberation process, this can explain why the BDS movement favours legitimisation of the PLO over the PA given their different engagements with the liberation and state building processes.
Without delving into the extensive, yet critical, field on the concept of power, it is necessary to draw from it in the questioning of resistance and delegitimisation. Hoy (2005, p. 82) writes that “power needs resistance, and would not be operative without it. Power depends on points of resistance to spread itself more extensively through the social network.” As above, this can be turned so the focus is on internal Palestinian politics whereby the power is viewed in regards to the other Palestinian leadership actors and not the traditional oppositional power that would be the Israeli state. It is no shock that Israel has reacted against the BDS movement, but the PA has often sought to repress elements of a nonviolent movement that holds similar end goals. Palestinian resistance has been “reframed as criminal insurgency or instability” not by Israel, but by the PA (Tartir, 2017). This is not to say that one branch or approach of the Palestinian national liberation movement should be deemed more ‘legitimate’ than another, but the issue is of the underlying consequences upon the process of legitimisation for the intertwined network of Palestinian national movement leaderships.

In their exploration of resistance, Baaz et al (2016, p. 142) write:

We are ultimately interested in the kind of resistance that prevails as a response to power from ‘below’; a subaltern practice, which has the possibility to negotiate and/or undermine power. In this, however, it is important not to dichotomize resisters and dominators since that would mean to ignore the multiple systems of hierarchy and that individuals can be simultaneously powerful and powerless within different systems.

This is a very useful approach in the case of Palestine where we clearly see such multiple systems of hierarchy and power, and therefore multiple levels of resistance to above powers – without stated intent. It is not novel for grassroots resistance to be critical of their formal political bodies within the same liberation movement. However the BDS movement, as part of Palestinian popular resistance, does affect the bases of legitimisation for the institutional organisations but it does not stand as a potential alternative to the political bodies in any stated capacity. The impact of BDS upon the legitimacy of the Israeli occupation is the movement’s central focus; the impact of BDS upon the processes of legitimisation within the Palestinian national movement proves to be an increasingly critical question for understanding the internal tensions.

There is no direct causal mechanism between how the rise of BDS affects the legitimisation of the formal political system, as there are numerous internal and external factors involved. However, the fact that there are complicated relations between the two requires the question of ‘delegitimisation’ to expand to incorporate those within the same national movement. The BDS movement
influences the wider environment underlying the processes of legitimisation in increasing the role of the liberation process as a basis for such. Resistance has been lifted in importance for legitimisation and therein lies the problem for the PA as its engagement with and reliance upon the state building process presents limitations for how the PA interacts with resistance. Resistance is inherently part of the liberation process and the presence of the liberation process undermines the statist approach. Given that the PA holds the state building process as a primary means of seeking legitimisation, an undermining of this process thus invokes the potential for a process of delegitimisation.

There are clear intersections with the governing bodies of Palestine which have resulted in critical tensions due to the overlapping processes of liberation and state building. However seemingly less overtly played out on the public stage is the relations of BDS with Fatah and Hamas. These two groups both attempt to manage dual engagement with the liberation and state building processes, both seeking democratic governance and active resistance involvement. While the BDS movement claims to be apolitical with no official affiliation with political parties or political stances, there is a seat within the BDS secretariat for the political parties. This further complicates the interactions between BDS and the PA, as despite technical separation between the functions of Fatah and the PA, there is an undeniable inseparability in the operations of both.

The role of Fatah within the BDS movement does not present obvious problems with Fatah seeking legitimisation through both the liberation and state building process; BDS supports the liberation process and gives no position on questions of the Palestinian statehood. But it is when the intersections with the Fatah and the other leadership bodies are added into the matter that the highly critical positioning of BDS vis-à-vis the PA presents issues. The BDS movement, and its engagement with the liberation process, opens the process of delegitimisation for the PA through its reliance on the state building process. Fatah controls the PA in a manner that has shown itself not to be as independent bodies. Therefore, while initially BDS does not appear to raises issues of delegitimisation of Fatah, there is an issue of delegitimisation-by-proxy through the deconstructed (and thus porous) boundaries between Fatah and the PA.

There is perceived to be a divide within Fatah that allows members to separate the organisation’s identity between the governing PA and the resisting civil society. How this develops alongside the liberation and state building processes and their roles in Fatah’s process of legitimisation is an important issue for future analysis. Hamas faces less of the problems outlined for Fatah above in terms of its associations with the BDS movement. However, this is primarily due to the prevention of Hamas governing through the PA. As it stands both a reconciliation deal with Fatah would need to prevail and subsequent elections be held before
Hamas would face an increased challenge in increasing the role of state building as a basis for legitimisation. Due to numerous internal and external factors, Hamas has had to reconcile this in practice and we have seen Hamas explicitly support not only resistance, but the BDS movement itself.

7.3. Conclusion

In examining the process of leadership in a national movement, this chapter has pushed the concept of legitimacy to a process of legitimisation. This has allowed this research to capture and analysis the interactions between multiple levels of processes in order to examine how processes of legitimisation are playing out for the Palestinian leaderships in the recent period. But more than this, in developing the understanding of legitimacy as a process of legitimisation, delegitimisation has emerged as a critical tandem process necessary for analysis. Within Palestine, legitimacy has been presented as a critical issue to be addressed and the question of why this is has been unpacked here by employing a relational approach. In doing so we can now reconceptualise the process of legitimacy to:

Figure 6. Legitimacy as a relational process

This chapter has demonstrated that the ongoing national movement processes are underlying bases of legitimacy to varying degrees. The interaction between leadership and the national movement processes has been acknowledged in the history of the Palestinian movement. However, in expanding understandings of legitimacy we see that traditional approaches have not captured a critical
relationship with the national movement processes. When we compare this to the historical legitimacies examined in chapter five, these were established in instances where there was generally one national movement process to take into account; the relationship between legitimacy and these processes was filtered through leadership (thus titled as ‘effected process’ in the summarising table). Such a conceptualisation was useful in this context in order to expand the discussion on internal legitimacies present amongst Palestinian leadership, however that was the limit of a more traditional analytical approach to leadership legitimacy. Examining legitimacy as a process of legitimisation has allowed analysis of what is actually occurring in such a process, and seen a necessary introduction of the process of delegitimisation in tandem. The duality of the liberation and state building processes often sees the legitimisation-delegitimisation tandem transpire. In this chapter I have detailed the instances of this for the leadership groups. It has been demonstrated that the above diagram becomes problematic when there are concurrent national movement processes existing in the same box and thus ‘legitimacy’ is actually a dual process of legitimisation-delegitimisation. This transformation is critical in understanding the Palestinian case.

The individual leaderships can be outlined independently in terms of the roles of the national movement processes as basis of legitimisation: the PLO seeks to rely on its historical version of liberation-based legitimisation; the PA was created from the state building process and thus continues to seek legitimisation based on this; Fatah controls both the PLO and PA which have differing bases, with the presence of the liberation process undermining that of state building; Hamas has begun to engage with state building process through the contesting of PA elections, but this in turn risks invoking the process of delegitimisation of the liberation basis that has been dominant for the group; and finally the BDS movement presents an open point of tension where these contradictions are playing out as the other leaderships attempt to manage the increasing re-emergence of liberation process as a basis of legitimisation.

This chapter has continued narrowing the analytical focus in order to be able to work with the relational approach in the Palestinian case. This has resulted in theoretical developments in how the processes of legitimisation and delegitimisation can be analysed and the subsequent empirical analysis from the leadership of the Palestinian national movement. This thesis has built smaller analytical blocks in order to reach this point. However, with a comprehensive examination of both relational and Palestinian legitimacy complete, the analytical blocks must reverse in size. From this and previous chapters the intersectionality of processes has emerged as critical in developing understandings across multiple areas: legitimacy, leadership, and national movements. Furthermore, it is the intersections that result in tension which establish themselves as critical points
of focus. Within the Palestinian case we can see resistance appear as a manifestation of the clashing between the liberation and state building processes. It is important to expand the focus back from that of the process of legitimisation, to a broader discussion on the implications of a relational approach for understanding multifaceted leadership in the Palestinian national movement.
8. Leadership and Legitimacy in the Palestinian National Movement: Conclusions and Implications from a Relational Analysis

This thesis began by seeking to understand how the complex relationships between the various Palestinian leadership groups can be described and analysed, and how leadership legitimacy can be approached in constructive ways in order to enhance such analysis. The previous chapter clearly demonstrated how shifting the analytical focus from legitimacy as a property to legitimisation as a process allows a more advanced understanding of the role of the national movement processes upon such – a critical development for assessing the complex Palestinian leadership relations. However, it is also possible to expand the findings of this research question a step further and discuss the implications for the Palestinian national movement in a broader sense given the multidimensional effects between the legitimisation and national movement processes examined. This chapter brings together the analytical components that have been gradually linking together throughout this thesis. First, the original research aim and questions are addressed. The relational approach has proven to be pivotal in reorienting leadership analysis of the Palestinian national movement to one of intersectional processes. The national liberation and state building processes hold significant roles in current bases of legitimisation for the different leadership groups and this is a significant finding in and of itself. Second, we take a step back to situate the findings of this work. In the case of Palestine, it is interesting to ask what this actually means for understanding the national movement as it continues to face leadership challenges. Additionally, this discussion speaks more widely to the challenges of complex national movement leaderships and the challenges incurred as we look towards future areas of research.

8.1. A Relational Approach to Palestinian Leadership: The Conclusions

I do not feel the need to recount an in-depth chapter-by-chapter summary of the undertakings of the research because all the parts of this thesis have served as building blocks to arrive at this point. It is not necessary to work back through them given the strong intertwining between case and theory that has taken place, especially given the singular focus on the Palestinian national movement. However, this section will work through the most important stages of the study in order to identify the major results and conclusions. In synthesising the
findings of this research I will return to the research questions with the answers that can now be elucidated and conclusions drawn.

**Leadership as a Dynamic Process**

Beginning with the approach that has provided a foundation for the research, relational leadership expanded the analytical focus to include intersectional processes that are incorporated within the social order. Relationality holds connections and transactions at its core – elements that I have demonstrated to be central to analysing Palestinian leadership in an ever-changing environment filled with contesting claims. For the case of Palestine, the national movement processes became an imperative element to include when examining leadership and legitimacy. When leadership is approached as a dynamic process of reconstructing the social order, this opens the space for a multitude of perspectives and means of performing leadership within the analytical scope. Relationality reverses assumptions of stability, instead presuming motion with the premise of explaining relative stability. Hosking (2011, p. 57) summarised three features of relational constructionism, stating that it is: “(a) about how, rather than what, (b) about multiple, local realities and relations, rather than the one way things probably are (assuming some universal rationality), and (c) about ‘developing’ or ongoing rather than stable realities as ‘content’.” Reorienting the study of leadership in this manner then required aligning a new means of examining leadership legitimacy.

**From Legitimacy to Legitimisation – A Way to Capture and Analyse Complexities**

Existing approaches to internal legitimacy were found to be both extremely limited in their scope and essentialist in nature, which did not allow for concurrent or differing degrees of legitimacy. However, when legitimacy is framed as a process of legitimisation, and therefore ongoing and dynamic, this does not enforce a pre-set typology upon the situation being studied and allows a reflexivity to the leadership developments of the case. In this research, legitimacy was first developed along the lines of ‘what’ and relationality allowed the reframing to ‘how’ – how legitimacy is constructed (the process of legitimisation) and constantly reconstructed. When the existence of multiple realities and relations were incorporated into the research approach, this then required a transformation of the concept of legitimacy to capture and reflect such. Rather than being a fixed state, legitimacy is a constant negotiation of powers and perceptions and therefore dynamic and multiple in nature. The process of
seeking legitimisation is one of ongoing development. However, for analytical purposes the legitimisation process could be arrested at defined points to note relative stabilities in what appeared to be forms of legitimacy. Relationality recontextualises fractured leadership to the dynamics of legitimisation between those seeking it. A relational constructionist approach provided the overarching frame for this research in order to engage a novel approach with regards to both legitimacy and the Palestinian case. Where leadership has begun to be studied from a relational perspective, the key concept of legitimacy has not developed to the same extent within the political scholarship. In engaging a relational approach, legitimacy was transformed to a concept that was able to capture and analyse the complexities of the Palestinian case – that of concurrent, multiple and contending perspectives.

Employing relationality goes beyond just theoretical implications as it is an ontological approach and thus influenced this research methodology. A relational approach to leadership requires a methodology that “provide richer insight into process and context than has been offered by traditional leadership approaches” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 671). There were two main sources of material to build the analysis: historical secondary literature and accounts and original interviews from my fieldwork. The former was a needed means of accessing and compiling perspectives from the periods outside of my fieldwork in order to establish the bases of historic foundational legitimacies. In addition, the secondary material also supplemented those periods within my fieldwork. The latter has provided a strong basis for going in-depth into the relational networks between the Palestinian leaderships and the numerous perspectives held that could present a new angle beyond the observable performances of leadership from the groups. Of particular interest and contribution were those that had links across multiple groups and thus provided an insight into the complex relations that were crucial to reorienting analysis of the Palestinian national movement.

**The Historical Foundations of Internal Legitimacies**

The first research question was split into two parts, with the first of these examining the bases of legitimacy within the various Palestinian leadership groups during key historic foundational periods. The question was designed in two parts as it was necessary to begin by expanding conceptualisations of legitimacy both within the conceptual field itself and in a means that reflected that Palestinian case. Building an analysis of the historical foundations of legitimacy for the Palestinian leaderships also served as an essential foundation to be able to trace the developments over time to better understand the 2016-2017 period when addressing the second part of the first research question. Chapter five began the legitimacy analysis and did not apply a relational approach given
the difficulties in using this to a long historical period in which the Palestinian national movement was not featuring the overlapping of processes to the same degree— and thus was not integral to being able to examine the foundational legitimacies. Primarily using secondary sources, this chapter introduced the national movement processes (liberation, peace and state building) into the assessment of the internal legitimacies that developed during these processes. Below is the table taken from chapter five that summarised the findings, including the new internal legitimacy types that emerged.

**Table 9. Summary of Palestinian internal legitimacies 1958-2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Year of First Claim</th>
<th>Legitimacy Type</th>
<th>Legitimacy Source</th>
<th>Effected Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>*Revolutionary</td>
<td>Armed resistance</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>*Revolutionary</td>
<td>Armed resistance</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Popular support</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>*Oppositional</td>
<td>Jihad</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>*Institutional</td>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>State building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatah</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Electoral victory</td>
<td>State building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Electoral victory</td>
<td>State building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDS</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>*Moral</td>
<td>Nonviolent resistance</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*new types*²¹

In examining the internal legitimacies that emerged over this period without a fixed typology, we saw four new types emerge alongside the pre-existing types. These provided more specific forms of internal legitimacies for the case of Palestine that directly drew upon and reflected the sources from which they emanated. The four were: revolutionary, oppositional, institutional, and moral. I differentiated legitimacy type and source as although the combinations between these matched when there were duplicates in my study (e.g. revolutionary and armed resistance) this need not be the case; having these separate further opens the scope for a more nuanced examination of internal legitimacies.

²¹ The asterisks denote new inclusions to types of internal legitimacy. Representative and democratic internal legitimacy are pre-existing in the legitimacy literature as demonstrated in Table 2.
Legitimisation and Delegitimisation amongst the National Movement Processes in 2016-2017

Analysing the historical legitimacies provided an important foundation for taking a further step in rethinking the concept of legitimacy for the Palestinian leaderships. There were two reasons why: the previous forms of legitimacy and their respective sources continued to play a role in understanding the recent framing for the processes of legitimisation; and we enter a period whereby the clean distinctions of the groups, the legitimacy types and national movement processes of the table above are no longer feasible. To address these issues, this thesis then drew from the relational perspective in order to be able to capture the complexities of 2016-2017 period for leadership legitimisation and address the second part of research question one that sought to find the bases of legitimisation for the Palestinian leadership groups during this period.

In approaching legitimacy as a relational process in chapter seven, I extended the concept to become a process of legitimisation that included a tandem process of delegitimisation. This was an essential theoretical development for analysing the Palestinian case amongst the dual liberation and state building processes. Shifting legitimacy into a process of legitimisation opened the space for questioning how the national movement processes influenced legitimisation in an ongoing dynamic interaction. Engaging a relational approach to legitimacy, and indeed leadership, allowed the points of intersection amongst these and the national movement processes occurring alongside to be incorporated into an analysis that built needed depth on the current Palestinian leadership situation. The relational approach provided a means of not only working with the cited complexity of the case, but breaking it down into analysable form. Of the relational approach, Ospina and Uhl-Bien (2012, p. xx) stated that “bringing relationality to the leadership field means viewing the invisible threads that connect actors engaged in leadership processes and relationships as part of the reality to be studied.” I believe these invisible, yet critical, threads have come into view through this research. It was the relational threads between the leadership groups and between their engagements with the national movement processes that have come into clear focus in explaining the so-called legitimacy crisis. The relational threads allowed the identification of the role of the overlapping national movement processes as bases of both legitimisation and delegitimisation for the Palestinian leaderships.

Drawing heavily from interviews conducted during fieldwork, much was deduced of the interacting relations at numerous levels in chapter seven. However, the individual leaderships could be outlined independently in terms of the roles of the national movement processes as basis of legitimisation and summarised as: the PLO seeks to rely on its historical version of liberation-based legitimisation;
the PA was created from the state building process and thus continues to seek legitimisation based on this; Fatah controls both the PLO and PA which have differing bases, with the presence of the liberation process undermining that of state building; Hamas has begun to engage with the state building process through the contesting of PA elections, but this in turn risks invoking the process of delegitimisation of the liberation basis that has been dominant for the group; and finally the BDS movement presents an open point of tension where these contradictions are playing out as the other leaderships attempt to manage the increasing re-emergence of liberation process as a basis of legitimisation.

**Understanding Palestinian Leadership**

Chapter seven painted a clear picture of how a relational approach to legitimacy can deepen our understandings of recent Palestinian leadership – research question two. Uhl-Bien (2006, p. 662) proposed that relational leadership requires a new line of questioning be applied to leadership analysis, one that asks:

- how realities of leadership are interpreted within the network of relations;
- how organizations are designed, directed, controlled and developed on the bases of collectively generated knowledge about organizational realities; and how decisions and actions are embedded in collective sense-making and attribution processes from which structures of social interdependence emerge and in turn reframe the collectively generated organizational realities.

In approaching the issue of Palestinian leadership legitimacy aligned in such a way with Uhl-Bien’s directive, it became possible to consider the diverse constructions that were taking place and producing different perspectives. During my fieldwork I had a chance to raise the first question listed by Uhl-Bien above regarding interpretations of different realities; the subsequent analytical process was the chance to situate interpretations within my reading of the network of relations based on both other groups' perspectives and observable performances of leadership. This analysis provided a new means of understanding legitimacy within the Palestinian national movement. It demonstrated the need to incorporate the tandem legitimisation-delegitimisation process both within and across leadership groups given that they interact not only with each other, but with the national movement processes in numerous ways.

This relational approach allowed me to question how there have come to be meanings of legitimacy in Palestinian leadership and furthermore, how these meanings have been reproduced. It is in the relative stabilities that legitimacies are captured, but the more prevalent periods of instability reshape the meanings.
Processes of legitimisation are dynamic in nature and thus fluctuate as the groups renegotiate the changing environment. Meanings and claims are forever ongoing performances and lack an essential ‘truth’. Tangible through statements and actions, these performances took place in a relational context with connections and transactions and therefore a relational approach allowed us to probe processes of legitimisation. Connections needed to be unpacked in order to be able to analyse where and how the transactions occurred. Such demonstrations never occur in isolation; a leadership group is not speaking about their own legitimacy in a vacuum. Furthermore, in addition to leadership groups interacting with each other, leadership is also a process interacting with the processes associated with the national movement. Through a relational approach it was possible to access the intersections of processes and thus reorient and expand the means of analysing the complexities of Palestinian national movement leadership. It was deduced from Mattern’s (2005) work that realities of legitimacies are intersubjectively constructed matrices and we can now see that this has resulted in complications for the Palestinian leaderships. Reframing legitimacy away from a black and white perspective allowed a broader view on how the leaderships and national movements intersected, and why this was an important element of analytical development; one group’s legitimisation is relational to both one another and to the processes and thus should not be studied in isolation.

The negotiation of the ‘diversity of constructions’ was paramount for understanding the Palestinian national movement leadership as it allowed us to capture the aforementioned fragmented, contested and fragile relational constructions between leadership and authority (legitimisation). Alvesson and Sveningsson (2012) proposed that leadership is a series of constructions around authority and relations responsive to a specific context; Emirbayer (1997) argued that due to the multiplex nature of constructing leadership, there must be ongoing reconstructions in order to avoid dissonance. This research has showed that there is a discordance between the Palestinian leaderships’ performances of leadership, perceptions of legitimacy, and national movement process narratives. Furthermore, there has been a stagnation in reconstructing the relational context and thus a lack of resolution. I contend that problems have arisen within the Palestinian movement leadership because groups, to differing degrees, have not entered into a process of reconstruction in response to the ever-changing political
context. The occurrences of this can be traced back decades. Whilst Shikaki (2002, p. 93) presented the options as “reform or perish” in regards to the leadership issues that led to the second intifada, this can be reframed (at an extreme) as ‘reconstruct or delegitimise’. Though a simplified version of the notion, this phrase is an important takeaway from the relational approach in its analysis of leadership as a dynamic process amongst others.

What is currently missing within the national movement is an acknowledgement that the liberation process continues, and this does not mean that state building aligned actors need necessarily diminish. The differing bases of legitimisation do not rule each other out. However, there will always be fluctuations if we view legitimisation as occurring in tandem with delegitimisation. When there are this many leadership actors in a national movement, changes in legitimacy are arguably more dynamic given the number of intersections between leadership groups and movement processes. This is why viewing legitimacy as a process of legitimisation provides a useful approach for Palestinian leadership; legitimacy is not simply an entity that is either present or not. The delegitimisation tandem shows how a relational approach provides a new means of approaching legitimacy and moves beyond stability. As the previous chapter demonstrated, leadership groups incur most issues in their processes of legitimisation when there is a linked delegitimisation within the same process, and this is often when there are discrepancies in the discourse and actions in actors’ performance of leadership.

Between the empirical contributions and theoretical developments of chapters five through seven, and their answering of the two research questions, the stated primary purpose was thoroughly covered: to map the Palestinian national liberation movement leadership, examining the inter-relations between the multiple leadership groups and internal legitimacies. While this map is by no means a simple one, nor one that can be presented without detailed text, very little prior research has tackled the current complex web of overlapping intersections amongst the numerous leadership actors and national movement processes. The aim in mapping the inter-relations was not to simply clarify the picture, but rather to highlight the intricacies that make analysing the movement so multifaceted. First, the relational approach has allowed a more advanced understanding of Palestinian leadership, previously

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22 I propose that it is the context that is ever-changing as this is built into the assumptions of the relational approach and instability. Whilst it has been questioned whether it is the national movement processes that have remained unchanged, I argue that these are part of the social order which is dynamic and therefore this affects the (in)stability of the national movement processes given the aforementioned feedback loops. Both the national movement and leadership processes do not occur in isolation and therefore are dynamic; the question is of reconstructions in response to this.
analysed mainly from more traditional perspectives; second, the study of Palestinian leadership has demonstrated that the relational approach can be fruitfully applied beyond the intra-organisational contexts where it has been most commonly used before.

Through addressing the overall aim of the research there have been numerous research conclusions which I will summarise here. Examining the internal legitimacies of the Palestinian leaderships resulted in an expansion of how internal legitimacy can be conceptualised. For the historical period analysed, I found revolutionary, representative, oppositional and moral legitimacy types within the Palestinian case. As a concept for examining leadership, I believe that legitimacy can be developed beyond the established types to provide more nuanced analysis for cases that do not align with such – as I have shown here with the case of Palestine. Furthermore, the internal legitimacies I developed were all attributed to respective national movement processes. But as these processes remain unfulfilled and thus overlapping, so too have the leadership inter-relations and internal legitimacies become overlapping in nature. This required the use of a relational approach in order to be able to analyse the recent period and further develop understandings of legitimacy. This approach transformed legitimacy into a process of (de)legitimisation that allowed us to identify the role of the interacting national movement processes. I found the continuation of the liberation and state building processes as concurrent bases of legitimisation within leadership groups to be key in explaining the inter-relations and internal legitimacies of the Palestinian national movement – and the issues inherent in such. A significant finding of this thesis is that there is a need for ongoing reconstruction in order to negotiate the interactions and contestations between the multiple and dynamic processes that underlie legitimacy. It is these complexities of the process of seeking legitimacy that have allowed us to capture and understand the complexities of the Palestinian national movement leadership. In this thesis I have shown how a relational approach develops our understandings of legitimacy in a way that expands the analytical capability for comprehending complex leadership cases.

8.2. Implications of the Findings for the Palestinian National Movement

This thesis concluded that a relational approach allows legitimacy to be understood as an interconnected leadership process. In this section I wish to discuss the implications of this conclusion for substantial related issues within the Palestinian national movement as it moves forward. Incorporated within the national movement processes are two key internal issues for the Palestinian
leadership linked to the legitimacy crisis – popular resistance and democratic elections. Currently popular resistance and elections provide an ‘everyday’ symbolism of the tensions between the liberation and state building processes respectively. Resistance has played a critical role in the Palestinian national movement and both historical and current bases of legitimisation. Furthermore, it has already been proposed in the previous chapters that legitimisation through resistance goes as far as influencing the outcome of the state building associated elections. From the relational approach it is important to situate what are seen as an integral leadership issues within the national movement discussion, in order to address the bigger picture of leadership as (re)constructing social order, given that the national movement processes within the social order itself affect leadership legitimisation. There is an ongoing multi-directional feedback loop that must be acknowledged in analysis of Palestinian national movement leadership.

In these final parts of the concluding chapter of this thesis I will show why understanding the interactions underlying bases of legitimisation is important for the issues of popular resistance and elections within the Palestinian national movement. I will discuss the implications of my research findings for these two issues in regards to their associated national movement processes and the current collision that is occurring. Quotes are used here to support the research implications from within the Palestinian national movement as we knit the two together.

8.2.1. ‘You Cannot Cross a River Twice’: From Discordant National Movement Processes to Discordant Leadership

Leadership has been framed as a process of (re)constructing social order and this relational approach opens an interesting channel for broadening the analysis beyond the specific processes of legitimisation. In the previous chapters we can clearly see these processes playing out in the Palestinian national movement leadership. Indeed this has been magnified further in a case that has contesting leadership groups which requires co-constructions to occur between both leadership and Palestinian society and between the multitude of leadership groups. There are, therefore, numerous ongoing constructions of leadership relations and thus equally numerous reconstructions of social order. It is through viewing the Palestinian national movement from a relational leadership perspective that we have been able to examine the situation as a network of intersecting (and thus interacting) processes. And if the leadership landscape can be understood in this way, so too can relational leadership provide a means of developing beyond the current issues that seem to plague the internal dynamics of the Palestinian national movement.
The analysis in this thesis shed direct light on the interactions occurring within the Palestinian national movement which have contributed to the legitimisation/delegitimisation tandem occurring for most of the leadership groups as they struggle to navigate their legitimacy claims in reconstructed surrounding processes. However, it is not that there is an unawareness of the ongoing changes in the relational context of the Palestinian national movement. Dr Ghassan Khatib, former PA minister and negotiation delegation member, proposed that:

*This is the nature of things, nothing remains as it is. It’s not only the Palestinian society that is changing, every society is changing. That’s why we cannot dream of another intifada. You know people, because of the romanticising of that intifada, whenever we have any kind of confrontation we call it intifada. But that type of intifada will never happen again. Definitely we will have other phases of confrontation, resistance, might be peaceful, might be violent, might be anything. But because history does not repeat itself contrary to the wrong saying; history does not repeat itself because you know it’s not the same society. Like it’s not the same river. You cannot cross a river twice, because it’s not the same river.*

(personal interview, 2017)

These phases of confrontation within the changing Palestinian society are now no longer only in reference to Israel, and can be seen as a manifestation of the stagnated leadership reconstruction process. Given that the river has changed, it is important to review the issues that have emerged as representing the conflicting elements of the liberation and state building processes for the leadership groups.

**Popular Resistance and Liberation**

Resistance now has a different effect within the national movement than when there was engagement solely with the liberation process. Popular resistance initiatives have had varied relationships with the different historical leaderships within the Palestinian movement, especially with regards to elite leadership, but they held the process of liberation in common and thus degrees of synergy. This allowed the co-constructions to have a greater degree of alignment and thus less contestation over the “means, relations, and objectives” (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2012, p. 222). This is by no means intended to romanticise earlier stages of the Palestinian national movement and leadership relations, but more to emphasise
that there was only one national movement process to negotiate during those points.

What is interesting to consider is the engagement in popular resistance in a period where the national movement has embarked upon subsequent peace and state building processes. The case of Palestine has seen the continuation of these processes along with that of the unfulfilled liberation process. When this is combined with a multiplicity of leaderships relating diversely to these processes, resistance has emerged as a key point of tension between the interactions amongst the leaderships and the processes. As the previous chapter highlighted that the process of leadership legitimisation is linked to the relationships with the national movement processes, the role of resistance is having to be negotiated by the leaderships as part of the current processes of legitimisation; furthermore increasingly so as the issue of resistance has pivoted from a sole focus on the Israeli occupation to now include the issue of the statist Palestinian leadership. The changing nature of the popular resistance is part of the ongoing reconstructions of social order, to the point that one leadership group has emerged with this as its basis. Whilst this is obviously not the first time for a Palestinian leadership group to emerge based upon resistance, BDS formed as popular resistance post-Oslo and after years of engagement in the state building process. That a leadership group can establish itself with the basis of its legitimisation resting upon a liberation process after the so-called completion of a peace process (and decades of an internationally supported state building process) speaks volumes not only about the processes in themselves, but the other leadership groups’ relations to these processes.

We can see this playout through specific examples within the leadership groups. The PA was founded within the state building process and so there rests its basis of legitimisation. The resurgent liberation-based resistance does not need to be viewed in pure opposition to this. Dr Ghassan Khatib argued that:

_The PA does not have necessarily to adhere to the BDS, they can continue to deal with Israel. But they do not have to be critical of the BDS approach and the BDS can pursue its activities without necessarily criticising the relation between the PA and Israel. Each can pursue their role without necessarily attacking each other._

(personal interview, 2017)

Though numerous statements from the PA align with this sentiment, many of the actions that contribute to the PA’s performance of leadership do not mirror a non-opposing approach that Dr Khatib proposes to be possible.
With its involvement across numerous leadership bodies, Fatah is struggling to provide a coherent approach towards the duality of liberation/state building. Of course Fatah has an extremely broad membership, but this is common within many large political organisations. Lifelong Fatah member Bassem Tamimi contended that there is even discordance within Fatah’s approach towards resistance:

Sometimes the Fatah movement are talking about the nonviolent resistance as a strategy in the conference – and it’s become the strategy. And you see sometimes leaders of Fatah come and start talking about the armed resistance, because we haven’t unity and agreement between all the Palestinian parties to strengthen the PLO and the strategic goal and the mean. For that sometimes you see how people are going from Palestine to work against the BDS. Some people are going through Fatah to the normalisation [with Israel]. They make normalisation, they make BDS, because there is no strategy.

(personal interview, 2017)

What appears thematically when discussing approaches to popular resistance amongst the leadership groups is the issue of ambiguous strategy for the national movement. It is frequently posed that there are increasing issues regarding the internal dynamics of popular resistance because the multitude of leadership groups do not have a clear relationship with the national liberation process and thus means of engaging with the process.

Jamal Zakout, a leader in the first intifada and former senior official, posed a series of questions that, despite his long experience with Palestinian leadership, demonstrates the current problems of approaching popular resistance without a coherent strategy from the formal leadership bodies – particularly those most involved in state building:

So what’s going on? I think here we can also, or we should also, go to make a kind of a new definition for what we want. What is the resilience? It’s only political? The resilience is connected to the resistance? So if yes, it’s what the government should be focused on. What’s the main parameter of the success of the government and the failure of the government? Do we need the popular movement or not? If we need the public movement and nonviolence or peaceful resistance, why do we not encourage the BDS? Is BDS a legitimate tool or not? It’s seems maybe I’m not supporting the BDS as some lump, but we should be more tactical. Because what’s
the main aim of the BDS? Is it to make Israel to pay the price? It couldn’t happen as we are fragmented, it couldn’t happen as we have double strategies – public movement and the government – which are contradicting strategies.

(personal interview, 2017)

The lack of apparent strategy towards the duality of the liberation and state building processes has caused many of the delegitimisation problems for the leadership groups. It is an issue within the groups and it can be expanded to an issue across the groups when looking at the wider Palestinian movement. Despite BDS having a clear process of legitimisation tied to a resurging basis of national liberation, there is more to the picture when this is set against the development of the national movement leadership. Zakout’s questions regarding the purpose of BDS within the internal aspects of the Palestinian movement force a rethinking of the group’s effect upon the state building process (and legitimisation of associated leaderships) regardless of BDS’ own legitimisation, as this does not occur in isolation within the movement processes.

In the case of Palestine, liberation from occupation is centred upon resistance, whilst state building includes cooperation with Israel. This currently leaves little space for resistance for the leadership groups seeking legitimisation within the latter, whilst increasing the potentiality of delegitimisation as resistance is now also focusing within the Palestinian movement. We can see that the matter of divided strategies is a reflection of the concurrent liberation and state building processes and of importance to address as it represents the impasse that the leadership actors must respond to in their reconstructions.

**Elections and State Building**

Where popular resistance symbolises the tensions emerging from the ongoing liberation process, the frequent posturing of national elections emerges from the attempts at an internal state building process. In almost every reconciliation deal between Fatah and Hamas since the division of governing in 2007, the holding of PA elections within x amount of time is presented as the decisive step in cementing the new relationship. Legislative elections have not been held in thirteen years; prior to that, they had not been held in ten years. This, of course, should be premised with the fact that the current version of the Palestinian democratic system is very young given that it emerged from the Oslo agreements. Additionally, there are significant obstacles to the holding of legislative elections outside of Palestinian control as has been elaborated previously. However, there are still important aspects to discuss of the constant promotion of elections as a
means of aiding the state building process and supposedly reaffirming associated democratic legitimisation.

Unity agreements between Fatah and Hamas consistently aim to achieve a resolution to carry through for years and tackle the state building process in addressing elections. The reconciliations fall over as they do not then adapt to ongoing reconstructions occurring from that point, including those that are happening beyond the two groups. Fatah spokesperson Abu Zayyad proposes that the unsuccessful holding of elections has created a cycle of negative reinforcement beyond purely the political parties:

And again this goes back to democracy: the lack of democratic process and democratic knowledge that we started to lose since 2006 in the division. Because we don’t believe anymore, I think the Palestinian society today is not ready to accept the fact that for a period of four years you need to respect the fact that there is another majority that believes in something that you don’t believe in are elected. You have to respect your beliefs, but you don’t have to apply by forcing them or accuse them of being traitors because they don’t commit to your laws. Who are you to define who is a traitor and who is a nationalist and who is not? And that’s the case I’m talking about in speaking about strategies and beliefs and norms.

(personal interview, 2017)

Abu Zayyad explicitly frames the ongoing issue within the approach towards state building as an inability to reconcile discordant values in a way that allows the system to function without enforcing a unification that compromises democratic plurality. The need for leaderships to contextually reconstruct as advocated by Emirbayer (1997) above is so that the strategies, beliefs and norms that Abu Zayyad references are transformed. When this does not occur, but the relational context in which the leaderships are ingrained does continue to transform, we see the current situation which struggles to move beyond this impasse. Moreover, as leadership is a process of reconstructing social order, this approach transfers into Palestinian society and further compounds the problem. However, reconciliations between leadership claims and perspectives at critical points does not refer to achieving an overarching consensus to be administered. Reconstructions must occur within leadership groups as much as between them, in order to transform approaches relative to the changing context and then repeat this as the next phase of constructing begins.
National elections are all too frequently cited by leadership bodies as both a means and an end. But it would appear that there first needs to be a conversation about the interaction between elections and the national movement processes. Writing in 1996, Shikaki (s. 16) stated that “elections will have a significant impact on all three processes of peace, national reconstruction, and democratization.” Therefore, from the beginning, the electoral process was viewed as important not only to the developing state building process, but also to the preceding national liberation and peace processes as they were seemingly transitioning towards fulfilment. Presently the matter of elections generally refers to the legislative PA elections. However, it is also crucial to include the PLO in the discussion, especially given the focus on the intersection between liberation and state building tensions. Dr Azmi Shuaibi affirmed this is in stating:

So at the same time why are we reviewing internal relation in the PNA, because representation is not only on the PNA – representation is still in the PLO. So we must solve this problem by all parties to be part of the PNC [PLO legislative body] and executive body. And the refugees must be represented on these in a very clear way. Maybe if there is political will between factions we can find how we can represent them even without election. Because maybe outside elections in other countries will be difficult.

(personal interview, 2017)

Dr Shuaibi (2017a) has been very critical of the constant proposing of elections arguing that the purpose of elections must first be established given that there is the ongoing liberation movement. This is echoed by Elgindy (2015, p. 145) who criticises: “While elections may seem like the simplest way to restore legitimacy to Palestinian leaders and institutions, the obvious question becomes: elections for what?”

**When Processes Collide**

The collision of processes has been a focus throughout the thesis, taken as the collision between those of leadership, legitimacy and the national movement processes. However, examining the implications of the intersections between these processes has led us to return to focus on a collision within. The overlap of the liberation and state building processes is not new information for the Palestinian national movement. Jamal Zakout elucidated of the Oslo period that introduced the intersection of the national movement processes that:
Maybe Oslo wasn’t the ideal agreement and there is a lot of gaps within the Oslo itself. But the main mistake in that time was, and here starting the problem of the leadership, that the peace process shouldn’t be in contradiction with the public movement. The new era which is creating the Authority and moving towards the achievement of the Palestinian national movement by using the peace strategy to achieve the main goal, ending the occupation by negotiation, shouldn’t be as I said in contradiction with the necessity of to keep the awareness of the public movement which was started mainly in the first intifada. Oslo and creation of the PA put the Palestinian national movement in a direct double goal, linked together. To continue the main goal as I said, as a national liberation, the main goal. But in the same time, Oslo is bringing the PA as driving wheel, put the national liberation with another task – the democratic building of statehood. So in the beginning, the leadership failed to realise the link between, first the fail to realise the new era that we still in the liberation, national liberation era.

(personal interview, 2017)

So while this ‘double goal’ has been an acknowledged issue, in situating it within the process of legitimisation we can now see the explicit implications for the Palestinian national movement – past, present and future.

Dr George Giacaman (2017), General Director of the Palestine Institute for the Study of Democracy (Muwatin), proposed that ending internal division is “the absent question in the current Palestinian situation” that has lost priority despite its pressing importance. I argue that the internal division goes further than the obvious rivalry between the leadership groups e.g. that of Fatah and Hamas which resulted in internal governance divisions. The internal division within the Palestinian national movement is between the concurrent liberation and state building processes, and the large number of competing and overlapping leadership groups is the observable symptom of this, as is the resulting legitimacy situation. This is not to say that either liberation or state building should be withdrawn, but rather that the duality needs to be addressed within the approach that leadership is a process of (re)constructing social order and these two processes are part of that social order. There are discordant claims amongst leadership authority because there are discordant claims amongst the liberation and state building processes. Whilst these processes affect leadership, so too can leadership affect these processes, and thus the discordance in the (re)constructing of social order.
The Palestinian national movement faces the challenge of decreasing the current level of discordance alongside divergent processes of legitimisation. This is a sentiment expressed within Palestine as demonstrated by Jamal Zakout:

*We should be united and to find a kind of solution all our differences. In a kind of platform which can keep the pluralism of the society from one side and the secularity from the other side. The Palestinian national movement is in need for all its people and all its factions and all its NGOs.*  

(personal interview, 2017)

The issues that the incomplete liberation process present for state building via elections are obvious, even in just administering them without a complete jurisdiction. Furthermore, elections do not infer unity within the Palestinian movement and reforms must precede any elections as Shuaibi (2017a) argues that governing reconciliations cannot surpass reform. The duality of the liberation and state building processes affects the means of electing leadership bodies that are involved with both of these processes; it is not the case that holding elections will strengthen state building and associated processes of legitimisation, as it is not a linear path from one to the other. This is also supported by Elgindy (2015, p. 145) who argues that elections may risk aggravating the divisions between both Fatah and Hamas and the West Bank and Gaza whilst “doing nothing to solve the leadership’s legitimacy problems.” From the relational perspective we can see that the role of the liberation process upon elections needs to be addressed as part of the reconstructing process.

It is not only the leadership groups involved explicitly with the state building process who must undertake the process of reflexive reconstructing in order to create space for points of ‘temporary resolutions’ (White, 1995, p. 1049). The BDS movement, which appears to have a clear process of legitimisation based in the liberation process, must engage in constant reconstructions as was true for all the leaderships once upon a time; the relational context within which the BDS movement is operating is not only a responsibility for the PA and their handling of the movement. Jamal (2005, p. xv) states that “When such elite disunity and fragmentation in a national movement takes place during a national struggle for independence, its results are devastating for all parties involved in the process, especially those most concerned with control and stability” (emphasis added). This was acknowledged by Fatah spokesperson Ziad Khalil Abu Zayyad who expressed the risks of the current stagnation:

*That’s the problem, that the period of administrating the conflict shifted into become a permanent period for both sides. But at the*
same time it is causing huge damage for the individual leaders of the Palestinians that will shift in a sudden explosion that no one anticipates when it happens.

(personal interview, 2017)

In such a complex situation, the issues occurring due to the duality of the liberation and state building processes must be addressed as these are central to the leadership process of reconstructing social order. To perform leadership without this perspective leads to the legitimacy crisis we currently witness; to perform leadership with this perspective is a means of reconstructing the internal dynamics of the Palestinian national movement.

When we include the ongoing question of elections alongside that of resistance, these two issues can be seen to reflect each of the two processes and are seen as associated means of leadership legitimisation for either the liberation or state building process. But the engagement (or rather simultaneous disengagement) with these two issues often overlooks the critical underlying problem, in that they represent a movement divided between ongoing liberation and state building processes. Addressing that division and the approach moving forwards in the leadership reconstruction process is necessary in order to access the crux of cause of the legitimacy crisis within the Palestinian movement.

How the leadership groups proceed with reconstructing the “relational contexts within which they are embedded, and in the process, transform their own values and themselves” (Emirbayer, 1997, pp. 309-310) is not my place to say. Examining the current interactions that are occurring between the numerous leaderships and the ongoing national movement processes from a relational perspective has provided a means of understanding the legitimacy crisis within the Palestinian national movement. This, in turn, has allowed a fuller picture of why there are perceived to be critical issues in leadership legitimacy. Bringing the findings of the processes of legitimisation back out to the wider Palestinian movement through the initial approach of leadership as a process of reconstructing social order, has highlighted the crucial issue of the ongoing duality of the liberation and state building processes. This is not to say that the leadership should take aim at controlling these processes, as the research has demonstrated that this is not a one-way effect. However, understanding leadership as a process of reconstructing social order provides a means forward given that the national movement processes are a part of the social order.
8.3. Looking to the Future

Just as this thesis has contributed to both theoretical and empirical realms, so too lie interesting future research opportunities in each. The relational approach presents leadership studies with a new set of questions – ones that I propose should be asked of the field of political leadership and its concepts. Leadership studies need to become much more multifaceted to reflect that the process of leadership is deeply complex with numerous interactions. Applying a relational constructionist approach would force established concepts, such as representation or even authority, to be reconsidered outside of their current typologies and as processes without set boundaries for their understandings. In chapter two I critiqued the dominance of Western perspectives in constructing theory and this could provide a means of expanding conceptualisations outside of these established views. With regard to my specific theoretical developments for leadership and legitimacy, I think these could be taken and examined in other cases of complex and contested leadership. I do not advocate a straight transferral of my approach, but rather a relational tailoring to the context of other cases in order to continue Danermark et al.’s (2002, p. 91) desire to discover “connections and relations, not directly observable, by which we can understand and explain already known occurrences in a novel way.” The process of legitimisation is a means of engaging with internal authority (and thus power) dynamics within leadership which is necessary when examining cases with a multiplicity of leaderships where there will be ongoing contestations of perspectives and realities and thus claims to legitimacy.

Turning towards the empirical, the obvious continuation for furthering the research would be to introduce Israel into the question of reconstructing Palestinian legitimacy. As already stated, the role of the state of Israel has an ongoing impact upon the Palestinian political leadership and this is an interaction that would further complicate, and therefore nuance, analysis seeking to understand the Palestinian leadership dynamics. Specifically, the relationship between Israel and the PA is already known to affect perceptions of the PA’s legitimacy. Furthermore, Israel also has an impact upon what has been deemed external legitimacies, both directly and indirectly; examples of this are the historic transformation of how the PLO has been perceived (from terrorist group to primary Palestinian representation) and the ongoing issues Hamas is negotiating in its role as blacklisted leadership.

Finally, I do not view my research as authoritative on the matter of Palestinian leadership and legitimacy. My goal was to contribute a new understanding of Palestinian leadership in what has been expressed as a period of crisis affecting the Palestinian national movement. I believe it is important to continue discussions within this research area, expanding the range of perspectives to both
understand and promote the development of this enduring national liberation movement.
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Appendix A

The purpose of this research project

The main purpose of this project is to describe and analyse the different perspectives on legitimacy from informal and formal political leadership sources. The research examines the various forms of relationships between groups involved in the Palestinian national liberation movement at varying leadership levels. The broader study aims to improve our knowledge of the interactions between separate informal and formal leaderships in national liberation movements as this is important for future peace processes.

Your possible participation in the study

You have been selected as a possible participant in the study because you are, or have been, active within Palestinian politics. Your participation in the study is voluntary. The researcher hopes for your open and official participation, but if confidentiality is requested in published material the researcher will take special measurements to guarantee confidentiality. Participation in the study can range from just one interview to several interviews. During interviews you will be asked a set of questions and you may choose to answer or refrain from answering any specific question. If you later wish to clarify a certain aspect of the interview you are encourage to contact the researcher in order to make an additional comment or revision to your statements. You are free to end your participation during any stage of the study, and if doing so you are free to ask the researcher to discard all individual material linked to your previous participation.

How the study will proceed

If you choose to participate, the interview will begin as soon as you have given your consent to participation. The researcher will carry out the interview, with the assistant of an interpreter if needed. If needed or desirable, more than one interview or meeting will take place, which will be agreed upon between you and the researcher. During the interviews, the researcher will take notes in order to remember the information provided. If your consent is given, the interview will be recorded. After the interviews and observations, the researcher will digitalise these notes. The compiled material will be used for analysis, which will be presented in a doctoral dissertation, academic reports, and articles.

Risks and benefits of the participation in the study

Participation in this study should not entail any particular risks to the participants. The issues at focus in the study, which will be discussed in interviews, are in general not sensitive and concern issues that should be within the range of normality for a politician/political actor in Palestine. If you feel that there are any special risks with your own participation these should be discussed with the researcher to minimise risks and any inconvenience that could occur. The researcher will take any measures possible to make you feel safe in your participation. All the information provided will be used for academic purposes only. There are no personal benefits to participating in this study, but the results and your participation will contribute towards improving both academic research and involved policy-making as it pertains to peace-building.
Leaderships of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement

Information management and confidentiality

Participation in the study is voluntary and names and titles will only be used in published material from those who have given their consent. If you request confidentiality, name and/or title will not be used if this may reveal your identity. The researcher and the person in question will agree on a sufficient alias, and how much character revealing information can be used. The researcher will, however, have names and information to all participants and the information you provide will be available to the main research in its original content. Research material will be digitalised and stored in password-protected computer files.

How will you learn about the results of the study?

If you want to learn about the results of the research project, please contact the project leader Philippa Barnes (see contact information below). You are always entitled to access the results for the study, when such results have been produced.

Voluntary participation

Your possible participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw your participation at any time before, during, or after any interview or meeting with the researcher. If you want to withdraw participation after interaction with the researcher is completed, contact the researcher using the information below:

Philippa Barnes, PhD Candidate
Department of Political Science, Umeå University
SE-90187 Umeå, Sweden
Phone: +46 (0) 90 786 7402
Email: philippa.barnes@umu.se
Local cellphone:

Responsible for the project

The person responsible for this research project is Professor Anna Jarstad. The project is carried out solely for academic purposes. Please contact Anna Jarstad if you have questions or concerns relating to this study:

Anna Jarstad, Professor
Department of Political Science, Umeå University
SE-90187 Umeå, Sweden
Email: anna.jarstad@umu.se

Consent to participation

By actively choosing to participate in the research process if this project, you confirm that you have made an informed decision to participate, and that you have understood the purpose of your participation, as well as potential risks and benefits of participating in the study.
Appendix B

Interview Guide I

1. Why does BDS exist?
2. How would you characterise the BDS movement?
3. Tell me about the BDS operations in the oPt
4. How is BDS organised within the oPt?
   a. What is the structure?
   b. How are decisions made?
      i. Who participates and how?
5. Tell me about the leadership system of BDS
   a. How did this structure come about?
   b. How are positions decided?
      i. Are there processes for dealing with potential issues?
6. Who does BDS represent?
   a. How are these groups/people represented (participation)?
7. Who is the BDS movement accountable to?
   a. Within BDS movement?
   b. Within Palestinian national movement?
8. Does BDS within the oPt interact with international BDS groups?
   a. How so?
   b. Which international BDS groups have strong working relations with oPt BDS?
   c. How is integrity/continuity managed?
9. Tell me about the communication processes of BDS
   a. Within oPt
   b. Internationally
10. Tell me about the purpose of BDS
    a. The ambitious objectives
       i. What would it mean for the formal Palestinian leadership if these were achieved?
11. How do you view Palestinian self-determination?
12. Do you think BDS is successful? Why?
    a. What does BDS success look like?
       i. Does success mean achieving the three objectives?
13. What does effective Palestinian leadership look like?
14. Tell me about the relations between BDS and:
    a. The PA
    b. The PLO
Appendix C

Interview Guide II

1. What do you think legitimacy means?
2. How do you view your organisation’s legitimacy?
3. Is your organisation a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people?
   a. How?
   b. How does your organisation represent the Palestinian people?
   c. How do you view representation?
      i. What is important?
4. Has your legitimacy changed?
   a. Has legitimacy of the Palestinian national liberation movement changed?
      i. How?
5. How do you view Fatah/PA/PLO/Hamas/BDS legitimacy?
6. Can more than one group have a claim to legitimate leadership?
   a. In terms of representation?
7. Do you think there are competing claims to leadership?
   a. What impact does this have on the nat lib mvmt?
   b. Is the geographical/social divide an issue for leadership?
8. What is your organisation’s relationship with Fatah/PA/PLO/Hamas/BDS/grassroots?
9. How do you view the use of nonviolent resistance?
   a. Does it have an impact upon the official peace process?
10. What effect does BDS have upon the legitimacy of the formal peace process?
11. The Pal lib movement is often compared to SA, what are your thoughts on this?
12. Does the Pal mvmt have an ANC?
13. In SA, leadership became unified. Is this important?
Appendix D

PLO

- 1964
- Representative claims = occupied Palestinian territories + diaspora
- Hamas not officially represented

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<th>Palestinian National Council</th>
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<td>• Unelected</td>
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<td>• 740 members</td>
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PA

- 1994 (creation of Oslo)
- Representative claims = occupied Palestinian territories

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<tr>
<th>Security Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Commander = PA president</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Palestine Legislative Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Self-government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fatah/Hamas divide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 132 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In 2013 it delegated to CC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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