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**The Social Work Profession in Palestine: Challenges and Strategies
for Future Development**

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Acronyms:

ARIJ	Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem
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BADIL	Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights Bethlehem, Palestine
BZU	Bir-Zeit University
BZU-CDS	Bir-Zeit University – Centre for Development Studies
CBOs	Community- Based Organisations
CEPR	Centre for Economic Policy Research
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSWE	Council of Social Work Education
EACEA	Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency
EC	European Council
ECSSW	European Council of Schools of Social Work
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FATAH	Palestinian National Liberation Movement
GATS	General Agreement on Trade Services
GCA	Grand Challenges Approach
GS	Gaza Strip
GSS	General Security Services
GoI	Government of Israel
HAMAS	Islamic Movement “Zeal”
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Commission of Red Cross
IHL	International Humanitarian Law

IHR	International Human Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IMSA	Israeli Ministry of Social Welfare
JMLSA	Jordanian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
LAYLAC	Palestinian Youth Centre for Community Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Organization for Coordination of Humanitarian Aid
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development (the new name of MoSA)
MAS	Palestinian Centre for Policy and Economic Studies
MSW	Master of Social Work
NASW	National Association of Social Workers
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PDPNE	Programme for the Development of Palestine Economy
PEDS	Palestine Education Development Strategy
PG	Postgraduate
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PLO-NAD	Palestinian Liberation Organization – National Affairs Department
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PRDP	Palestinian Reform and Development Plan
PUSWP	Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists

QOU	Al-Quds Open University
RWTC	Ramallah Women Training Centre
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SSDCA	Social Services Department of the Civil Administration
YMCA	Youth Men Christian Association
UNFCCC	United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change
UK	The United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Sciences, and Culture Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East
USA	United States of America
WB	West Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation
WZO	World Zionist Organisation

Abstract:

The research looks at the development of social work in Palestine amidst the crisis and political conflict ensuing from the colonial occupation of the Palestinian Occupied Territories and the continuing pressures this and neoliberal policies of donors has placed on social work education and practice. In providing an historical overview of Palestinian society and of indigenous forms of social work throughout its history, it explores the developments of more formal practices and how these have shaped social work education.

Using individual interviews and focus groups, a qualitative methodology is used to explore the meanings participants make of their experiences within education and their understanding and interpretations of the policies and practices that have affected their experiences as educators, graduates and representatives of the social work profession.

The findings suggest a need for an indigenous Palestinian social work model developed through an understanding of the crucial role that social work has served in addressing issues that arise from the political conflict. It recommends the development of a national framework for the profession that would provide a shared vision, purpose, standards, and values by which education and practices should be guided.

Introduction:

Social work in Palestine plays a crucial role in supporting people who negotiate their everyday life under Israeli occupation. Yet the profession itself and the professional education that prepares social workers, is a much under-researched field with only a few authors addressing the challenges facing the profession in general, and education in particular (Sharoni, 2005; Harrop and Ioakimidis, 2017; Faraj *et al.*, 2018). The history of the development of the profession was explored, for the first time, in 2012 through research funded by the Norwegian Federation of Social Workers and Social Educators (Faraj, 2017). It provided a documented narrative of the social work profession in Palestine that never existed prior to that study, in terms of when, why and how it came to existence and how it evolved. The main limitation to that study was that there were no other sources for the data except the views and experiences of the individuals who were involved in formally initiating the social work education and practice programmes. Therefore, the researcher had to apply snowball sampling to reach the people, who historically took the first steps and decisions.

Social work education in Palestine emerged in 1971, with the initiation of the first two-year diploma at Hind Al-Husseini College for Girls. The first degree in social work was offered by five Palestinian universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; two of them offering a Master's in social work (Al-Quds University started in 2008 and Bethlehem University started in 2013). With the exception of the MSW at Bethlehem University, all these programmes were designed and proposed for the MoEHE's approval through a top-down manner (i.e. by the managers and professional educators in these universities, and without any consultation or engagement with local communities and practitioners, or any feasibility studies). The key concern of the MoEHE is to ensure that proposed programmes meet specific criteria in terms of rational (which is mainly theoretical and not based on any research-based demands), the design of the courses (titles and credit hours) and the qualifications of proposed academics. The content of the different courses, the teaching methods and technologies and the extent to which these courses respond to local needs and are sensitive to cultural context are part of the responsibility of the university.

The social work profession exists without any national coordination or planning and throughout its history has encountered numerous challenges both at an education and practice level. For example, the field supervisors in Bethlehem area are overloaded and confused because of discrepancies in the field training technical instructions between three social work

programmes there. One university pays the supervisors for every student, while other universities do not pay, which results in the level of attention students receive from the same supervisor. At practice level, for example, UNRWA Psychosocial Support Programme refused to accept the employment application from social work graduates of Al-Quds Open University until 2006, because the design of the university programme was perceived as weak compared with other universities, particularly the field training component, which is determined by the university while there are no national standards for this aspect of the course design.

The main research question is: “What are the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, and what are the strategies to overcome them?” Qualitative research methods, mainly individual interviews and focus groups were applied to explore the views and perceptions of different categories of participants through a cross-sectional research design. These categories included participants from social work academia, graduates, employers and professional representatives. These are explored in the context of the political and legal environment in which social work education and practice take place. Responses to research questions were analysed using the thematic analysis framework.

The first chapter is devoted to a contextual framework about the Palestinian socioeconomic, political and legal environment in which the social work profession has emerged. The second and third chapters are devoted to the theoretical framework and the research methodology respectively. The findings of this research are presented over three chapters (IV, V, and VI). Chapter IV explores the entire spectrum of challenges identified by all participants with some analysis about the dynamics amongst them. The list of challenges was presented through six categories (each category was assigned one general theme). The six general themes are: Community Attitudes, Social work Education and Training, Employability and the Labour Market, Policy and the Legal Environment, Professional Representation, and the Political and Security Environment. As the main conclusion from chapter IV is the significance of the challenges within the Social Work Education and Training system, it was decided to devote one separate chapter to present and analyse them (chapter V). The strategies that were suggested to address the different challenges are presented in chapter VI. The final chapter (chapter VII) covers the main conclusions, recommendations and the way forward.

Chapter I
Contextual Framework

1.0 Introduction:

The history of the social work profession in Palestine goes back to the early 1970s when the first social work education programmes were established (i.e. at the Bethlehem University and Hind Al-Husseini College for Girls), yet it is untold and not sufficiently recognised. It started its way toward the formal recognition when it was first institutionalized as a taught programme in 1971. It came into existence in response to the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian communities after the Nakba (Catastrophe)¹ of 1948 (Al-Awar and Hassan, 2013; Ali, 2012) and the Naksa² of 1967 in general, and to provide the relief and social assistance organisations which existed at the time, with qualified graduates in social work. Prior to 1971, formal social work education did not exist and the employers, like UNRWA, the Jordanian and Israeli Ministries of Social Welfare or civil society organisations, recruited graduates with degrees in humanities (i.e. history, education and geography) to perform social workers' jobs. However, one of the consistent features of both pre and post 1971 provision of social work has been for civil society organisations to help disadvantaged and vulnerable Palestinians to cope with the consequences of the Nakba including the provision of relief services, education and health services, and awareness raising activities about the political conditions and national resistance (Abdul-Hadi, 2002; Falnigan, 2014; Ali, 2012). Social work education and practice in Palestine has emerged within the context of the political conflict and the people's struggle for national liberation from the colonial occupation.

This chapter provides a historical context of the socioeconomic, legal, and political settings of Palestine from which social work has emerged as a profession. This will cover the different periods during which Palestine was ruled by different external powers (Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Egyptian Arab ruling, the Israeli colonial occupation, and the Oslo Accords project). The impact of the historical, political and legal environment was explored to see their effects on people's lives and how the public and voluntary welfare services responded and affected the social work profession and education in Palestine.

¹ "The term Nakba is used to describe the disaster that befell Palestine in 1948, yet the word Nakba is still used today to describe the endless Israeli/Zionist propaganda in employing its racist and degrading policies against Palestinians who according to the Zionist version, 'do not exist'. As a result, the Palestinians' side of the story, as to how they became refugees in their own lands, remains unheard. Nonetheless, records of the oral testimonies of the generation of the Nakba and subsequent generations reveals the value and power of these testimonies in uncovering historical truths" (Ali, 2013, p5).

² This is when Israel extended its colonial occupation to the remaining 22% of historic Palestine.

1.1 Palestine under foreign rule:

Palestine has always been controlled and ruled by external forces and has never had true and full freedom to develop and meet the aspirations of its people. This has left its socioeconomic and cultural systems at the behest of foreign interests and political powers. Sbeih (2011) described this situation as “alienation” (Sbieh, 2011, p5) of the Palestinian socioeconomic and cultural systems, including the social fabric, core values and future directions that have been manipulated by the policies and practices of the colonial powers that ruled the country over different periods (i.e. prior to 1917, 1918-1948, 1949-1967, 1968-1994, 1995- the present time). These periods reflect the timeline of the political history of Palestine that shaped the socioeconomic life of Palestinian citizens and their local communities, and the demand for social work interventions. Accordingly, these periods can be classified in terms of relevance to the existence of the formal social work education and training programmes in Palestine. During the eras two forms of social work emerged; informal social work and formal social work. The first came into existence with the emergence of the charitable societies and missionaries over the last quarter of the 19th century. This informal form of social work has been evolving and expanding its interventions over decades in the 20th century, in response to the peoples’ needs under adverse economic and political conditions. It is still a key player in the Palestinian scene, despite the emergence of formal social work interventions, through the social welfare programmes of the Jordanian and Egyptian ruling in the WB and GS (1950-1967) and the emergence of the social work education programmes in 1971.

1.1.1 The Ottoman Empire era (1516-1917):

The Ottoman Empire ruled the whole area of western Asia between 1516 and the end of WWI in 1918. The Empire ruled this area in accordance with Islamic tradition but dealt with all other religious minorities with absolute tolerance according to the regulations known as the “status quo” (Khalidi, 2004). The entire system of governmental services, including the judicial system, was managed centrally from Istanbul by the Islamic “Sharia” except for the Christians and Jews, who were given the freedom to apply their own religious laws/rules to manage their civil life, particularly marriage and inheritance (Kaiali, 1990). The Palestinian local economy was almost entirely dependent on farming except for the minority that lived in cities and made their living from trading, handicrafts and agricultural industrial works and governmental jobs (Khalidi, 2004; Nadan, 2006; Kaiali, 1990). The Ottoman tax system, at the time, forced the poor

“Fallaheen” farmers who could not pay the taxes for their land to either sell it to feudalists or avoid registering the large part of it and losing the legal ownership rights. The Ottoman government used to confiscate the land of defaulters and sell it in auctions (Kaiali, 1990).

Within the feudal system, two levels of control formed the leadership of the Palestinian local communities; the feudal economic elite who owned most of the land and controlled internal and external trade activity (between cities and with neighbouring countries like Lebanon, Syria, Iraq ...etc.), and the tribal family system. The land confiscation by the Ottoman Empire authorities, under the “Capitulations’ Law’ (Angell, 1901; Forman and Kedar, 2003), was the main cause for the deterioration of the local economy and poverty in the Palestinian community. In the absence of any formal welfare system or structures, individuals and families would resort to the head of the village to attain the needed assistance, i.e. in-kind, in-cash, resolving conflicts within families and the village community (Muslih, 1993). Few charitable societies existed to respond to the welfare needs of Palestinian individuals and families between 1875 and 1918, particularly the provision of food, clothes, and pre-school education services (Muslih, 1993; Zahlan and Zahlan, 1977; Abdel Shafi, 2004; Azzam, 2014).

The year 1882 witnessed the first organised wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine by the World Zionist Organisation (WZO)³ in Europe (Kalidi, 2004, Abbott, 2012). On August 27th, 1897 the first Zionist conference was held in Basel, Switzerland with the attendance of 200 intellectuals from 19 countries (Jewish Virtual Library, 2015). Between 1882 and 1914, about 30 Zionist colonies were founded to accommodate the 80,000 Jewish immigrants to Palestine (Kaiali, 1990). In response to the Jewish immigration to Palestine, the political Palestinian and Arab leaders expressed their concerns to the representatives of the Ottoman government. Parallel to those formal protests, Palestine witnessed continuous popular resistance activities that were organised by local charitable and grassroots organisations that existed at the time, particularly youth and women’s popular committees, and trade unions (Kalidi, 2004, Sinanoglou, 2009; Abbott, 2012; Abu-Lughod and Sa’di, 2007; Abdul-Hadi, 2002; Azzam, 2014; Abdel Shafi, 2004; Zahlan and Zahlan, 1977). Clashes between Palestinian peasants and Jewish immigrants over the last decade of the 19th century signified the emergence of the Palestinian national resistance to the Zionist project in Palestine as well as the grassroots and charitable service

³ The WZO was established at the time of the evolution of European nationalism and colonial phenomena by Jewish intellectuals from Eastern Europe (Khalidi, 2004).

societies. Over time, the national resistance to the Jewish immigrants escalated and the demand on social services increased, especially after the first Zionist conference in Basel in 1897 that launched a continuous and organised migration movement of Jewish settlers to Palestine. (Anderson, 2001; Sinanoglou, 2009).

In response to the deteriorating socioeconomic living conditions of the Palestinian local communities, the voluntary social and economic assistance was provided by the activists who volunteered with the grassroots organisations, charitable societies that existed prior to 1971. It was based on a mixed humanitarian/ philanthropic motivation to support the victims of the colonial Zionist project in Palestine on the one hand, and to strengthen the national resistance on the other (Anderson, 2001; Sinanoglou, 2009; Muslih, 1993; Hilal, 2010). The history of grassroots organisations, charitable societies, and the modes by which these have served the poor and the vulnerable individuals and groups, was the era during which the indigenous model of informal / popular social has evolved (Muslih, 1993). It is the model of dual functions; provide social support services to promote the resilience and maintain national resistance (in Arabic terminology this is known as *Somoud*, as the Palestinians prefer to call it) (Zahlan and Zahlan, 1977; Abdel Shafi, 2004; Azzam, 2014).

1.1.2 The British Mandate era (1918-1948):

In the aftermath of the WWI, the British colonial mandate was imposed on Palestine according to the Sykes-Picot treaty signed between France and the United Kingdom on May 19th, 1916 (Loevy, 2016; Neal, 1995; World War I Document Archive, 2018; Said, 1994). Officially, it started in 1918 and ended a few months prior to the declaration of the establishment of the Israeli colonial state on about 78% of the Mandate Palestine (Blome and Safadi, 2016). This constituted the grounds on which Britain issued the Balfour Declaration⁴ that granted Palestine to Jews, to establish their National Home Country (Trueman, 2015; Machover, 2006; Neal, 1995; Chomsky, 1999; Association for Israel Studies, 2017; and Sinanoglou, 2009), which was a reflection of the colonial nature of British existence in Palestine (Carosu, 2013; Said, 1994).

During the British Mandate (1918-1948), the number of Jewish settlers and the area that was confiscated or purchased for them increased tremendously. The majority of the settlers, mainly

⁴ A letter submitted by the Lord Rothschild for the approval of Arthur J. Balfour who approved it by on November 2nd, 1917.

Europeans, focused on the capitalist investments in agriculture of the confiscated land (Abdo, 1991; Greenstein, 2019). The Balfour Declaration opened the door widely to a massive influx of Jewish immigrants into Palestine (Home, 2003; Neal, 1995; Chomsky, 1999; Said, 1994; Hayford, 2010). The transfer of land from Palestinian peasants to Jewish immigrants constituted the main cause of the economic deterioration of Palestinian society over the 30 years of the Mandate.

Kamat (2004) argues that, over the three decades of the British Mandate period, political awareness among Palestinians was promoted significantly, particularly with the emergence of more grassroots organisations and their active role in promoting the culture of collective actions to resist the British Mandate policies and the Jewish settlements in Palestine (i.e. a group of about 20 charitable societies was founded and registered according to the Ottoman Law of Charitable societies) (QOU, 2007)⁵. They focused on both overt relief work and covert national resistance to promote the awareness of regular citizens to the call for national liberation from the British Mandate, and to fight the Zionist immigration movement to Palestine (QOU, 2007; Abu-Hadba, 2009; Gluck, 1995). The functions of these charitable societies were categorized by Muslih (1993) as informal or 'informal social work' (Amal Ejtima'y in Arabic). For Muslih (1993), informal social work that was rendered through grassroots organisations and charitable societies, included all the individual and collective initiatives within local communities to help the poor families, the disabled, the chronically ill and others. The 'informal social work', in this sense, continued and proliferated significantly during the British Mandate and over the decades that followed the 1948 Nakba 'Catastrophe', accumulating hidden history of the indigenous / Palestinian locally developed and practiced way of doing social work. Until the emergence of the term 'voluntarism' in Palestine in the late 1970s, which denoted an organised movement of youth, serving local communities, under the leadership of civil society organisations and political parties (particularly the Commonest Party), a more indigenous term was used to describe all the

⁵Arab Club-Jerusalem (1918), Islamic Christian Society-Jerusalem (1921), Arab Women Union Society-Nablus (1921), Hamilat Al-Teeb Society – Jerusalem (1924), Al-Nahda Al-Nisa'eah Society – Ramallah (1925), Arab Women Union Society – Jerusalem (1919), Society of the Arab Blind Persons – Jerusalem (1932), Armenian Charitable Society – Jerusalem (1932), Arab Women Union Society – Ramallah (1939), Arab Orphan Society – Haifa (1940), Arab Orphan Society – Jerusalem (1949), Orthodox Charitable Home Society for Elderly – Jerusalem (1940), Society for Woman and Child Care – Beit Jala (1944), Child Care Society – Ramallah (1944), Arab Women Union Society – Bethlehem (1947) Dar AL-Tiffil Al-Arabi – Jerusalem (1948), Dar Al-Awlad Society – Jerusalem (1948), Al-Fatah Al-Laje'ah Society – Jerusalem (19949), The Society of Wounded Persons (Al-Jareeh) Society – Jerusalem (19949).

organised and spontaneous social support initiatives (Abdel Shafi, 2004; Zahlan and Zahlan, 1977; Azzam, 2014). That term was ‘Faz’ah’, which refers to any collective effort in which members from extended families, neighbourhoods, or a local community at large that would be mobilised by a call from local traditional or / and organisational settings (where these existed), to help. For example, a single family beckoned to reconstruct a room or a house; a neighbourhood (to pave a road /pathway), or an entire community (to construct a mosque or classrooms of a school). Such initiatives used to be called for, relieving the suffering and / improve a living condition, from an immediate and direct cause, and promote peoples’ resilience and resistance to the British and Zionist colonial plans in Palestine. Kanafani (1972) highlights the role of these grassroots organisations and networks in mobilizing the masses into civil disobedience and the organisation of civil demonstrations to protest the existence of British colonial rule and the Zionist project in Palestine in the 1936-1939 revolution.

1.1.3 The Nakba and Naksa era (1948 – 1967):

The years 1947-1948 and the Arab-Israeli war marked the creation of the colonial state of “Israel” (Abbott, 2010; Caruso, 2013; Tiley, 2009; Peteet, 2005; Ali, 2012) and the catastrophe “Nakba”⁶ of the Palestinian people when at least 750,000 Palestinians were uprooted from their villages, towns and cities that were to be the land of the new state (UNRWA, 2013; Fischbach, 2010; Ali, 2013; Ali, 2012; Ameta, 2015; Abu-Lughod and Sa’di , 2007; Peteet, 2005). On November 27th, 1947 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) issued its Palestine Partition Plan Resolution #181 (II) upon which Mandate Palestine was to be divided into two states with 16 districts (BADIL, 2004; Chomsky, 1999; Caruso, 2013). Nine of these districts were allotted to the new “Jewish” state “Israel” (on 56% of the land), where only one district had a majority of Jewish immigrant population. The Nakba of 1948, in addition to all types of material losses, constituted an unforgettable collective trauma that deeply shattered the socioeconomic and political structures of Palestinian society (Abu-Lughod and Sa’di, 2007; Peteet, 2005; Ali, 2012).

Over the seven months that followed the UNGA resolution, while trying to seize the 13.3 million dunums, the militarized Zionist gangs attacked and horrified Palestinian residents and forcing them to flee their homes and villages. The state of “Israel” was declared on May 14th,

1948 on about 78% of the Mandate Palestine instead of the 55.5% suggested by UNGA resolution 181 (Fischbach, 2010; Chomsky, 1999; Ali, 2013; Khalidi, 1997; Caruso, 2013) (See Annex 3)⁷. According to the records of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Near East (UNRWA, 2013) more than 750,000 Palestinians were uprooted from 360-429 villages, towns and cities during those seven months (UNRWA, 2013; Fischbach, 2010)⁸. The Nakba constituted a turning point in the history of Palestine, not only on the new geopolitical and demographic facts on the ground, but also at the political / ideological discourse of the Palestinian and Arab political parties, elites, lay citizens and local communities. The question ‘Why has this happened?’ was the central issue around which all ideologies were constructed. The most common theme used across all ideologies and discourses was the Holocaust and its consequences on the Palestinian people specifically, and Arab countries in general. Kanafani (1972) argues that one of the main causes of the 1936-1939 Palestinian revolution, in the face of the British Mandate forces and the Zionist military gangs, was the steep increase in the number of Jewish immigrants from 1933-1935 which was a direct result of Nazi persecutions in Germany. Over those three years, about 150,000 Jews migrated to Palestine which raised the average number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine from 7,201 / year (over previous years) to 42,985.

Nevertheless, the common theme between the pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli views in the reviewed literature is the acknowledgment of the collective and unprecedented traumatic genocidal nature of the Holocaust that aimed to wipe the Jewish race off the identity and existence of the European nations. None of the Palestinian intellectuals, historian, within or outside the Political parties have argued with the Holocaust as an antisemitic historical crime

⁷ The West Bank refers to the area that is located on the western side of the Jordan River as opposed to the Eastern side of the river on which Transjordan was established in the 1920s (The World Population Review, 2015; Immell, 2010). The Gaza Strip is the name given by the Israeli military commander (BZU- the Development Studies Program, 2006). In 1967, the population of Gaza Strip was estimated at 350,000 – 450,000 but it increased to 1.47 million in 2005 and to 1.870 million by mid of 2016 (PCBS, 2016). Palestinians in the Gaza Strip lived primarily on agriculture and fishery products. The Gaza Strip area is about 350 square km (45km long and 6-12km wide) (BZU-CDS Program, 2006), which was transferred to the administration of the Egyptian government after 1949.

⁸ Therefore, the UNRWA official definition of the registered Palestine refugees is that they are: “The persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict (UNRWA, 2013). BADIL (2004), Caruso (2013), and Ali (2013) confirm the UNRWA records regarding the number of Palestinian refugees. The population of the WB, due to the flood of refugees, increased by 57.4 percent between 1948 and 1952 (Mansour, 1988). In this sense, the Nakba had deep socioeconomic and political consequences on the 750,000-850,000 refugees as well as the residents of the WB and GS, whose resources were barely sufficient.

against the Jews, which is an overtly denounced crime against humanity before and above everything else. The issue that came to the fore of the argument about the Arab-Israeli conflict is about how such a crime against humanity can be used by the leaders of the Zionist movement and the capitalist powers to justify the colonisation of Palestine which has led to the Nakba of 1948. For majority of the Palestinian political parties, if not all, the Holocaust and the Nakba can be viewed as basis for coexistence between the two peoples rather than for one to exist at the expense of the other, in one democratic state for all its citizens or two independent states living in peace with each other.

Bashir and Goldberge (2014) argue that the memories of both, the Nakba and Holocaust, provided a major source for collective identity and political consciousness for both the Jewish and Palestinian peoples. Each was a major and unique traumatic event in the history of the two peoples that left both, Palestinians and Jews, with endless, continuous suffering through all generations. From the Palestinian and Arab stand point, the Holocaust was instrumentalized by the Zionist movement to achieve its political goal (establishing a Jewish state in Palestine 'Israel'), which resulted in significant inclination to acknowledge the Holocaust, because they could not accept the victimhood of their enemy 'occupier' to gain moral and legal justification (Litvak and Webman, 2003). The Palestinians and Arabs regarded the Nazis and Zionist movements and the war on the existence of the Jews across East Europe as the main cause of the Nakba. The establishment of Israel in Palestine was the price that the Palestinians paid for the consequences of that war 'the catastrophe of the Holocaust', though they bear no responsibility for its occurrence (Litvak and Webman, 2003; Basir and Goldberge, 2014).

For all Palestinians, and many others around the globe, addressing the right of the Jews to exist and their statehood, should not be resolved by occupying other people; denying their right to exist and statehood. The way in which the Zionist movement and its allies across Europe, at that time, have designed and applied their answer to the consequences of the Holocaust, resulted in putting the two peoples on a track of endless existential conflict, instead of providing a basis for coexistence and mutual empathy (Basir and Goldberge, 2014). Alayan's (2016) presentation on the Holocaust in Palestinian and Israeli textbooks highlights one important example of how the two peoples and their leading governments transmit their narratives to subsequent generations, thus shaping their collective national identities and how they should perceive each other. They provide two conflicting historical narratives that perpetuate the

conflict rather than resolve it. For Alayan (2016), both have freely chosen to ignore and / or deny each other's suffering to avoid providing legitimacy of the establishment of Israel and its occupation of Palestinian land (which is a Zionist agenda) or the Palestinians' struggle for national liberation and having their own independent national state. In a country like England, Brown and Davies (2006) argue to what extent the education authorities should provide more emphasis on teaching the Holocaust as a significantly important topic as a history subject, yet not even a mention about its consequences to other peoples like Palestinians. Their argument highlights a critical issue about how the education system across Europe needs to be revisited and restructured, should these nations truly contribute to promoting a culture of peace, justice and coexistence among future generations.

However, in response to the consequences of the Nakba, the first and largest international relief and social services programme was launched in Palestine through UNRWA on 8th December, 1949 according to the UNGA resolution 302 (IV), with the mission carrying out basic relief and works, education and health services for Palestinian refugees, until their return to their home villages. It started its operations on 1st May 1950 (UNRWA, 2018). UNRWA now serves about 5 million registered refugees in its five fields of operations (West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon). Four generations of Palestine refugees have benefited from its services as long as their right of return⁹ is not fulfilled (Shabaneh, 2012). Also, about 160,000 Palestinians remained within the territories of May 1948 on which the "State of Israel" was declared (Fischbach, 2010). Palestinians inside 'Israel' now constitute about 18% of the total population and have been subject to continuous discriminatory Israeli policies. Over time, this Arab-Palestinian minority was perceived by the state of Jewish settlers as the "hostile minority" or "demographic bomb" (Miari, 2011, pp. 1-6).

In 1950 the West Bank was formally annexed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan based on a decision taken on 1st December 1948 by the Jericho conference held by King Abdullah. It was attended by Palestinian representatives selected from different areas of the WB (Milton-Edwards, *et al.*, 2009; Al-Abed, 2006). Accordingly, all Palestinians who had lived in Palestine before 15th May 1948 and were residing in Jordan were granted Jordanian citizenship under the Jordanian Citizenship Law of 1954, Article 3 (Al-Abed, 2006; Cavendish, 2000). The Jordanian Government ruled the WB, and the Egyptian government administered Gaza Strip until June

⁹ On December 11th, 1948 UNGA issued the resolution # 194 to confirm the right of return to all Palestine refugees.

1967 (Prager, 1990; Milton-Edwards *et al.*, 2009; Al-Abed, 2006; Cavendish, 2000). The Gaza Strip population increased from 80,000, before the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, to 280,000 after the war due to the influx of refugees from Jaffa and Beer Sheba areas (southern districts of Mandate Palestine).

According to PCBS (2017), the total population of the WB is currently 2,860,000, of which the registered Palestinian refugees comprise 26.65 percent. The population of GS is 1,820,000, of which the registered Palestine refugees comprise 67.2 percent. UNRWA provides basic primary and elementary education to 473,500 students, primary health care to 3.1 million, and 301,015 are enrolled in its Social Safety Net (SSN) under the Relief and Social Services Programmes (Murrar, 2007; McCann, 2008). According to Prager (1990) and Nassar (2003), the notion of refugees has shifted the conception of the Palestine question way beyond the classical definition of occupation. It has become an issue of up-rootedness and displacement of the people. It is about wiping a people with all its history, culture and identity.

What has marked the post-1948 era (1949-1967), particularly due to the devastating consequences on the Palestinian people and their land, was the increased number of collective actions and organised initiatives to help the needy and awakening the consciousness about the national cause and resistance. The Nakba and its consequences constituted a turning point in the history of the grassroots and charitable organisations movement (Ali, 2012; Abdel Shafi, 2004; Zahlan and Zahlan, 1977; Azzam, 2014). About 7% of the Palestinian charitable societies were established during those twenty years compared with only 2% that came to existence in the nearly 75 years between 1875 and 1948 (MAS, 2007). The need for humanitarian services reached unprecedented levels and the national cause had become a clearer and a more overt cause for its interventions (Gluck, 1995; Abdul-Hadi, 2002).

Between 1950 and 1967, the Egyptian and Jordanian governments applied their own laws and rules to govern the Gaza Strip and the West Bank respectively, in addition to British Common Law - effective and applicable as long as it did not contradict their own laws and regulations (Rampel, 2006; QOU, 2007; Al-Abed, 2007). In fact, this was a significant change in the legal environment, whereby the laws of two Arab countries were applied in Palestine for the first time. The efforts of the Jordanian government to establish a system of formal representation of the West Bank Palestinians in its parliament, and the support of the Egyptian government to the establishment of nationalist political parties in the Gaza Strip, signalled a new era in the legal

and political life of all Palestinians.

The introduction of Jordanian and Egyptian law, particularly laws regulating charitable societies, provided a wider margin to establish more charitable societies and the expansion of the voluntary welfare services sector, which played a complementary role to the ministries of social welfare of the two governments in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. The key roles that the social welfare ministries of the two governments were to provide were food and in-kind assistance to a limited number of poor families, and to monitor the growth of charitable societies, according to their respective laws and regulations (i.e. registering new charities in the West Bank was according to the Jordanian Law of 1951, while the Egyptian government used the Ottoman charitable societies' law of 1908) (Safadi and Easton, 2014, Faraj, 2017, QOU, 2007; Abdul-Hadi, 2002; Cavendish, 2000).

In 1953, for example, the Jordanian government issued Law No. 87 about taxes for social services, followed by Law No. 61/1953 that entrusted charitable societies to establish their own budgets including movable and immovable properties, which opened the door for establishing charitable societies in all cities and villages. In 1954, the Jordanian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (JMLSA) issued Law No. 1/1975 that reformed the taxes system and Law No. 16/1954 to deal with juveniles. In 1956, the JMLSA issued the cooperative societies Law No. 14 (QOU, 2007). These laws provided a legal platform for more charitable societies to emerge and serve the people. It also provided the eligibility criteria for service allocations to different categories of beneficiaries under the direct delivery of the Ministry, through its offices in both the West and East Bank of the Jordan River (including Jerusalem). During these years, the Jordanian government used to provide both in-cash and in-kind aid to the Palestinian beneficiaries, according to the assistance and rehabilitation Law of 1963 and the Law of the Ministry of Social Affairs of 1965.

In the Gaza Strip, under the Egyptian military administration, social services were provided to specific social hardship cases (abject poor, disabled, widows, divorced, and elderly), through four main offices (QOU, 2007); the joint office of the public social services and CARE International relief services meeting basic humanitarian need. The people who benefited from these services were basically nominated by a local representative "Mukhtar" and no professional criteria were followed, except through his/her personal judgment. Until June 1967, about 70,000 Palestinians were benefiting from the services of this office. The Public Social Services Office

(that employed a few social workers, who had completed their degree in social work or other social sciences in Egyptian universities), and clerks were to deliver cash and food assistance services mainly¹⁰.

Under Jordanian and Egyptian ruling (1950-1967), the number of charitable societies increased from 2.2% (30 out of 1400 societies), which existed during the British Mandate, to about 7% (about 136) during the 1950-1967 period (MAS, 2007). This increase of 106 CSOs was only possible under the Jordanian law of charitable societies No. 33, 1966 in the WB, and the Ottoman Charitable Societies Law of 16th August 1908 in the Gaza Strip. These laws remained in effect until the issuance of the Palestinian Law of Charitable and Non-governmental Societies No. (1) Article 2/26 – 2000, which provided the legal basis for any group of Palestinian citizens to establish and register a charitable society with a clear and specific mission and objectives (Qatamish, 2003; Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights, 2009; Abdul-Hadi, 2002).

Within this context, the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964 was another important factor that influenced the role of the voluntary organisations during the 1960s and the following decades. The PLO led a new phase of organised national resistance to the Israeli colonial occupation (Said, 1994; Parsons, 2005; Leuenberger, 2016). During the latter half of the 1960s, the PLO (including all its political parties) was focused on using armed resistance and the recruitment of supporters from the Palestinian communities, inside and outside Palestine. It was its establishment stage during which the PLO was heavily engaged in the battle of presenting itself to all Palestinians, Arab countries and internationally, as well as defending its status of being the only representative of the Palestinian people (Giacaman, 1998). Consequently, until the mid-1970s, limited efforts could be devoted by the PLO to the voluntary sector and its services.

At this stage, the social work profession had not been introduced to the public and most of the service providers (public and voluntary). The absence of the higher education institutions or post-secondary education in social work was one of the key factors that shaped this reality (Faraj, 2017). The social worker position was limited to the public services (provided by the

¹⁰ The increased demand on relief services, due to the Nakba, and the changes in the legal environment as mentioned earlier, led to the establishment of more charitable societies, including but not limited to, the Palestinian Red Crescent-Jerusalem in 1950, Rawdat Al-Zohour-Jerusalem in 1952, Islamic Charitable Maqased Society – Jerusalem in 1956, and the Elderly Centre – Abu Dis in 1957 (QOU, 2007).

Jordanian and Egyptian administration in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip), and the limited number of national and international NGOs (i.e. House of Hope for The Blind Person in Bethlehem and UNRWA Relief Programme). However, few of those who occupied these positions were trained in the field of social work (Faraj, 2017).

1.1.4 The era of the Israeli colonial occupation of the WB, Jerusalem, and GS (1967- 2019):

On 5th June 1967, the colonial state of Israel expanded its occupation to the remaining 20-22 percent of the Mandate Palestine and imposed its military authorities through military Order No. 2 and numerous subsequent military orders issued over the following year (Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem, 2007; Handel, 2009; Tiley, 2009, Tenenbaum, 2014; Harker, 2011). The expansion of the Israeli occupation to the WB, Jerusalem and GS was explained either by ideological / Biblical explanation or / and security and economic strategic interests of the 'state of Israel' (Tenenbaum, 2014). However, this resulted in a second wave of between 350,000 and 450,000 Palestinian refugees (Chomsky, 1999; Ameta, 2015). Additionally, about 60,000 Palestinians were abroad at the time of the war and were denied the right of return to WB, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip (Sondergaard, 2005). The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued Resolution 237 that called on Israel to ensure the welfare and security of Palestinians in WB, Jerusalem, and GS (McCann, 2008).

Also, in July 1967, the UNGA requested the UNRWA to extend its services to Palestinian refugees, who were displaced as a result of the war (McCann, 2008). Thus, Jordanians and Egyptians withdrew from the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip as a result of the war (BADIL, 2004). On June 27th, 1967 the Israeli government annexed Jerusalem and on 28th June it proclaimed it as its Capital (ARIJ, 2007; Handel, 2009). In addition to its military laws and orders, the Israeli military authorities applied a combination of Israeli, Jordanian, Egyptian and British Mandate laws to govern the occupied West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip between 1967 and 1993 (Brynen, 2000).

The years 1967-1973 witnessed the transfer of the social services system from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (in the West Bank and Jerusalem), and the Egyptian authorities (in the Gaza Strip) to the authorities of the Israeli Occupation, to take full responsibility for the welfare and safety of Palestinian occupied civilians and their resources, as an obligation under the Fourth Geneva Convention and International Humanitarian Law (Cohen, 1985; Qita, 2015). More significantly, this transfer of authorities demarcated the time when the western terms of

social work were introduced to the Palestinian services system. That was done on two tracks; the first track was the new Israeli military headquarter in Beit Eil that hired some Israeli professionals to manage the social welfare offices in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, and the second track was the international humanitarian aid organisations. On the first track the social work concepts and skills were introduced to the Palestinian staff in the offices of social welfare through training and supervision provided by some Palestinians, who had studied social work in the United States of America or the Hebrew University (Faraj, 2017). Concurrently, in order to escape the cost of its obligations towards the newly occupied Palestinian communities, Israel encouraged the influx of international aid organisations to provide social services through different types of programmes (Ibrahim, 2011). Over the latter half of 1970s, a few graduates from Bethlehem University's social work programme were hired to work in the welfare services offices in the West Bank and Jerusalem (Faraj, 2017).

The 1970s witnessed a systematic shift of the Palestinian local economy from one dependent on agriculture to one dependent on work in the Israeli labour market; mainly the construction of settlements (Tenenbaum, 2014). For example, the number of Palestinian workers from the WB who used to earn their living from work in the Israeli market increased from 53,600 in 1968 to 108,300 in 1977, and from zero workers from the Gaza Strip to 46,000 (ARIJ-ATLAS (2007). The direct impact of this shift was on the agriculture sector that was devastated as Palestinian farmers were forced to abandon their land, to work in the construction sector inside 'Israel'. Due to the confiscation of Palestinian land and the weakened capacity of the locally produced harvests, they struggled to compete with 'Israeli' products that swept the Palestinian market at lower prices¹¹ (Brynen, 2000; Wendler, 2018; ARIJ, 2007). These were just some of the key colonial policies applied by the Israeli occupation, to annex the local Palestinian economy and control the possibilities of its independence (Jeronen, 2019).

Concurrently, the gradual expansion of the PLO political parties over the late 1970s and early 1980s resulted in unprecedented engagement of the voluntary sector in the national resistance (Said, 1994; CHF, 2013, unpublished report on voluntarism). In response, the Israeli occupation applied collective punishment policies on a large scale. It imposed: curfews for varying periods between a few days to some weeks at specific locations, mass arrests of people

¹¹ The numbers of workers in the agriculture sector in Palestine, dropped by one-third between 1970-1990 (Brynen, 2000).

from the same town or refugee camp (i.e. using buses to transfer them to jails), closures of entrances to and from districts/areas, arrest campaigns on youth popular committees or students' councils at schools and universities (Swedenburg, 2003). These years witnessed the beginning of a more active role for 'informal social work' during the national resistance, which resulted in exposing thousands of social activists, who had been engaged in extending emergency food and cash assistance to families, to different sorts of security measure by the Israeli security apparatus. This included arrests without attending any sort of military or civil court and harassments, when they were stopped by Israeli troops of soldiers on the roads between cities or within their local communities and neighbourhoods. The names of all these activists were on lists provided to Israeli troops of soldiers and checkpoints for this purpose (Griffiths and Repo, 2018). Accordingly, these activists ended up taking part in the confrontations with Israeli military troops as well as collecting and distributing food, medicine, cash donations etc. to families under curfew and families of arrested households and martyrs (Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013; Bahmad, 2007; Parsons, 2005; Abdul-Hadi, 2002).

The increase in the number of registered charitable societies was an attempt to help the deeply shattered Palestinian local communities in a more institutionalized manner, within a context of turning about 67% of the population into refugees, concentrated in refugee camps. Refugee camps, since 1948, denoted a new type of local community in Palestine (in addition to cities and villages). One of the key characteristics of a refugee camp is that the inhabitants are a mix of nuclear families (split from their extended families) belonging to tens of original villages. For example, the residents of Dhesheh camp (where the researcher was born and grew up) constitute a collection from about 37 destroyed villages, where each of those villages used to be a homeland for one or two clans (Badil, 2014). The population density of the 58 refugees' camps, run by UNRWA, shows the hard-humanitarian conditions of the population, and the loss of their villages and livelihoods, due to the creation of the colonial state of Israel. It turned these emergent Palestinian communities into concentrated hot fronts of the national resistance to the occupation at one level, and at another, an arena for more intensive efforts to organise local grassroots, to serve the welfare of the residents, but with much more overt commitment to the political affiliation and national resistance cause. Accordingly, it was phenomenal to find, for example, two health centres, 5 kindergartens, 4 youth centres, and 3 women's service centres in one refugee camp, run by two different grassroots organisations, which were affiliated to two

different political parties. Both offer services to the local community, based on the residents' needs and not on their political affiliation. The concern was to respond to the needs of the largest portion of residents. Over the late 1980s, the grassroots phenomenon has expanded steeply to villages and cities in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip (out of the refugee camps).

On 9th December 1987, the first Palestinian Intifada "uprising" broke out in the WB, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip (ARIJ, 2007; BADIL, 2004; Said, 1994; Bornstein, 2001). The popular and non-violent engagement of the widest spectrum of Palestinian citizens was unprecedented, and together with the establishment of Unified National Leadership (UNL) (Bornstein, 2001) was entirely surprising to the Israeli intelligence, the PLO leadership and the Arabs. The first Intifada also witnessed the birth of the first Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) on 14th December 1987 (Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem, 2007). The Intifada continued until 1993/4 when the Oslo Agreement was signed between the PLO and Israel on September 13th, 1993 (Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem, 2007; Parsons, 2005).

Over the six years of the first Intifada (1987-1993), as many reports confirmed, the Israeli security measures included checkpoints (Griffiths and Repo, 2018), arrests¹², home demolitions (Jeronen *et al.*, 2019), and inspections (See Annex 6) were applied across all areas of the WB and GS prior to December 1987 (Handel, 2009; Bornstein, 2001; Parsons, 2005; Blome and Safadi, 2016), and thereafter intensified. New forms of security measures were introduced during the first Intifada to repress the growing national popular resistance and to control the local economy and the peoples' movement between the WB and GS; between cities and between cities and their surrounding villages (Hochberg and Maikey, 2010; Parsons, 2005). Checkpoints, curfews, military closures, blockages of roads and entrances of cities, villages or refugee camps, and many other measures became regular security practices¹³. Therefore, the quality of life of every Palestinian citizen at all levels was compromised by these measures (Blome and Safadi, 2016; Winslow, 2004; Hochberg and Maikey, 2010; Veronese, *et al.*, 2014; Parsons, 2005).

The first Intifada, resulted in the death of 1,362 Palestinian civilians and 230 Israeli

¹² During the first Intifada, about 20% of the Palestinian labour force was arrested and kept in Israeli jails.

¹³ During the same period, approximately 2,237 curfew days were imposed on refugee camps, towns, villages and cities. About 7,600 citizens were given identity cards with special marks (including a green cover) indicating that they had been in prison, which invoked checks and harassment by Israeli security troops and checkpoints. By February 2nd, 1988 about 1,194 schools in the WB were closed until further notice by military orders, and all higher education institutions were closed at different times and for varying periods from days to weeks. All teachers and students who were caught in classes within CBOs, mosques, churches as an alternative education activity were subject to interrogations and arrests by Israeli military forces (ARIJ, 2007; Moughrabi, 2015).

soldiers and settlers; over 80,000 Palestinians were injured, 487 Palestinian residents deported out of the WB and GS, with 195,000 arrests made for the period of one week and longer, along with the interrogation of 23,000 Palestinians activists by the Israeli General Security Services (GSS). In addition, 18,000 Palestinians were arrested for administrative detention for 3-6 months (none were brought to court), there was a complete demolition of 432 houses; further 62 partial demolitions and the complete sealing of 411 houses occurred (Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem, 2007; Cohen, *et al.*, 2014). Social services centres, education institutions, labour unions, press offices and many other facilities were subject to different security measures including searching, destruction of equipment and furniture, and the sealing or closure of buildings (ARIJ, 2007; Moughrabi, 2015).

All those measures, over time, have resulted in individual psychosocial and socioeconomic shocks and trauma to all Palestinians, to which tens of voluntary Palestinian organisations and international aid programmes tried to respond through food/cash aid and psychosocial support interventions. During these six years the well-being of the Palestinian citizens and communities dropped significantly (Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013; Giacaman *et al.*, 2011; Giacaman *et al.*, 2013). Over these six years, both the popular / informal and formal social work programs witnessed high demand. Therefore, the roles of popular committees in all areas, women and youth committees, and informal social welfare networks provided a wide array of basic services at psychosocial, educational and health levels. In addition to technical staff, tens of thousands of volunteers (mainly university graduates) were involved in delivering these services to the entire community that was in severe need, under the strict security measures imposed by the occupation. Such experiences have been poorly documented and researched, which limited the possibilities for integrating them into the social work education programs across the six universities in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip.

The massive increase in the number of relief and psychosocial services programmes, by national and international organisations, increased demand on the social work graduates, to an unprecedented level (Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013; Faraj, 2017). International humanitarian assistance agencies, like UNRWA and UNDP, and many national non-governmental organisations and charitable societies, hired hundreds of social work graduates to deliver food, cash, rehabilitation, and psychological support interventions (e.g. the Young Men's Christian Association - 'YMCA').

Within this context the demand on social work graduates had increased, by the providers of social assistance services. This encouraged: Al-Quds Open University to inaugurate its social work programme in 1991 in 16 Palestinian governorates in the WB and GS (Faraj, 2017), the expansion of the YMCA crisis intervention and disability rehabilitation programmes to all Palestinian areas, the launching of food/cash emergency programs by UNRWA and some other international and national organisations, and the establishment of the popular committees in the refugee camps and many other cities and towns to organise and facilitate the delivery of different humanitarian services to local communities. Accordingly, studying social work was viewed by many families from the poor and middle classes as a gateway for employment. For example, during the years 2000-2004, many local organisations used to contact the PUSWP to nominate social work graduates for vacant social workers' jobs and when the PUSWP contacted all the graduates it found few or none of them jobless.

The high level of engagement of all Palestinian citizens in the popular resistance to the colonial occupation, was one of the most significant indicators of the active role of the grassroots organisations and community-based societies, in promoting the cause of national resistance among the people, while rendering the social, educational, cultural and health support services (Zahlan and Zahlan, 1977; Abdel Shafi, 2004; Azzam, 2014). That was the main reason for the Israeli security apparatus to ban everyone from grassroots and unregistered charitable societies, and treat anyone considering engagement in their activities as a threat to the security of the state of Israel: a sufficient cause in itself to be sentenced for a period of a few days to months, without attending court. The targets of these arrests were mainly the leaders of these grassroots organisations and key activists.

1.2 The WB, Jerusalem and GS; between self-rule and colonial occupation:

In September 1993, the Declaration of Principles was signed between the PLO and the Israeli government, based on which the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established to take the responsibility of initially administering Jericho city and the Gaza Strip, then negotiate the gradual transfer of other parts of the West Bank, over a five-year plan. However, until 2018, at no time did the PNA achieve full control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, due to many other factors that evolved during prolonged negotiations between the two parties; mainly the escalated Israeli security practices on the ground, the expansion of settlements, continued land confiscation, and the break-out of the second Intifada in 2000 (Nassar, 2003; Parsons, 2005; Al-

Awar and Hassan, 2013; Bornstein, 2001; Tenenbaum, 2014; Jeronen, 2019). The fruitless negotiations pushed Palestinian citizens into despair and the search for alternative strategies to be liberated from colonial occupation, including the militant resistance (UNICEF, 2010). The existence of the PNA in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip since 1994 did not exclude these areas from being defined as colonised areas according to Turner (2012) and Harker (2011). In particular with the continuous direct control of Israeli occupation over 60% of these areas, its control over the security system inside and its relations with the surrounding countries. For Turner, western aid for the peace-building process, is the second element to what he called “the colonial equation” (p.1).

A series of “peace negotiation” rounds were held between 1994 and 2000, and a number of agreements between the PLO and Israel were reached and signed, including the Gaza-Jericho autonomy agreement, the Paris economic agreement / protocols in 1996 (DeVoor and Tartir, 2009; Parsons, 2005; UNFCCC, 2015), the Oslo II Interim Agreement / Taba Agreement (1995), the Hebron Agreement (1997), and the WYE River Memorandum (1998). Most Palestinians aspired to reach an agreement between the negotiators on the final status issues (i.e. boundaries, Jerusalem, refugees ...etc), over the Camp David negotiations round in 2000. Contrarily, the failure of that round turned all Palestinians’ aspirations into despair and anger against the Israeli occupation, particularly with the provocative visit of the Israeli Defence Minister, Ariel Sharon, with his guards and groups of settlers, to the Al-Aqsa mosque and the killing of tens of Palestinians who protested the visit (Ibrahim, 2011; Parsons, 2005). Those events constituted a trigger for the outbreak of the second Intifada in Palestine (West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and the historic Palestine) on the 28th of September 2000. Many, however, considered the second Intifada¹⁴ as a result of the accumulated deep frustration and despair from endless and unproductive rounds of negotiations after 1994 (UNICEF, 2010; Ibrahim, 2011; Schachter, 2010; Parsons, 2005; Al-Awar and Hassan, 2013; Nagl, 2012).

The second Intifada¹⁵ continued until 2005, during which about 5,050 Palestinian civilians

¹⁴ The visit of the Israeli Defence Minister with 1,000 soldiers to Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem on July 11th, 2000 ignited the anger of the Palestinians, especially when that visit resulted in shooting and killing tens of Palestinian who protested the visit while they were praying in the mosque (ARIJ, 2007; Parsons, 2005). The deadlock in the Camp David negotiations on the final status of the WB and GS that was reached with the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak at that time, opened the door for the right-wing parties (lead by the Likud) in the Israeli government to undermine the peace process by the visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque ((ARIJ, 2007; Parsons, 2005).

¹⁵ “The failure of the negotiations was the beginning of the eruption of the second Intifada, which was more sophisticated and a bloody wheel of violence” (Nagl, 2012, p.49).

and about 1000 Israelis were killed (Abbott, 2010) and resulted in 47,760 Palestinian injuries; 11,000 prisoners; 72,437 damaged properties; 432 industrial constructions damaged; the confiscation of 242,271 dunums of land; the uprooting 405,658 trees; the bulldozing of 80,712 dunums of fertile lands, and the imposition of 518 checkpoints to control the peoples' movement and trade between the Palestinian areas (ARIJ, 2007; APE, 2012; Al-Awar and Hassan, 2013; Blome and Safadi, 2016; Griffiths and Repo, 2018), See Annex 6). In the GS alone, by the beginning of the second Intifada, unemployment jumped from 10% to 34% in April 2005, and the poverty rate reached 70%, due to the strict closure and collective punishment policy imposed by the Israeli Military Commander. This in turn promoted a sense of solidarity at a community level and within all sub-groups or sectors (i.e. women, youth, prisoners ...etc) (Bornstein, 2001). Over the period 1967–2007, until the end of the second Intifada, the reports of Palestinian Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees confirmed that about 800,000 (25% of the population) had been jailed by the Israeli military administrations, (PCBS, 2007; CEPR, 2012).

The impact of the first (1987-1993) and second Intifadas (2000-2005) was very significant in adding more targets for social work interventions including, but not limited to, prisoners, ex-detainees, displaced Bedouin communities, displaced families of demolished houses, persons with permanent physical disabilities due to serious injuries, psychologically traumatised children and women, families that have lost their basic livelihood and sources of living, shortage in medical supplies for chronically ill persons etc. In response to these needs, many national and international NGOs designed and delivered new interventions (i.e. UNRWA psychosocial interventions, YMCA rehabilitation programme, and Defence for Children International - DCI) or expanded existing ones (i.e. UNRWA food and cash emergency programmes and Job Creation programmes, Iyad Al-Sarraj Centre for Psychological Support in Gaza Strip, Ex-Detainees Rehabilitation Programme). Also, new civil society organisations (CSOs) were established.

Within all these programmes, thousands of social work positions were opened and predominantly occupied by social work graduates. For example, the UNRWA emergency programme in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip hired about 1000 emergency social workers in addition to about 200 social workers in the psychosocial support programme. This steep increase in the number of social work interventions and the types of services it provided between 1987 and 2005, resulted in greater awareness and recognition of the profession, in addition to the varied roles and titles of social workers in the different organisations (See Annex

11), which reflected the deep influences of the colonial occupations on the development of the social work profession.

Since its establishment in 1994, the PNA started the process of reforming the ministries of health, labour, education and social affairs, transferred to it from the Israeli civil administration, in addition to establishing others like the ministries of interior, civil affairs, justice, prisoners, women, finance, national economy, and foreign affairs (UNICEF, 2010). The reforms within the ministries of education and social affairs have influenced the realities of the social work profession directly, mainly through the increased number of social work positions (for instance, most of the public and private schools had social workers for the first time in Palestine). The reforms also included the increase in the number of social workers (with social work qualifications) within the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), and establishing the post of school educational counsellors, which were open to social work graduates as well as graduates of psychology (Faraj, 2017). These reforms constituted unprecedented openings for social work graduates in the public sector and turned the PNA into the largest employer of social workers. A very limited number of social worker positions were established in other ministries, like the Ministries of Health and Labour. In 1997, the number of civil society organisations reached 2,400 registered organisations according to the records of the Ministry of Interior in 2017, and provided more jobs for social work graduates (BISAN, 2007; MAS, 2004; Merli *et al.*, 2004), particularly with the increased levels of funding by international donors.

On 16th June, 2002, the Israeli State occupation started the construction of the creeping apartheid wall¹⁶ (Jeronen, 2019; Zangl, 2012; Harker, 2011; Leuenberger and El-Atrash, 2015; Greenstein, 2019) on the western borders of WB land that is 707km in length, of which 66.8% was completed by 2010. Eighty-one local communities with 411,000 people are affected in the areas located in the west and east sides of the wall and in East Jerusalem (See Annex 4). It had eaten up about 7% of the land in the so-called “seam zone” between the wall and the borders of 1948 of the “state of Israel” in addition to the surrounding areas in which Palestinians are not allowed to come close or cultivate their agricultural land (B’TSelem, 2012; and Veronese *et al.*, 2014; Leuenberger, 2016; Zangl, 2012; Greenstein, 2019). All the land on which the wall was constructed was confiscated from its owners by Military orders of the Israeli Military

¹⁶ “The West Bank Barrier—also known as “the security fence” or the “Apartheid Wall” - that snakes along the Green Line, the 1949 armistice line between Israel and the West Bank, consists of elaborate physical infrastructures, including fences, walls, trenches, roads, checkpoints, and intricate surveillance systems” (Leuenberger, 2016, p339)

Commander of the WB, breaching the articles of the conventions of IHR, IHL, ICJ judgment, and Interim Agreement of 1975 between the PLO and Israel about the integrity of the WB & GS (Alternative Information Centre, 2006; Zangl, 2012). It severely impacted the local economy of at least seventy-two local communities, inhabited by 470,000 people (653, 600 dunum between the wall and the green line) which is about 7.5% of the WB area: their social fabric (about 274,500 people) will be cut off from the rest of the population in the WB, and about 150,000 students from 271 localities in six districts will be subject to various types of negative impacts including access to their schools, financial complications and bureaucratic restrictions.

Accordingly, about 50,000 Palestinians, who live within one kilometre of the wall; need entry permit and special security arrangements to access their land, to cultivate it. There is also control of the underground water, and access to services. This impacts on the physical and mental health of the population, especially with the daily suffering of travelling in and out, under strict check points and physical searches and all types of possible harassments by the soldiers to children, women, youth and the elderly (Giacaman *et al.*, 2011; Gould, 2014; Alternative Information Centre, 2006; Sela, 2016; Nagra, 2013). In response to these needs, crisis interventions programmes were established and delivered by some service providers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (i.e. YMCA, counselling centres, UNRWA, disability rehabilitation programmes, in addition to food aid and cash for work programmes provided by local and international organisations).

In 2006, the second elections of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) took place. The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) won seventy-six seats out of total 132 seats. Fatah won forty-three seats (CEPR, 2012; Saleh, 2010). This result created a state of tension between the two largest Palestinian political parties (Pace, 2012; Pelham, 2011). The process of setting the new government and transfer of authorities between Fatah (who won the 1976 PLC elections) and Hamas, led to violent clashes between the supporters of the two parties in the Gaza Strip, resulting in the killing of tens and injuring hundreds from both sides. Fatah lost the battle in Gaza, which led to the establishment of the Hamas government controlling the GS (since June, 2007), while the WB was maintained under the government led by Fatah (Baconi, 2015; Ameta, 2015; Salem, 2012; Saleh, 2010; Pace, 2012). This divide resulted in deep frustration among all Palestinians inside Palestine and abroad. It strategically constituted a deep crack in the Palestinian internal national unity, pushing most donors to Palestine to review their funding

policies to the occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt), and encouraged the Israeli occupation system to make its security measures in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip stricter and more aggressive. The poverty rate, for example, according to the actual consumption patterns, reached 34.5% and the monthly income of 57.3% of the population was found below the national poverty line in 2007 (PCBS, 2007). All these events and changes have characterised Palestinian life as one full of everyday hardship, violence and trauma (Bornstein, 2001).

Shikaki (2002) and Saleh (2010) argued that the political divide between the secular and Islamist political parties resulted in diminished funding levels and more cautious funding policies to PNA and civil society organisations. Accordingly, the capacities of the PNA in the WB or the Hamas de facto government in GS, to develop and apply any development plans, had been severely diminished. Similarly, the levels of funding to the civil society sector in Palestine shrank to its minimum level, and their capacities to respond to the increased demands on welfare services were compromised. This resulted in an increased dependence on the grassroots organisations that relied on voluntarism rather than external funding to serve local communities. The years (2006/2007) marked the end of the golden era of the employability of social work graduates, a steep rise in their unemployment, and increased engagement in voluntary activities of the grassroots organisations and social networks at a local level (i.e. inside their towns, villages, cities and refugee camps). Although comparison between the grassroots and community-based organisations model and the NGOs and government services model of social work practices in Palestine is beyond the scope of this research, it is necessary to highlight two substantial criteria to be considered, should such comparison to be addressed in other researches: the sustainability of services and the stance on how to be engaged in addressing the political causes of life challenges of the their beneficiaries. The political identity of social work profession may prevail only in the model that abandons the donors' conditions of depoliticization and neutrality of service providers.

The Oslo Accords, which were tailored and drafted by the capitalist neoliberal powers (states and international financial institutions), managed and funded the peace negotiations between Israel and the PLO since the Madrid conference in 1989/1990 resulted in dividing the remaining 22% of historic Palestine into fragmented geopolitical zones (A, B & C) (Bornstein, 2001; Harker, 2011). It also maintained the "C" zone (constituting 60% of the WB) under Israeli control, caused the political divide, perpetuated the economic annexation of the West Bank, and

Gaza Strip to the colonizers' economy, and more aggressive security measures against civilians (BZU-CDS Studies Programme, 2006; Hochberg and Maikey, 2010) (See Annex 3).

1.3 The Palestinian civil society organisations and the politics of international aid:

The published literature about Palestinian civil society highlights the impact of the political context on necessitating its existence and shaping its mandate in social welfare and the national struggle. However, one of the key factors that was not explored and addressed in the literature was the impact of the colonial occupation in turning many Palestinian citizens, particularly the youth, into social activists and community organisers. This was the key factor that enabled thousands of individual citizens, to act on their initiative and start local grassroots organisations or CBOs, which provided a strong prevalence of the bottom-up community organising model, in Palestine.

'Popular' social work practice (Muslih, 1993), and formal social work education and training after 1971 (Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013) had evolved within Palestinian civil society in economic and political contexts (Swedenburg, 2003). This sector emerged and evolved in response to the deteriorating standards of Palestinians' well-being, under the colonial policies and daily practices of settler occupation, in the WB, Jerusalem and GS. The role of this sector in serving Palestinian society, was always based on its commitment to the national aspirations of occupied Palestinian society and its needs, more than the donors' agenda and priorities that prevailed after 1994. Therefore, international aid, through state and non-state agencies, had been used to divert this sector from its commitment; particularly after launching the peace-building process in 1989/1990. It was directed to depoliticise and neutralise CSO interventions (Dana, 2011; Ibrahim, 2011; Flanigan, 2014; BISAN, 2007; Charlton, 1995; Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator, 2002; and Calis, 2013; Muslih, 1993; Giacaman, 1998; Khouri, 2012; Fuqaha, 2012; Costantini, *et al.*, 2011; Peteet, 2005).

The increase in the number of CSOs in Palestine over the first eighty-seven years of the 20th century did not raise serious concern about the role and the impact of this sector in the political conflict. The first intifada (1987-1993) provided clear evidence of the significant impact of this sector (particularly the popular committees, unregistered community-based organisation (CBOs), and registered charitable societies) in the mass mobilisation and engagement in popular resistance to occupation. The increased dependence of the charitable societies on international

funding resulted in some of them turning into large and complex NGOs that used the smaller CSOs and unregistered grassroots to implement its interventions (projects). Gradually, particularly over the 1990s, the small charitable societies and grassroots organisations became increasingly dependent on the support channelled through the large NGOs, and less dependent on local sources of funding (i.e. local donations). The unpublished CHF (2013) research-based report on voluntarism, demonstrated clearly the role of this shift towards dependency on international funding, in reshaping two main features of the Palestinian CSOs. The first is the distanced programme from the agenda of national resistance and the second is the replacement of motivation to volunteerism from the commitment to national resistance and willingness to help the local community with financial and other material incentives, supplied by the donors. Over the 1990s, some Palestinians and other researchers and intellectuals raised their concerns about the serious impact of international aid on the commitments of the CSO sector to the national liberation agenda, such as Sarsour, Naser, and Atallah (2011), Jad (2007) Khouri (2012), Da'na (2014), Salem (2012), Qita (2015), Bahmad (2007), Turner (2012), Brynen (2000) and Merz (2012).

Ibrahim (2011) and Calis (2013) presented a detailed description and analysis of the impact of international aid to Palestine before and after the Oslo Agreement in 1994. During the period 1994-2000, international aid entered a new era: “NGOisation” (Jad, 2007, p.622), that caused profound damage to social and political movements in Palestine, such as damaging the women’s advocacy movement, according to Jad (2007). Hannieh (2012), Qita (2015) Al-Awar and Hassan (2013) argued that the level of international funding to the Palestinian National Authority and NGOs was the highest in the Arab region, particularly after 1994, which was directed to support the 1989 peace process launched in Madrid, mainly the creation of the PNA, rather than addressing the root causes of suffering of the people, which originated with the existence of settler colonial occupation.

The impact of the separation / apartheid wall (See Annex 4) (Leuenberger and El-Atrash, 2015; Farsakh, 2008; Tiley, 2009; Jeronen, 2019; Greenstein, 2019), on the social and economic development of the Palestinian community, was described in detail by Calis (2013) through the example of Jayyous village in the North West Bank area. As Calis (2013) described it, it is enough to drive through the cities, towns and villages of the West Bank and observe the signs of “donated by” everywhere. The states of the international donors could have focused on

preventing the colonial occupier from constructing this wall; instead they directed some of their money to relieving the suffering of the people from its consequences. Therefore, Hanieh (2012), Qita (2015), Sarsour, Naser and Atallah, (2011), and Kassis (2001) argued that all these funds failed to establish any form of just peace, prevent the deteriorating levels of poverty and unemployment, prevent the continuous land confiscation and the construction of the wall, or enhance the democratisation of Palestinian society under the control of the occupation and the National Authority (Jeronen, 2019; Kassis, 2001; Salem, 2012; Blome and Safadi , 2016; Greenstein, 2019).

Hammami (2014), Merli *et al.* (2004), Brynen (2000), and Kassis (2001) describes the conflicting relationships between the PNA and the NGO sector after 1994 around the funding, roles, and the mutual monitoring. Hammami (2014) highlights the conflict and the mutual accusations of abused international funding for enrichment purposes, at the cost to the destitute population. Kassis (2001) and Salem (2012), on the other hand, argue that the CSO sector in Palestine failed to perform their expected role in democratising Palestinian society. This conflict existed prior to the Oslo Accords, between some of the NGO and grassroots organisations, but the steep increase in the level of international funding to the PNA and NGOs sector, for the purpose of sustaining the peace process project, fuelled the conflict (Brynen, 2000). For many analysts, the donors' money was channelled to NGOs and not to grassroots organisations (Merz, 2012; Abdel Shafi, 2004; Azzam, 2014; Zahlan and Zahlan, 1977), after Oslo was meant to maintain the status quo and depoliticise / neutralise the work of the civil society sector, with a goal to halt the national resistance and promote the peace-building project in the country (Hammami, 2014; Calis, 2013; Shikaki, 2002; Ibrahim, 2011, Da'na, 2011; Da'na, 2014, and Muslih, 1993; Hanafi and Tabar, 2003).

Such a strategy resulted in a clear split within the Palestinian civil society sector, between the NGOs that meet the donor criteria and are sufficiently qualified for their funding (professionalisation and neutrality (Merz, 2012), and the community-based and grassroots organisations that are not sufficiently qualified to meet the donor criteria (Abdel Shafi, 2004;Azzam, 2014). The first were ultimately committed to donor agenda and priorities, and abandoned the popular and armed national resistance (Merz, 2012), while the other remained committed to the needs of local communities, but with limited resources and capacities (i.e. it ignored the popular committees, the trade unions, women and youth CBOs (Merz, 2012).

Accordingly, the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (2007), PCBS (2008), Hanafi and Tabar (2003), and Jad (2007) highlight the fact that international aid, after launching the peace process in 1994, was directed to humanitarian relief missions to meet the basic needs of the population in the WB and GS.

The results of the PLC elections in 2006 invoked restricted international funding to Palestinian CSOs (Merz, 2012; Lasensky and Grace, 2006; Le More, 2008; Merli, *et al.*, 2004; Pelham, 2011; Brynen, 2000). Additionally, most of the international donors gradually withdrew their funding to the emergency programme of international aid agencies, like UNRWA, and shifted their focus to other countries facing new humanitarian catastrophes and political conflicts in the Middle East region. These shifts in the donors' policies and of priorities in Palestine firstly left hundreds of thousands of poor and disadvantaged Palestinians without any support and further caused severe cuts in the employment opportunities for workers on humanitarian aid and social development projects including for social work graduates. For instance, the UNRWA decision in September 2009, to terminate the contracts of 314 emergency social workers and all the food and cash services to 65,000 refugee families in the West Bank (WB) (UNRWA/RSSP¹⁷ Annual Report, 2009).

The Oslo peace-building project was packaged with a set of political, economic and security reforms in the PNA structures and policies, which was an open arena to the imposition of neoliberal policies, of the capitalist powers and international financial institutions (World Bank Group and IMF mainly), on all sectors in Palestinian society; the public, the private and the third sector (civil society) (Persson, 2011). Further, Tartir (2013), Khalidi (2019), Dana (2011), Merli *et al.* (2004), Bornstein (2001) and Le More (2008) argue that the PLO engagement in the 'peace process' according the terms and conditions of the colonial powers and establishing the PNA, marked the beginning of the end of the Palestinian national liberation project, and the full engagement of the PNA in the neoliberal one.

1.4 Social work education and practice in a political conflict zone:

The preceding sections have provided a backdrop to establish an adequate understanding of the realities of the social work profession in Palestine, including the challenges that have been faced in its development. The trajectory of this profession reflects the deep impact of the political

¹⁷ Relief and Social Services Program

conflict context on its emergence and evolution over more than a century. The next section illustrates that 1971 demarcated the emergence of the formal social work education and training system, which succeeded in presenting western social work theories and models of practice to Palestinian society, but could not pick up the local context and sufficiently reflect informal or popular social interventions used by the local community, to address its problems under colonial occupation, since the dawn of the last century.

1.4.1 Social Work Prior to 1971

Social work in Palestine is not an exception in terms of its emergence from the womb of charitable, philanthropic and voluntary movements by which people, who are in better off conditions, helped those in need of assistance. Tannenbaum (2014) and Reisch, (1997) confirm the link between the social work profession, and charitable and philanthropic work. While terms such as charity and philanthropy have Greek roots and are based on Biblical principles, modern social work concepts owe much to the influence of the Koran and the mutual aid practices of Native Americans, the African-American community, and immigrants from all over the world (Tannenbaum, 2014; Reisch, 1997). Both Tannenbaum (2014) and Reisch (1997) refer to the socioeconomic and political conditions that necessitated the emergence and the institutionalisation of the social work profession in the USA, since the 18th century including the industrial revolution, immigration, economic recession, poverty, unemployment, war and other conditions. However, the case of Palestine is an exception, given the exceptional model of settlers' colonial occupation that does not exist and never existed in any other part of the world.

Abu-Ras and Faraj, (2013) and Faraj (2017) presented a detailed account on the development history of the social work profession in Palestine. For the first time, the date of emergence of the social work profession and institutionalising it in a formally structured "social work" education programme was identified with all historical contexts that justified it. Muslih (1993) referred to those efforts as the 'Amal Ejtima'y' in Arabic which is roughly translated as 'informal social work' and was based on the religious instructions and traditions developed by the local community. Muslih (1993) defined the informal social work or 'Al-Amal Al-Ejtima'y' (in Arabic terms), as all strategies that Palestinian families and local communities would use to address the different types of life challenges, social (i.e. conflicts and delinquencies) and economic (i.e. poverty), by resorting to traditional leaders of the extended family, the local

community (village, refugee camp or city), the clergy, political leadership, educated individuals and existing charitable societies.

Table I-1 summarises the shift of social work over the different political stages (presented in the first part of this chapter) and the different socioeconomic and legal conditions that characterised the Palestinian context at each stage.

Table I-1
The Social Work Journey in Palestine

	Ottoman Empire (Until 1917)	British Mandate (1918-1948)	Nakba (1948 – 1967)	Naksa (1967 – 1987)	Ist Intifada	Oslo Project onwards
Political System	Foreign control / Occupation	Mandate Occupation	Israeli Occupation	Israeli Occupation	Israeli Occupation	National Authority + Israeli Occupation
Legal Environment	Ottoman laws	British Military Mandate laws	British Military laws and Arab ruling laws	Israeli Military laws	Israeli Military law	Israeli Military laws and Palestinian laws
Economic conditions	deteriorated	Deteriorated due to land confiscation for Jewish settlements	Creation of Israel on 78% of the historic Palestine / Arab ruling the remained 22 %	Expansion of the occupation to the 22% of the historic Palestine	Israeli occupation of entire historic Palestine	Establishing PNA on 13% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip
Psychosocial needs	On high demand	On high demand	On high demand	On high demand	On high demand	On high demand
Demands on social work interventions	On high demand: popular SW provided through	On high demand: popular SW provided through	On high demand: popular SW provided through	On high demand: Formal SW interventions provided	On high demand: Formal SW interventions provided through qualified graduates	On high demand: Formal SW interventions provided through qualified

	existing charitable organisations and grassroots	existing charitable organisations and grassroots	existing charitable organisations and grassroots	through qualified graduates by ministries of social affairs and NGOs and popular SW provided through existing charitable organisations and grassroots	by ministries of social affairs and NGOs and popular SW provided through existing charitable organisations and grassroots	graduates by ministries of social affairs and NGOs and popular SW provided through existing charitable organisations and grassroots
Civil Society status	Limited size and scope of interventions	Limited size and scope of interventions (2.2% CSO existed)	Limited size and scope of interventions	Limited size with wider scope of interventions (7% CSOs existed)	Increased size and wider scope of interventions (33% CSOs existed)	Massively increased size under the new Palestinian law of charitable organisations / open scope of interventions
Social workers employment status	SW didn't exist in the country	SW didn't exist in the country	SW didn't exist in the country	SW started in 1971 to exist in the country	High demand on SW graduates	The demand on SW graduates increased but the employment opportunities did not.

Table I-1 shows that the need for social work intervention has always been high among all sectors in Palestinian society due to the conditions created and perpetuated by the exploitive and oppressive colonial powers that ruled the country. However, the absence of formal education institutions to teach and train social workers prior to 1971 was substituted by voluntary and faith-based interventions through grassroots and informal local and popular initiatives. With the increased demand on social interventions over the following decades, the public and voluntary sectors attempted to provide their services through social work interventions and qualified social

workers, yet the demand on the services of grassroots organisations increased, although no trained social workers were engaged in the management and delivery of these interventions.

The increased demands of the Palestinian community, under the ruling of different colonial powers, over the 20th century was accompanied by intensified formal and informal responses, including the establishment of charitable societies and grassroots organisations (Muslih, 1993). Hence, the types of needs of the Palestinian community and the social interventions developed to respond to them prior to 1948, have not been precisely documented in the published literature and it is beyond the scope of this research to account for the history of informal social work in Palestine. The devastating consequences of the Nakba and the changes in the legal environment, particularly during Jordanian and Egyptian rule (1950-1967), have contributed to a large extent to the increase in the number of registered charitable societies and intensification of informal individual and collective initiatives to help the hundreds of thousands of refugees and other disadvantaged families. Also, these two decades witnessed the existence of the early presence of international aid agencies like UNRWA; International Commission of the Red Cross.

On April 25th, 1948, Mrs. Hind Al-Husseini attested to the misery of families who had fled the Zionist massacres against Palestinian villages and towns during the 1948 War (i.e. Deir Yassin Massacre) (Stav, 2012; Demichelis, 2015; Sousa *et al.*, 2019) to the Old City of Jerusalem and started her voluntary work with 55 children of these families. She first gathered them in two old rooms in the Al-Hussor Neighbourhood in the Old City (Hind Al-Husseini College, Commemoration, 1974; Washington Report on the Middle East, 2008). The two rooms were not properly adequate to accommodate the teaching activities but were good as a start. From that reality, she had the idea to establish the Society of Dar Ettifil Al-Arabi in East Jerusalem (Faraj, 2017). After the second Truce Agreement of 1949, some schools re-opened to resume teaching classes and she tried to integrate the 55 children into these schools. After all attempts, she reconsidered the need to start independent classrooms within the neighbourhood itself and a space of one garage and stable was renovated and used as classrooms (Faraj, 2017). In 1961 and 1965, donations from the ARAMCO company in Dahrhan and the Al-Alshaie' family (from Kuwait) were given to construct the basement, and the first and second floors of the school, later named Dar Ettifil Al-Arabi Society. Today, it is still in use as an elementary, preparatory and secondary school (Faraj, 2017). In 1970, with a donation from the Lutheran Church in Germany, more classrooms and premises

were added to constitute the current compound of Dar Al-Tifil Al-Arabi School and Hind Al-Husseini Arts College for Girls.

1.4.2 Social Work after 1971

In 1971, Mrs. Hind Al-Husseini established the first institute of social work as one of three programmes at Hind Al-Husseini Arts College for Girls; House Keeping & Custom Design, Teaching, and Social Work. It was a response to the need to target young Palestinian girls from the WB and GS, who had finished secondary school and were ready for undergraduate programmes (Hind Al-Husseini College, Commemoration, 1974; Naguib, 2007; Washington Report on the Middle East, 2008).

The year 1972/3 witnessed the establishment of sociology departments at Bethlehem University, followed by the establishment of the sociology programme at BirZeit University in 1973, then at Al-Najah University in 1977. These were the earliest undergraduate sociology programmes in Palestine. In 1973/4 the first undergraduate four-year programme in social work was established in the University of Bethlehem. After four years (1977/8), the first group of eleven Palestinian Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students graduated from a Palestinian university. Abu-Ras and Faraj (2013) and Faraj (2017) confirm that the first social work programme in Palestine that started with the two-year diploma in social work at Hind Al-Husseini College was upgraded to a four-year undergraduate programme by Al-Quds University in 1982/1983. According to Abu-Ras and Faraj (2013) and Faraj (2017), the first BSW group of female social workers graduated in 1986/87¹⁸ from this programme with the first degree in social work. Al-Quds Open University / WB and GS followed the two universities (Bethlehem and Al-Quds) and established its BSW programme in 1991. Subsequently, the Islamic University and Ummah University in GS started their BSW programme in 1998 and 2008 respectively. In 1974, UNRWA Ramallah Women's Training Centre (RWTC), WB graduated the first group of female students with a diploma in social work, while in 1977 and 2008, Al-Najah National University, WB and Palestine Ahliya University College, established their minor degree in social work for a sociology BA programme. According to those who were directly involved in establishing the social work programme, academic councils of their universities and colleges took the decision, due to the steep rise in demand on social work graduates since the first Intifada in 1987 (Jad, 2007). Accordingly, the years following 1987, witnessed the rise in community awareness and

¹⁸Haj-Yehia, Amin. Interview on January 08th, 2010. Palestine Ahlyia University College, Bethlehem, WB

societal recognition of the significant role that social work graduates could perform for effective social interventions. This positive attitude towards the profession of social work was due to the high rate of employability, in addition to the positive role in helping the needy (Faraj, 2017).

The establishment of the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists on March 24th, 1997 under the Palestinian Law of Labour initiated a new era in the life cycle of this profession. It reflected a common concern of most social work graduates about their professional and career status (PUSWP, 2005). However, PUSWP still had limited authority as a regulatory body to represent the social work graduates and formally advocate for them (See Annex 8). The absence of any regulatory law and bylaws for this profession, and the political divide are the most crucial predicaments to that goal (PUSWP, 2005; Faraj, 2017).

1.5 Conclusions:

The political realities in Palestine created the conditions that necessitated the emergence of the social work profession, particularly in the aftermath of the 1948 Nakba, and the 1967 Naksa. The consequences of the two wars, the first and second Intifadas (1987-1994, and 2000-2005 respectively), the continuous confiscations of land for settlements and bypass roads, the house demolitions, and the complex regime of security measures, have increased the demand for more institutionalised responses through charitable societies, grassroots organisation, and Non-Governmental Organisations (Bahmad, 2007; Abdul-Hadi, 2002; Al-Awar and Hassan, 2013), to meet psychosocial and economic needs.

The developmental history of social work in Palestine includes two distinct forms of social work interventions; informal social work that existed prior to 1971, and formalised social work that emerged after establishing the social work education programme in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. With the increased demand on social interventions prior to and after the establishment of the PNA in 1993 / 1994, the size of the voluntary sectors and the levels of international funding to its programme fluctuated, due to variations in the legal and security environments in Palestine. Nevertheless, this research focuses on the challenges facing the development of the formalised social work profession in Palestine not the informal social work that is still not recognised by the existing systems of education and practice. However, this research highlights the informal social work practiced at grassroots and CBOs level as part of the call for the indigenisation of the profession and considering it the main feature of the Palestinian social work model.

It was noticed that the content and structure of the formal social work education programme were and still are focused on teaching western theories and models of interventions, and poorly integrated the local socioeconomic and political context, in which the graduates were necessitated to intervene to help their clients (Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013). To this end, it is extremely hard to understand the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, and propose any strategies to address them in the future, in isolation from the influences of the colonial and neoliberal systems, policies, and practices, on which Chapter II will be focused, to provide a theoretical framework to understand the realities of social work in Palestine.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

2.0 Introduction

The fact that Palestine is the country containing the most complex political conflicts in modern history is a result of the global conflict between the hegemonic capitalist powers to redistribute the wealth of nations, including the Arab region. The same powers that created and perpetuated the colonial occupation of the land of Palestine drafted and launched the peace-building process in 1990 according to its terms and conditions, of which are necessary to maintain the state of the colonial occupation while providing a self-ruling scheme for the occupied population. The quality of life of every Palestinian was subject to the consequences of this conflict and the attempts to resolve it. Understanding the challenges facing the social work profession and proposing strategies to address them requires adequate understanding of the political-economic context that necessitated its existence in the first instance.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the theoretical framework that will be used to understand and draw meaning from the findings of this research (challenges and strategies), particularly within the colonial and neoliberal context. The first part of it is a brief background on the development theories that explain the link between the global capitalist development theories, colonialism and neoliberalism, and its implications for social work education, research, and practices, globally, regionally, and locally. The remaining part of this chapter will be devoted to discussing the impact of this context on the identity of the social work profession in Palestine, as it is a key factor that should be considered in drafting the strategies to address the challenges facing this profession.

2.1 The capitalist development theories: from colonialism to neoliberalism:

Larrain (2013) presents the set of theories of development and their evolution from the classical political economy point of view. Larrain (2013) highlighted (also Havinden and Meredith, 2002) the relevance of development theories to different countries in the global south (i.e. countries of Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East), as these theories lend themselves to the debate about the relationships between the hegemonic capitalist countries in the global north and those in the global south within the realm of development and underdevelopment (Rodney, 2018). Larrain (2013) and Rodney (2018) argue that the concepts of development and underdevelopment are very much connected to the emergence of capitalism from the feudal and slavery systems where the accumulation of capital has been stagnant. The economic advancement of the feudal society would have not been possible without the revolution in the

production instrument and therefore the production relationship (Fanon, 1963). According to Larrain (2013), the change agent for this advancement was the bourgeoisie. The class conflict within the feudal system resulted in the victory of the bourgeoisie class that distorted the control of the political system of the society, through and after dismantling the medieval institutions that restricted an increase in production and hindered free trade and the free market economy (Larrain, 2013). The classical political sciences relate the emergence of the concept of development to the struggle of the British bourgeoisie against the remnants of the feudal system over the late 19th century (Havinden and Meredith, 2002). The development theories that emerged and developed to provide different perspectives to analyse and understand the class conflicts within capitalist countries, internationally, brought many other concepts to the debate about the processes by which a development of society may take place. These included the concepts of imperialism, colonialism and neoliberalism (Havinden and Meredith, 2002; Fanon, 1963; Meari, 2017).

Meari (2017), Neal (1995) and Kendall (1986) explain the linkages between capitalism and development through British colonial policies. They highlight the use of community development interventions to colonise the global south countries and that indigenous people of these colonised countries, mainly social work professionals, have contended the community development approach and tried to replace it with the community organisation method, which is a radical approach to community intervention. Meari argues that colonisers used the community development approach to turn a colonised population into economically productive social units by all possible means (i.e. skills training and microcredit enterprises). Towards this end, the colonisers like the British, mainly encouraged education and invested in its infrastructure, but only to a certain level (i.e. it encouraged the elementary and preparatory education in Palestine but discouraged secondary and post-secondary education). Meari (2017, p. 508) says that:

“British colonial administrators and theorists coined the term ‘community development,’ out of their endeavor to develop ‘mass education’ and ‘social welfare’ in the colonies, in accordance with the colonial rule’s ‘dual mandate to “civilize” while exploiting”.

Larrain (2013) categorises the development theories under three generations over which the capitalist system has evolved: the generation of competitive capitalism (1700-1860); the generation of imperialism (1860-1945); and the generation of late capitalism (1945-today). The

first generation includes the theories of classical political economy (Smith and Ricardo), the second generation includes the theories of neo-classical political economy (Marshall and Walras) and the classical theory of imperialism (Bukharin, Lenin and Luxemburg), while the third generation includes the theories of modernisation (Rostow *et al.*), neoliberalism (Friedman), world systems and unequal exchange (Wallerstein and Emmanuel). The first generation has explained development and capitalism since its first emergence in Great Britain and how it invaded the rest of the world to secure markets by force to produce the industrial economy; mainly by the colonial system (Larrain, 2013). In this era, the colonised countries (peripheries) owned the raw material to sell to the colonial country and import the products from them, but at a different level of values for the interest of the coloniser. In this era, the debate was about whether capitalism is the absolute mode of production, and about the prevalence of Marxist ideology in parallel to the emergence of the conscious working class.

In the age of imperialism, development theories focused their debate on the differentiation between the competition and conflict within the trade markets, the emergence of cartels and the large-scale production of goods at the expense of the development possibilities of colonised countries (Rodney, 2018; Fanon, 1963). The second decade of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of the imperialist economy, where the monopolies of the accumulated capital prevailed. It also witnessed the unprecedented concentration of financial capital and the establishment of international banking institutions, the export of capital to non-industrial countries and the territorial division of the world between the most advanced capitalist countries. During this era, the forced expansion of capitalism through colonialism prevailed. During the first quarter of the twentieth century and the rise of the recession period in the 1930s, the Keynesian economic theory and the welfare state emerged and prevailed till the early 1970s. The failure of capitalist countries to put colonised countries in the global south en route of industrialisation and development and the de-development it caused them (Havinden and Meredith, 2002; Rodney, 2018), have led to the de-colonisation movement and the serious efforts to delink from the capitalist economic powers (Larrain, 2013; Fanon, 1963). Fanon (1963) provided one of the key distinctions between the strategies applied to maintain the exploitive relationships of neoliberal powers, in their countries and in the colonies; these are the education system in the former, and the blurring of the education system and the “rifle butts and napalm” (p. 37) in the latter.

Havinden and Meredith (2002) argue that despite the ending of direct colonialism in the predominantly third world countries of the global south (Price, *et al.* 2013), the capitalist hegemonic powers persistently maintained unbalanced development in the third world; in order to maintain the extraction of food and raw materials at a cheaper cost, while selling their own products at the maximum level of interest. Therefore, the economic and modernisation theories that emerged over the second half of the last century sought to explain the processes by which developing countries can accomplish development and the changes they should make in their internal structures to reach this goal (Mehmet, 2002; Meari, 2008). Between the 1940s and 1970s, the state was given a maximum role in controlling and regulating the economic development of the country and applied more responsibilities to poor and disadvantaged sectors.

According to Larrain (2013), while decolonisation succeeded in Latin America, it almost failed in the remaining underdeveloped countries. The last quarter of the last century witnessed the emergence and prevalence of neoliberalism, or what Midgley describes as “new imperialism” (Cowley and Howlett, 1982; Midgley, 1981) and the Westernisation¹⁹ of the Third World as a strategy by which direct colonialism can be substituted to maintain the control of capitalist powers over underdeveloped countries and their resources, while promoting the belief that economic development is attainable without any challenges from local culture or context (Mehmet, 2002; Dossa, 2007; Cowley and Howlett, 1982; Meari, 2008; Rodney, 2018). It applies new tools and strategies to maintain underdevelopment and an unbalanced control for the West, such as Westernised aid, technical assistance and cultural colonialism (Rodney, 2018) or cultural genocide (as explained by Choate (2019) in the case of British and French colonialism in Canada). Nevertheless, after decades of efforts of marketing and applying the strategies of Westernisation and neoliberalism in the third world, the number of refugees, displaced people, the poor and unemployed has continuously increased (Dossa, 2007; Cowley and Howlett, 1982; Meari, 2008). Therefore, the terms colonisation and indigenisation refer to different meanings and types when we contextualise and discuss them within a specific country.

The case of Palestine represents one of the most brutal examples where social and economic de-development of Palestinian society (Tenenbaum, 2014; Seidel, 2016; Said, 1994; Chomsky, 1999; Loevy, 2016; Meari, 2017; Anderson, 2015) and neoliberalisation processes

¹⁹ “Westernization is reconstructing or shaping the rest of the world on Western norms and institutions. Central in Westernization is the idea of economic development as ‘progress’ determined according to the market forces of supply and demand which emerged in the West” (Mehmet, 2002, p. 14)

conducted by the Oslo peace-building project are lived and experienced by all Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. Majority of the Palestinians are refugees and displaced families, poor households, prisoners and families of martyrs and unemployed youth. The Israeli colonial occupation controls the 1967 borders (of the WB, Jerusalem and GS) with other countries and between the cities of the WB, with the GS and Jerusalem (Tenenbaum, 2014). For Tenenbaum (2014), Israeli governments have been applying these (and other) practices to establish and maintain economic colonialism in Palestine through all forms of exploitation of Palestinian human and natural resources. Yet, the Palestinian National Authority relinquished the local market to the private sector within margins both limited and controlled by Israel, according to the Paris Economic Protocols (1996) of the signed Oslo Agreement in 1993 (UNFCCC, 2015). Additionally, it privatised the higher education system, widened the margin for private education (basic and secondary) and adopted the World Bank means-test approach to social welfare services. Consequently, the types of social problems in which social workers intervene, and their root causes, demonstrate a profound presence of the political dimension that should be clearly reflected in the structure of social work education and practice in Palestine, so is a central concern for the indigenised identity of the profession. According to Peteet (2005), arguments about the processes by which socio-political identities are constructed and reconstructed, a conscious reconstructing and producing of a collective past is necessary to produce a collective present and future for the profession. This process is a central task in developing an indigenized identity of the social work profession in Palestine. The research conducted by Faraj in 2012 about the development history of this profession in Palestine is an especially important contribution to the issue of producing the sense of a collective past.

2.2 Neoliberalism: Definition and implications

2.2.1 The definition:

The foundations of neoliberalism were suggested by Friedman during the 1970s as a remedy to the crisis of inflation and stagnation in the world capitalist system and called for freeing the market from state control (Smith, 2006). Thorsen (2011) and Stark (2018) defined neoliberalism as a set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual, especially commercial, liberty, as well as strong private property rights. This conviction usually results, in turn, in a belief that the state ought to be minimal or at least drastically reduced in strength and

size and that any transgression by the state beyond its sole legitimate purpose is unacceptable. These beliefs could apply to the international level as well as local, where a system of free market and free trade ought to be implemented as well (Thorsen, 2011). Thorsen (2011), Spolander (2014) and Stark (2018), to mention a few, highlight some of the key features and elements of neoliberalism. These include mainly the adoption of the free market mechanism as the best way to organize all exchanges of goods and services, the individualised liberty and access to investment opportunities in the market, the efficient allocation of resources and the relocation of power, from the political process controlled by the state to the economic process controlled by private sector.

Neoliberalism, however, should be viewed and understood in the context that produced it and necessitated its existence. Cowley and Howlett (1982), Hill (2006) and Ferguson (2009) argue that neoliberalism is an advanced form of capitalism and that neoliberal capitalism leads to degradation, inhumanity and enhancing inequalities, since neoliberalism takes the profit as its 'God' (Ferguson, 2011, p. 2) and the 'motor' of policy, instead of the public good (Hill, 2006). Midgley, Cowley and Howlett (1981) and Yunong *et al.* (2008) regard the imported Westernised social work model to developing countries as 'professional imperialism'. Therefore, at the state level, as argued by Thorsen (2011) and Stark (2018), the government's call to privatise the ownership of public services and goods including welfare, education, health (i.e. communications, railways, mail delivery, traffic control, etc.), enables the management of welfare services according to business principles and techniques (managerialism), as well as cuts to state subsidies and expenditure on welfare and other public services.

At the global level, Hill (2006) argues that it calls for a removal of any barriers to international trade (free trade) by applying all relevant rules and regulations such as GATS²⁰, enabling wealthier countries to exempt themselves from these rules and regulations. Eventually, the effects of neoliberalism can be traced in the sub-systems of society with which regular citizens and families interact to improve their standard of living or survive. Welfare and education are sub-systems where such effects can be traced.

Midgley (2007) provided an account of the evolution of the unipolar world by comparing different neo-conservative governments of the United States of America. Midgley (2007) argues that neoliberalism is a key feature of the unipolarist strategy to lead the entire world to adopting

²⁰General Agreement on Trade and Services

a system of imperialist capitalism. Since its emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the major issue here is that hegemonic capitalist powers have applied a variety of policies to ‘rent’ political regimes in global south countries, to apply prescriptions extracted from the ten original economic policies that have been identified and developed under the “Washington Consensus”²¹ policies in 1989, by the USA, World Bank and IMF (Midgley, 2007; Smith, 2006; Williamson, 2004).

Sotomayor (2015), in his master thesis on “The Violence of Neoliberalism”, concluded that neoliberalism has defined the world more than any other system. Sotomayor (2015) presents neoliberalism as an ideology that enhances and reinvents capitalism and individual freedom. It is “the catalyst for much of the hostility in this globalized society where tension and poverty are causalities of individual and corporate prosperity” (Sotomayor, 2015, p. 5). The doctrine of neoliberalism, as a theory of political economic practices, aims at promoting human well-being through liberated individual entrepreneurial freedoms and capacities within the framework of strong private property rights, free markets and trade (Sotomayor, 2015). For Smith (2012), neoliberalism is committed to laissez-faire economic policies and any type of governmental interference. It is about economic liberalism at the state and interstate levels, spread freely or by force (Smith, 2012²²). At the individual level, neoliberalism promotes unemployment, inequality and poverty, which are blamed on individuals rather than structural constraints since it turns the focus of the role from the community to the individual where the former is discarded as an unnecessary component of the welfare state (Smith, 2012; Spolander, 2014; Stark, 2018). The element of free market economics, privatisation and welfare state withdrawal, that swept the first, second and third world countries, became salient to the concept of neoliberalism by the early 1980s onwards (Venugopal, 2015).

²¹ The Washington consensus refers to “a wide measure of agreement in Washington that the following ten policy actions were desirable in just about all the Latin American countries: 1. Budget deficits . . . should be small enough to be financed without recourse to the inflation tax. 2. Public expenditure should be redirected from politically sensitive areas that receive more resources than their economic return can justify. . . toward neglected fields with high economic returns and the potential to improve income distribution, such as primary education and health, and infrastructure. 3. Tax reform . . . so as to broaden the tax base and cut marginal tax rates. 4. Financial liberalization, involving an ultimate objective of market-determined interest rates. 5. A unified exchange rate at a level sufficiently competitive to induce a rapid growth in non-traditional exports. 6. Quantitative trade restrictions to be rapidly replaced by tariffs, which would be progressively reduced until a uniform low rate in the range of 10 to 20 percent was achieved. 7. Abolition of barriers impeding the entry of FDI (foreign direct investment). 8. Privatization of state enterprises. 9. Abolition of regulations that impede the entry of new firms or restrict competition. 10. The provision of secure property rights, especially to the informal sector” (Williamson, 2004, p.196).

²² www.thesocietypages.org/sociologylens/2012/10/02

2.2.2 The implications of neoliberalism in the developing countries:

Hill (2006) and Abu-Awwad (2013) summarise the key implications of neoliberalism on public policies of governments. The first of these implications are the cuts to public services in the post-war welfare state, including minimal state subsidies and support that was termed as “sound fiscal policy” in developed countries. In developing countries, it has been a condition of structural adjustment programmes and loans provided by the World Bank Group (WBG) and the IMF (Smith, 2006). Secondly, is the privatisation of public services, which means transferring publicly owned services to private ownership, leaving these services to the market rules and business principles such as competition in prices, quality and marketing. Eventually, these results in differentiating people in classes based on their financial capacities to access (buy) a specific education service at a specific price. The remaining public schooling is left for those who cannot afford the costs of private schooling and live with “perceived” low quality educational outcomes. Thirdly, are the cuts in labour costs and leaving the role of setting the pay scale and recruitment conditions to the owner of the privatised service which in turn compromises the quality of the service and the workforce rights and entitlements. This aspect results in concentrating the qualified human resources into the well-paid opportunities inside or outside the given country. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) was one of the most effective mechanisms towards imposing neoliberal policies at international and national levels²³.

Wagner *et al.* (2011) and Hill (2006) argue that neoliberalism has shifted the focus of education institutions, for example, from the advancement in social justice and the equal access to well-being opportunities, to the preparedness for competitive economic markets. This impact of neoliberalism, however, can be traced in the higher education of other countries, including those in the global south. The important concept presented by Wagner *et al.* (2011) is the position of higher education institutions (i.e. universities and post-secondary colleges) within neoliberal systems and its effects on their key functions and the shifts in its priorities. Both denoted that oppressive and dominating education systems influence what is taught, how it is

²³ According to Hill (2006), all countries which signed the GATS accepted removal of all types of barriers to international trade, capitalist enterprises and others including education and health services, and applying “free trade” rules and regulations at the expense of any local policies that may favour national interests or workforces. This applies to the edu-business and trade across borders. The USA and EU countries are excluded from the application of GATS.

taught and what students expect to learn. The curricula of a neoliberal education are constructed to meet the demands of a competitive and individualised market economy, with lower priority for and interest in, social justice, compared to profitability. The competition on limited resources, excellence and meritocracy are indications of neoliberal systems, which produce forms of discriminatory education policies and practices (Wagner *et al.*, 2011).

At the practice level, Lavalette *et al.*, (2018) argue that the impact of neoliberalism is on the roles of social workers in designing and implementing interventions. Neoliberalism alienates them from the helping process since they implement the instructions of their employers, who are concerned with the compliance to terms and conditions of their donors. Accordingly, social workers are not implementing the knowledge and skills they learned to be the change agents. Additionally, Lavalette *et al.* (2018) highlight the limited or no control of social workers over the resources they may need to help the people they work with. In a neoliberal welfare system, professionalism alienates the service users from social workers and the processes of making decisions that influence their lives.

In Palestine, the social work profession (at the education and practice levels) is challenged by identity and position within a context in which the two versions of capitalism exist; neoliberalism and colonialism. Further, it is expected that the challenges facing the social work profession in Palestine would be concentrated in the areas of responsiveness of social work education and interventions to the needs and expectations of Palestinian society, and the extent to which the policy and legal environment are facilitating/hindering its functions; given that social workers are alienated from their clients and the process of determining what to deliver to them and how. At the social work education and training level, one can expect that social work students, service users and employers are not part of the process of designing the curricula and the active learning-teaching process. They are alienated at this level too.

The review of the social work curricula in the five universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2012, for example, showed that none of the social work programmes in the five universities offer a course in critical/radical social work, political economy, or social work interventions under colonial Israeli occupation and so on (Faraj, 2017). Therefore, for many Palestinian professionals and practitioners, social work education in Palestine is perceived as standing on the wrong side of the battle, because it is teaching classical capitalist social work

theories and models to address problems that originated and are perpetuated by colonial and neoliberal systems and structures (Faraj, 2012, unpublished paper).

2.3 The duality of colonialism and neoliberalism in Palestine:

On daily basis, Palestinian citizens in the West Bank are living lives that are tailored and imposed on them by the Palestinian Authority and the colonial Israeli state. Both are political regimes made by the neoliberal hegemonic powers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The price of the bread they eat, the price and choices of the educational services they consume, the legal environment in which they live, the clothes by which they cover their bodies are determined and offered by the neoliberal projects in Palestine (Leuenberger and El-Atrash, 2015).

The development possibilities of the Palestinian society still, by and large, have been hijacked by the existence of the continuous colonial project in Palestine (Bahdi and Kassis, 2016). The NAKBA²⁴ of 1948 has profoundly influenced and is still influencing the quality of the socioeconomic and political life of the land and people of Palestine (people and land) (Ali, 2012; Fischbach, 2010; Demichelis, 2015; Peteet, 2005; Greenstein, 2019)²⁵. According to Tartir (2013) and Khalidi (2019), signing the Oslo Accords in 1994 has, firstly, put an end to the national liberation project, and secondly, brought another layer of oppression and marginalisation of the Palestinian people. Tartir (2013) describes the PNA-Oslo project as:

“The PA, Israel, and the international community have decided that the best and only route for state building is through the four pillars of security sector reform and enforcement of the rule of law; building accountable PA institutions; provision of effective public service delivery; and achievement of private sector-led economic growth in an open and free market economy” (p470).

²⁴ “Prior to the 1948 war, over 1,308,000 Arabs lived in Palestine. During the fighting, more than one half of these people were uprooted from their homes, mostly those living in the 77.2 percent of Palestine that emerged from the war as the new state of Israel. Approximately 750,000 refugees fled or were expelled by Israeli forces. Two-thirds of these found refuge in the remaining 22.8 percent of Palestine controlled by Arab forces after the war (the West Bank and Gaza).iii Somewhere around 300,000 other refugees found themselves in the surrounding Arab countries”(Fischbach, 2010,p.2)

²⁵ “A study conducted from 1953-62 by the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) identified 6,057,032 dunums of individually-owned land (one dunum = 1,000 m. sq.) abandoned by refugees – a huge area, especially considering that before the war, Jews had owned only 1,734,000 dunums in all of Palestine, 6.59 percent of the total surface area”(Fischbach, 2010,p.3).

Khalidi and Samour, (2011) argue that the PLO drift to neoliberalism started a few years earlier than Oslo, in 1989 when the Madrid conference was held on the Palestinian question. This was the turning point when the PLO opened its arms to the USA and key European players to engage in steering the so-called “peace process” through prolonged and endless cycles of peace negotiations (Khalidi and Samour, 2011). For Tabar and Salamanca (2015), Khalidi *et al* (2011) and Merz (2012), the Oslo project was more than a shift in the centre of political decision making regarding the conflict and struggle for national liberation. It embodied a radical shift from anti-colonial and economic resistance strategies to strategies of reinforcing dependency on the colonial economy and its donors (state and non-state) and caused the shift of the Palestinian economy from a national liberation economy to the neoliberal economy. Twenty-two years after the signing of the Oslo Accords by the PLO²⁶ in 1994, Israel still has the absolute upper hand²⁷ in security control over the West Bank through a strict and intensive security regime (See Annex 5) (OCHA, 2018; Azzouni, 2010; Hanafi and Tabar, 2003; Le More, 2008).

Between 1994 and the present, Palestinians have faced oppression resulting from both Israeli colonial occupation that is still in control of the economy and security of the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip (See Annex 5), and the neoliberal policies that the PNA applies as part of its obligations under the Oslo Accords -in particular, the Paris Protocol of 1996 and the World Bank structural adjustment policy (Azzouni, 2010; Tartir, 2013; Le More, 2008; UNFCCC, 2015). Bornstein (2001) presents his own experiences in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 1988 and 2000 from an anthropological point of view which offers a snapshot of the sufferings of Palestinian citizens and communities under Israeli colonial authority as well as under the PNA’s repressive practices. For Bornstein (2001), it is the traumatised Palestinian prisoners of the Israeli occupation first, then of the PNA security intelligence, that exemplifies the incarceration and torture by these two authorities against the same population, because they are determined to continue the struggle against colonial occupation. After 1994, one of the main duties for the PNA security apparatus was to ‘show’ their control over vanguards of the national resistance against Israeli occupation, simply because for the PNA leadership the Oslo project was the only way to national independence, which was an unpopular and uncommon stance

²⁶ Palestinian Liberation Organization was established in 1964, which was the period of transnational liberation and post-colonial states emergence era in the global south (Shweiki, 2014)

²⁷ “Within the Oslo ‘security first’ paradigm, progress in the political process, Israeli redeployments from the oPt, and ceding control to the PA were all conditional upon Palestinian security performance as judged by Israel” (Le More, 2008, p.6).

among the Palestinians. Bornstein (2001) also highlights the need for interventions with thousands of traumatised prisoners that are beyond apathetic humanism and need help to reconceptualise their social world. In this process, social welfare workers, like many other professionals, could play a critical role, according to Bornstein (2001).

Along with the analysis of Wagner *et al.* (2011) on the consequences of neoliberalism, Khalidi and Samour (2011), Hussein (2013) and Shweiki (2014) conclude that the PLO has accommodated its position towards Israel, global powers and lures of neoliberalism since the 1990s, which is the case for many post-colonial countries.²⁸ Accordingly, PA economic development strategies that, over the years that followed the development agenda, were drafted by international economic development aid agencies (governmental and non-governmental), were focused on supporting the PA as long as it remained a compliant player (Abu-Eisheh, 2014). Therefore, the PNA ended up both administering its civil services and applying a coordinated security system (with the Israeli military system) to protect the occupation rather than the Palestinian citizens.

The impacts of neoliberalism on Palestinian society have been and are still debated by Palestinian political parties, elites, academics, researchers, civil society and other actors (Tabar and Salamanca, 2015). The consensus between all parties is of high significance to the land and education of any development options in Palestine (Jabir, 2011; Al-Awar and Hassan, 2013). However, the remaining land of the West Bank is either inhabited by Palestinian residents or subject to confiscation for Zionist settlements (Jabir, 2011; Wendly, 2018; Tenenbaum, 2014), leaving the higher education system open to privatisation since 1994 (*ibid*). Concurrently, the conditional funding channelled to CSOs has been directed to serve the agenda of neutralising them in the national liberation battle (Jabir, 2011).

Along those lines, a series of international, regional and local reform initiatives/structural adjustments (Smith, 2006) were proposed and discussed for the Palestinian NGO sector initiative, the Palestinian private sector initiative and the Palestinian political parties' initiative (Abu- Dayah, 2004; Nakhleh, 2011; Jad, 2007). However, it was clear that each initiative reflected and mirrored the perceptions and interests of its sponsors in the required reforms. The private sector initiative, for example, called for comprehensive review and restructuring of the PNA legal systems and frameworks. It called for the institutionalisation of the PNA civil and

²⁸(www.jacoin.mag.com/2014)

security apparatuses to ensure maximum commitment to the policy of free market economy as well as the maximum privatisation of the public services. Further, it called for the minimum interventions of the PNA in international trade agreements and opening the door for the private sector to lead the development process of the local economy (Abu- Dayah, 2004; Nakhleh, 2011).

The impact of neoliberal policies in Palestine, which is already under colonial occupation, was considered devastating to the welfare of all Palestinians since it added more layers of oppression (Al-Botmeh 2015; Tartir, 2013; Tabar and Salamanca, 2015; Khalidi, 2019). Tabar and Salamanca (2015) and Merz (2012; Hamdan, 2011; Nakhleh, 2011; Haddad, 2011) consider the Oslo Agreement a colonial treaty, that reproduced and perpetuated the socioeconomic inequalities, dependency and the outright rejection of self-determination, as well as fragmented the Palestinian national liberation movement, accelerated land loss and lead to a severe drainage of natural resources to settlers and their colonial government (Greenstein, 2019).

In addition to the impacts on the education system (that will be discussed in more detail in the following section), the health conditions in the WB and GS are in continuous deterioration due to the siege on the Gaza Strip and the security restrictions on people's movement within the West Bank (Bruhn, 2006; Moughrabi, 2015; Merli *et al.*, 2004; Sela, 2016). Gordon (2009), who was an international social work student doing her field placement in Palestine, provides an eye-witnesses testimony to the colonial security measures on social welfare, and the physical and mental health of Palestinians who encounter check points daily.

2.4 Colonialism, neoliberalism and education in Palestine:

The significance of focusing on the influences of colonialism and neoliberalism on the education system in Palestine, and its influences on peoples' lives, stems from the value of education for them, particularly to improve the quality of their present lives and to challenge the uncertainty brought of their future possibilities. It is a strategic means for them to preserve their inherited culture, to pass down the nation's aspirations through generations, to combat inequality, and to engage minds intellectually in the battle for national liberation. In fact, all the occupiers of the Palestinian land and its people realised the centrality of education for Palestinians and managed it accordingly, including the late Ottomans, the British Mandate government, the Jordanian and Egyptian governments, and the Israeli Zionist and colonial state.

2.4.1 Education as a survival strategy:

Feldmann (2016) discusses the practices of colonial powers towards the education systems of its colonised communities, as part of his comparisons between British, Spanish and French colonial policies in different parts of the world. Feldmann (2016) highlights the centrality of these systems in the colonisers' policies, in terms of the role of education in the economic and social development of any society and the control its systems have been directed to serve the interests of the colonisers. Feldmann (2016) argues that the policies of the British Mandate government in Palestine were directed to confine the advanced education of Palestinians, in order to control the number of those who were competent and qualified to occupy leading positions in the education system. The purpose was to ensure these positions were maintained by the traditional leadership, which comprised individuals who were less competent and insufficiently qualified (Feldmann. 2016). According to Feldmann (2016, p. 38), the purpose of such policies was to “avoid the creation of a nationalist movement” through an enlightened elite. Therefore, the colonial Mandate government did not permit the establishment of any Palestinian HEIs between 1918 and 1948, which in fact defied its Mandate responsibility, granted by the League of Nations in 1922 (Batanjeh, 2015).

This view, of using the education system either for oppression and maintaining oppressors, or for using it as a vehicle for liberation, is presented and argued by Al-Zaroo (2003), Ramahi (2016) and Madiah (2014), with the focus on how Palestinians in general have been subject to the former by their colonial occupiers, and how they have conceived it as the means for liberation. Ramahi (2016, p. 2) described such policies as:

“Historically, formal education in Palestine has been controlled and administered by foreign rule. Over the years these powers varied their education agendas to maintain the status quo. Accordingly, knowledge and learning came to be associated with the power structures and ruling elite, and alienated the indigenous inhabitants from the means and processes of their own education”

Education is one of the most valuable resources for the development of any society (Easton, Safadi, and Crea, 2017; Alzaroo and Hunt, 2003; Al-Awar and Hassan, 2013). It became more significant after the Second World War with the adoption of the concept of “free education for all” by all countries that went through post-conflict colonial development stages (Abu-Awwad, 2013). In this sense, Palestine is no exception, except that it has been under the

British occupation (1917-1948) and remains under Israeli colonial occupation that started in 1948. Up until 1994, Palestinians had never had an education system of their own (Ramahi, 2016; Ibrahim, 2013; Wolf, 1982; Hashweh and Hashweh, 1999; Sanchez *et al.*, 2011; Alfoqahaa, 2015). The British Mandate government, between 1917 and 1948, deliberately neglected the school curricula and kept it isolated from the developments and changes in its local, regional and international contexts (Madiyah, 2014). Madiyah (2014) points to the serious role of the British Mandate government that monopolised the administration of the education system, in order to control what was taught (content), who was teaching it (human resources) and how it was taught (teaching methods). The role of the education system is central to shaping the future of a nation, and the British Mandate government, being aware of such a fact, abusively controlled the education system in Palestine to accomplish specific goals to aid the establishment of Zionist projects in Palestine (Madiyah, 2014).

Nevertheless, the PNA has been negotiating the content of the curricula of basic and secondary education with the colonial Israeli government since 1994, particularly regarding the content related to Palestine's own history (Ramahi, 2016). Abu Awwad (2013) argues that the adoption of neoliberal policies by the PNA has contributed to the degradation of the education sector in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, especially via the application of privatisation and a free market economy. Such policies, for example, encouraged private schooling services which resulted in dividing Palestinian society between those with financial access to private schooling and those who cannot (and have to go to comparatively cheaper, lower quality public schooling). This has also deeply affected the HEI services in many ways according to Abu-Awwad (2013).

2.4.2 Neoliberalism and higher education in Palestine:

Much like the pre-secondary education in Palestine was subject to adverse conditions²⁹ (Batanjeh, 2015) and impacts of political instability and destruction caused by colonial occupiers and foreign Arab governments, the tertiary education system has been exposed to a more adverse and serious implications of the political context prior to Oslo, and the neoliberal policies that ensued it. Ramahi (2016) describes the effects of this role of the education services (pre-secondary and post-secondary education) as a tool for securing socio-economic mobility and

²⁹“ Some examples of adverse conditions in this study included the following: unprovoked arrests of student, instructors, and employees; unjustified closing schools; curriculum interference; not granting permission for use of advanced technical devices or equipment imperative to education requirements; imposed military checkpoints; and the building of concrete walls to divide towns and villages” (Batanjeh, 2015, p.8).

redressing the impact of national exclusion. Award-bearing formal education was a means to survival, which may account for why, for many years, Palestinians have had “the highest rate of participation in education in the Arab World” (Ramahi, 2016, p 9). Ibrahim (2017) argues that for Palestinians, university education has become a strategic asset that supplies them with the human capitalist needs for socioeconomic and political development. Nevertheless, apart from the effects of the colonial occupation, the challenges facing the higher education sector in Palestine are found to be very similar to those facing this sector in the Arab Middle Eastern countries as described by Rowmani (2009).

Until 1948, no single Palestinian higher education institution had been established (Sanchez *et al.*, 2011). According to Foqahaa (2015), Demichelis (2015) and Batanjeh (2015), the government of the colonial British Mandate refused to establish any Palestinian HEI over the Mandate period while granting this right to the Jewish community. As such, it rejected the request of Haj Amin Al-Husseini in the 1930s to establish the University of Al-Aqsa Mosque in equality with the Jewish community, which was given the right to establish the Hebrew University in 1925³⁰ (Demichelis, 2015). Baramki (1996) notes that two years after the establishment of the PNA, “Palestinian higher education set out its vision to reverse the brain drain”. Baramki (1996), Hallaj (1980), Moughrabi, 2015 and Bruhn (2006), to mention a few, confirmed that no Palestinian universities existed prior to 1967, so Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip would get their tertiary education from Arab, European and North American universities. The high expense of studying abroad has made these opportunities accessible only for the wealthiest Palestinian families (Bruhan, 2006). Now, in the WB and GS, there are about 49 higher education institutions (of which about 34 are in the WB and 15 in GS) that are delivering post-secondary, academic and vocational, education and training programmes in about 300 fields. Most of these are non-governmental institutions (Koni, Zainal and Ibrahim, 2012). The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) was established in 1998, four years after the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (Koni, Zainal and Ibrahim, 2012).

Before and after the establishment of the PNA in 1994, the Israeli restrictions on the movement between Palestinian areas resulted in establishing more accessible universities within the main cities (particularly in the West Bank) (Bruhn, 2006; Sela, 2016; Hallaj, 1980;

³⁰Also, the Technology University was founded in 1924 (Batanjeh, 2015)

Moughrabi, 2015; Merli *et al.*, 2004). Under these pressures, and the awakening national resistance, three universities emerged as an expansion and upgrading of colleges that existed at the time (Bir Zeit University in 1972, Bethlehem University in 1973, Al-Najah University in 1977 and Gaza Islamic University in 1978) (Alfoqahaa, 2015), while some other universities were established in the following two decades (1980s and 1990s). Between 1972 and 2006, the USA vetoed 24 UN Security Council resolutions condemning the practices of the colonial occupation, including the adverse policies and Israeli Military Orders against Palestinian HEIs (Batanjeh, 2015).

In August 1994, the PNA established the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE). The Palestinian HEIs used to follow the guidelines of the PLO before the establishment of the PNA in 1994 but shifted to the PNA's MoEHE after 1994. Integrating the neoliberal policies and agenda into the policies of the Palestinian MoEHE, particularly privatisation and marketisation (Ferguson, 2009), necessitated the restructuring of its academic programmes and priorities. Priority has been given to programmes of income generation focus, like business administration, IT, law, medical sciences and other industry fields of study. Accordingly, competitiveness and consumerism have been normalised behind the policies of HEIs in Palestine. According to Abu-Awwad (2013), this resulted in two main phenomena:

- The focus on qualifying graduates with intermediary knowledge and skills to pursue cheap labour work (i.e. technical and vocational training and education).
- Redeeming the quantity and quality of social and human sciences in local universities, that are important in dealing with the daily concerns of Palestinian society. For example, the disproportionate attention and support provided and channelled into research in other streams, compared to research in human and social sciences.

2.5 Colonialism, neoliberalism and social work in Palestine:

2.5.1 Colonialism, neoliberalism and social sciences:

The EACEA report (2012) highlights serious weaknesses in social sciences programmes in the HEIs. The report does not attribute these weaknesses to any economic and/or political reasons, but Tamari (1994), Abu-Awwad (2013) and Hamdan (2010), to mention few, do. Privatisation of the HEIs and the diminishing support from the PNA has resulted in promoting policies of profitability, enforcing cuts on budgets for social sciences and investments in human

resources development and social research (Merz, 2012; Abu-Awwad, 2013; Hamdan, 2010; DeVoir and Tartir, 2009).

One of the areas where neoliberalism has hit hard on higher education, in general is research (particularly in social sciences, including social work). Hanafi (2010) reported that in East Arab countries, there are 122 research centres, out of which 42 are in the occupied Palestinian territories. According to Hanafi (2010), these research centres emerged during the political transitions in these countries, with the generous support of international donors as part of their agenda to enhance the roles of civil societies. Themes of social research in these centres were largely determined, or at least influenced, by the policy agenda of these international donors (i.e. the economic development priorities within local communities, the feasibility of some university programmes in the Palestinian local market, the effectiveness of vocational training centres in the WB and GS) (Hanafi, 2010).

In the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt): 13 out of the 42 research centres (31%) are NGO-based centres that focus mainly on research; 24 out of the 42 (59%) are centres attached to NGOs working in the fields of development and advocacy; and only 4 out of the 42 are university research centres (10%). Hanafi (2010) claims that this reality has discouraged the engagement of Palestinian academics and graduates in social research as well as weakened the quality and quantity of research production. The limited number of experienced researchers in Palestine, who are linking their individual interests with research projects that are donor-driven and funded, has created a culture of monopolising research contracts, whereby access to the research market for new research fellows has become heavily controlled and restricted (Hanafi, 2010). Therefore, it is common to find a single researcher who is contracted by different research centres to conduct many research projects at the same time, while many academics and graduates are waiting for a single opportunity to participate in one research project in the country (Hanafi, 2010); DeVoir and Tartir, 2009; Tabar and Salamanca, 2015). Hanafi (2010) claims that the increase in the number of researches centres in these countries, including Palestine, is a product of the neoliberal policies of international donors, who have focused research topics and themes according to their own priorities, rather than the local agenda and needs. The death of social work literature in Palestine, or other streams of social sciences (i.e. sociology, anthropology, or psychology), can be attributed to a great extent to this phenomenon. Researches in these fields

are usually self-funded or partially supported by universities or their partner universities, but not international donors (Ibrahim and Hreish, individual interviews, 2018).

2.5.2 Colonialism, neoliberalism and social work:

Clarkson (1976), Osei-Hwedie (1993), Twikirize (2014), Gray and Coates (2010), Midgley (2007) and many other scholars present some of the challenges to social work education in developing countries/ the Third World. Many of these challenges can be observed and identified in Palestine as well (i.e. curriculum relevance, identity, functionality, qualifications of social work instructors, language barriers, limited research, etc). However, Clarkson's (1976) presentation includes an argument of how British universities contributed to the development of social work education in these countries. Similarly, so does the Kreitzer's (2012) presentation about the impact of social work programmes in Europe, the United States and Canada by transferring their model for many other countries, mainly through partnerships or the academics, who received their education in these countries. Midgley (2007), also argues that 'professional imperialism' was transcended in Third World countries by scholars who resumed their education in the West under the banner of modernisation.

Clarkson (1976), Cowley and Howlett (1982), Grigorenko (2007), and Ragab (2016) also highlight the role of qualified professionals and academics from Western countries, or those who resumed their postgraduate studies there, in setting the education system and designing the curriculum in the third world countries. They, like many other scholars, came across the impact on the relevance of social work education in local contexts, which is a key feature of the colonisation of the education systems in these countries. Ragab (2016) argues that social work education and practice in the global south countries would need more than indigenisation, since it doesn't reflect the need for radical alteration of the Western models with properly fitting local models (Price *et al.*, 2013).

In review of the historical developments of the 'indigenisation' movement of the social sciences, including social work, Yunong *et al.* (2008), Osei-Hwedi (1997), Twikirize (2014) and Gray and Coates (2010) consider it a postcolonial phenomenon that emerged in the aftermath of WWII; since the colonial powers used social science education as a tool to perpetuate their control and existence in the Third World countries. They consider, therefore, the intellectual or professional decolonisation an important process to fulfil the liberation and independence of these countries. According to Yunong *et al.*'s (2008) review of relevant literature, three models

of indigenisation were highlighted to denote the varying conceptions of the process: the transnational model; the theoretical reasoning model; and the grounded model. The first was based on the critique of the blind copying of Western theories and practice models to the non-Western context and called for local research to select what was feasible and applicable to the local context. The second focuses on the critique of the cultural relevance of imported Western theories and models of practice to the local cultural context and calls for a key role of local research to make them more culturally sensitive or relevant theories and models. The third model 'grounded' calls for the key role of local scholars to develop/produce localised, research-based knowledge that reflect the problems in the local context and the effective models of interventions to address them. Key to the indigenisation process is the language of teaching and the development of local content, the local research for a locally prioritised agenda, and the local theoretical and methodological reorientation (Yunong *et al.*, 2008).

Along those lines, Coats *et al.*, (2016) and Yan *et al.*, 2007 are still questioning the extent to which international and national leading bodies in social work (i.e. IFSW and IASSW) succeeded in promoting the indigenisation and cultural relevance of the profession in the postcolonial era and contexts. Ragab (2016), alternatively, supported the call for social work 'authentication', as explained by Yunong *et al.* (2008) and Gray and Coates (2010), to reflect the originality and radicalism of local models of social work intervention. Therefore, in such local contexts, authenticating, radicalising or indigenising the education system and curriculum can be viewed as part of the national resistance to colonial projects. However, in some contexts, the local capacities needed to radicalise the profession might be insufficient to entirely escape Western theories and models of practice. Additionally, Yang, *et al.*, (2008) highlights the fact that 'indigenisation' is not a linear import-adapt process; the concern of the role of local political context confirms that it requires more than adaptation to local cultural context. Rather, it is a process, not a one-shot operation, of planning and implementing the gradual shift from the currently Westernised to the aspired radicalised social work theories and models.

In the Palestinian context, for example, the call would be for more than adaptation to the local cultural context. It would need the development of social work curricula and practice models that are effective in the decolonisation process. For example, social work students in the five Palestinian universities need to understand the impact of segregation via the apartheid wall (Zangl, 2012; Tilley, 2009; Leuenberger and El-Atrash, 2015), land confiscation and

displacement (Jeronen, 2019; Tabar and Salamanca. 2015; Shabaneh, 2012) and imprisonment (Bornstein, 2001) on the social, psychological and economic life of the Palestinian communities. They need to analyse how this impact is linked to social work theories and values and develop the strategies to address them. Similarly, they need to be aware of and able to analyse the variation of effects of daily injuries, arrests, killings, curfews, checkpoint, house demolitions, economic suffocation and other colonial practices on the well-being of Palestinian society at the individual and collective levels. Social work students recognise these traumatic events because they are happening on the daily, to them personally, within their neighbourhoods, local communities, or elsewhere in the larger community. The issue is that these experiences have little or no margin in classroom discussions/analysis and that the social work curricula do not cover these realities at the theoretical, analytical or skill development levels. Therefore, all employers have had to arrange special training courses for new social workers on the interventions they apply, such as: Classroom-Based Intervention (CBI), that was developed by the YMCA-Beit Sahour³¹ programme and has been applied since the first Intifada; and Qader³² Community-Based Mobilisation (CBM), the manual of which was developed for working with people with disabilities in the last 7 years, which has replaced the CBR approach brought to Palestine in the 1990s through the ILO and other international organisations³³.

To this end, the term ‘indigenisation’ in this research will be used to refer to the processes by which the ‘indigenous social work in Palestine’ (prior to the emergence of formal social work education) and selected elements from the international ‘mainstream’ social work (that fit with necessary adaptations) can be integrated into an effective Palestinian framework that is compatible to deal with the social problems generated by the socioeconomic and political context, particularly the settler colonialist Israeli occupation and the neoliberal policies imposed by imperialist powers in the global North countries (Greenstein, 2019). The successful models of

³¹ Beit Sahour is a Palestinian city in Bethlehem governorate in the southern area of the West Bank.

³² Qader is one of the well-known organizations working with the disability rehabilitation in Bethlehem / WB.

³³ Annex 10 summarizes a case study of an intervention conducted by a Palestinian social worker with a group of solid waste pickers in the southern areas of the West Bank. It illustrates the limitations in the social work education and training in providing social work students with the relevant knowledge and skills to intervene with Palestinian clients encountering life difficulties caused by the colonised and neoliberalised contexts. None of the social work education and training curricula in the Palestinian universities qualified the social work students to intervene effectively in similar conditions. In 2017, the World Bank Group (WBG) hired the same social worker (who conducted this project in Southern West Bank) to apply the same intervention in Southern Gaza Strip area because the first one won the best WBG project in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In 2018, the WBG hired the social worker to develop a manual for this intervention to be adopted and applied in other regions in MENA region.

intervention, as explained in the examples above, reflect a wealth of successful experiences in indigenising social work interventions in Palestine, as well as are models from which other countries can learn.

The impact of the globalised neoliberal policies on social work education and practice resulted in many similarities in the challenges facing the profession in many countries. Fergusson (2009) argues that the increased levels of poverty and unemployment due to the free market economy (brought by neoliberalism) increased the demand on social welfare services. This, for example, has resulted in overloaded social workers, whose capacities to implement professional interventions (taught at universities) have become extremely limited due to the top-down interventions imposed by donors, with consideration to their recommended intervention strategies (Safadi, Easton and Lubben, 2015; Hamdan, 2010; Hammami, 1995; Hanieh, 2012).

Spolander (2014) and Stark (2018) explain the ways by which neoliberalism has influenced social work through the shift of responsibilities for managing the social welfare services, from the state to civil society and the private sector. Spolander's (2014) and Stark's (2018) explanations, however, do not apply typically to the Palestinian context, which is a key variation between the Palestinian and other contexts that Spolander (2014) raise for consideration as well. In the capitalist system, Stark (2018) describes social workers as "the nurses of capitalism" (p. 51), where in the neoliberal and depoliticised sense, like Palestine, the function of social work education and practice can be considered as "nursing the neoliberal and colonial systems". In this sense, any indigenised form of social work, if bound by and restricted to cultural relevance, while accommodating the local experiences by extending social services, would be in capacity of 'nursing' neoliberal and colonial systems. Therefore, it should integrate its contributions and commitments to the national resistance with this colonial system and its neoliberal peace-building project in the WB and GS.

The influences of neoliberal policies on the social work profession in the Palestinian context can be found on two levels; the privatisation of the HEI (in which social work education and training is an integral part), and the international conditional funding to public welfare services and civil society sector (See Chart II-1). In the general sense, the effects of neoliberalism on the two systems in Palestine (HE, the public welfare services and the voluntary social services provided by CS sector) are similar to those in other parts of the world (particularly the global south countries). This makes them global issues that should be addressed

locally, through strategies developed according to the specifications of the Palestinian context. One of the key elements that would require unique strategies is the political context, particularly considering the WB territories occupied by Israel, while the GS is under its siege. This condition essentially turns the purpose of the services provided by these systems (at least the HE and CS) towards enhancing the national resistance and decolonisation, rather than maintaining the colonial occupation. The roles of the Palestinian community and civil society organisations (including all grassroots) are essential in planning and conducting national advocacy campaigns to influence HE policies, PNA policies, and re-negotiating the conditions of international donors.

Chart II-1 demonstrates the ways in which HEIs responded to privatisation policies and how the public and voluntary sectors responded to international donor conditions. Within the HEIs, the impact of these policies and conditions were harder on the social sciences, including social work, because social sciences/work students come mainly from the poor and middle classes. Raising tuition fees restricted the economic access of these classes to HEI. Applying loose admission policies increased the enrolment rate of students which could afford to cover these tuition fees. These institutions also applied highly conservative human resource policies, by which the number of qualified, full-time staff was maintained, and the number of part-time staff increased. The competition between institutions to enrol new students jeopardised the programmatic coordination between them, which resulted in minimum attention/concern for the required synergy and for developing a set of minimum standards for social work programmes to meet to qualify a competent Palestinian social worker. With the total ignorance of the labour market and the limited coordination with employers, social work education and training programmes continued at full speed with enrolment capacity, which resulted in an oversupply of poorly trained social work graduates compared with the diminishing employment capacities of the local labour market.

Concurrently, international donors to the PNA gradually shifted part of its responsibility of responding to the needs of poor and disadvantaged individuals, families and divisions of the Palestinian civil sector. This was reflected in the increase in number of CSOs by 30% in 1994-2000 (MAS, 2008). Accordingly, the PNA maintained its budget for the Ministry of Social Welfare at a constant level of support to the poor and other disadvantaged groups, while maintained the employment of new social workers at a marginal level. To this end, the PNA had to adopt the Proxy Means-Test Formula (PMTF), which focused PNA interventions on cash-

transfer services. This narrowed the roles of the social workers down to home visits, to check on families' eligibility for the poverty alleviation program through the cash transfer service. In May 2019, the PNA/ MoSD launched the project of reforming what it called 'the Case Management System', which included the applications of the PMTF. The review of the Terms of Reference for this project reveals, among many other details, a task to review and adapt the job description of social workers. The same shift was adopted by UNRWA in 2009/2010 in a process of harmonising relief and social services with the Ministry of Social Development, which had started piloting the PMTF in 2006/07. According to Fergusson's (2009) analysis, donors such as the World Bank imposed the proxy-means testing formula as a strategy to combat poverty, which is mainly a computerised process. This role-shift leaves the social workers demoralised and frustrated; it negatively influences their self-esteem and professional identity (Fergusson, 2009; Easton, Safadi, and Crea, 2017; Lunday and Wormer, 2007; Costello *et al.*, 2015).

The experiences of all international donors, including UN agencies, the civil society sector and the PNA (since its establishment), shows that poverty, unemployment and all other forms and levels of suffering, both for Palestinian citizens and local communities, cannot be addressed, regardless of how much money is allocated; as long as the colonial Israeli occupation has control over the resources and possibilities for peoples' self-determination. Indigenising social work education and practice needs to be tuned towards this end and all types of interventions must be managed on the temporariness of the current political conditions. Addressing this shift in the focus of social work education and training, as well as the practice of public and voluntary sectors, should be reflected in any strategies designed to address the challenges facing the social work profession in Palestine.

Chart II-1

Impact of Neoliberalism on the Social Work Profession in Palestine

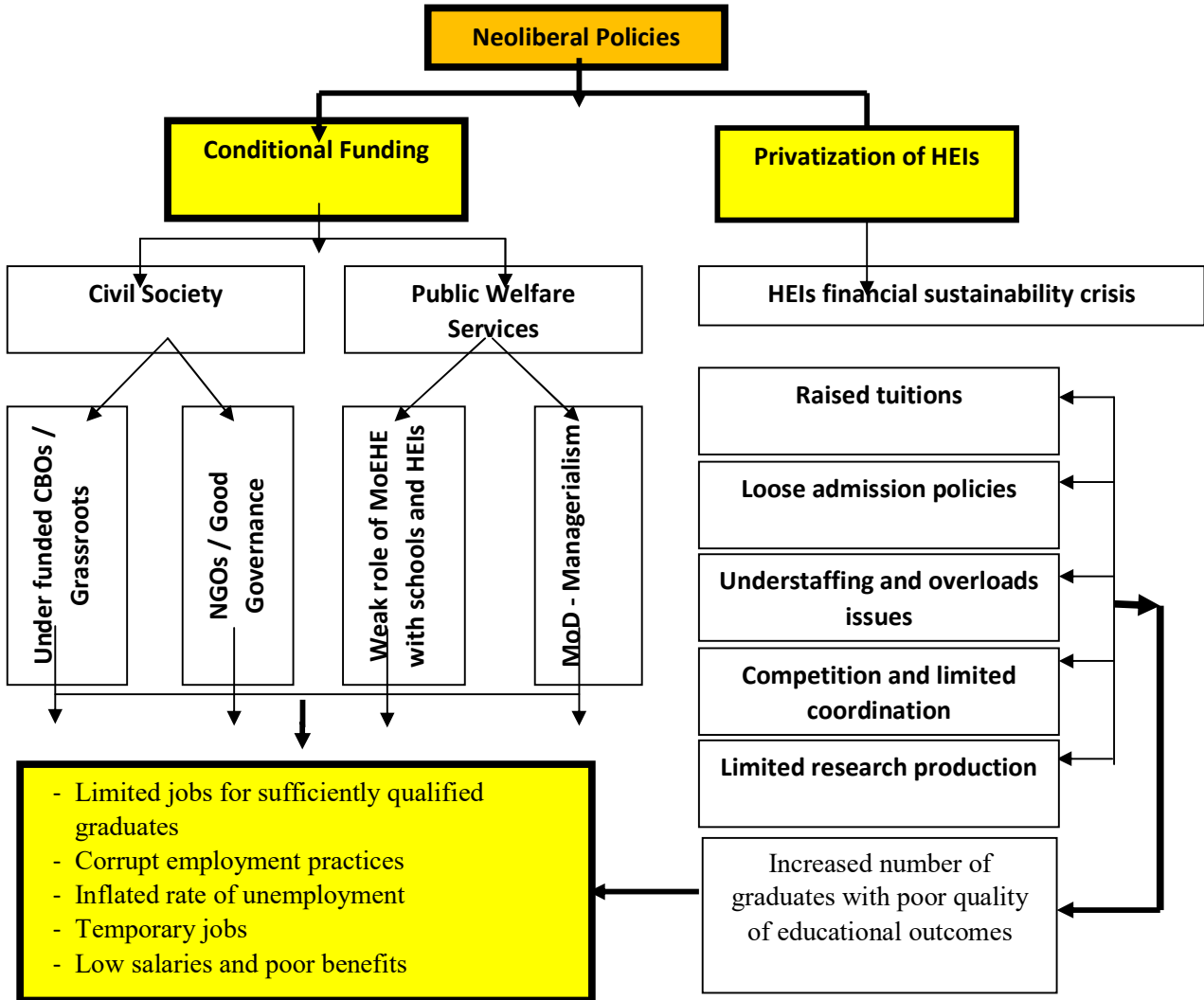


Table II-2 presents a summary of the impact that neoliberalism and Westernisation have had on the social work profession (education and practice) and possible areas for indigenisation:

Chart II-2

Neoliberalism, and Indigenisation of Social Work in Palestine

	Key features of neoliberalism in Palestine in WB/GS	Effects of neo-liberalism in Palestine in WB/GS	Key principles of indigenous social work	Potential effects of indigenous social work in Palestine
1.	Public Social Welfare Services.			
	Austerity policies	Fixed ceiling of beneficiaries despite deteriorating living conditions.	Responsive budgets to the increased demands.	Support and protection of victims of political conflict.
		Restricted margin of employment.		
	Donor-driven design of interventions (Mean Test approach)	Restricting assistance to cash transfer.	Shifts to need-based and rights-based interventions	More effective social work interventions that are focused on the dynamic interactions between the individual and environment.
		Total ignorance of other psychosocial and economic empowerment needs	Comprehensive / integrated interventions.	
		Alienation of social workers from their clients and the decision-making processes.	Adherence to professional relationship and partnership with clients.	Aligning social workers and the clients in facing the sources of oppression individually and collectively.
		Alienation of clients from making decision influencing their life.	Participation of clients in designing and implementing interventions.	Clients' empowerment at individual and collective levels.
2.	Privatisation of HEI			
		Loose admission policies: limited attention to the motivation and potentials of applicants.	More attention to the motivation and capacities of applicants to study social work.	Selecting those who are sufficiently motivated and have the potentials to be effective social workers.
		Raising (doubling or tripling) tuitions.	Providing financial support strategies.	Equal financial access to HE programmes (including SW).
		Shifting attention to marketable (income generating programmes).	Review and restructure social work programmes.	More relevant and responsive SWE to the demands of labour market and local communities.
		Under budgeted plans for staff development or recruiting qualified staff (retention issues)	Reviewing and increasing budgets allocated to Social Sciences staff development and recruitment plans.	More specialized and competent staff in social work will enhance the quality of educational outcomes.
		Under budgeted research plans to make the curricula more relevant.	Allocating sufficient budgets for research in social work within academic programmes.	More relevant curricula.
		Limited coordination between universities and	Establishing coordination mechanism	Develop national standards for social work

		with other actors (employers, research centres, union, etc.)	between social work programmes.	education and training in Palestine.
3.	Conditioned Funding			
		Dividing civil society between NGOs and Grassroots.	Retaining the active role and commitment of all NGOs and grassroots to the national resistance agenda.	New basis for funding relations negotiated and established to serve the national liberation priority.
		Depoliticising / neutralisation of accepted donors' political and programmatic conditions.		
		Weakened grassroots sector (limited impact and shrinking size).	Establishing national framework and networks for grassroots collaborative efforts to unify work standards, priorities and strategies.	Effective and influential grassroots work.
		Donors' agenda over the needs and priorities of local communities.	Produce national development agenda from grassroots and community perspectives as the basis for funding and partnerships with international aid partners.	Empowerment-based partnerships and national-international collaborative plans.
		Professionalisation (distanced relations between social workers and clients)	Reinstating social work interventions based on partnerships with clients and integrated assessments and interventions.	Clients' empowerment interventions.
		Donors' –driven agenda for research projects (business-like research)	Establishing social work and social policy research centres within the academic institutions.	Produced social work development strategies / policies.

Despite the difficulty of providing a detailed account of what duties social workers in Palestine perform in the public and voluntary sectors, it is possible to provide a spectrum of the roles they play in different interventions (Ferguson and Lavalette, 2007)³⁴.

³⁴ Among these roles and duties are the following:

- The social welfare workers (to provide cash assistance using the PMTF approach of the World Bank such as in the Ministry of Social Development and UNRWA). Prior to the time of PMTF, social workers in the public welfare sector used to be engaged more actively in the assessment phase of the cases and plan their interventions according to available resources and programmes within the MoSD and the coordinated referrals to other voluntary services.
- The school counsellor in the public and private schools where they apply psychosocial interventions with minimal margin for outreach / field work. These positions never existed in the MoE prior to the existence of PNA. The focus of intervention is the individual pupil and social workers are not allowed to plan and conduct interventions

This indicative list of roles shows that the restrictions on the roles of social workers are very high in the public sector compared with the voluntary sector, particularly when it comes to work at the macro level. It also signals the limited coordination and synergies between the roles of social workers in these two sectors.

Srujy (2010) discusses the challenges facing social work under the influence of the Arab Spring, including Palestine, which is in a state of ‘eternal Arab Spring’ for national liberation purposes. Some of these challenges are internal while other challenges are external, according to Srujy (2010). By “internal”, Srujy (2010) refers to challenges within the social work theory and practice system, while by “external” he refers to the larger societal system. Srujy (2010) contends that internal challenges are more crucial than external ones. According to Srujy (2010), social workers and academics in Egypt, for example, were either observant or neutral during the Arab Spring process, while this profession should, supposedly, have had a more active role. Srujy (2010) calls for a review of the vision of this profession in these countries, and deeper analysis of the existing welfare regimes. Srujy’s (2010) argument about the roles of the social workers in tackling public issues, such as the political struggle for more just political systems, raises the issue of the political roles of social workers in Palestine.

The social work education and training system does not prepare trainees to perform any active role in the political climate (Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013); the public employer (PNA) has already confined their roles to means-test processes and NGOs have pre-defined the roles of social workers according to donor proposals and conditions (Spolander, 2014) that, in Palestine, were provided to maintain the neoliberal PNA and entirely avoid any role in decolonisation activity. Accordingly, the remaining part of the service providers that have a margin for political roles to be performed by social workers is the grassroots organisations that have not yet developed a clear role for social workers. Additionally, the social work education and training system does not cover popular social work through the grassroots organisations, which constitutes a great proportion of the Palestinian civil society sector. Rather, it is geared to prepare social workers to work in the statutory sector and in NGOs that provide traditional social work

at mezzo and macro levels. However, these new roles of school counsellors still bounded to interventions with the individual student away from the family and the community at large. A home visit or a community project requires an approval of the head of the MoE office in the governorate at least.

- The case work, group work, and community work within the rehabilitation programmes for person with disabilities which are provided mainly by some voluntary sector institutions and charitable organisations (i.e. CBR programmes of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation).

interventions, but not at the community-based and grassroots level where social work interventions are more often needed and are effective in responding to the needs of civilians that are not covered by NGOs and PNA programmes.

Ibrahim *et al.* (2019) studies the challenges facing social work education in four Arab countries (Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Sudan). He identifies different key challenges (including, but not limited to) loose admissions policies, increased numbers of social work students compared with the limited number of qualified academics, outdated and Westernised curricula, inefficient field training programmes, traditional teaching methods and the shortage in locally produced social work knowledge. This comparative qualitative study confirms the similarities in the challenges facing social work education in these countries, including Palestine. However, it does not address the exceptionality of the Palestinian context. Additionally, two universities that were involved in the study were from Gaza Strip. Furthermore, it addresses social work students only. Similar challenges are raised by Ibrahim's study about the challenges facing social work education in Palestine from student and academic perspectives in 2017. None of these studies link the challenges to social work education with the other elements in the socioeconomic and political context of Palestine.

2.5.3 The political identity, collectivism and the indigenisation of the social work profession:

Developing an indigenised social work profession in Palestine is a complex process that would not be accomplished without having a clearly defined identity of the profession and the concerted active engagement of all concerned actors. The very basic concept of this profession, as internationally defined by IFSW, is that social work is the profession of social change that strives for social justice. Accordingly, within the context of colonial occupation and the neoliberal system, it should have a clear political identity that distinguishes its position from existing forms of oppression, also by which its education and practice must be guided. However, developing a political identity and the process of developing an indigenised profession are attainable only through collective action.

- **Political Identity and Indigenisation**

Rush *et al.* (2014), Dellgran and Höjer (2012), Munoz-Guzman (2018), Ioakimidis (2015) and Baum and Ramon (2010) debate the concept of the 'politics of social work' and the ways the identity of the profession influences the roles of social workers. They explain the relation

between welfare regimes, their political contexts and the role of the social work profession within them. Gwilym (2017) argues that the political identity of social work practitioners becomes clearer and more significant when it performs collective action to influence a policy outcome or performs a politically oriented job. It reflects a specific political ideology, with its values and principles apparent within the context. They focus on the role of the social worker in the Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) of social work in developed and developing countries (including Palestine), particularly in a time of neoliberalism.

Ioakimidis (2015) explains the historical alignment of the social work profession with Nazi and Fascist states in the past and raises the concern of a similar position with its successors in the capitalist/imperialist world. The policies of capitalist states to apply 'care and control' or 'carrot and stick' policies constitute the basis on which social workers may find themselves involved in extending the services of the welfare regime to the poor, while its ultimate purpose is to maintain the status quo rather than challenge it. The 'peace industry' promoted within these zones of conflict signals the seriousness of the roles that international NGOs (and their allies from national NGOs) play in promoting a culture of peace according to colonial conceptions and agendas rather than those of national liberation movements, particularly in global south countries. Therefore, Ioakimidis (2015) calls for a paradigm shift regarding the way social workers understand and respond to political and military conflicts. Ioakimidis' (2015) argument flags up the concern of maintaining the social work profession in conflict zones in the area of 'neutrality', which is a capitalist, Westernised concept promoted by international state and non-state donors to existing governments and civil society organisations in global south countries.

Blome and Safadi (2016) present their analysis about the effects of the vicarious (shared) trauma in Palestine, to which social workers, clients, employers, educators and professional representatives have been continuously exposed over many decades to a significant impact, that shapes their emotional fatigue, fear, identity and sense of self. They refer to the daily exposures of these groups as an indefinite list of oppressive practices of the Israeli occupation, such as the check points, arrests, dehumanisation, land confiscations, house demolitions and displacement (Jeronen, 2019). These daily sufferings have resulted in a "collective consciousness" (p. 24) about the impact of the political context, in generating day-to-day challenges and causing temporary trauma as well as deeper traumas that cannot be healed through temporary relief and social welfare services. However, vicarious trauma has resulted in strengthening the internal

solidarity within and among each group (i.e. between citizens themselves and citizens with their social workers, between social workers and with their employers, between employers and with policymakers, etc.). Ignoring these effects, as well as the greater effect on the political identity of the social work profession at the education and practice level highlights the serious gap that needs to be bridged, collectively, by all groups.

The main issue in the argument about the political identity of the social work profession in Palestine is the extent to which the colonial and neoliberal contexts in which social work is taught and practiced (Blome and Safadi, 2016; Midgley, 2001; Long, 2018) is reflected in the process of social work education and practice. Blome and Safadi (2015), Gwilym (2017), Rush *et al.* (2014), Dellgran and Höjer (2012), Munoz-Guzman (2018) and Baum and Ramon (2010) advocate that this profession cannot be and should not be neutralised or depoliticised if it is to live up to its mission in social justice. Among Gwilym's (2017) and Blome and Safadi's (2016) arguments about 'political identity', is that it is necessary for the identity of the social work profession in Palestine to reflect the perceptions and commitments of those engaged in its education and practice to the national liberation/decolonisation agenda, rather than just being a neutral tool to deliver the immediate assistance offered by the governing state or authority. The historical development of the social work profession in Palestine, (detailed in chapter I) and the political context, in which it emerged, indicates that its engagement in the social change process should be based on the fact that the colonial occupation has been and still is the main source of all injustices encountering Palestinian citizens and their communities.

The Review of the SWET curricula in the five universities in the WB, Jerusalem and GS shows that the political identity of the social work profession in Palestine is totally ignored. For Israeli social workers, including Palestinian social workers, it is a matter of wrestling influences of the political conflict on the identity of the social workers, particularly within practice contexts (i.e. at social worker-client level and supervisor-supervisee level) (Baum, 2007). Baum (2007) does not address the extent to which these issues are relevant to the political conflict in the SWET in Israeli universities but confirms the deep impact it has on intervention levels. The arguments presented by different scholars on the political identity of the profession, in terms of its alliances with the oppressed against the oppressing systems and policies (and particularly in its fight for social justice) do not present the processes by which this political identity can be developed at the micro, mezzo and macro levels.

In Palestine, social workers are subject to the daily oppressive practices of the colonial occupation, before and after engaging with this profession (i.e. arrested, injured, or harassed). The institutions that hire them are subject to different types of oppressive practices applied by the Israeli occupation (i.e. breaking into offices, restricting the movement of staff on duty, imposing strict monitoring on their funding sources) (Blome and Safadi, 2016; Tenenbaum, 2014). The entire community to which they belong is also subject to oppressive policies and practices of the colonial occupation (i.e. curfews, restrictions on movement, economic siege, settlements) (Tenenbaum, 2014). Therefore, in the Palestinian case, all parties engaged in the helping process are in the same 'boat' or shared context; all are facing the oppressive practices of the occupier (Blome and Safadi, 2016). To this end, the political identity of the Palestinian social work profession is shaped by the colonial and neoliberal context in which it functions. Therefore, as Dellgran and Höjer (2012) put it and as seconded by Baum (2007), the social work profession cannot hold a non-political identity if it stands for its mission globally and locally.

Accordingly, the Palestinian social work education and training curricula, neutralised and depoliticised as copied from the Western curricula, will never contribute to the process of developing an indigenous political identity of its social work students and graduates (Blome and Safadi, 2016). Raza (2009) argues that the role of the social work education and training process is extremely significant in the process of building this identity, particularly as this system is the first step in preparing future social workers. The neutralised and depoliticised policies and approaches of employers, in compliance with donors' conditions (particularly within public services or the conservative administration of universities), maintain the process by which the identity of social workers and their roles are neutralised and depoliticised. In these two stages, the social work curricula and social work job descriptions become tools by which the education system and employers keep the social work identity at a 'safe' distance from any politically oriented roles. Therefore, the Palestinian social workers become engaged in the national resistance and apply their skills through informal voluntary social work frameworks (mainly at grassroots and CBO levels, prior to and after 1994), which is based on an individual and free-choice commitment to relieve the suffering of their communities, but not based on what they have learned and trained for at university.

The issues presented by Baum (2010), for example, about the conflicting situations where Israeli social workers are engaged would supply a crucial element to the discussion about the

political identity of social workers and their profession. There is an entire difference between the political position of Israeli social workers who are part of the occupier system and Palestinian social workers who are part of the system of the occupied. Baum and Ramon's (2010) presentation focuses on the contradicting feelings and attitudes that Israeli social workers face when intervening with Jewish victims of the conflict, but do not discuss the suffering of Palestinian social workers and their clients, as presented by Gordon (2009). It would make a significant difference if the conditions under which Palestinian social workers and their clients live and try to survive, particularly for clients who are prisoners, injured, martyrs, displaced, impoverished, deported, refugees, along with many other groups. At a different level, the engagement of social workers in the emergency programmes provided by international and national agencies during the first Intifada and onward cannot be considered as a deliberate engagement in backing up the national resistance since this has not been the purpose of these agencies. Within the formal and informal social work frameworks in a country like Palestine, social workers may need to consider shifting their roles from resilience to resistance, in line with the arguments of Ioakamidis (2015) and Guo *et al.* (2010).

Shamai (2015), also argues that in the zones of conflict, social work (education and practice) is supposed to integrate and analyse the ways by which this context influences the quality of life of service-users, the types of interventions to be applied and the content of the social work curricula that prepares social workers for this challenging job. If this context is not reflected at all in these, and other, levels to address the structural causes of the social problems, this indicates that the conventional and Westernised social work theory and models of practice are copied and pasted. For the Palestinian case, the outstanding question would then be about where social work education and training stands in relation to the political cause and the political identity of the profession in Palestine. Yong *et al.* (2008) and Baum (2007) argue that the issue of the political identity is a central part of the debate about indigenous social work and that the indigenisation process must go beyond adapting the social work education, training and practice models to the local cultural context.

However, the issue of the cultural relevance of the profession in Palestine is focused on the irrelevance of social work education and practice models transplanted from the West to the local Palestinian culture, besides ignorance of the political conflict/national struggle for liberation, from the colonial occupation in social work education and training (SWET) particularly and the

practice models in general. Being part of the decolonisation of Palestine is the main feature of an indigenised social work profession in Palestine, which should not be at the awareness or consciousness level only i.e. to be aware of the conflict and where we stand as Palestinian social workers, but also to know and exercise the roles that we should perform at the practice level.

Coats *et al.* (2016) highlights the challenging gap between the identity of international social work and the efforts to indigenise the profession by developing its locally recognised and unified identity. The challenging task for this profession, for Coats *et al.* (2016) and Howard and Garland (2015) is in defining the boundaries of the two identities and in the capacity of local actors, in specific contexts, to develop a culturally and politically relevant identity while maintaining the shared elements, standards and agenda, particularly in the age of globalised capitalist neoliberalism. They highlight the calls from different developing countries to make the social work profession and its identity rooted in the local/country specific context. Coats *et al.* (2016); Howard and Garland (2015); and Bailey and Koney (1996) emphasise the role of the social work education system and social research in the processes of developing the political identity and indigenisation of the social work profession, since the identity cannot be viewed and treated as a fixed frame.

Peteet (2005) and Sousa *et al.* (2019) analyse the impact of the confiscated ‘place and landscape’ in Palestine on the social welfare of the people and their national (including the cultural) identity. Their analysis provides an example of what ingredients from the Palestinian realities should be integrated in the indigenisation of the social work profession, especially as none of the SWET programs cover an element of what Sousa *et al.* (2019) calls “critical place inquiry” and how settler colonialism influences the quality of life of Palestinian citizens. Tolbert (1996) therefore argues that it is important to analyse this identity continuously to review the status of this profession in the social system of any given society (Palestine in this context) and make all efforts to maintain a sufficiently and properly indigenised status and identity. The significance of the distinguished and indigenised identity of the social work profession stems from the necessity to reflect it upon the competencies of social workers, in terms of what they are capable of doing in technical and practical terms, and ensuring its relevance (Tolbert, 1996; Dellgran and Höjer, 2012; Gwilym, 2017). Accordingly, developing a nationally and professionally relevant identity of the social work profession in Palestine is a collective responsibility for all actors.

Therefore, the process of developing the political identity of the profession is at the heart of the indigenisation process and would be required from the engaged actors to make their strategic decisions about the function their profession should have in the colonial occupation and neoliberal context; challenging the status quo or maintaining it. In Palestine, maintaining the status quo streamlines the profession with the neoliberal agenda of the PNA and NGOs, as well as depoliticising/neutralising its mission in the national liberation process. The efforts to indigenise the social work profession, that one may suggest, would lead to bringing the experiences of informal/popular social work to the forefront to identify locally developed models of intervention to be integrated in the social work education and training system. In the absence of these efforts, the present social work education and training will continue to train social workers to fit with the de-politicised functions within a context of colonial and neoliberal systems.

- **Collectivism and Indigenisation**

Collectivism refers to the collective actions by all parties (social actors or stakeholders) with a shared interest in accomplishing specific change. Such actions, which are directed to challenge the status quo of the social work profession, need to be adequately coordinated and implemented with clear roles and responsibilities, allocation of needed resources and timeframes in order to achieve an agreed upon vision. Collectivism in this context will be used to denote the unity needed among all concerned and interested social actors (individual professionals and institutions) to generate the needed leverage for change. In the case of social work in the Palestinian context, such a vision does not exist and, therefore, actions are developed. According to Lavalette *et al.* (2018), collective action is the key strategy to addressing the challenges and consequences of neoliberalism and colonialism for social work education and practice, globally and locally. However, there is a gap in the published literature about a successful model of collective action to advance indigenised social work in the postcolonial era, particularly a model in which all stakeholders (including beneficiaries, employers, social work professionals, academics, students and graduates) are actively engaged in the change process.

In countries like the USA, Canada, Australia and the UK, some professions have tried to address the most challenging conditions facing them, through what they have called the Grand Challenges Approach (GCA) (Bent-Goodley, 2016; Uehara, 2013; Baron and McLaughlin, 2017; Barth, 2014; Sherraden *et al.*, 2014; Stringfellow, 2017). This approach is about bringing the

main actors leading a specific profession to evaluate the current status and challenges of the profession and agree on a specific strategy by which these challenges can be addressed. In some countries like the USA, professional social work institutions have applied this approach and developed a set of strategies to address them (Uehara, 2013). However, the review of the applications of the GCA in these countries have revealed some key shortcomings that flag major concerns about the applicability of this approach in other contexts. Should we consider the GCA for social work or other professions, as a successful example of collective action in these country-specific contexts, it would not be the model that can be applied within the local contexts of the global south countries, particularly in colonial or post-colonial contexts. In addition to the differences in the socioeconomic and political contexts, the GCA is applied in these developed countries in an elitist, professionalised and totally institutionalised manner, by which only academics, professional representatives and research institutions were engaged. To this end, collectivism is a unity development strategy by which the concerned actors may develop a shared identity of the profession as well as develop an agreed agenda to develop an indigenised education and practice model for Palestine. Accordingly, collectivism may be applied differently in different contexts according to the aspired change (vision) and the scope of actors to be involved, as well as many other factors.

The political identity of the profession is about the shared vision and goals set for it by a group of actors/stakeholders engaged in leading it in a country. Accordingly, the vision and goals of the collective action (unity) is a determinant factor to political identity. Ashforth and Mael's (1989), Brown's (2000), Hogg's (2001) and Tajfel's (2010) arguments about the social identity of an individual or a group highlights the concepts of interactions of a person or specific group with the wider context and the influence of such an interaction in shaping social identity. All highlight the significant impact of the social identity, which is developed through membership of an individual in a larger group, in establishing the perceptions of others (external individual and groups) of all members. According to Brown (2000), Hogg (2001), Tajfel (2010), Miari (2011) and Ashforth and Mael (1989), there are specific shared properties among the group members that determine the shape and content of the collective identity. However, how individuals acquire their membership starts from what Hogg (2001) defines as 'the self-categorisation', which is the self-perception of specific self-properties that are shared with the group to which they belong. When the person reaches a point where s/he recognises the shared self-properties with a large

group (i.e. social workers in a country), s/he categorizes himself/ herself as qualified and a fit with the group. On the other hand, the extent to which the person is willing to and interested in being a member of a specific group depends largely on the established perceptions of the group by other or larger groups (Hogg, 2001). For example, if these perceptions are positive, the person tends to get the membership, otherwise s/he inclines to do so.

Tajfel (2010) and Ashforth and Mael (1989) confirm that within the process of interaction between the individual member and a group of members with the external actors come many other considerations and factors that contribute to shaping the perceived identity. Some of the key factors are about the way these members present themselves, the interventions they provide and the way they provide them and the comparison between the members of one group with members from others (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Eventually, the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a positive social identity of a group before other actors (i.e. individuals, groups, institutions or others) is a responsibility of the individual member as much as the collective action of all the members (Wendly, 2018). Within the Palestinian context, the role of the social work education and training curricula, the employers' policies, and the way by which the social workers present themselves to the wider community and service users, are main factors in developing and maintaining indigenised political identity of the profession. The missing / weak role of the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists, for example, provided would explain the underdeveloped sense of collective identity among the social work graduates in general and its registered members particularly. It represents the frame for them to develop a self-categorisation and to which they develop a sense of belonging. The shared properties are not addressed in the curricula, while the employers exert no efforts to train their social workers on how to present themselves while delivering a service. The collective identity of social workers in Palestine is still not considered as a priority for all these actors.

The other dimension of the identity of the profession is its status and power to influence the surrounding systems and bring about the required social change. The profession of undermined status will have weak or no power to influence the change process (Spears *et al.* 2010; Midgley, 2001). Spears *et al.* (2010) defines status as the social position of a group that is valued by the social context. They define power in terms of the social influence and control the group has over others, whereas influence and control are discursively related to the resources the group can confer to others. Accordingly, with more power the status of the group is enhanced which is

reflected in valued identity by others and the members of the group (Spears *et al.* (2010). Within the same context, Spears *et al.* (2010) present the concept of legitimacy to the argument about power, status, and identity. Legitimacy, in this context, is about the level to which the position of a group and its members is accepted by them, by the formal system within which the group exists and functions. As much as the group succeed in ensuring higher levels of acceptance internally (by members) and externally (by other groups and systems), its status is enhanced. To this end, Brown (2000), Long (2018), Midgley (2001) and Wendly (2018) suggest collective action as a strategy by which a group (i.e. the social work profession at local and international levels) can build and strengthen its internal unity and maximise its influence on the context within which it exists and functions.

Baum and Ramon (2010), Shamaï and Ron, (2009) and Ramon (2012) present the case of Israeli social workers and the impacts of their interventions with the victims of what they call ‘the violent political conflict’. They argue that the social workers’ work in this context has contributed to their professional growth (in terms of knowledge and skills), the development of their professional identity, particularly their contribution to what they call ‘the commitment to the state of Israel’ (Baum and Ramon, 2010, p. 152; Shamaï and Ron, 2009, p. 52). The societal awareness and appreciation of the roles of the social workers also feeds into the development of the professional identity and the pride of performing them in situations of emergency. The other factor that they highlighted in relevance to the professional identity is the ‘collective trauma’ to which the Israeli citizens and the Israeli social workers were exposed during the second Intifada. Despite the many critiques that can be provided to the analysis and conclusion of these studies, particularly the total ignorance of the wider context of the political conflict and the insinuation that the occupied Palestinians are the perpetrators, when discussing the political element of the identity of the Israeli social workers.

The premise of social justice, for which the whole social work profession stands, simply and clearly contradicts the existence of the colonial Israeli occupation that has been exposing all Palestinians to a collective trauma since 1948. Therefore, one may argue the reason of occupying 78% of historic Palestine while the UN resolution 181 of 1947 proposed 55.5% to be given to establish ‘Israel’ (Khalidi, 1997), and the reason of keeping 70% of the C-Zone of the West Bank under direct military Israeli occupation while it should have been given back to the PLO a few

years after signing the Oslo Interim Agreement of 1995 (Zangl, 2012), as one of the direct reasons behind the second Intifada to which the researchers referred their research.

The case of the ‘Arab-Israeli’ social workers and the effects of the ‘violent political conflict’ on their profession and personal growth, and the development of their professional identity, as argued by Baum and Ramon (2010), is worth further and deeper analysis of their professional identity and the factors that have resulted in limited/or no positive impact of the work with the victims of ‘violent political conflict’, as well as the contribution to their ‘professional growth’. Along those lines, it would be worth studying the professional identity of the Palestinian social workers working under the Israeli administration in Jerusalem (who have no engagement with the Jewish victims of the ‘violent political conflict’ but are engaged in a system of providing Israeli municipal welfare services during the daytime, while the same employer of ‘Jerusalem municipality’ demolishes the homes of Palestinian families day and night, while building and granting thousands of new housing units for Jewish immigrants). At the least, the first group is viewed and evaluated by the Jewish community as that they did not accept them (Baum and Ramon 2010) while the second group faces rejection from their own community because they were perceived as ‘collaborators’ with the occupiers, as reported by the Jerusalemite social work masters students in Bethlehem University in 2015.

In the absence of nationally developed and approved frameworks and research-based choices, there is a key role for the SWET programmes to contribute to the aspired role, particularly in the development of relevant curricula and preparing students for their future roles (Long, 2018). That is to provide balanced and sufficient knowledge about the different options provided by international social work literature and experiences and the expected roles of Palestinian social workers in the local context. In a country like Palestine, the definition of social work, the roles of the social workers and the core values of the profession need to reflect the country-specific context as part of the indigenisation³⁵ of the profession (education and practice), according to the arguments of Gray (2005); Gray and Coates (2010); and Yan *et al.* (2007) of what this process of indigenisation entails. However, there is a need to be aware and extremely cautious about which elements from international social work can and cannot be adapted. Which new elements from the local context to be integrated in the Palestinian social work model is a

³⁵ “indigenization is largely conceived as a process by which western knowledge is imported and adapted to fit the local needs and contextual realities” (Yan, M., et al., 2007, p643) yes

key function for the parties to lead in the indigenisation process, in order to develop and maintain a distinct identity and function and set the boundaries with other professions. Gray (2005) argues that in the countries passing through colonialism or neo-colonialism, the definition of social work, its values and social work education should reflect the role of the profession in decolonisation and liberation rather than reflecting the international definition as is. The Westernisation-indigenisation dilemma³⁶ should be addressed in these countries when designing strategies to develop the profession and its status within society (Gray, 2005; Yan *et al.*, 2007).

Finn and Jacobson (2003) present their analysis and reflections on the challenges facing the social work profession (education and practice) and how these challenges should be addressed over the new century. A new social work paradigm that transcends the national, geographic, cultural borders and domains of practice is needed. Finn and Jacobson (2003) refer to the need for international professional solidarity and unity of the social work profession but not undermining the local agenda for the profession. Finn and Jacobson (2003) and Reisch (1997) called for the engagement of social workers and educators in political action and the structural changes in social work education and training. To challenge the status quo of the profession and address the challenging conditions facing its development, advocacy and solidarity strategies, at national and international levels, for example, must be applied on the basis that it is an emancipatory project (Finn and Jacobson, 2003).

Healy (2004), Long (2018) and Jones (2012) advocate for collective and collaborative actions and strategies to advance the recognition of the profession and consolidate the efforts needed to address the challenges facing its development or hindering its functioning. Healy (2004) raises the issue of the role of social worker associations and trade unions, which she refers to as the “convergence between professionalism and political activism” (p. 243). Healy (2004) also brings attention to the role of social work supervision for students and practitioners, in sharpening the consciousness and critical thinking of oppressive contextual structures and how to challenge them. Healy *et al.* (2004), and Jones (2012) and Hare (2004) highlight the IFSW, IASSW and ICSW calls in the Hong Kong 2010 conference for collaborative partnerships at the international level and between the international and local levels to resist the impacts of the

³⁶ Gray (2005) considers that importing theories and methods for social work education and practice from western countries, which are different contexts, without critical evaluation and adjustments would perpetuate imperialism. Gray (2005) defines the imperialism within social work as promoting the dominance of the western views over the local and indigenous cultural contexts.

global crisis on the well-being of people. Jones (2012) also highlights the shared global agenda of IFSW, ISSW and ICSW to reconsider the social work identity at the international and local levels.

In the process of indigenisation of the profession, Buysse, Sparkman and Wesley (2003) and Reisch (1997), like many other scholars, highlight the strategy of enhancing the role of social work research to improve the quality of social work education and practice. They point to the necessary engagement of social work academics/teachers in the research to improve the quality of social work education and their role in translating the research findings into useful policies and practices. The emphasis is on discouraging the academics' research for career promotion at the expense of the advancement of social work knowledge. Social work education programmes should focus on the advancement of social research knowledge and skills of social work students to be used in their knowledge production and applications in the future (Buysse, Sparkman and Wesley, 2003). There must be a strategy to shift the teaching methods of social work from schooling mode to critical discussions and testing, as well as the development of the competencies that would help social workers get the outcomes of interventions attained (Buysee *et al.*, 2003; Reisch, 1997).

2.6 Strategies to address the challenges facing the social work profession:

Hill and Wayne (2017) highlight the realities that neoliberal policies shape, the ways by which its policies are applied, and the strategies used to resist them, which vary from one country to another. The examples Hill and Wayne (2017) draw to present this rule of thumb, from the global north and south, do not cover the exceptional case of Palestine where both the direct colonialism and neoliberalism exist. Spolandar (2014), Ferguson (2009) and Hill and Wayne (2017) particularly emphasise the need for a collectivisation of resistance strategies to neoliberalism and colonialism (by all social actors), at all levels within any given country and internationally (Guo *et al.*, 2010). At the heart of the resistance plans and efforts, Twikirize (2014) and Gray and Coates (2010) position the indigenisation of the profession, particularly social work education and training.

Hill's (2017) presentation about the strategies by which neoliberalism can be resisted within the education arena can be considered as enlightening examples. However, prior to discussing the way by which social work education may resist neoliberalism in a country, the social work profession, at the national level in the country, needs to define its position from

neoliberalism and reflect this in its definition, mission, vision and values, where social work education and training will follow (Spolander, 2014). Additionally, Spolander (2014) highlights the need to consider the difference in the impacts of neoliberalism from one country to another, because the variations in the socioeconomic and political contexts shape different types of problems in which social workers intervene.

In their analysis and arguments about the strategies to resist neoliberal capitalism and its effects, Hill and Wayne (2017) call for collective action both within countries and globally, in which all individuals, sectors, groups and institutions can work together on fighting neoliberal capitalism on all fronts. Ferguson (2017), for example, calls for reconsidering the possible strategies by which radical social work education is part of the professional resistance to neoliberalisation and the colonisation of higher education in global south countries, that can be integrated in the social work curricula at the theory and practice levels (Guo *et al.*, 2010). Ferguson (2017) argues that social work students, during the field practice/training courses (as they suggest for South African social work), can play a role in developing a more critical or radical social work field training curricula. However, developing indigenised social work education and practice would need a national framework with a collectively developed indigenised vision and identity of the social work profession (Midgley, 2001; Long, 2018) in a country encountering both neoliberal and colonial systems.

The term 'national framework' refers to the conceptual organisation of the shared perception of groups of people, sectors etc. about specific issues/concerns in the world surrounding them (Wendly, 2018; Long, 2018; Midgley, 2001). For the Palestinian social work context, this would mean a conceptualisation of the identity, mission, goals, values and standards by which the social work education and practice would be guided. Developing a national framework for the social work profession in Palestine that meets the national aspirations and the international standards of social work profession, would essentially be based on the principles of collective, collaborative and bottom-up action. Developing this framework would be the first step towards developing an indigenised social work profession in Palestine. The next step would be the establishment of a consensus about the main challenges and its priorities, then the development of the plans of actions with clear definitions of roles and responsibilities of the different partners and timeframes (Long, 2018; Williams, 2016; Gray and Coates, 2010; Baron and McLaughlin, 2017).

The process of developing such a national framework for the social work profession in Palestine (as the researcher would call in this research) will never be a straightforward and easy task. It may become easier after overcoming the structural considerations of the professional leadership/representation issues, answering the questions related to the neutrality of the profession in the national liberation process (Midgley, 2001) and the fight with the neoliberal policies in Palestine.

2.7 Conclusions

The Palestinian socioeconomic context has been moulded, to a great extent, by the colonial and neoliberal political powers that have controlled the country until the present time. This context has contributed, partially or entirely, to shaping the different types of social problems facing the Palestinians at the individual and collective levels, in which the social work profession is designed to intervene. However, this profession has been wrestling with many challenging conditions that have compromised its effective and efficient functioning in the Palestinian context (Blome and Safadi, 2016). To a great extent, the same socioeconomic and political context that have shaped the day to day challenges for Palestinian citizens is shaping the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, which constitute the main features of the shared “Vicarious Trauma” (VT) for both Palestinian social workers and their clients (Blome and Safadi, 2016, p. 237). Accordingly, any efforts to identify, define, and prioritise these challenges and developing effective strategies to address them, must be based on an adequate and comprehensive understanding of the effects of the colonial and neoliberal contexts in which the supportive relationships and processes are taking place. To this end, the research methodology, by which the realities of this profession will be explored, must be selected and designed carefully.

Chapter III

Methodology

3.0 Introduction:

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology by which research questions will be answered. This chapter covers the epistemological position of the researcher, the role of the researcher, as well as the research data collection and analysis methodology. The topic of this research reflects and covers part of the gap in the knowledge of the social work profession in Palestine, particularly the challenges facing its development, which has received little attention in the research literature, in Palestine and internationally. This poses more significant reflections upon the selection of the research methodology. The experiences of the researcher, as a Palestinian activist and professional for more than twenty years, brings more attention to the role of the researcher and the challenges he has faced while collecting the data within a conflict zone, in which he was born and grew up.

Dudley (2010) suggests a list of factors that affect a researcher's selection of his/her topic: political perspective, socio-cultural views, professional discipline within the social sciences, specialisation within social work and personal life experiences. Sarantakos (1993), too, argues that the researcher's motivations generate the purpose of his/her research, which in turn determines his/her ontological and epidemiological positioning and whether s/he will follow the inductive or deductive reasoning. According to Sarantakos (1993), for some social science researchers, improving the quality of life of the participants or a specific population constitutes a strong and legitimate reason to conduct research. The impact of this research stems from its originality, which demands a methodology by which the required knowledge can be produced, and upon which better understanding and effective remedies can be envisaged.

3.1 Research purpose and questions:

3.1.1 Purpose:

Bryman, (2012) states that the purpose of the research determines the questions and the focus of the research, its design and the contributions it makes in bridging the gap in the knowledge in a particular area. Based on the reviewed literature concerning the social work profession in Palestine, the gaps in this knowledge are in two areas mainly; first, the lack of historical documentation on the development of social work; and secondly, the challenges facing its future development. The first was addressed through research conducted in 2012 and published in 2017 (Faraj, 2017), which also highlights the concern about the different challenges

facing the development of this profession and the need to study them deeply and comprehensively.

3.1.2 Research Questions:

The main question this research asks is:

“What are the main challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine at national and local levels (The West Bank and the Gaza Strip) and how can these challenges be addressed?”

This can be divided into 3 sub-questions:

- What are the major challenges faced by the social work profession and social work education and training?
- What are the main factors that shaped these challenges?
- What are the most effective and efficient ways to address these challenges in the future?

The absence of previously produced research-based knowledge about the challenges facing the development of this profession in Palestine highlights the need to pay considerable attention to the methodology the researcher will apply to answer these questions. Therefore, prior to delving into this methodology, it is important to discuss the epistemological and ontological position of this research.

3.2 The epistemological and ontological position:

The epistemological and ontological position of the research form, are, together, a cornerstone and a determinant of its methodology and design. In the Palestinian context, the social work profession does not constitute a single reality that exists independently or in isolation. The realities of the social work profession are created and shaped by the socioeconomic and political environment and by the interaction between the key social actors involved in its education, training and practice. Therefore, the changes in the realities of this profession reflect the rapid changes in the context in which it has been functioning; therefore, it cannot be studied in isolation from this.

The interpretations, explanations and meanings of key social actors (individuals and their institutions) are often developed through their interactions with the surrounding space and people

(Bhattacharjee, 2012). These perceptions and feelings play an important role in shaping the status of the social work profession, the challenges it is facing and the appropriate ways to address them. Accordingly, the epistemological position of this research is interpretivist and not positivist. According to Creswell (2003), the knowledge produced by actions and interactions of people, that are based on perceptions and meanings they establish about their context, constitute an alternative claim to a positivist epistemological position. The originality of this research lies in its unique contribution to the research-based knowledge about the challenges facing the development of social work in Palestine and the solutions that lay ahead, as portrayed through the interpretations of social work academics, students, workers and policy makers. In the Palestinian context, social work education and practice, what it stands for and how it should be applied, has been subject to an individual's and institutions understanding, particularly with the absence of any national vision or standards framework. Therefore, each institution and individual professional has his/her own conceptions, narratives and preferences when discussing and defining social work in the Palestinian context, the challenges it is facing and what effective strategies they may suggest to developing it. More importantly is that these individual and institutional experiences in the social work education and practice sphere have never been researched in depth (qualitatively), with the vision of laying the basis for future actions.

The ontological positionality of this research assumes that social phenomena are created and constructed by the interactions between the different social actors based on their understanding and interpretation of it (Creswell, 2003; Bryman, 2012; Tuli, 2010)³⁷. Sarantakos (1993) views qualitative research, for example, as the way by which the researcher collects the data about how people make sense of the social world around them. To Sarantakos (1993), the material/physical world is worthless without the meaning that people construct about it, based on their individual and collective interactions and meaning-making processes. The role of the

³⁷ "Individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed towards certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. The questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open-ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting. Often, these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically" (Creswell, 2003, p 8).

context in which research participants exist and act plays a very critical role in shaping the meanings about the social world around them.

Accordingly, the reality of the social work profession in Palestine can be viewed through the complex set of factors that have been shaping it since its emergence in 1971, including the way these actors interact and respond to these conditions. Therefore, exploring the status of this profession and the way in which it has been shaped constitutes a central theme of this research.

3.3 Methodology:

Bellamy *et al.* (2012, p.9) defines the research methodology in terms of “how we proceed from the findings of empirical research to make inferences about the truth of theories”. For them, a good methodology should enable the researcher to design research that enables him/her to draw defensible conclusions, including the causes stemming from the ways people interpret their perceptions and meanings of the world around them. Research literature has identified three main research methodologies; quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodology. Research methodology is about the strategy that the research applies to infer defensible conclusions and this entails the research approach (i.e. descriptive, exploratory or explanatory), research methodologies (quantitative, qualitative or a mixture), methods of data collection and analysis (i.e. individual interview, focus groups, observation). Studying the challenges facing the development of social work and the ways to overcome them need exploratory research, since no previous research has been conducted on the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip.

Making the right choice between the qualitative, quantitative or a mixed research strategy depends largely on the researcher’s ontological and epistemological orientation, the purpose and questions of his/her research (Matthews *et al.*, 2010; Thomas, 2013; and de Vaus, 2001). The critical comparison between the advantages and disadvantages of the three strategies is a necessary step for the researcher to make an informed choice. The purpose of exploring a topic that has never been studied before must be accomplished by a research method that enables him/her to obtain sufficient and open accounts of participants’ views, feelings and meanings relating to their experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). The quantitative research methods, due to their focus on numerical and structured designs, have limited advantage in this function compared with the qualitative research methods (Matthews *et al.*, 2010). Another criterion is

about the extent to which the researcher needs to understand and unravel the interactions and processes shaping specific phenomenon or behaviour (Abdullahi *et al.*, 2012). One of the main advantages of qualitative research methods, and a limitation of quantitative methods, is the full margin they provide for the researcher to discuss and explore in depth these interactions and conditions that have shaped the participants' responses, particularly through the semi-structured or unstructured designs of questions (Mathews *et al.*, 2010; Becker *et al.*, 2012).

Exploring the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine would require a methodology that enables the researcher to capture the conditions that the participants view as challenges, their effects on respondents' self-perceptions and feelings, meanings, the conditions that shape the different challenges and the ways to address them in the future. These conceptions and feelings are difficult to explore in depth by quantitative methods because of their 'fixed design', as described by Matthews *et al.*, (2010). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) describe and highlight the advantage of qualitative research and how it would contribute to such a role more effectively than the quantitative one:

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 4).

Another important advantage of qualitative research methods is that the researcher himself is part of the data collection tool, which is a function that s/he may need for in-depth exploration of the participants' responses, despite that it makes the entire research process a subjective one and restricts the generalisability of the findings. In cases where generalisability of the findings is not a priority, qualitative research methods become a more effective method than quantitative ones (Mathews *et al.*, 2010; Thomas, 2013; Denscombe, 2010). Dawson (2002), Bryman (2012) and Sarantakos (1993) present extensive comparisons between quantitative and qualitative research, including the advantages and disadvantages. One of the most common advantages of qualitative research is that it is mainly directed to explore and create knowledge, to the level that the available resources allow. Mainly, it is concerned with words, and, to a lesser extent, with

numbers or quantifications. It is an inductive research strategy by which researcher can produce knowledge.

To answer the research questions, the researcher will apply a mix of qualitative research methods, specifically individual interviews and focus groups. As Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 7) explain the multi-method research strategy, the researcher may “secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question ... [It is] a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry”. Accordingly, the qualitative research strategy was adopted for this research to allow the sufficient depth of knowledge of the challenging realities facing the social work profession in Palestine, as perceived and interpreted by research participants.

3.3.1 Research Design:

Selecting a design that would be convenient to answer the research questions becomes substantial, since the term “design” is usually used by social scientists to refer to the way by which data is collected, coded, analysed, constructed and interpreted (Bryman, 2012; Harwell, 2011; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Kelly, 2011; Ritchie *et al.*, 2013). The proposed research design for this research is a cross-sectional flexible/or reflective design that applies a qualitative research strategy and method, as explained by Bryman (2012). The flexibility or reflectivity of the design refers to the margins that the researcher provides and applies for research participants to freely and openly engage with, in responding to research questions (Alzbouebi, 2004). To explore the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine and the strategies to overcome them, as perceived by different social actors, the researcher requires the sufficient margin for flexibility and reflexivity.

The Palestinian context is defined by the zone of political conflict that has been influencing the life and perceptions of every Palestinian citizen, institution and local community. The conceptions of such a reality, and how to address it, vary vastly between the different groups of participants and within the same group. Therefore, the design of the research needs to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate this variation. Bryman (2012) defines cross-sectional design through three main elements; the case on which the research is focused, the timing of the research, and the strategy it applies.

The case, which is the unit of study for Matthews *et al.* (2010), shows that the research focus can be on a phenomenon, on groups of people, organisations, a nation or a state (at the

macro level) or an individual or group of individuals (at the micro level) (Matthews *et al.*, 2010). For this research, ‘the social work profession in Palestine and the challenges facing its development’ is the case to be studied, which is a phenomenon at the national level. The time element is studying the case(s) simultaneously, at one point in time or over a time-series schedule. In this research, the researcher explores the views of contemporary ‘social actors’ (Matthews *et al.*, 2010) involved in teaching and practicing social work. The social actors in this case meet Matthews *et al.*’s (2010) definition, which is the engagement of different groups of participants to enable the researcher to make a comparison of their views at a specific point in time. In the case of this research, social work academics, graduates, professionals, employers and representatives are groups of participants who provide their views and perspectives about the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, the conditions that shape them and the strategies to address them.

The research strategy can be qualitative (using unstructured or semi-structured interviews), quantitative (using self-administered or interview questionnaires), or a mix of the two. Moreover, in the qualitative, cross-sectional research design there is a great emphasis on peoples’ experiences and reference to their narratives.

Dudley (2010, p. 137) describes the linkage between the exploratory research approach and the cross-sectional research design as follows:

“In general, exploratory research designs are the simplest and most flexible of the three types [Descriptive, Exploratory and Explanatory]. Simply, these designs are cross-sectional, which means that the data are collected at only one point in time from research participants”.

As such, the cross-sectional research design is applied to explore the responses, views, perceptions, meanings and interpretations of the participants at the present time. It is a time when the status of the profession is not clear to the community, is confused by different employers and other professionals, is not regulated by any laws and is deeply influenced by the political realities of the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. There is an expansion in the number of social work programmes, an intensification of the work on the regulatory framework/law, while at the same time, the levels of unemployed graduates are increasing and the status of the union of social workers is declining.

The significance of the time factor stems from the need to get the views of participants concerning the challenges facing the development of the profession at the present time (not in the past), for the following considerations:

- The proliferation in social work education and training programmes at the undergraduate and post graduate levels.
- The process of launching the regulatory law of the profession is launched with limited engagement from academics, graduates and employers.
- The unemployment crisis among graduates has reached a point where the vast majority of them cannot find jobs.

3.3.2 Research methods and tools:

3.3.2.1 Research methods

Two main qualitative research methods are selected and applied in the data collection to answer the research questions; individual interviews and focus groups interviews. However, as far as the individual interviews are concerned, three types of interviews are identified in the relevant research literature; the structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview (Dudley, 2010); (Bryman, 2012); (Babbie *et al.*, 1997). Structured interviews usually constitute closed-ended questions and provide no margin for conversations with the participants that explore his/her views and perceptions in any real depth. On the other hand, unstructured interviews are not applicable in the case of this research because there are specific areas the researcher needs to explore. Accordingly, the researcher has selected the semi-structured interview, to be applied both with individual interviews and focus groups, because it provides the minimum level of structure needed to secure sufficient focus on the key research questions, while provides participants with an ample level of flexibility to express their views and reflect on their experiences.

With individual, semi-structured interviews, this method is designed to solicit the responses of key influential figures/informants, who are well-informed about the history of the social work profession in Palestine and its current challenges at education, practice and policy levels. This category of participants includes the heads of social work programmes at the five Palestinian universities (3 in the West Bank and 2 in the Gaza Strip), representatives of the main statutory and voluntary employment agencies, representatives of the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists and selected professional figures who do not represent any institution

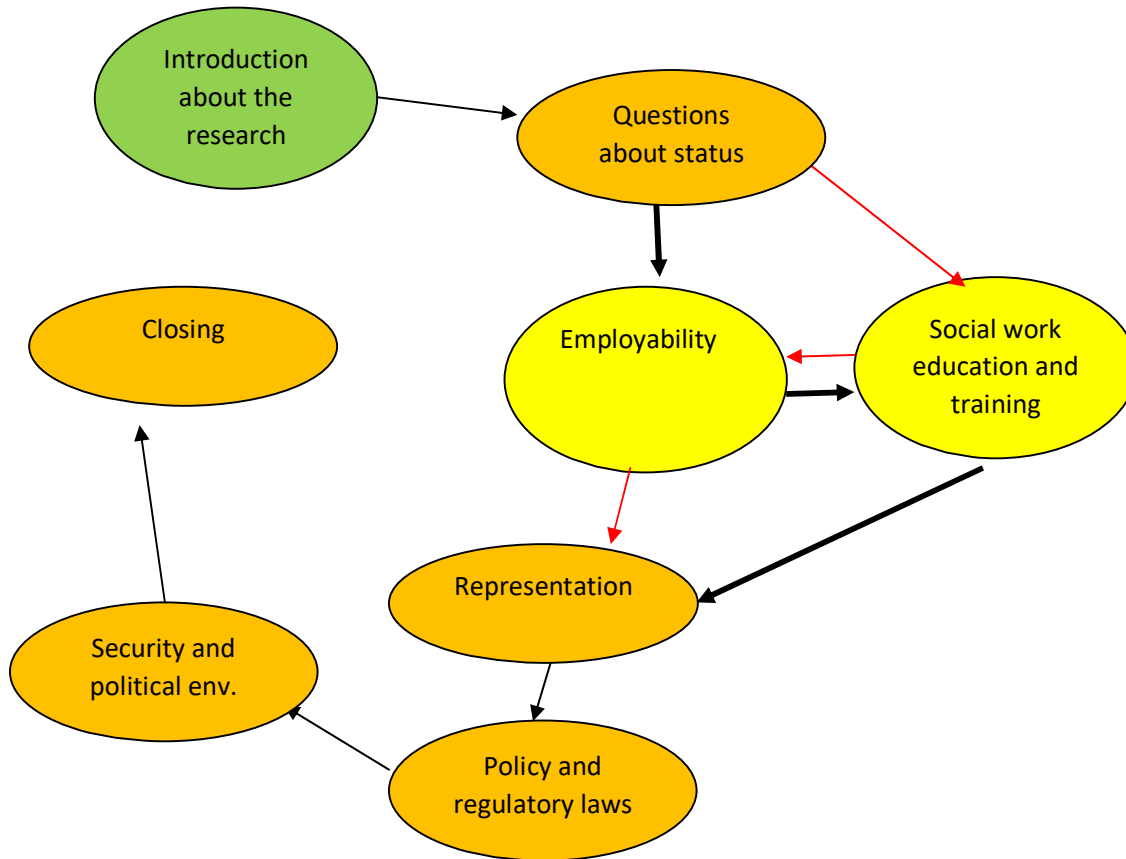
but have acquired a wealth of knowledge and expertise (over the past 45 years) in the development of social work education and intervention programmes.

As for the focus group interviews, Bryman's (2012) definition is applied. Bryman (2012) defines the focus group method as a form of group interview, in which several participants discuss a specific topic and try to develop a shared understanding of it. Each of the interviews with the individuals and groups include 4-6 questions that cover the participants' views about the status of the social work profession in Palestine at the present time. This, in the following order, is compared with examples from previous times, with other Arab countries, with the challenges facing the social work profession in Palestine in general and then moves onto discussing the challenges identified by participants in specific areas, such as education, the labour market, political representation and so forth. The time frame that the researcher allocates for individual interviews is around 60 minutes, with around 90 minutes for each focus group. Informing the participants about the time frame was necessary at the beginning of the interview to help them focus their responses and elaborate to the necessary extent. Some of the interviews required longer timeframes than others, but to a reasonable extent (i.e. an additional 15-20 minutes, maximum).

During the interviews, the strategy focuses on discussing the group related to the topic that emerges during the discussion with the individual or group. This is in order to select a specific response from the participant who has volunteered to respond, give him/her the chance to elaborate on this point, to then move onto another participant who is willing to respond to the same question and elaborate on the same issues. However, in some cases, the researcher notifies the participants of the opportunity for interviewees to provide a response on any of the topics discussed before closing the interview. This strategy is used to help the participant(s) transition from one topic to another smoothly. However, it is noted that the discussion flow follows a similar pattern spontaneously. The pattern that prevails is that the discussion usually starts with examining the status of the profession, then moves onto education and training or the employment and labour market, the professional representation and legal environment, and ends with the security and political environment. Often, the researcher asks a question about any outstanding issues that participants did not bring up in the discussion to make sure that it is covered, at least to maintain consistency of the discussion and coverage of topics among different groups.

Chart III-1

Pattern of Discussion Flow of interviews



As for the size of the focus group, most of the relevant literature recommends an average of 7-9 participants in each focus group (Dawson, 2002; Bryman, 2012). In section 3.4.4 the researcher presents the variations in the size of the focus group, between the planned and the actual size, which is common due to the impact of uncontrolled circumstances under which the research is carried out (i.e. the unstable security and political conditions in Palestine).

3.3.2.2 Research Tools:

- The Individual Interviews Schedule

In this type of interview, questions are already crafted, but the researcher can ask them in a different order while ensuring that each question is focused on a specific topic/area of discussion and ensure that all sub-topics/sub-areas are covered and properly linked to each other. Probing questions may be asked during the interview based on the evolution of the discussion, which is subject to different factors including the expertise of participants and their aptitude to reach more

depths. The margin of flexibility of this tool makes it more convenient than other types for exploratory research tools (Dudley, 2010 & Bryman, 2012).

To ensure a maximum level of consistency in the semi-structured interview, an interview schedule should be piloted before proceeding with actual interviews. These interviews can be conducted via face-to-face or via telephone calls, skype or videoconference and the researcher should apply the one that is more convenient to the participants' preferences and circumstances. The researcher needs to be aware of the advantages and limitations of all choices s/he makes when selecting the method and tools. In the case of studying the challenges facing the social work profession in Palestine, the researcher found that semi-structured interviews are very convenient to explore the views and feelings of participants, but also that the timeframe (duration) of the focus group interviews was challenging to some extent. Of particular effect is the fact that the topic was brought to serious and systematic discussion with the participants for the first time, with the majority of them eager to discuss and go into extensive detail. The timeframe (i.e. 75-90 minutes) was not enough to accommodate this unexpected surge of participants into discussion (See Annex 1).

Along those lines, the researcher designed a semi-structured interview *schedule* with broad and open-ended questions based on the reviewed relevant literature about the social work profession in Palestine and the context in which it is functioning. Two semi-structured interview tools were drafted; one is applied with participants in the individual interviews (i.e. heads of academic programmes, key professionals, representatives of employers and the Union of Social Workers and Psychologists), and one with the focus groups (i.e. academics and social work graduates). The researcher also used his previous expertise in social work research, teaching and practice while drafting the different questions. Accordingly, the researcher designed the two tools to cover a list of 5-7 open-ended questions that start with a question about the status of the social work profession in Palestine and why it is perceived as such. The researcher planned to apply maximum flexibility to move to the other questions (particularly the challenges in different areas) based on the responses to the first question. For example, if the participant were to focus his/her explanations about the status of the profession on the quality of social work education, the researcher would ask further questions about education, and from the education issues he would move on to other areas based on the relevance of the participants' content, to other areas like employment, or the roles of the Union. Accordingly, the responses of participants almost

guide the researcher in terms of the most convenient, yet relevant, next question to be asked. This resulted in some variations in the flow of the researchers' questions but he/the researcher) eventually ensured that all topics are covered as much as the participant was willing to/can talk about them. The list of questions included in Boxes (III-1) and (III-2) illustrate the flow of questions, with one of the participants in the individual interviews, and one in the focus groups. The order of the questions slightly differs from one individual interview or focus group to another. However, the main topics and areas of discussions are covered in all interviews.

According to the research plan, the researcher piloted both the interview guide and schedule for the individual interview and focus groups. This was necessary to develop the final drafts that would be applied in the actual data collection process. The individual interview guide was piloted with the former head of the social sciences department at one of the Palestinian universities in the West Bank, who had twenty years of work experience as a social worker and over 13 years' experience as a lecturer of social work courses at different universities. The focus group interview schedule was piloted with a group of social workers, in a rehabilitation centre in one of the Palestinian villages that was suggested by social work academics from one of the universities in the Bethlehem area.

Box (III-1)

List of Question with One Individual Interview

- How do you see the status of the social work profession in Palestine compared with other professions in the country, and other Arab countries (if possible), or compared with previous years?
- Employability would be one factor or reason that affects the way society perceives this profession. What are the other factors or conditions that contribute to shaping society's perceptions of the social work profession in Palestine?
- To what extent does the Palestinian community culture affect the way people regard the status of this profession?
- How is the social work education, for example, related to such a problem?
- How do you evaluate the competencies of social work academics in Palestinian universities?
- This raises the issue of employment among social work graduates. What are the challenges in the area of employability for social work graduates?
- What/where is the role of professional bodies, like the union of social workers, in addressing these challenges?
- How do you see the coordination between the service providers, the universities and the union?
- Is there any sense of agreement in answering the question: "what are the qualities of the Palestinian social worker that all parties should contribute to build?" If yes, what are these?
- Where is social research in Palestine regarding all these issues, concerns and challenges?
- What/where is the role of academics in bridging this gap?
- How we can address these challenges, in your opinion?
- How can universities agree on an admissions policy?
- Who will facilitate this coordination, given the competition between universities?
- How can we bring all the interested parties, like universities, institutions, employers, unions, ministries, and potential others, to work together on these complex issues and challenges?

Box (III-2)

List of Questions with One Focus Group

- I would like you to tell me about social worker status in the West Bank and Gaza, compared with previous years, other professions and with other surrounding Arab countries. Why is this status at this level, from your point of view?
- The community vision of the identity of the social work profession is linked with emergencies and tangible assistance. Can social workers act as counsellors and make behavior modifications, or as social workers who are able to solve problems as community organisers or community leaders?
- Do you think that professional ethics are clear to social workers?
- Are there clear limits for social workers or what is your opinion?
- Is this variation clear to society?
- In your opinion, is there a challenge in teaching social work in Palestine? And how do you see social work teaching programmes?
- In your opinion, why don't universities practice and apply the staff development policy?
- Who is responsible for developing field work training?
- Regarding curricula and its relevance to the problems in Palestinian society, what is the link between curricula and these societal issues? Is it clear in the Palestinian case? For example, the curriculum being taught is the Egyptian one, is this adequate for understand cases in our society (and reality)?
- Does labour market has challenges that are related to the social work profession?
- Can we combine these to develop a national plan for social work?
- How can we reach an applicable solution?

The piloting was used to test the appropriateness of the key questions and probes in terms of the content and sequences, as well as the logistical and technical considerations such as the duration, privacy, documentation (i.e. recording and note-taking practicalities). All questions and sub-questions were found to be very convenient in terms of areas/dimensions, the sequence and flow and the guiding notes for the researcher. The relevance of questions to the social work context in Palestine and their sequences were found to be appropriate (See Annexes 1 and 2).

The next step was to contact the department heads of social science programmes in the five universities, to nominate professionals or key informants at the national level for individual interviews. This request was submitted to all of them via emails but followed up with a phone call to elaborate on the request verbally and to make sure that the correct email addresses were provided. After submitting the request, the researcher waited 24-48 hours for confirmation. Email reminders and phone calls were used to make sure that the head of each department received the request. It took 3-4 weeks to gather the nominations from all five universities and for the lists of nominated professionals to be compiled. This length of time was reasonable and expected, particularly with the prompt reactions from the heads of departments, which was an encouraging indicator of their willingness to facilitate this research. This spirit of urgency and commitment dominated the process, because the participants, as much as the researcher, were aware of the need to act immediately within an environment of emergency in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip.

Concurrently, through separate communication plans, the researcher communicated the invitations for individual interviews with the department heads via email. Usually, follow-up emails and calls were used to make sure that the invitation to the individual interview, the consent letter and participant's information sheet were properly received. Always were the date, time and venue for interviews discussed and set via phone calls. Prior to any face-to-face and skype interviews, the researcher prepared all necessary procedures for proper documentation, including collecting the signed consent letter either before, during or after the interview. After finishing the interview, it was always important to check the recorder, to make sure that it was fully and properly recorded, and that copies of recorded interviews were made on the PC, laptop, external memory and hard disk. Field notes were checked after interviews and amended for details as necessary (Denscombe, 2013; Gillham, 2005; DeVaus, 2001).

In general, the sequence of individual interviews started with the department heads, then followed by key informants/professionals, employers and representatives of the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists. However, as it was not practical to wait until finishing interviews with one group before moving onto the next, the researcher had to conduct some of the interviews concurrently (i.e. one employer and one professional during the same week, or sometimes the same day). The unexpected deterioration in security conditions, the limited duration and the irregularity of a power supply (mainly in the Gaza Strip), the academic

term times of universities and the busy personal schedules of participants obliged the researcher to accelerate the process and interview those in the order of who were most imminently available and willing to participate. Some skype interviews were conducted during the daytime, while others were conducted during the early or late evenings (particularly with participants from the Gaza Strip due to the power supply or busy schedules). Late night skype interviews were usually held from home, while those held during the daytime were held from my office.

In fact, some interviews that were expected and planned to take place via skype were held face-to-face, such as the two interviews with the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs because of their offices being in Ramallah/West Bank, instead of Gaza. One interview was planned to be held face-to-face in the West Bank (in Jenin city/North-west Bank), but due to the busy schedule of the participant, the unstable security situations on roads, in addition to the lengthy travel time expected, it was held via skype. Another face-to-face interview was held via skype, with the representative of the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists; as he lives in Jerusalem, this requires a security pass-permit from Israeli Authorities, giving him no time to come to Bethlehem where the researcher lives. As such, the researcher and the participant agreed to meet via skype, despite it being only a 20-minute bus journey between the two cities.

According to the research proposal and consent letter details, the estimated duration of each individual interview was 60 minutes. None of the conducted interviews lasted for 60 minutes exactly. All of the interviews exceeded 75 minutes, either due to the enthusiasm and willingness of participants to speak in detail and provide in-depth explanations of their views, or due to the continuous attempts to explain the questions when the researcher sensed that participants did not completely understand them. The fact that some participants were more experienced than others also affected the level of detail they wanted to go into and when these details were found interesting and relevant to the research questions or a specific, important topic, the researcher had to provide extra time to the extent it was needed. Babbie *et al.* (1997) explains the elements that should be covered in the instructional part of the interview schedule, which can be addressed formally in the cover letter or the participant information sheet that should be provided to participants prior to the interview.

- The Focus Group Guide

The researcher used the semi-structured focus groups to collect data from social work academics and graduates. The academics were targeted to provide the focus on social work

education in terms of curriculum, field placements, supervision, teaching methods and research, etc. The social work graduates were targeted to provide their views and experiences with the labour-market, professional and career development, their representation, professional status and recognition and the gaps between academic programmes and practice. This method positioned the researcher as a facilitator/moderator where participants take the lead of discussion according to a pre-determined agenda that reflects the research questions. A guide, with a series of main questions and sub-questions/prompts, was designed to guide the discussions in a fairly flexible manner over a limited duration of time for each group (about 75 minutes).

The first wave of focus groups was with the social work graduates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Before implementing any of these focus groups, the interview guide was piloted with a group of social work graduates at one Community-Based Rehabilitation Centre in Bethlehem. As a result, it was slightly modified, specifically with the need to include a general introductory question about the status of the profession in Palestine based on the participants' experiences, which was intended to allow participants to start their response when they preferred. This question was inserted after the introductory part of the session and before any specific questions about challenges in different areas. The initial intention for this new question was to help participants prepare their focus and start the discussion smoothly, to pave the road for asking the specific questions afterwards. No other important modifications were made based on piloting the tool.

It was expected to be easier to conduct the focus groups in the WB prior to the GS because of the difficulty of access to the GS for the researcher (as explained earlier), also because he is more widely known to people in the WB and Jerusalem compared to those in the GS. Therefore, the focus groups with social work graduates from the WB were held prior to those in the GS. In accordance with the research proposal, it was suggested that social work graduates be invited through employers, universities and the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists (PUSWP) and interview those who accepted the invitation and decided to participate.

The consultation with the local advisor and some professionals, the identities of whom are at the discretion of the researcher, raised the concern that this strategy may end up with a larger number of participants than expected, making it difficult to maintain the standards of the focus group format (7-11 participants). Besides this, the availability of time, space and hospitality would become challenging. Following this discussion with the researcher's supervisors, it was

agreed that he/the researcher would ask local institutions which employed, trained or interacted with social work graduates to nominate a specific number of participants (i.e. 1-2 participants) for participation in the study. The researcher provided written criteria in the invitation letter (confirmed and explained verbally to the contacted persons on the phone, or during short meetings held to explain the research and its procedures) for the nominees, but it was not possible to ensure objective selections from these institutions.

Another methodological issue was about whether to delegate the duty of deploying invitations to these institutions to just one of them, or to deploy the invitations from the researcher to all institutions. It was difficult to answer this question without an actual trial. Therefore, the researcher tried to benefit from the PUSWP, as the umbrella of all graduates (employed and unemployed) that supposedly is in the most neutral position in the governorate. The first trial was conducting the focus group in Jenin city (North West Bank) and the invitations with all other necessary documents were explained to the PUSWP-Jenin chairman. PUSWP-Jenin deployed the invitations 12 days prior to the date of the focus group meeting. Invitations were followed by phone calls to confirm the receipt of invitations and willingness to participate. According to the PUSWP-Jenin chairman, none of the institutions declined or apologised, but only three participants attended the focus group, including the PUSWP-Jenin Chairman. This was a frustrating result. However, the discussion was held as planned.

Concurrently, another focus group was planned for Nablus city (Also in the North West Bank) through the PUSWP-Nablus chairman. The Nablus governorate has a very encouraging history reflecting a very active and influential role of the PUSWP compared to many other governorates. However, 10 days after deploying the invitations and follow-up (24 hours prior to the date), the PUSWP-Chairman reported to the researcher that the meeting could not be held as none of the invited institutions had expressed an interest in participating. This was very surprising to the researcher based on his experience as a social worker and a researcher who is familiar with the area context. The chairman of Bethlehem PUSWP branch has verbally reported to the researcher that the PUSWP head in the West Bank (who is from Nablus city) attempted to restrict social workers' cooperation with the researcher, considering the researcher to be known for his critical attitude and position towards the earlier shifting of the Union towards an increased political affiliation with one political party (Fatah), particularly after 2010. The researcher feels

that, over the years, this shift has negatively influenced the status of the Union at local and national levels.

Based on those two trials, the researcher decided to try other strategies for two main reasons; firstly, to avoid any more failures due to the challenging conditions related to the PUSWP's position/status, and secondly, to test the effectiveness of direct contacts of the researcher with individual social workers and institutions outside the PUSWP. Accordingly, in Nablus city, the Community Service Centre of Al-Najah University (headed by an MSW qualified professional, who provides social work field placements and volunteering opportunities to social work graduates) was contacted and undertook the duty of deploying the invitations and providing the logistical arrangements. In Jerusalem, another strategy was tried, which was delegating the duty to one MSW graduate, who is known and active, to deploy invitations through her professional network in the city. In these two cases, the role of the researcher was to explain the research proposal and to agree on the criteria to be met by participants, such as their field of study and having at least 2-3 years of experience in social work after graduation. To ensure maximum objectivity, the researcher did not interfere in the selection of any single participant in either of these two cases.

3.3.3 Population, sampling frames and targets:

The participants involved in this research were described in terms of the population to which they belong; the specifications of their different categories, and the sampling techniques that were applied to recruit them. The actual number of participants and the variations between them will be highlighted, including an explanation of such variations.

3.3.3.1 Population

The population of this research can be described according to the geographic and demographic boundaries including the theoretical and accessible population (Trochim, 2002), as follows:

- The Geographic Boundaries

The theoretical and accessible population of this research is defined by three geographic domains of discrete boundaries; the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, that constitute 22% of the total area of historic Palestine. These are considered as three geographic boundaries due to the following considerations:

- Each is ruled and influenced by different international and regional political powers that have shaped different socioeconomic and political contexts (as described in chapter I).
- The discontinuity of these geographic boundaries is under the restrictions of the colonial occupation that still imposes its economic and political authorities upon areas of the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, where different or mixed legal, economic and political systems exist³⁸.

- The Demographic Boundaries

Despite the matter of the geographic divide on the ground, people still believe in an eternal unity and a shared conceptualised destination that shapes the daily interactions between regular citizens, professional groups, sectors and political parties by all possible means. The target population of this research falls within these three areas; the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

3.3.3.2 Sampling Frames

The Sampling Frames of this research, which constitutes the social units for data collection and analysis (Trochim, 2002) were classified under the following categories:

- **Individual Elites**, formed of leading professionals with fairly extensive experience in the social work field and do not represent a specific institution, the heads of social work programs at the five universities, representatives of employers (statutory and voluntary sectors) and representatives of PUSWP.
- **Academics/lecturers** of social work courses at the five universities offering social work programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- **Social work graduates**, who have completed their first degree in social work, regardless of employment status.

3.3.4 Sample size and sampling techniques:

Qualitative exploratory research applies mainly to non-probability sampling approaches/techniques (Bryman, 2012; Dudley, 2010; Mack *et al.*, 2005). Dudley (2010) and Bryman (2012) suggest 3-4 types of samples. These are: the convenience sampling (availability sampling), which applies to situations when participants are known and easily approached or available; quota sampling, which applies when the research has sufficient statistics and other data

³⁸ The PNA and de facto government of Hamas in Gaza Strip, the Israeli Colonial occupation and PNA in the West Bank and the Israeli colonial occupation in Jerusalem.

to apply stratified/proportional sampling; criterion sampling, also called purposive sampling, that is applied when specific criteria are defined and met by all participants based on the research purposes; and snowball sampling, that the researcher applies when it is difficult to identify or locate participants who meet a specific criteria, thus the researcher may start interviewing a few known participants who would recommend others to the researcher. In this research, the researcher applied convenience, snowball, and purposive sampling techniques. The convenience sampling was applicable with focus groups of academics and social work graduates because no statistics were available to apply the quota sample. The snowball sample was applied with the individual interviews with the leading professionals, mainly because it was difficult to establish a comprehensive list of names for this category. The purposive sample was applied with the participants in the individual interviews with the heads of the five social work education programmes, the representatives of the largest employers and of PUSWP, who are already known as the people who exclusively occupy these positions.

As for the size of the sample, Dudley argues that when the researcher is concerned and interested in in-depth view and insight, s/he aims to have relatively small sizes. The number of interviewees can vary from 1 to 10. The size becomes more an important consideration when it comes to focus groups more than individual interviews. The size of the sample is not a serious concern in exploratory research since the generalisability of the research findings is not a significant consideration in the research. Eventually, the number of participants from the different categories and the sampling techniques are presented in table (III-1):

Table (III-1)
Planned Sample

Category (participants from each category)	Research Method	Sample Type	Predicted Size (number of participants)		
			Total	WB & Jerusalem	GS
Key Informant figures: 5 Managers of SW programs: 5 Employers:7 Union of SWs:3	Individual Interviews	- Individual Elites: Snowball sample - Heads of SW prog., PUSWP & employers: Purposive sample	20	15	5
Academics	Focus Groups	Non-Probability / Convenience	50	30 (3 groups)	20 (2 group s)

Social Work Graduates	Focus Groups	Non-Probability / Convenience	90	60 (4 groups)	30 (2 groups)
Sub-Total			160	105	55

During the field work and data collection process, the types of samples and the sampling techniques were applied as planned. In the case of managers of the social work programmes, the existing heads of programmes were interviewed, except the head of programme in one university in the Gaza Strip (Al-Ummeh University for Open Learning). He apologised and instead nominated one of his staff, his reason being that he is not from the social sciences field and has no sufficient knowledge in relation to the research questions, having reviewed the Participant Information sheet. Similarly, in the cases of the PUSWP, the chairman was very busy and delegated his deputy. Interviewing two other leading members in the union went as planned.

In the case of key informants, the number of participants that the researcher planned to reach was 20, but for the purpose of reaching theoretical saturation (Bryman, 2012) the researcher reached 26, including the 1 interview conducted for piloting purposes in the West Bank (see table (III-2)). The type of the sample and the sampling technique has not been changed and the nominations of participants were provided by heads of academic programmes and by participants themselves. As table II-2 shows, one change in the distribution of the sample was adding a third category to the participant categories, which represented the West Bank and Gaza Strip together, and merging Jerusalem with the category of the West Bank.

The other change was in the number of focus groups held in the West Bank; it was planned to conduct 4 groups (2 in the north, 1 in Jericho in the centre of the West Bank, 1 in Jerusalem and 1 in the Southern West Bank), but the researcher did not succeed in organising the one in Jericho due to continuous delays from the Ministry of Social Development offices there. As such, the researcher had to substitute this for one more group in the Bethlehem/Southern West Bank.

Table (III-2)
Actual Sample (reached)

Category (participants from each category)	R. Method	Sampling Approach	Predicted Size (number of participants)			
			Total	WB & Jerusalem	GS	WB & GS
Key Informant figures: 12 (including 1 for piloting from WB & Gaza) Managers of SW Programmes: 5 Employers: 7 Union of SWs: 2	Individual Interviews	Type - Key Informants: Snowball sampling - Heads of SW programs, PUSWP & employers: purposive sample	26 (25+1)	15 (14+1)	7	4
Academics	Focus Groups	Type: Convenience sample	31	17 (4 groups)	14 (2 groups)	
Social Work Graduates	Focus Groups	Type: Non-Probability / Convenience	47	38 (5 groups)	9 (2 groups)	
Sub-Total			104	70	30	4

Note: This is the total of participants who expressed their opinions and recorded in the transcripts.

As for the employers, three employers instead of four were accepted to participate. The employer who declined was an international organisation/West Bank branch that officially apologised. The branch of the same international organisation in the Gaza Strip agreed to participate. The other change was that two ministries of the Palestinian National Authority agreed to participate and represented both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Accordingly, the total number of employers remained as planned, but the distribution between the WB, Jerusalem and GS varied (WB & Jerusalem: 4 dropped to 3, GS: 3 dropped to 1). The researcher did not consider, when proposing the sample, that there would be some employers who would represent these two areas. The participants from the Palestinian Union of Social Workers dropped from 3 to 2 because the researcher could not get in contact with the chairman. Given the drop in these numbers of participants, the researcher sought to increase the number of participants from the professionals' category, which increased from 5 (3 in the WB and Jerusalem, and 2 in the GS) to 12 participants (8 in the WB and Jerusalem, including the piloting interview, and 4 in the GS). The methodological lesson that can be drawn from this experience is that the researcher needs to

have ‘a contingency plan’ for the participants’ recruitment, particularly in conflict zones where last-minute cancellations, declinations or absenteeism are fairly expected. In cases where researchers are not familiar with the social and professional networks (i.e. from outside the country) these situations may cause serious delays or significant diversions from the original research plan. Therefore, being prepared with alternative, yet compatible participants is essential prior to the research taking place. This is a particularly highly recommended measure in the case of individual interviews, rather than focus groups.

The size of the sample and the sampling techniques have changed / diverged in the focus groups of social work graduates and academics. The first change was the need to get a group of 10 participants from academics (from 5 groups) and 15 participants from graduates (from 6 groups) - see table II-1. During the implementation, the number of academics’ groups increased by 1 group in the West Bank, so it became 5 instead of 4. Therefore, the average of participants from the academics’ category dropped from 8.3 to 6.7 respectively. As such, the total number of academics that participated in the focus groups was 31 (WB and Jerusalem: 17, and GS: 14) instead of 50 participants (i.e. West Bank: 30 and Gaza Strip: 20).

As for the graduates’ focus groups, it was anticipated to get 90 participants (WB and Jerusalem: 60 participants in 4 groups, and GS: 30 participants in 2 groups), with an average of 15 participants in each group. During the implementation, 47 participants attended (WB and Jerusalem: 38 and GS: 9). The number of groups held in the GS did not change, but in the WB one more group was held in the North WB and the one group in the Central WB was replaced by one in the South WB because of the continuous delays from the office of the Ministry of Social Development in Jericho that could not organise the group in the central area. Therefore, the average of participants from this category dropped from 15 to 6.7. The direct effect of this situation was that the experiences and views of participants from one governorate have not been solicited; particularly given that Jericho constitutes one out of the two governorates that constitute the central West Bank. This might be considered a representation issue.

It is obvious that the number of academic participants has dropped due to the increased number of groups and the difficulties of getting a larger number of participants due to their academic (and other) commitments as reported by the facilitator (who was delegated by Al-Ummah University to help the researcher organise the groups). As for the social work graduates, the average number of graduates also dropped because of the increase in the number of groups,

and for other reasons, such as the incapacity of the union of social workers in Jenin to recruit a larger number and the work commitments of graduates from the southern areas in the WB. The case of graduates in Gaza was different in terms of the hesitation of many graduates, for security reasons related to the government's strict surveillance on the freedom of speech there (according to people who facilitated the organisation of these groups). One of the key lessons from the research experience in the GS is mainly that the researcher needs to have a sufficient number of trusted, professionally committed professionals who can facilitate the participants' recruitment process. Identifying these professionals is not an easy job, that needs to be given ample time prior to delving into the data collection process. In a conflict zone like the GS, the researcher needed more than one person for the job to minimise any potential biases and make the task more manageable, ideally on a voluntary basis. Should financial resources be available, these roles would be performed on a paid basis. The sense of insecurity and mistrust cannot be completely overcome and should be acknowledged by the researcher as a key limitation.

3.3.5 Data analysis approach:

Dudley (2010) presents three strategies to analyse qualitative research data, using a clear comparison based on the reasoning the researcher applies. In inductive reasoning, the researcher is interested in peoples' understandings and meanings of the social world around them, including creating knowledge/theory that does not yet exist. In contrast, in deductive reasoning, s/he is after testing or verifying theory or knowledge that already exists. Categorising the data (i.e. words, texts and narratives expressed in the participants' responses) without losing their meanings, into categories of different levels and extracting a systematic set of concepts and possibly theoretical frameworks, is the trunk of Dudley's approach to qualitative data analysis. The three strategies that are suggested by Dudley are the case study; summaries of responses to open-ended questions; and theme analysis. The first strategy is about analysing data collected on one case and does not go beyond the description of the case (i.e. studying a case of successful rehabilitation processes over several years of interdisciplinary interventions to explore/evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of this approach). The second strategy is about categorising the responses of participants to open-ended questions the researcher may include in survey research. S/he develops categories of these responses to be used at a pre-nominal or nominal level of measurement and not beyond that purpose (i.e. this applies to social surveys that include open-ended questions that should be closed, by categorising the different textual responses and coding

them for the quantitative analysis). The third strategy is about clustering the responses of participants into themes or patterns that are prevalent across several cases. It is applied to analyse lengthy narratives or unstructured interviews.

Bryman (2012), on the other hand, suggests two main strategies to qualitative data analysis; analytic induction and the grounded theory approach. The first one focuses on finding the consistency/deviance of the case from the research hypothetical explanation. The researcher applies the iterative research method on a case-by-case basis. As more inconsistency prevails through the analysed cases, s/he reformulates his/her hypothetical research explanations. In this strategy, data collection and analysis are applied simultaneously, and end up, usually, with a reformulated hypothetical explanation that is supported by a consistent number of cases.

As for grounded theory strategy, Bryman (2012) presents two key elements comprising this strategy. The first element is the basic tools (that are the basic concepts that the researcher applies when conducting his/her analysis, such as theoretical sampling, coding, theoretical saturation and constant comparison). The second element, the outcomes, is about the products of the analysis, including the concepts that researchers may generate throughout the analysis, categories of these concepts, attributes (aspects) comprising each category, hypotheses that researchers may develop about relationships between categories, and a theory (which is defined by Bryman (2012) as the well-developed set of categories that are systematically linked and form a theoretical framework). By a simple comparison between the strategies presented by Bryman (2012) and Dudley (2010), thematic analysis would be the strategy that combines the “theme analysis strategy” of Dudley and the theme development process which is part of the grounded theory approach presented by Bryman (2012).

According to the strategies presented by Sarantakos (1993), Bryman (2012) and Dudley (2010), the researcher highlighted two main issues that he considered to propose as the analysis framework for this research. These are:

- The iterative feature of the analytic induction process and the grounded theory approach will not be applicable to this research for two main reasons; the first is that the purpose of this research is not to test any theory, and the second is that the researcher is applying a cross-sectional design by which the responses to research questions are collected from many participants, from within a variety of groups directly engaged with social work education and

practice at the present time. Additionally, the resources required to apply the iteration method are not available to the researcher (material and immaterial).

- The inductive reasoning and general framework of the proposed analysis, that starts from the research questions, through to the coding and development of categories, and ends with the theoretical framework, would be the best fit to this research and its purposes.

Sarantakos (1993) and Dawson (2002) argue that a long list of qualitative data analysis strategies can be classified into three main categories, based on the timing of the analysis process:

Category One: Strategies that analyse the data during the data collection process, which is the most common strategy. Researchers who apply these strategies start the coding and identification of themes and development at the early stage of the data collection. As the data collection process moves ahead, they modify the codes and themes, or/and add to them. This process continues until theoretical saturation is reached. This is not applicable to this research because the researcher's concern was to collect all the data from the field during a relatively calm general period where the security restrictions on movement and communications in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip were not being applied strictly.

Category Two: In other strategies, researchers **wait** until the data collection is completed and then start the data analysis. This is used particularly when audio-visual recordings are involved and need to be heard and transcribed.

Category Three: The third category of strategies applies a mix of the first two, but mainly analyses part of the collected data for the purpose of ensuring that the research procedures and process are effectively serving the purpose of answering the research questions. However, they start a fully-fledged analysis after the completion of the data collection.

The strategy that the researcher adopted and applied in this research belongs to the third category. He started the analysis after the completion of the data collection process, since the data collection process was an overwhelming one, given the limited resources (mainly time) to conduct a spiral strategy (first one). However, throughout the data collection process, the researcher was observing the discussions and the emerging themes. One challenging factor that the researcher faced is that he had to transcribe all interviews (individual interviews and focus groups interviews) from audio records using the language of participants (Arabic) and then translate them into English before starting the review and coding tasks. There was no concern

about translating the terms used by participants because they are professionals and educated people who expressed their views properly. The issue was challenging as the process of transcribing and translating has consumed a great deal of time, particularly transcribing the audio recordings into textual format and reviewing the Arabic version of all interviews before translating all texts into English to ensure consistency between the different versions. Performing this task while resuming the data collection activities under high uncertainty, stemming from the unpredictable security conditions (arranging and conducting the different interviews) have put the researcher under enormous pressure.

The Open University/UK (date not specified) presents a similar approach to qualitative data analysis that was also applied by Save the Children/UK, which is a more or less simplified version of the framework presented by Dudley (2010), Bryman (2012), Trochim (2002) and Sarantakos (1993). It is “**The Framework Analysis**” which binds the analysis, by pre-determined dimensions, issues and concerns of the research which are identified by the research questions and the review of relevant literature. Basically, the common thread/attributes between the initial ideas/thoughts (Initial Themes) are grouped under a specific theme (basic theme). The basic themes that have common attributes can be grouped under a higher level of abstraction (organising themes), which can be abstracted further into global themes or concepts. Eventually, the researcher may develop a hypothetical framework and theory to understand and explain specific phenomena under research. Dawson (2002) describes qualitative analysis as a personal process that may make its findings and analysis subject to biases and, therefore, is considered one of weaknesses, at least in the perspective of quantitative researchers. The researcher also reviewed the thematic analysis process as described by Cochran (2007), in its guide that was applied and developed in different areas of operation and used to propose the thematic framework he applies in this research.

Based on the above explanations and descriptions of the different strategies, the researcher proposed and applied the Thematic Framework Analysis that was applied by The Open University/UK and Save the Children/UK (explained above). The focus of this analysis was on identifying and defining the main areas (themes) of challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine and trying to explore the linkages between them and the processes that produced them. The starting point was when the researcher identified some of these themes (which are domains or areas of possible challenges) based on his review of relevant

literature and previous research conducted on social work in Palestine. Accordingly, the analysis process started from identifying all the challenging conditions as identified by participants, grouped them under specific categories based on the common specifications, then abstracting the sub-groups under broader categories. Therefore, the processes started by reviewing the transcripts, identifying the initial themes and grouping them under basic and organisational themes that were further classified under broader domains (general themes) (according to the terminology used in Chart II-A). The following table illustrates indicative examples of the abstraction process (from right to left):

General Theme	Organising Themes	Basic Themes	Initial Themes	
Social Work Education and Training	Human resources	Availability of specialised academics in social work	Some academics are teaching social work courses or even leading social work programs without having any experiences in the field.	
			No interest in professional development of academic staff by universities	
	Research	Non-Academic research centres	No research centres specialised in social work research and knowledge production	
			Policy research	There is not policy-driven research in Palestine
			Non-Academic research centres	No research centres specialised in social work research and knowledge production

In the following are the steps that the researcher carried out to analyse the transcripts of the individual interviews and focus groups:

Step One: The researcher identified and defined the units of analysis and reviewed all transcripts over three rounds, to prepare the textual data for analysis (mainly the MS format and language), familiarising himself with the breadth and depth of content of inputs, taking notes and making summaries about the different thoughts and emerging patterns/trends. In this research, the researcher selected two types of units for the analysis; the transcripts of individual interviews, and the focus groups. The significance of the input provided by the first unit was that it reflected challenges at the macro level (i.e. national policies, legal environment, socioeconomic and political factors influencing Palestinian society, etc.), and mezzo level (mainly the institutional

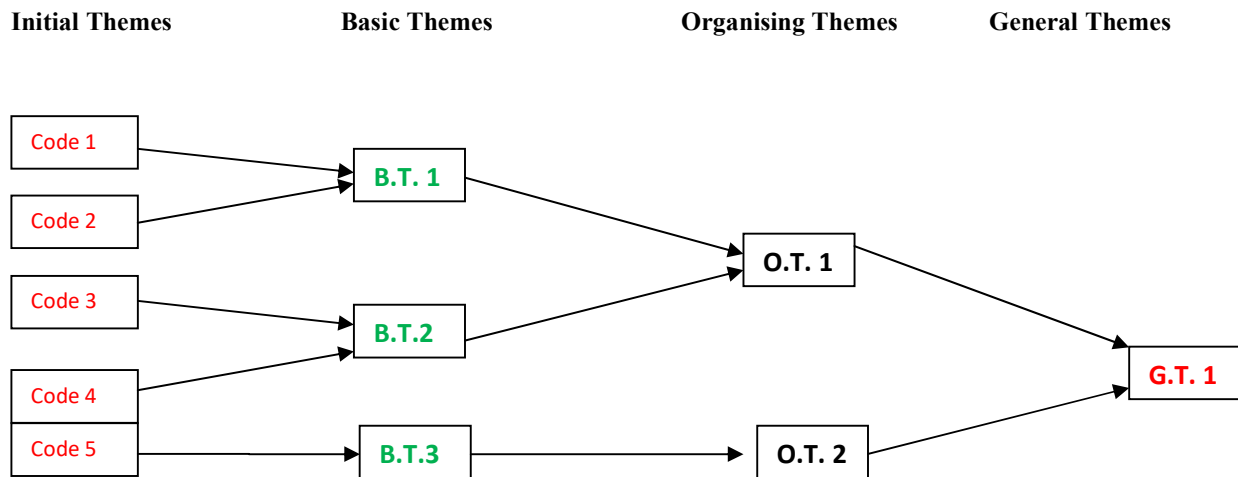
policies and practices within the different systems and sub-systems such as universities, public and voluntary employment agencies and field training organisations). As for the second unit, the significance of its input lies in collective views and perceptions provided by groups of shared professional identities and geopolitical contexts³⁹, common functions and roles, work experiences with different segments of Palestinian clients, and so on.

The participants in the second unit represent wider sectors of two main social actors who influence and are influenced by the realities of the social work profession in Palestine; the social work academics who are involved in teaching social work at local universities, and the social work graduates. The researcher conducted 26 individual interviews and 13 focus groups from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Accordingly, the researcher has analysed 39 transcripts/units of analysis.

Step Two: The researcher developed the coding system, which was about identifying, abstracting and coding all common and relevant themes, thoughts and perceptions that emerged throughout the repeated reviews of transcripts. The term “theme” is defined by Dudley (2010) as “an idea, viewpoint, or conceptualisation of something that is repeated over and over”. The initial list of dimensions that were identified from the literature review and previous research are considered an initial list of the global themes that were open to modifications (omission and additions) and under which the lists of initial, basic and organising themes would have been expected to fit. As the researcher found, the term ‘Global Theme’ can be confusing because it is not clear what ‘Global’ refers to, so he replaced it with the term ‘General Theme’ to denote a broadness of the concept/idea, which is the highest level of abstraction of a sub-group of challenges classified under ‘organising themes’. Every organising theme represents an abstraction of several sub-groups of challenges, where each sub-group represents some challenges with common attributes. Every challenge in each sub-group of the organising themes category is called a ‘basic theme’ (See Chart III-A).

³⁹ Given the fact that the context of the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip are different, and the contexts of areas within the West Bank would slightly vary due to security measures imposed by the colonial occupation that isolate them from each other. These differences are not only at the socioeconomic level, but also at the legal and political systems level (i.e. the West Bank is governed by the PNA while Gaza Strip is governed by the de facto government of Hamas, and Jerusalem is governed by the Israeli municipality)

Chart (III-1)
Thematic Framework Analysis Illustration



For example, the PUSWP report highlights the challenges related to the absence of the regulatory laws and employability of social work graduates, while the research on the development history of the profession (conducted in 2012) (Faraj, 2017) and the research conducted on social welfare services (conducted in 2013) (Abu Ras *et al*, 2013) highlight the concerns in the areas of the quality of social work education and training, the political and security environment and professional representation. These are considered and referred to as the general themes⁴⁰ in the following chapters (See Table III-3, left column).

However, the researcher reviewed a sample of 4 transcripts from individual interviews and started identifying basic themes from the responses of the participants (see the scanned part of one of the transcripts in Chart III-2). Chart III-2 shows an example of one of the basic themes highlighted on the right margin ‘coupon stigma’ that marks a statement about the way identified social workers engaged in the distribution the food coupons as part of the emergency programmes. Across all transcripts, all initial responses that described this aspect in the work of the social worker and the community perceptions of his/role are highlighted under this basic theme.

⁴⁰ In the following chapters (i.e. IV, V, VI & VI) the term “domains” will be used to refer to the “Global Themes” that the researcher used in this chapter.

Chart III-2

Snapshot of Highlighted Statement in one of the Transcripts

The image shows a screenshot of a transcript with several lines of text. The text is as follows:

31 sociology, social work and psychology graduates.

32 I:

33 To what extent you agree with those who see social work profession as a

34 coupon profession?

35 P:

36 To great extent I agree with this point of view. People also look to social

37 worker as someone who presents assistance coupon, and therefore the

38 profession stigmatized as a coupon profession not a profession that could

39 achieve social development.

40 I:

41 You said that social work is a prestigious profession and it is linked with

42 coupons is contrary with your point of view, will you explain?

43 P:

44 All the time human being seeks fulfilling his basic life needs and if these

45 needs are addressed through the social worker, he will look to social work

46 positively as it is a profession that addresses his basic needs.

47 I:

48 What about the evaluation of the employers' institutions to the status of

49 social work?

50 P:

51 Institutions differ in its types and the nature of presented services. People are

52 looking for the institutions that could guarantee continue living and

53 delivering assistance for him. Institutions didn't reach the level of achieving

54 social development and we can see a lot of problems and phenomena that

55 emerged and need the social work interventions.

56 I:

Annotations on the right side of the transcript:

- A pink box labeled "Coupon stigma :{1p}Comment" has a dashed line pointing to the highlighted text in lines 36-39.
- A white box labeled "Basic theme" has an arrow pointing to the pink box.
- A pink box labeled "It is important in :{2ZF}Comment addressing basic needs" has a dashed line pointing to the highlighted text in lines 44-46.
- A pink box labeled "Institutions didn't reach the :{3p}Comment level of achieving social development and we can see a lot of problems and phenomena that emerged and need the social work" has a dashed line pointing to the highlighted text in lines 53-55.

Throughout this process, the researcher was flexible to modify the titles of the basic, organising and general themes or add new ones as emerging from the review of the collected data. After reviewing all the transcripts from the individual interview and focus groups, the seven general themes (Table III-3, left) were merged into six (Table III- right column). The first modification was to include 'social research' under 'social work education and training'. The second modification was in the general theme of 'Labour market' (Table III-3, left) that became 'the Employability and Labour Market' (Table III- right column). This is because of the emphasis of many participants on the different conditions influencing the opportunities for graduates to get jobs, which are not limited to employers' policies, but are also influenced by employers' perceptions of the quality of education and training provided by one university compared with others, the political divide and affiliation of the graduate.

Table (III-3)
General Themes

Before Data Collection		After Data Collection	
The Community Attitudes	CA	The Community Attitudes	CA
The Social Work Education	Ed	The Social Work Education & Training	ET
The Policy & Legal Environment	PLE	The Policy & Legal Environment	PLE
The Professional Representation	PR	The Professional Representation	PR
The Social Research	SR	Included in ET	
The Labour Market	LM	Employability and Labour Market	ELM
Security and Political Environment	SPE	Security and Political Environment	SPE

When the researcher completed this process, he produced two tables that described the initial themes, basic themes, organising themes and general themes for the individual interviews and the focus groups. Table III-4 (below) provides a sample of the structure of these themes. The entire list of the themes identified in the individual interviews and focus groups transcripts are provided in Annexes 14 and 16.

Step Three: Abstracting Themes

The coding task involves establishing what Dudley (2010) calls “a coding system” in which there is a code for each sub-theme and abstracted theme. This is a process of data reduction and interpretation. In the case of a manageable number of codes, this step can be implemented through the “table method” by which all initial codes are spread on a table, then the order of sub-groups are rearranged; each sub-group is given a title or a theme that link all initial themes through common characteristics. In this research, the process of classification was performed using the Microsoft Word processing programme. The researcher came up with a list of themes that were reviewed and refined throughout the process (See Table III-3).

Table (III-4)

Example of 4-level Codes

General Themes (G.T)	Organizing Themes (O.T)	Basic Themes (B.T)	Initial Themes (I.T)
Community Attitude	Community Awareness	Confused concepts and roles	Wider category of the community does not understand what this profession is about and what the social worker's role is/what it can do for them.
		Stigma on the role of the profession	Many people, mainly in the Gaza Strip, still believe that the main function of the social work profession is to provide tangible assistance (food and cash).

When the transcripts of all the 25 individual interviews were reviewed, **133** initial themes were identified, initially abstracted into **72** basic themes, and further abstracted into **33** organising themes (See Annex 14). Also, from the focus groups, **88** initial themes were identified, initially abstracted into **53** basic themes, and further abstracted into **29** organising themes (See Annex 16). Finally, the organising themes from the individual interviews and focus groups were classified under the same **6** general themes. The initial themes are the specific ideas that participants express as challenges with no overlapping (i.e. using lectures rather than interactive exercises, traditional teaching styles, poor use of power point presentations, poor use of case studies, etc). These have been aggregated under 72 broader, basic themes based on common attributes/characteristics (i.e. teaching methods). The basic themes were further abstracted into organising themes (i.e. human resources) that combine the teaching methods and the qualifications in the social work field (another basic theme) and the staff development (another basic theme) together. The last step was to abstract the organising themes into a general theme, which, is in this case, is the Social Work Education and Training. The six General Themes produced by this thematic analysis of this research are: Community Attitude, Social Work Education and Training, Employability and Labour Market, Policy and Legal Environment, Professional Representation, and Security and Political Environment.

The researcher's curiosity was to go beyond identifying and defining the main GTs, within which the most significant challenges fall, and try to explore the dynamics between them. A key finding that emerged from the data at that stage was the centrality of the SWET in terms of the level of attention it received from the different categories and its influence on the other GTs. Therefore, the six GTs and the dynamics among them were presented and analysed in one

chapter, followed with another chapter devoted to presenting and analysing the challenges within the SWET as a central theme for the social work profession in Palestine.

In the coding process, the researcher developed a coding system that is specific to this research. The term “code” refers to a symbol (i.e. letter that stands for a specific description such as S= Social Support) or a color using a marker pen. Codes were added to the left-hand margin of the transcript. According to Dawson (2002), the coding term and technique is borrowed from the content analysis strategy. This step produced a list of codes (words, short statements or numbers) that captured the essence of the transcripts. Furthermore, during the review process, the researcher developed his memos reflecting his thoughts, questions, comments, impressions and so forth. One of the key functions of the developed codes was to link the quoted statements/responses, in the presentation and discussion of the research findings, to anonymous participants. In order to maintain anonymity of the transcripts while referring specific quotations to specific transcripts, every transcript was assigned an identifier (see examples of quotations below, and identifiers in red) that consists of the initials letters to distinguish the academics from graduates in the case of focus groups (i.e. A stands for Academics and G stands for Graduates), or the initials of the Individual Interview (II). These initials are followed by the serial number assigned to the individual interviews (i.e. between 1 and 25) or the category of the focus group, the geographic location (i.e. WB for West Bank, GS for Gaza Strip or J for Jerusalem), followed by the serial number assigned to the focus group (i.e. from I to 13). This is followed by the number of the lines from which the quotation is taken (i.e. L12-13), or the number of the participant (i.e. Par. 4), followed by the line number. So, the quotation from an individual interviewee would look like II-12, L107-109 and the quotation from a participant in a focus group would look like AWB-04, Par. 3, L82-84. The quotation, then, would appear at the end of the quoted statement as illustrated in Boxes (III-3) and (III-4). To facilitate the process of linking the quotations with themes, all these quotations were identified and copied to excel sheets where the initial, basic, organising and global themes are classified (See Table III-5).

Box (III-3)

Quotation from individual interview

Box (III-4)

Quotation from Focus Group

"There are ideal governmental and legislative polices but they aren't applicable on the ground"(II-17, L206-207).

"People who come to us think that we are associated with Israeli institutions such as national insurance, ministry of interior and the police, there is no trust between people and social workers because people think that we are spies and cooperate with Israelis, they think that we can book a turn for them in the ministry of interior or issuance of identities"(GJ-04-Par3, L53-57).

In order to facilitate the process of the analysis, the researcher needed to link the quotations with themes by having them in one table. So, the researcher copied most of the relevant quotations from the texts of transcripts and pasted them into the tables of themes. Table III-5 provides a copied section of the excel sheet file that the researcher developed to link all themes and quotations.

Table III-5

Sample of Themes and Quotations

Global Themes	Organising Themes	Basic Themes	Initial Themes	Quotations
Social Work Education and Training	Human resources	Universities' policies in professional development of academics	This profession was developed by those who had the chance to study in the Arab countries and European/American universities. The increased demand on social work by the community, by universities and employers at some stages has encouraged some graduates to resume their PG studies abroad including one university (QOU) to send a group of graduates to get their MSW and come back to join staff.	"I am very much involved in teaching social work courses in Najah University and Al-Quds Open University. It is worth noting that the number of the PhD holders is not more than 10 persons" (II-18, L50-52).
				"There are very serious challenges to talk about. The most prominent one is about those who specialize in social work. I see that most of the academics teaching social work aren't specialized in social work. Accordingly, their capacities to plan and conduct social work researches are very limited" (II-14, L179-183).

	Demand on SW education	Demand on social work education increase under emergency conditions	The demand on social work education is increased by the community under emergency conditions that create more jobs for social work graduates. The example of QOU is a strong one to support this linkage.	"We were at the end of the first intifada and there became prisoners, martyrs, many wounded and a large segment of the society has been negatively and seriously affected which created great challenges. One of the programs that were designed at the time was the Ex-Detainees Rehabilitation program at the social, vocational and the psychological levels. So, the university realized the size of the problem and decided to start the social work program in order to qualify specialists to work on these needs and issues which were have affected big numbers in addition to the needs of huge number of organizations that needed the social workers roles.." (II-12, L66-73)
	Human resources	Availability of specialised academics in social work	A limited number of academics specialised in the field of social work, which resulted in hiring academics from other streams in social sciences to teach social work courses.	"The academic load and the shortage in the number of PhD in social work and the lack of experiences are some of the challenges that exist" (II-01, L149-150).

Step Four: Generating Tentative Hypothesis

At this stage, the researcher may develop a set of hypothetical frameworks that describe the proposed relationships between the abstracted themes and concepts reflecting and capturing the different themes and comments under each theme. To Dudley (2010), this is an optional step in the analysis process. At this point, a satisfactory level of theoretical saturation should be reached by the researcher where there are new themes and their attributes and concepts can be reached with more review and analysis (Sarantakos, 1993).

3.4 The ethical considerations:

Two main interrelated challenges encountered in this research both had great potential to compromise the researcher's capacity to meet the required research ethical standards. These are, firstly, the denied access for the researcher to the Gaza Strip to recruit the research participants and interview them, and secondly, the limited trust towards the researcher in the West Bank

where he is not known. To overcome these two challenges, the researcher applied two strategies; contingency planning and flexibility (Mazurana, Jacobsen and Gale, 2013; Khatib and Giacaman, 2017; Wood, 2006) and “investment in the local network” (Dixit, 2012, p. 134). For the researcher, within a conflict zone, the strict adherence to the “do no harm” principle (Wood, 2006; Goodhand, 2000) was the most important ethical consideration that guided the data collection activities. Wood (2006) and Goodhand (2000) explain that the data collection process should not expose the participants to any form of physical and/or psychological harm, either by the researcher or any third party, during or after the research process. Towards this end, the researcher must be aware of possible sources of threats and causes of such effects towards the participants and take all measures to avoid them.

The security regime (imposed by the Israeli occupation) did not allow the researcher, as a resident from the West Bank, to enter the Gaza Strip to recruit and interview the participants via direct face-to-face contact. The other source of the missing trust is the political divide, the conditions of which are context specific. Within this context, the political affiliation of some participants and the institutions to an authoritarian government (Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Fatah in the West Bank) and some participants (if not all of them) could have implicit fears that their views could be shared with the opponent political party or government, which may expose them to interrogations or arrests. To this end, it was almost impossible for the participants from the Gaza Strip to trust the researcher, who is from the West Bank and thus not known to any of them (except one participant who coincidentally was selected to participate in the research). These conditions hindered the possibilities of recruiting a sufficient number of participants and establishing the trust needed for the individual and focus groups interviews.

The only way to address this challenge was to recruit 1-2 people, preferably professionals, to bridge the two gaps in access and trust. That was possible through the head of the social sciences department of Al-Ummah University, who, as one of the ‘gatekeepers’ in the Gaza Strip, suggested that one of his qualified staff assist the researcher and facilitate the data collection task, including the recruitment of participants. The volunteer academic was a well-known social work instructor to the staff, social work graduates of the two universities in the Gaza Strip and to most of the employers and field training institutions. After interviewing this volunteer via skype and telephone conversations, the researcher appointed her.

The issue of trust was more critical in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank, more challenging to the individual interviews to some extent and the focus groups to a greater extent. The reason for this is that the Government of Hamas has been extremely sensitive and strict with critiques compared with Fatah in the West Bank (as reported by some participants individually). In focus groups, every single participant needed to trust the researcher as well as the other participants in the group. The participants' trust in this volunteer was necessary to gain their confidence in the researcher (as a person and as a professional) and the purposes of the research, based on her trust in the researcher and his research. However, it was not sufficient for the volunteer to invite the participants to the interviews and inform them about the interview location. She attended the interviews to encourage participants to share their views openly and confidently. Further, her presence was necessary to confirm the needed adherence to confidentiality and the commitment of participants to the rule of not sharing the expressed views with any third party. She ensured trust both within the group (between the participants), and between the participants and the researcher.

The main roles of this volunteer were to reach out to academics, graduates and professionals who might be interested in taking part in the research, providing their contact details to the research to contact them and resume the process of recruitment (including the provision of the information sheet, the invitations and replying to clarifications about the research before conducting the interviews) and assist the researcher in documenting the data collection process (i.e. securing the internet connectivity, proper recording, and sending the records to the researcher via email). In the focus groups particularly, she volunteered to attend and participate in all these groups to maintain the level of confidence and promote trust, which was extremely helpful and effective to make these discussions effective and fruitful. She was helpful in selecting the convenient places for the meetings as she is aware of the places that are safe, acceptable, neutral and less costly for many participants. Therefore, she always ended up with organising the focus group interviews at universities. When she needed assistance in writing to a university to gain access, she requested the researcher to do so.

3.5 The researcher's role and identity (Positionality):

Holmes (2014) and Alzbouebi (2004) argue that the term "positionality" refers to the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study and is identified by locating the researcher in relation to three areas; the subject, the participants, the research context

and process. Holmes (2014), considers that some of the different aspects of the researcher's positionality are culturally ascribed or fixed (such as gender, race and nationality), while other aspects are subjective and contextual (such as personal life history and experiences). These aspects are the ingredients of the researcher's identity based on which s/he interacts with others in certain ways (Kerstetter, 2012). Bourke (2014) defines the positionality of the researcher as "a space in which objectivism and subjectivism meet." Bourke (2014) argues that "we can strive to remain objective but must be ever mindful of our subjectivities." Bourke's (2014) presentation of subjectivity versus objectivity mirrors Kerstetter's (2012) and Alzbouebi's (2004) notion about the insider-outsider terms of researcher positionality. For Bourke (2014) and Kerstetter (2012), researchers must acknowledge who they are as individuals, as members of groups and "as resting in and moving within social positions" (Bourke, 2014, p.3). The biases of the researcher, that come from his/her identity, shape the research process and the researcher should be aware of these biases before, during and after engaging in the data collection to find the best way to approach research participants and engage with them objectively (Bourke, 2014; Kerstetter, 2012; Yates, 2013). The notion of positionality also regards the way in which the research participants conceive the researcher's identity and the context in which the interaction between the two (the researcher and the respondents) takes place (Yates, 2013). As much as the participant's identity is important, the researcher's identity and the research process are important. The dynamic relationships between these three factors largely shape the quality of the research product (Yates, 2013). In this research, the impact of the fixed/ascribed elements of the researchers' identity is marginal compared with the impact of the contextual ones.

I am a married, Palestinian, Muslim male resident, born and raised in one of the refugee camps (Dhesheh Camp) in Bethlehem/West Bank. I was born in the camp and lived there until I was 42 years old. Not until the age of 13 did I become aware of the term 'occupation'. I had never heard of it before. On one of those days, the headmaster of the preparatory school of the camp came to our classroom and asked me to tell my father to take me (right after school) to "the Israeli military headquarter in Bethlehem" upon the request of the Israeli chief military commander of the Bethlehem area. I did not understand the meaning or the reason of such a request, but I passed the message to my father who immediately took me to this place and handed me to the military guards at the main gate. He left me with them after handing them his Identity Card. They asked him to come back at 19:00 to take me home. Inside that building, I

was asked to clean floors of soldiers' dormitories, bathrooms, dust their beds, prepare the dishes for supper, collect them and clean them afterwards. At 19:00, my father attended and took me home. I spent a year and a half performing this duty but with added tasks including fixing blocked sewage pipelines, toilets and fences surrounding the base. That was the way I became aware of what the term 'Israeli occupation' means. That experience laid the basis of my personality as a political activist over the following decades.

Until 1988, I was imprisoned several times, although the exact number is difficult to remember because I used to be imprisoned one or two days prior to every national and religious occasion⁴¹. I was detained for 1-3 weeks every time. It was painful for me and my family, but we had to live with it to the extent that my family became tired of waking up every time the soldiers come to arrest me. So, I used to wait until the soldiers and their commander knocked at the main gate and walk out to be handcuffed and leave with them. Additionally, I was detained twice, 6 months each during critical times of my education journey. This was to force me to leave school (in 1981) and university (in 1987). The whole education system was under full control of the Israeli military authorities. In fact, they never succeeded because I learned how to sneak back into the school system without getting the security clearance certificate that I needed after being arrested for 6 months in 1981. As for my university period, I escaped arrest during the period for which I was wanted for detention by moving away - I did not sleep at home, or at any place where the Israeli intelligence could find me for 2-3 years.

Yates (2013) highlights the importance of the researcher's consciousness of the different aspects/elements of his/her identity (i.e. the social, professional, academic, political, cultural and other aspects). One example of the impact of these aspects on the research process is the interest of the researcher in a specific topic, the access to primary and secondary sources of data, the relationship to gatekeepers and the previous experiences with participants. Because of these experiences, I decided to focus my studies in social work/community organisation, very much engaged in the change agent roles at the mezzo and macro levels, very selective of the jobs I apply for.

These experiences, in fact, enabled me to grasp a comprehensive view of the realities of the social work profession in Palestine and positively influenced my access to the participants in this research. For example, these experiences urged the dean of the social work department of Al-

⁴¹such as the Christmas and New Year, the prisoners' day, the anniversary of the 1967 war, etc

Quds Open University (QOU) to encourage a significant level of his staff' participation in my focus group interviews, if they wished to take part. Similarly, these experiences have made my access easier to all employers, the representatives of the PUSWP and the heads of social work departments at the five universities. However, the same procedures and protocols that applied with other universities were applied with QOU to avoid any possible biases stemming from any previous relations at personal and professional levels.

Another dimension that is related to the impact of the researcher's positionality on the research process, as highlighted by Yates (2013), is the power dynamics which stem from the status and position of the researcher as a person and as a professional and how the participants are influenced by them. However, Yates does not consider the unbalanced power relationship as an indicator of having an exploitative or manipulative interview necessarily, but that "it has the potential to be so" (Yates, p. 3), which is true especially when the researcher and participant have clear differences that cannot be denied or ignored, such as gender and age differences. That is exactly why the power relationship between the two sides is always asymmetrical, according to Yates (2013).

Self-preparing for the individual interviews and focus groups interviews was a routine intellectual exercise to ensure proper positionality. Initially, I thought there would an easy answer to the question of "where I should stand" and "which hat I should wear" while interviewing social work teachers, the heads of departments, the key informant professionals, the social work academics, the representatives of the Union, the employers and the social work graduates. Some of the participants were my students, colleagues, subordinates, supervisors, or my line managers. Some of them were or still are my friends, while I had conflicting relationships in the past with others. Many of the participants I had never met. At some points, especially in the early interviews, I slightly slipped into discussions or arguments that put my objectivity at stake. In fact, I never had a challenging discussion because of the "fixed" aspects of my identity. Also, to maintain objectivity during interviews, I reduced the possibility of participants feeling impacted by my political and professional experiences by being genuinely open and willing to listen to everyone's' view, experiences at personal and or professional levels.

The challenge of maintaining maximum level of objectivity was an obvious concern for me within the context of this research. Some of the participants in the individual interviews and focus groups, for example, were part of my personal or professional connections in the past and

present. Even though all these participants were recruited randomly, and I recognised that some of them were part of previous personal or / and professional experiences, I tried to ensure a systematic and consistent process in collecting and analysing their responses which was helpful to retain as much objectivity as possible. During the process, I recognised that maintaining objectivity, in terms of disconnecting myself from the audio records was more challenging compared with reading texts because I could recognise some of the voices and linking them to some participants while it was more difficult to link textualised statements with persons with exception of few cases, particularly when some of the participants known to me used specific examples during their discussions. The efforts to produce common themes out of the responses of many participants was another level in the process that helped me depart the position where a response of specific participant had minimum or no impact on final conclusions. However, it was a constant concern throughout the data collection and analysis processes.

Among the different groups of participants in this research, political affiliation is common for two reasons; the first is that the entire Palestinian community lives in a high level of political polarization after encountering colonial occupation for more than a century, which affected every citizen. The second reason is that students and graduates of social sciences (compared to many other academic / professional streams) are most likely engaged in political actions and affiliated to one of the Palestinian political parties. This applies to the researcher himself as well. Therefore, one may expect to consider this element of their identity as a source of threat to the objectivity of the research discussions during the data collection. However, it had almost no impact on the discussions and the outcomes of the research findings. The main reason was the common norm that political affiliation should be kept out of any scientific / professional discussion, particularly when the public good and the search for better future is the absolute intention of the researcher. For the majority of participants, the researcher is well-known as a political activist and a professional social worker, who always defended internal unity and commitment to the national resistance agenda, and his expectations from participants to maintain this as a norm has contributed to minimizing the effects of their political affiliation. Given the deep negative effects of the political divide on every Palestinian over the last 14 years (since 2006), it was known that bringing political affiliation by any participant (like in many other venues) will not be conceived as positive conduct therefore not welcomed by others. This might be another reason that may explain this observation.

Throughout the process, I continued to learn about the different aspects of my identity and positionality, as explained by Bourke (2014), and tried to keep their impact upon the process and its outcomes at a minimum level. The continuous examination of the impact of the researcher's positionality on the research process is part of what Bourke (2014) describes as "reflexivity", that involves a self-scrutiny and consciousness of the interaction with research participants.

I remember that I always had two levels of dialogue; one with participants, "external dialogue" and an "internal dialogue" with myself. Mostly, I think that I succeeded to reconcile the two and control swapping or avoid confusing the boundaries between them. Sometimes, I found myself slipping and tried hard to step back to my role as an objective researcher. That was a very insightful exercise by which I exercised my internal controls. Actually, the internal dialogue usually continued after the interviews in terms of reviewing where I was "good enough" and where I was not doing the "right thing" (i.e. discussions about the existence of the regulatory laws and their importance for the social work profession, or the quality of social work education in Palestine).

During the interviews, I noticed that the interactions with the social work graduates differed from those with the academics, the employers' representatives or the Union representatives. I expected to have comprehensive responses/views from the latter groups of participants compared with those of the graduates, because of their experience and connections through universities and other venues across the country, but it was quite the opposite in most cases. I sensed that graduates were less influenced by my identity compared with other groups. Possibly, the graduates were less concerned with my impressions or how I would judge their views/responses compared with the others who, sometimes, tried to avoid being "judged" by a known professional doing his PhD research like myself.

Additionally, the identity and positionality of the researcher may influence his/her decisions and choices of what to transcribe and what to exclude (Yates, 2013). This is part of the continuous change in the identity and position and their influence on the interactions with the participants and, therefore, the research outcomes (Yates, 2013). While reviewing the transcripts, I always found myself in a position to decide what to include in the analysis. The internal dialogue about the relevance of participants' responses to my research questions was sometimes confused by the question of "how this answer would serve my research purposes". My answer was eventually that I would have to contextualise the "odd" answers/responses in a way that I did

not lose my objectivity and integrity. For example, the Counselling and Special Education Department in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) has formally decided that the position of the education counsellor should be occupied by a university graduate with a degree in psychology or counselling. The limited supply of these graduates urged them to open this position to social work graduates, but only if psychology or educational counselling graduates are not available, which did not seem to be a policy that was understood among the participants in the research. In the analysis process, I had to report the responses of the social work graduates as well as those of the policy makers from the MoEHE.

3.6 Challenges to research in zones of conflict: The Palestinian case

Conducting research in conflict zones poses different sorts of challenges. Some of these would influence the research methodology, while others would influence the quality of the collected data and the research findings. Usually, the first are classified as methodological challenges and the latter are classified as analytical challenges. The challenges encountered by field researchers in different conflict zones (i.e. India, Sierra Leone, Salvador, Sudan and many other countries) are classified under two main categories: challenges related to the context in which the research is carried out, and challenges related to the content of the research and the role of the researcher. However, it can be a mix of the two (Khatib and Giacaman, 2017; Cohen and Arieli, 2011). Wood (2006) considers field research in conflict zones as “challenging for both methodological and ethical reasons” (p. 373). Wood (2006); Dixit (2012); Mazurana, Jacobsen and Gale (2013), and some others, identified a long list of challenges to field research that fall under the two types of challenges. The methodological challenges include the limited access to databases and contact info about participants, the difficulties in identifying and reaching them, the medium of communications and insecure places for interviews, political polarisation and divides, political affiliations of individuals and organisations, denial of access to blocked areas for security reasons, as well as unpredictable blockades and military checkpoints (Griffiths and Repo, 2018) (See Annex 6). The analytical challenges include fear and mistrust, cultural differences, the identity of the researcher and his/her role as an outsider or insider and sometimes, the funding of the research that would result in biased findings (Al Zbouebi, 2004).

Palestine is a conflict zone where field researchers report many of the challenges as related to the political conflict; externally with the Israeli colonial occupation, and internally between the dominant political parties (Al-Khatib and Giacaman , 2017; Mazurana, Jacobsen, and Gale,

2013; Gabriel and Goetschel, 2017; Cohen and Arieli, 2011). The participants in the research on “challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine” were representatives of different actors as shown in Table (III-2) and reside in the three areas in the West Bank (North, Centre and South), East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Most of the challenges the researcher faced were methodological and few were analytical. The methodological challenges were the difficult access to data bases and the difficult access to participants. The first was seen in the extremely cautious policies of universities, which represented the only gatekeeper who did not provide the access to its databases about their students, graduates and staff. The other gatekeepers in this research were the employers (in the public and voluntary sectors) and the heads of social work departments in the five universities. All of them were fully cooperative and provided access to the participants from their institutions or department. Therefore, it was difficult for the researcher to get sampling frames of the social work graduates and academics to draw a probability sample and get the contact details of the selected participants and invite them to participate in the research individual interviews or focus groups. These policies were considered valid for the security of the students, graduates and academics, which is common reason within this zone of conflict. To overcome this challenge, the researcher invited the graduates through employers and the Union of Social Workers and Psychologists using the convenience sample. The academics were invited to focus groups through the heads of the department, which was considered as a convenience sampling too. This was not a challenging issue with the identification and recruitment of participants for individual interviews, because he used the snowball sampling, where he started with the nominated names from the heads of the social work programs, then the participants themselves nominated others. Under these circumstances, the non-probability snowball and convenience sampling techniques are highly recommended by Al-Khatib and Giacaman (2017), Cohen and Arieli (2011) and Mazurana, Jacobsen and Gale (2013), particularly with an exploratory research study.

The second challenge was to access the academics and graduates from Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip directly (face-to-face), as the researcher is a resident of the West Bank and would require an official permit from the Israeli military commander (which is usually difficult in the case of Jerusalem and impossible in the case of the Gaza Strip). Alternatively, the researcher conducted one individual interview with a participant from Jerusalem via Skype but invited social work graduates to travel to Bethlehem (a 20-minute drive from Jerusalem) to participate in

the focus group. As for the participants from the Gaza Strip, in both individual interviews and focus groups, the researcher relied on one of the social work academics (delegated from her university to facilitate the task) to invite social work graduates and provide a list of potential participants for the individual interviews who were contact by the researcher. A condition that made the Skype interviews more challenging was the electricity supply to the Gaza Strip, which by the Israeli side was restricted to 4 hours a day, without informing the people in the Gaza Strip during which four hour period it would be supplied. Accordingly, the researcher had to wait until late hours into the night to conduct an individual interview, or re-schedule the times for focus groups to make sure that there was a network for the skype interview.

Challenges that could influence the analysis process were mainly related to the fact that the researcher was considered as an outsider to most of participants from the Gaza Strip, which is already fuelled with distrust and a sense of insecurity. The militant conflict with the Israeli occupation and the internal political divide between Hamas and Fatah were the main sources of difficulty for participating in a research study conducted by a person unknown to them. Al-Khatib and Giacaman (2017), Mazurana, Jacobsen and Gale (2013), Gabriel and Goetschel (2017) and Cohen and Arieli (2011) confirm the existence of the challenges in the Palestinian context that the researcher encountered. Singh (2013) describes, in a detailed manner, the difficulties of accessing the WB and GS (in terms of security measures and travelling between areas, and the trust in the researcher, who is not Palestinian and is not known to them). During the research period (April –November 2018), the situation was relatively stable, and the research was carried out as planned. The visit to Nablus city to conduct three individual interviews was an example of the unpredictable emergencies.

On the date that the interview with the Dean of the social work department of Al-Quds Open University was planned, the researcher travelled up north to Nablus city (which is closer to Bethlehem than Jenin), where the security conditions on the bypass roads were relatively stable. The interview was held at 11am. When the interview finished at 12:30, the Israeli military forces had closed the roads out of Nablus because a settler shot a young Palestinian boy at the entrance of Nablus and the settlers were celebrating the event on the road. The researcher had to wait for a couple of hours before figuring a way out of the city through neighbouring villages, located some distance from the main road to Nablus. It took him a whole day to get back to Bethlehem.

3.7 Conclusions:

The exploratory cross-sectional research design was drafted and applied to identify, define and prioritise the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine. The need to explore the views of the different categories of participants to a satisfactory extent and get the differentiated meanings between them required qualitative research methods and tools: individual interviews and focus groups. However, planning and conducting social research in a conflict zone would require paying more attention to the research standards at one level, and commit exceptional attention and efforts to addressing the challenges stemming from the conflict environment (i.e. flexibility and innovation). In this sense, a researcher needs to be sufficiently skilful at planning and conducting scientific research in both standard environments (not a zone of conflict) and conflict zones. The identity of the researcher and his/her roles are key factors that would adversely influence the research process and outcomes if not managed and controlled adequately. The first step towards this end is to be fully aware of all aspects of his/her identity and the potential impact that these might have on the research process and outcomes. Planning and conducting the research about the challenges facing the social work profession in Palestine was characterised by three types of challenges. The first were the challenges that were expected to meet any research, which stemmed from the expected variation between what was planned and what was applied within a relatively stable political environment. The second were the challenges that were posed by the political conflict regardless of the identity of the researcher (particularly the nationality). The third stemmed from the nationality of the researcher, which is one of the fixed aspects of his identity but posed a specific set of challenges that influenced the research methodology and analysis.

Chapter IV

The Six Challenges Facing the Development of the Social Work Profession in the WB, Jerusalem and GS

4.0 Introduction:

Chapter III presented the methods applied to answer the research questions, the impact of identity and life experiences on the process and outcomes of the research, and the challenges faced during the data collection. The chapter also included a detailed explanation of the method of analysis by which the coding system was developed and identified the different types and levels of challenges. In this chapter, the focus will be shifted to present an overview of all challenges that have been facing the development of the social work profession (education & practice) in Palestine, and the dynamic interactions between them. The participants' responses will also be presented, to differentiate the challenges that received more attention from the participants and establish a sense of priorities between them. However, this chapter will be introduced with a brief background about the political and security context to contextualise these challenges. A discussion of the participant responses and the main conclusions about the priorities of the different challenges will be provided in the second part of the chapter.

4.1 The political context: Background

The annexation of the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip to the colonial authority of the Israeli state on the 5th of June 1967 resulted in the imposition of a complex system of security measures to repress the will of the people and exploit their natural and human resources (Machover, 2006; Loevy, 2016; Home, 2003, Abdul-Hadi, 1932; Friedman, 2007; Said, 1994). The policies and practices of the colonial systems (Sela, 2016; Tiley, 2009; Nagra, 2013) have shaped the different types of social and economic problems at all levels for the Palestinian people, which necessitated the emergence and evolution of 'popular social work' first, and later the mainstream or formal social work in 1971 (as explained in Chapter I). The development history of the social work profession in Palestine, at the education and practice levels, shows that all social work education programmes and service providers (particularly in the voluntary sector) came into existence as initiatives isolated from each other and remained poorly coordinated, which is a phenomenon that characterised the civil society sector in Palestine, to which these programmes belong (Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013; Faraj, 2017).

The international humanitarian aid agencies have extended their services, through a variety of aid programmes, to different groups and sectors that were affected severely by the colonial occupation (Azzouni, 2010; Ali-Elaydi and Hammond, 2013; Merli *et al.*,

2004; Sela, 2018), particularly after the Nakba of 1948, Naksa of 1967, the continuous land confiscations, wars and incursions, arrests, house demolitions, injuries, and so on (Samama, , *et al.*, 2007; United Nations, 1982; ARIJ, 2007; Mukhimer, 2005; Ali, 2012; Jeronen, 2019; Greenstein. 2019). However, the date of signing the Oslo Agreement, as part of the peace-building initiative (UNICEF, 2010; Ibrahim, 2011; Merli, *et al.*, 2004; Al-Awar and Hassan, 2013) that was launched and managed by the capitalist western powers, demarcated a turning point in the history of international aid to Palestine (Shlaim, 1993; MEM, 2017; ARIJ, 2007;Awad *et al.* 2007; Meari, 2017; ,Schneider, 2014; Nagra, 2013; B'TSelem, 2015; PCBS, 2016). The agenda of the international donors was redirected and refocused to serve the purposes of the peace-building process; namely to legitimise the Israeli colonial occupation and promote the role of the PNA in administering civil services to the Palestinian residents. To this end, international aid to civil society organisations was conditioned with a neutralised political position for some and for others engagement in promoting the culture of peace according to the terms and definitions of the Western capitalist powers (Da'na, 2014; Giacaman, 1998; Giacaman *et al.*, 2011; Midgley, 2001). This has added more fragmentation to the CSO sector, including social work education and practice systems.

The participants in this research were part of these two systems (academics and employers) and were directly influenced by their existing realities shaped by the political context of the country. Despite the fact that the problems of the Palestinian clients (individuals, families, local communities, and the entire Palestinian society) were shaped by the political context, social work education and practice programmes did not reflect this reality in their design and content.

4.2 The findings:

In this section, an overview of the six general themes (GTs) and the challenges sub-grouped under each of them (i.e. Organising Themes) will be presented first with an indication of the number of participants who share the same views of these challenges. Afterwards, the linkages between these GTs will be presented. As explained in chapter III, section 3.5.5, and according to the thematic analysis approach, each of the GTs represents an overarching conception of a group of themes (OTs) based on their common specifications, and each of the OTs represents an overarching conception of a group of basic themes that were identified in the responses of participants over several rounds of reviews of transcripts of individual and focus groups interviews (See Annex 14 and Annex 16).

4.2.1 The general and organising themes:

One of the key findings of this research is that the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine were abstracted into six GTs and 29-33 Organising Themes (OTs) (4 OTs in the individual interviews were not identified in the focus groups discussions). Table IV-1 illustrates these six domains and their respective sets of challenges (OTs), and the percentages of responses that each domain received from the participants in the individual interviews. The responses from the participants in the focus groups, the percentages and classifications under the organising themes and their respective GTs, are presented in Table IV-2.

Table IV-1
The General and Organising Themes / Individual Interviews

General Themes		Organising Themes	Responses (Basic Themes)	%	
Community Attitude	1	Community Awareness	46		
	2	Conservative culture	8		
	3	Economic returns	4		
	Total		58	13	
Social Work Education and Training	4	Human resources	25		
	5	Demand on SW education	3		
	6	Admission policies and profitability	36		
	7	Availability of social work academics	6		
	8	Language barriers and textbooks	6		
	9	Research	41		
	10	Curriculum relevance	26		
	11	Quality of Field Training	52		
	12	Coordination	31		
	13	Infrastructure	2		
	Total		228	54	
	Employability & Labour Market	14	Employers awareness and Attitudes	20	
		15	Public sector reforms	3	
16		Job descriptions	1		
17		Unemployment rate	7		
18		Recruitment processes	8		
19		Donors' policies	11		

	20	Coordination with concerned parties	8	
	21	Legal environment	1	
	Total		59	14
Policy and Legal Environment	22	Availability and applicability of social policies including policies for SW education	10	
	23	Coordination	1	
	24	Legal environment	17	
	Total		28	6
Professional Leadership	25	PUSWP Roles	24	
	26	PUSW vision for the profession	3	
	27	PUSWP organisational structure	3	
	28	PUSWP Constituency	3	
	29	Coordination with universities and labour market	1	
	Total		34	8
Security and Political Environment	30	Political divide	8	
	31	Security regime	6	
	32	Siege	1	
	33	Donors' policies	2	
	Total		17	5
			424	100

Table IV-2
The General and Organising Themes / Focus Groups

General Themes		Organising Themes	Total Responses (Basic Themes)	%
Community Attitude	1	Community awareness	55	
	2	Conservative culture	10	
	Total		65	19
Social Work Education	3	Irrelevant curricula	23	
	4	Coordination	8	
	5	Research	12	
	6	Quality of Field Training	54	
	7	Human Resources	19	
	8	Infrastructure	6	
	9	Admission policies and profitability	27	
	10	Relations with graduates	1	
	Total		150	45
	Employment and Labour Market	11	Recruitment processes	9
12		Employers' awareness and attitude	16	
13		Awareness and attitudes of other professionals	4	
14		language barriers in Jerusalem	1	
15		Unemployment rate	10	
16		Donors policies	4	
17		Low wages	1	
18		Institutional capacities		
19		‘On the Job’ Professional development	1	
20		Fields of interventions in Gaza	2	
Total		48	14	
Policy Environment and Legal Environment	21	Availability and applicability of social policies including regulatory law and policies for the profession	23	

	22	Coordination	9	
	Total		32	10
Professional Representation	23	PUSWP roles	23	
	24	PUSWP style of leadership	1	
	25	PUSWP structure	3	
	Total		27	8
Security and Political Environment	26	Political divide	2	
	27	Security regime	1	
	28	Siege	2	
	29	Political context in Jerusalem	8	
			13	4
	Total		335	100

The definition of each GT and its group of challenges (OTs), based on the common characteristics, are explained as follows:

- The Security and Political Environment (SPE):

This GT is an abstraction of four OTs that were perceived as key conditions challenging the development of the social work profession in Palestine (education and practice); the political divide, the security regime, the siege, and the political context in Jerusalem. The significance of this GT stems from the fact that social work has emerged and evolved within a zone of conflict as explained in Chapters I and II. Surprisingly, this significance was not reflected numerically in the numbers and percentages of the participants' responses (4-5%) in tables IV-1 and IV-2). The researcher believes that the participants' responses reflected the normalisation effect of the adverse political and security context, which influences the entire Palestinian community and not social work only. Therefore, a limited number of participants highlighted the influence of this context on the development of this profession.

The political divide between the two dominant political parties in Palestine has negatively influenced the recruitment processes in the public and voluntary sectors which have become more based on the political affiliation of the social work graduate than his / her competency (See the section on challenges encountered this research in chapter VII). The impact of this factor was more evident in the Gaza Strip in both sectors, but in the West Bank it was clearer in the public sector where the graduates affiliated to Islamist parties have extremely limited chances to be

hired. This applies to all fields and not only social work. The security regime, which is imposed on the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, has been influencing the movement of social work academics, students, graduates, and their clients. One of the participants described this condition when he said that:

“Many professionals, specialists and academics at both formal and academic levels received invitations to participate in international scientific conferences but the occupation security system and the blockade prevented them from participating and making use of these opportunities. Also, the existing political division between the West Bank and Gaza affected the availability and efficiency of coordination between them” (II-17, L224-229)

The restrictions on trade between these areas contributed to the worsening economic conditions of the whole population (including social workers and clients), and the movement of academics and students between the areas. The siege of the Gaza Strip was an extreme security measure that had its political dimension as well and has influenced the residents of Gaza Strip (more than the West Bank and Jerusalem) to a significant degree. As explained in Chapter V, the impact on the education system is an example of this effect. The siege has compromised the minimum standards of living of all residents in the Gaza Strip including social workers and the users of social services. It has steeply increased the demand on social work services since the year 2000. However, the limited capacity of the public and voluntary social services system to respond to the deteriorating standards of living was reflected in the responses of some participants who considered the siege on Gaza Strip as a challenging condition.

Similarly, Palestinians living in Jerusalem live under exceptional political and security conditions that do not apply to those in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Therefore, it was listed under a separate organising theme. The impact of this condition on social work education and training, the community attitude, the legal and policy environment, and the professional representation are exceptional, and are not shared with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For example, social work graduates from Jerusalem must be acknowledged by the Israeli Association of Social Workers in order to qualify for a job in the Israeli social welfare services in the city, but they cannot be members in its general assembly. The Hebrew language must be mastered by Palestinian social work graduates in order to qualify for a job even though s/he will work only with the Palestinian citizens in the city, because the formal medium of

communications with the social workers and clients is only Hebrew and no bilingual system is applied. One of the participants in the focus group from Jerusalem said:

“I am as a citizen afraid of the municipality because the occupation municipality aims to displace people and demolish their houses during the night time and provides assistance for them during the day; this creates a complex situation and is problematic for ourselves first and with the people second” (FG-4, Par. 1, L163-167)

- The Community Attitude (CA):

The GT ‘Community Attitude’ reflects the responses of the participants on the status of the social work profession within the Palestinian community, and the key challenging conditions that they believe are shaping it. The participants in the 26 individual interviews identified three main challenging conditions that shape the community attitude towards the social work profession. These are: community awareness, conservative culture, and economic returns. The first is about the extent to which the local community in Palestine is aware of what social work is and what the roles of social workers are. From individual interviews, about 46 responses out of 58 (about 79%) considered that the Palestinian community often confuses the definition of social work and the roles of social workers with other professions in the social sciences field. Similarly, from the focus groups’ participants about 85% of the responses (55 out of 65) confirmed that the community confuses the social work profession with other professions.

The conservative culture referred to the degree to which the community accepts the intervention of Palestinian social workers in personal and familial social problems, and the perceived limited effectiveness of these interventions compared with the traditional ‘social reform’ committees and leaders from within the extended families and / or the broader community. This OT had a lower level of attention (13.8% of the responses from the individual interviews and 15% from the focus groups). Also, from the individual interviews, about 6.9% (4 out of the 58) of the responses were focused on the perceived low economic returns of studying social work for the families of social work graduates, due to the increased percentage of unemployment among social work graduates. However, the responses from the participants in the both the individual interviews and the focus groups highlighted the lack of community awareness about the role of the social worker as the most challenging condition within this

category of OTs. An example that reflected the community perception of social workers was provided by one of the participants in the individual interviews:

“People also look to the social worker as someone who presents assistance coupons, and therefore the profession is stigmatized as a coupon profession not a profession that could achieve social development” (II-17, L36-39 and L44-46)

According to the participants, the efforts of the universities, the services providers of social work interventions and PUSWP do not seek to educate the Palestinian community about the profession and the different roles of the social workers. The absence of sufficient knowledge about the profession and the long history of the traditional strategies to solve social problems restricted the space and confidence of the local community and citizens to accept some of the social work interventions. For example, the traditional Palestinian community used to, and still tends to, solve the problems of sexual violence against children and women within the closest circle of social networks within the same family, and mostly the voices of the victim are shut down, while perpetrators resume their life as they wish. This community is not aware of the roles of qualified social workers in solving these problems or / and doesn't accept these roles for reasons such as not having any confidence in their capacities to solve these problems and their commitment to the principle of confidentiality. Most of the community would accept the intervention of a religious leader to resolve couples' conflicts and divorce matters rather than giving any role to a social worker in the process for similar reasons, as one of the participants described it.

“Suppose that a wife faced violence and went to the protection house and if the social worker goes to her parents, they will not accept her or allow her to take part in solving the problem. But if two persons from the social reform committee try to do that, they will solve the problem quickly as the society accepts traditional reforms more than the social workers. We are a very conservative community that refuses to reveal its secrets to social workers, and this is a result of the misunderstanding of the real role of the social workers and the extent to which s/he is perceived as maintaining confidentiality” (II-13, L42-46)

The third OT under the GT of Community Attitude is 'economic returns' which highlights an important parameter upon which the Palestinian community in general and the families of social work students particularly, value the social work profession. It is about the financial

returns of sending sons / daughters to study social work and how much s/he will contribute to the welfare of the family after graduation. This also includes discussions about the chances of getting work opportunities after graduation, the period s/he may take to get a job and earn a rewarding salary that s/he will bring back home. As the Palestinian community considers higher education as a survival strategy and one of the best ways to invest in its members, it is always important to decide on which field to study. The community looks for the fields of study that may help the families and their members escape the trap of poverty and unemployment. One of the participants explained his view about the economic aspect of studying social work from the local community's point of view:

“The cost of studying outside the country is very high. People prefer to send their children aboard to study medicine which can give them social status and financial benefits, while studying social work will not give them the desired social and financial benefits like medicine. Therefore, people hesitate to send their children aboard to study social work” (II-18, L94-98)

The period of 1988-2006 witnessed the highest level of employment among social work graduates, particularly during the emergency times and the high demand for social workers. Over those years, more families, than ever were encouraged to send their sons and daughters to study social work, but this attitude has changed over the last ten years because of the increased percentage of unemployment among social work graduates. However, these emergency social workers were not offered the same benefits as the regular social workers (who are not engaged in any emergency programmes), which makes them feel unfairly treated by the employers particularly in terms of the acknowledgment of their professional judgment, ethical commitments, and the contractual benefits they are entitled to. The issue of inequalities between the two types of social workers raised by the Palestinian social workers also exists in other contexts as described by Clifford and Williams, (2002).

The donors' attention to the emergencies in Palestine over the last decade declined due to political pressures on the Palestinian leadership to accept specific terms and conditions for peace deals as offered by the capitalist countries (mainly USA), and because they diverted most of their funds to other humanitarian crises in the region that did not exist in the previous decades (i.e. Syria, Iraq, and Yemen). Accordingly, over the last decade, during emergency and non-

emergency conditions, the demand on social work graduates declined steeply as did the employment opportunities.

- Social Work Education and Training (SWET):

This is the second GT that covers the widest range of challenging conditions for the participants in the individual interviews (10 out of 33) and the second widest range for the participants in the focus groups (8 out of 29). More significantly, the percentage of responses that highlighted challenging conditions under this domain was the highest in both the individual interviews (54%) and the focus groups (45%). These responses reflected that the highest concerns about the challenging conditions to the development of the social work profession in Palestine originated in the social work education and training system. The responses of participants were classified under 8 groups of Organising Themes. The quality of the field training / practice received the highest attention from participants. One of the participants who described the challenges in this area said:

“There is supervision by universities but still not up to required standards. The university supervisors concentrate on the attendance of student, their strengths and weaknesses more than discussing the challenges / obstacles they face and skills they need” (II-09, L94-96).

Accordingly, the researcher considered it as the central domain among the six domains, on which the next chapter will be focused, and discussed in a separate chapter (chapter VI).

- Employability and Labour Market (ELM):

The impact of the perceived high rates of unemployment among social work graduates in Palestine had some (limited) influence on the community attitude towards the profession, as indicated under the first GT, but it occupied the second rank (after social work education and training), for both the participants in the individual interviews and the focus groups (14%). The aspect related to the labour market could be the critical factor that pushed it towards this relatively high rank. This was based on the relatively high attention that the participants paid to the issues of the responsiveness of social worker education and training to the demands of the labour market, the recruitment processes, and the fluctuating demands on social work services.

The challenges related to the engagement of social work graduates after finishing their first degree in social work constitute the employability and labour market general theme, which is the third one on the list. It received 14% of the participants' responses (See Table IV-1) which

makes it at the same level as the community attitude (second rank) after social work education and training. Under this GT eight organising themes could be identified. The two organising themes that received the highest rates of responses are the ‘employers’ awareness and attitudes’ and the ‘donors’ policies’, 34% and 19% respectively (See Table IV-1). The explanations provided under the economic returns about the impact of the donors applies here again, but the knowledge and attitudes of the employers in this context flagged up the challenges related to the factors influencing the distribution of the available employment opportunities. The responses from participants highlighted the personal preferences, political affiliation, and sometimes the limited awareness about the social work profession and social workers’ roles as some of the main factors influencing the employment process, the employers’ choices and decisions. An example of the challenges under this GT was provided by one of the participants who said:

“Let me say that the situation varies between the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem in terms of the demand on the social work profession. In Jerusalem this is much higher than in the West Bank and Gaza. We find that the employment percentage among Jerusalem graduates is the highest, and the social work programme at Bethlehem University depends on Jerusalem students because they get jobs shortly after graduation (no unemployment), unlike the West Bank which has a high percentage of unemployment and a small percentage of employed graduates. The unemployment rate in Gaza Strip is much higher than in the West Bank” (II-01, L90-98).

- The Policies and Legal Environment (PLE):

This GT refers to three OTs from which specific challenges stem. These are the lack of social policies, the absent legal environment, and the limited coordination between the concerned social actors to act collectively in lobbying for and developing these policies and legal frameworks. Participants expressed their belief that these are necessary conditions to define the roles of social workers and the areas of their interventions. For example, there are no national policies and regulatory environment on social insurance, women’s protection, child labour, disability, agricultural economic development, and poverty alleviation. Additionally, there is no legal framework to regulate the social work profession (i.e. accreditation). Some participants believe that having these policies and legal regulations in place will contribute to enhancing the status of the profession similar to other organised professions (such as the engineering and health

professions), and would provide clear vision, goals, and values to which the education and practice systems abide. One of the participants reflected his own views about the impact of the absent policies and framework for the social work profession. He said:

“There is no policy or vision, we are taking from the outside and we are happy and blindly teach our students. Ok, where I am going when I have no clue I want to be in the future. There is no policy, no vision and no horizon” (II-02, L110-113).

- Professional Representation (PR):

The sixth GT is about the extent to which the participants believe and feel that they are properly represented by the PUSWP. Some of the participants believe that PUSWP lacks vision and an effective structure, it is not an organisation for all social workers, and it functions in isolation from the key players involved in social work education and practice. They think that having a union with clear vision, democratic structure, and good connections would play a central role in developing the social work profession in Palestine. It may bring the education system and the employers under one umbrella to develop and work on a shared national development agenda. One of the challenges that one participant described is a structural challenge within the PUSWP and the extent to which members feel dissatisfied. He said:

“The other point related to the union is the type of specialisations represented inside the union. You may find social work, sociology, education and psychology. The union represents the main dilemma which increases the crisis in the social work profession in Palestine rather than solving it” (II-20, L41-43)

4.2.2 The challenges in dynamic interactions:

The socioeconomic and political context in Palestine, particularly as a conflict zone, generated and increased the demands on social work interventions on one hand and challenges for social work education and practice on the other. As explained earlier in this chapter and in previous chapters (particularly chapters I & II), the political and security conditions imposed by the colonial Israeli occupation and the neoliberal policies / practices adopted and applied by the PNA have shaped the needs of Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip as well as the challenges for the profession. However, it is difficult to understand every single GT and its respective OTs in isolation from other GTs and OTs. Chart VI-1 illustrates the six GTs and some indicative examples that highlight the shared lines or areas of interactions between them.

Nevertheless, it does not show the interactions between all GTs, since the participants responses did not reflect the direct connections between them (i.e. The CA and PR, the SWET and PLE). This Chart highlights the levels of reciprocity between the systems of actors involved in and affected by these challenges, and consequently the fact that none of them can claim that these challenges are affecting him/her only or claim responsibility and capacity to address a single challenge alone.

The University of Bethlehem (UoB), for example, had planned and conducted a training course in 2018/2019 to promote the supervisory technical capacities of field supervisors, who supervise social work students within the placement institutions that receive its students. In the Bethlehem governorate, there are three universities that send their students to these and other placement institutions. This course was perceived as a good and effective initiative to address some of the challenges facing UoB's social work students, but the impact and sustainability of this initiative will remain very limited if the other universities and institutions are not part of it. On a larger scale, the other universities and institutions in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip are totally isolated and cannot benefit from it at any level. The areas or the lines of interactions (in the circles) highlight a long list of challenges facing the development of this profession in Palestine, and each of them can be supported by many examples like that of the UoB. Since it is beyond the purpose of this section to provide a comprehensive presentation of all interactions and linkages, selected examples will be provided. This will cover the main areas of interactions that Chart IV-I illustrates.

The limited awareness of the community about the social work profession was perceived by the participants to be the responsibility of the universities, the employers and the professional representation bodies. They believe that social work students, academics, and graduates (particularly those who are employed by the public and voluntary sectors) are affected by this limited awareness, the limited economic returns of studying social work, and the conservative attitudes towards the roles and boundaries of social workers.

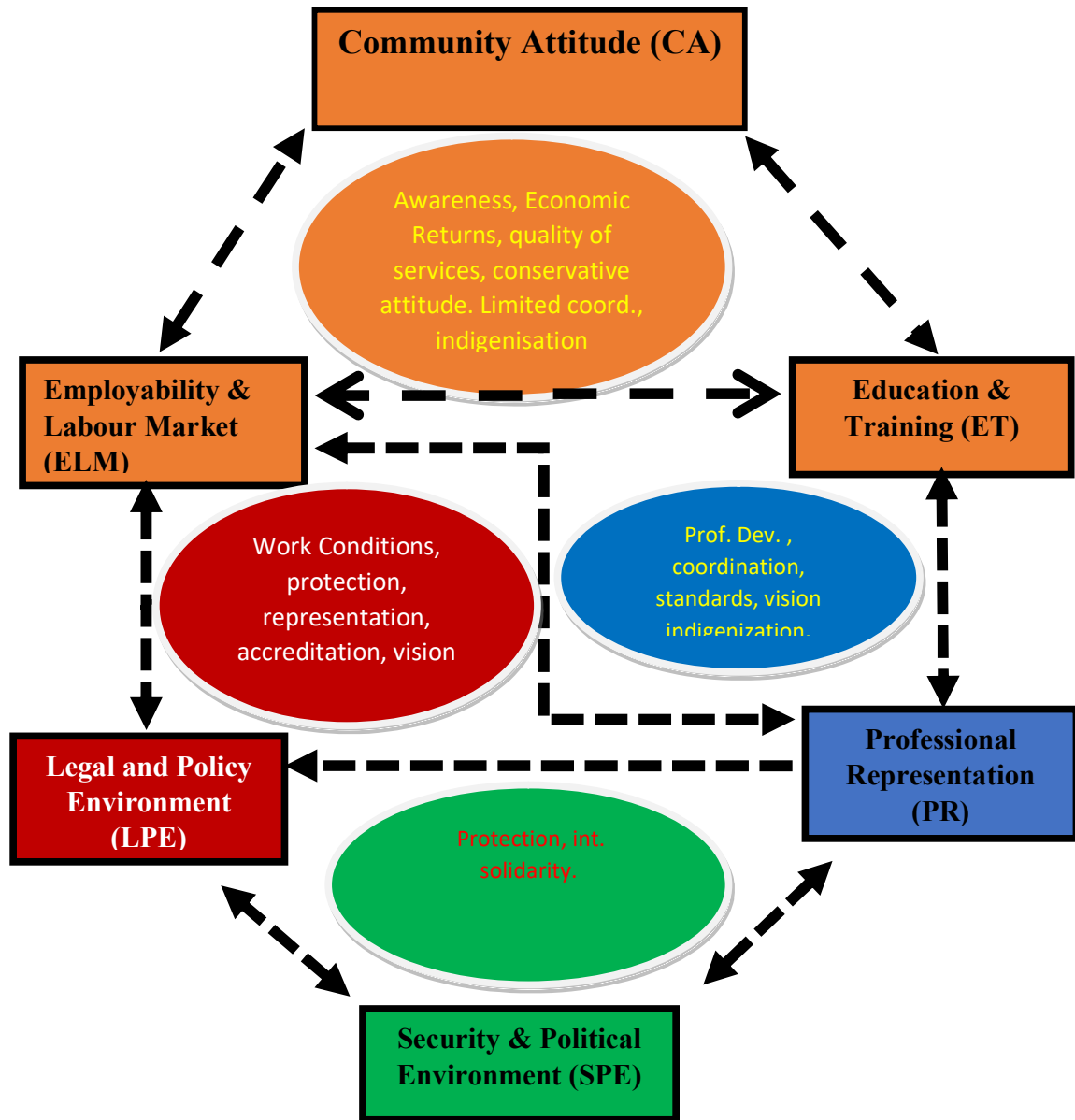
The quality of education and training provided to social work students was perceived by different employers who participated in the research as inadequate and that it was not possible to rely on professional development courses to bridge this gap. However, neither the universities nor the professional representation bodies are providing these courses. This gap has negative

influences on the employability of the social work graduates⁴² and quality of knowledge and skills that a new social worker can bring to the workplace. When a graduate applies for a vacant position, s/he mostly does not have confidence in the recruitment process. When s/he gets the contract and becomes an employed social worker, there is no support for him/ her in ensuring that s/he gets adequate terms and conditions in the contract, career development opportunities, or even be subject to a third party monitoring responsibility to ensure adherence to ethical standards while performing the job.

Table IV-1 and IV-2 show the political and security conditions on social work education and practice, and on the processes by which the different GTs received little attention from the participants, despite the fact that this profession has emerged in response to and functions within the political context of the colonial occupation. This would insinuate that the security situation has limited impact at a specific level with limited GTs, which is an important conception to address here. Chapter I provided an extensive description of the political context by which the realities of the social work profession were shaped. However, over the last two decades, the political and security conditions resulted in differentiated conditions and impacts of the political and security environment between the WB, GS and Jerusalem. For example, the emergency conditions are more prevalent and extensive in the GS due to wars in 2008, 2012 and 2014 despite the withdrawal of the Israeli military presence in 2005. On the other hand, the Israeli security measures within the WB are becoming stricter, land confiscation, home demolitions, daily arrests and many other measures are in continuously escalating and increasing (Jeronen *et al.*, 2019).

⁴² The unemployment among social sciences graduates is considered by the PCBS (2016) as one of the highest compared with other professions. The PCBS (2016) report stated that 8% of all graduates from the HEIs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are from the social sciences programmes. The unemployment among them is 64%. Additionally, it reported that the graduates in social sciences spend 14-20 months searching for a job in their field. The same report indicated that about 40,000 Palestinian graduates finish their undergraduate studies every year. This means that 3,200 are graduates of social sciences, and only 832 of them find permanent or temporary jobs in their field.

Chart IV-1
Circles of Interactions



All these conditions constitute the environment in which social work education and practice exist and function. One of the graduates' groups described some effects of these conditions on shaping the needs for specific social work interventions and how this has led to influencing the community perceptions of the roles of social workers:

“There are many factors mainly the political situation, closure of the Gaza Strip, low work opportunities and people's tendency [more capable to consider this option] to get assistance from institutions and associations through social workers, this helps in forming this stigma” (AGS-09, Par4, L52-54).

The impact of the security conditions imposed by the Israeli colonial occupation on the employability and the labour market for social work graduates was strongly present in the individual interviewees' discussions. One participant from the Gaza Strip tried to explain the negative impact of the restrictions on the movement of social work practitioners and academics (as explained by Moughrabi, 2015). He said:

“As academics, we are aware and believe that there are a lot of graduates who study social work but few of them finish their postgraduate studies for several reasons like the closure of Gaza Strip and the high financial cost” (AGS-09-Par3, L100-102).

The other element in the security and political environment is the political divide between the two dominant political parties (Fatah and Hamas), which took place after the PLC elections in 2006 and resulted in one party trying to impose its control on the government in the West Bank and the other trying to control the Gaza Strip (Pace, 2012; Hilal, 2010; Pelham, 2011). This conflict is reflected in the service provision, institutional relations, labour market, rule of law, civil life, and many other aspects in the two areas. As explained by different participants in the Gaza Strip, the charitable organisations extend their services to families or hire social workers of similar political affiliation (with Hamas and Fatah). Coordination between charities and universities of different political orientations does not exist. For instance, the Islamic University and Al-Aqsa University do not coordinate their programmes even though only a few metres separate their compounds (Individual Interview, II-15 and II-26). The police forces and other security apparatuses are staffed with affiliates to Hamas and other Islamic parties while the PNA in Ramallah is paying security staff in Gaza who are sitting at home without any formal duties there (Individual Interview II-21).

In the middle of this conflict, the political affiliation of institutions, their staff, and social work graduates becomes an area where the quality of services, employment opportunities, freedom of thought and speech are negatively influenced. Par.2, the graduate from Gaza Strip,

highlighted the impact of the political divide on the employability, particularly the political affiliation side of it. He said:

“Gaza is suffering from political divide; the political parties employ their affiliates and others don’t have any help in getting job” (GGS-01, Par. 2, L139-140).

The participant II-01, who is an academic key informant, commented on the effect of the two conditions by saying that:

“The political divide that happened between Fatah and Hamas and the divide between the West Bank and Gaza by the Israeli Occupation has affected the development and progress of social work between the West Bank and Gaza” (II-01, L17-19).

Another dimension of the effects stemming from the security and political environment is the relationship between international donors and the PNA. The political conditions packaged with the donors’ assistance to PNA have placed the latter in a critical position before the Palestinian society in general and its opponents particularly. The cuts or freeze on donors funding due to reconciliation efforts between Fatah (the leading party of the PNA) and Hamas (the leading party of the government in Gaza Strip) have always negatively impacted the coverage levels of humanitarian services provided to the victims of the occupation (due to the cut in aid programs in Palestine) and the employment opportunities (diminishing or termination of contracts). The manager of the one key institution in the West Bank commented on this reality:

“The authority is still unable to determine its fate and is not capable of being independent, they are trying to establish a system, but it is difficult, and this is controlled by international procedures. Until now they are dealing with us by Balfour mentality, establishment of a homeland for the Jews while preserving civil life matters [education, health, social welfare, economic activities, and telecommunication services] for the PNA. The financing of the authority is still related to this mentality, this affects people’s life and the services presented to them” (II-03, L146-152).

The effects of the political and security situations of Jerusalem on the profession were identified at two levels mainly; service delivery and professional development. On the first level, the relationships between social workers and service users are subject to critical levels of distrust because of the practices of the Israeli municipality in the city. The social workers who are employed by the municipalities and the Israeli ministry of welfare are facing serious challenges in both the helping relationships with their clients and their own identity. Most social workers from Jerusalem prefer to find jobs in the city because of the higher salaries compared with the jobs in the West Bank and the difficulties in travelling to West Bank cities every day. The vast majority get jobs within the Israeli welfare system that is managed by the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem. Social workers are perceived by the Palestinian clients as collaborators with the Israeli municipalities and the Israeli National Insurance system that are extending social welfare services through social workers during the day on the one hand and demolishing houses during the day and night times on the other. Therefore, these social workers have no choice other than leaving available employment opportunities there or live with the distrust and accusations of their clients. The focus group participants from Jerusalem described these situations as follows:

“People who come to us think that we are associated with Israeli institutions such as national insurance, ministry of interior and the police. There is no trust between people and social workers because people think that we are spies and collaborators with Israelis” (GJ-04-Par3, L53 -57).

“We have a history of struggle with the institutions of the occupation. The Palestinian employees working with the Israeli municipality are facing difficulties because they don’t trust the municipality which provides the social assistance on the one hand and demolishes the homes and /or imposes high taxes on citizens, on the other. It aims to displace people. This creates a complex situation and it is putting us in a conflicted position with ourselves first and with clients” (GJ-04-Par1, L55-60).

On the second level, social workers from Jerusalem who are willing to resume their postgraduate studies are restricted to the opportunities offered in the Israeli universities which are very expensive or studying abroad which forces them to leave their jobs if they can afford the high costs. The Master of Social Work programme that was launched in the University of

Bethlehem in 2015 (University of Bethlehem, 2013) was open for social workers from Jerusalem but the Israeli Ministry of Welfare imposed a condition on the programme. In order to acknowledge the certificates of the students from Jerusalem, those social workers should do their field training in West Bank institutions and not any of the institutions inside Jerusalem. The same condition was imposed on the Bachelor of Social Work programme of the same university a few years ago. From the logistical point of view, travelling to the West Bank institutions one or two days per week to do the field training courses is costly; especially as it entails leaving their duty for the whole day, which affects their salaries in addition to travelling costs and time. Al-Quds University offers the Master of Social Action which is accessible for the students from Jerusalem, but the Israeli Ministry of Social Welfare does not acknowledge its degree because the head office of the university is inside the East Jerusalem and this is not acceptable to the Israeli government. Therefore, the degrees from this university in all fields are not recognised by the Israeli Authority.

In the area of social policies and legal environment, there are two main challenges; the absence of integrated social policies and any regulatory laws for the social work profession. Some participants considered that there was no social policy in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, while others considered that there are some social policies in place, but they were not applied. According to Safadi and Easton (2014), there has been no national social policy in Palestine given the fact that it was controlled and occupied by different external powers (i.e. the Ottoman Empire, British Mandate Government, Jordanian and Egyptian governments, and the Israeli colonial occupation (Tenenbaum, 2014). In the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip until 1950, it was not clear what welfare policies were implemented and how because no documentation of that period has been found by researchers (Safadi and Easton, 2014).

In 1994, there was no choice for the PNA but to maintain the welfare system inherited from the Israeli military administration and try to modify it over time. Since it was not the first priority for the PNA plan to develop its own internal structures, the welfare system and policies applied in the West Bank and Gaza Strip remained intact with marginal modifications (Safadi and Easton, 2014). The absence of clear Palestinian social policies remained until 2009, when the 13th PNA government came to address this matter. It worked intensively and developed a national Palestinian welfare policy that covered 23 sectors, including the social policy sectors (ibid). One of the key limitations to this policy was at the implementation level; it applied to the

West Bank only since Jerusalem was under the control of the colonial occupier (Israel), while Gaza Strip came under the control of Hamas Government following the 2006 PLC elections. However, the inability of the PNA to control the revenues from taxes and natural resources, due to the control of the colonial Israeli occupation, has hindered the capacity of the PNA to implement these policies. Eventually, the services provided by PNA through the different ministries were funded by international donors according to their package of conditions (Samarah, 2000; Hadad, 2015; Dana, 2014; Botta *et al.*, 2012).

The respondents to research questions, of all categories, were not sure of the existence of the laws and social policies. One of the key professionals (participants II-01) said:

“There are ideal governmental and legislative policies but they are not applied”

(II-17, L206-207).

Some participants expressed their disappointment with the poor attention to the profession from the MoEHE. The participant II-I (key professional):

“There is no clear social policy, and the ministry does not care about the profession. There are no plans or clear policies to address the development needs of this profession” (II-01, L254-258).

The discussions about the regulatory law for the social work profession provided an example of this gap in the legal framework that was caused by the political and security environment. Some participants agreed that these laws do not exist and explained the influence of this absence of regulatory laws on the status of the social work profession. Some others said that there is a regulatory law for the social work profession in Palestine, but it is not applied. In fact, there are no laws or regulatory laws for the profession in Palestine according to PUSWP reports (PUSWP, 2005, PUSWP, 2010) and according to the reports presented to the general assembly of the Bethlehem branch in January 2019. The absence of this law was attributed mainly to the deactivated PLC since 2006 when the political divide started. PUSWP submitted the draft of the regulatory law on July 2007 through the legal unit of the PLC but it was never reviewed due to the freeze in the PLC functioning caused by the political divide (PUSWP, 2010). In one of the focus groups of social work graduates, an experienced participant from the MoEHE said:

“About laws, until now there is no real implementation of regulatory legislations and there are no nationally approved standards of acceptable social work practice until now. This is related to political conflicts and to the disruption of the Legislative Council” (GWB-03, Par 01, L23-28)

The impact of the absent regulatory law on social work education and practice was highlighted as a challenging condition by many participants, particularly the sense of limited protection and support. This was described by one of the participants as follows:

“Until now, I don't know my boundaries according to any Palestinian laws or regulations. Therefore there is no clarity about our identity as social workers, and this affects the social worker's self-perception and our status before our managers and what they expect us to do in the workplace [referring to irrelevant duties such as secretarial work, cleaning offices, serving drinks to their guests]” (GWB-03-Par2, L50-54).

The absence of a regulatory law has caused chaotic practices in the field, particularly with the absent monitoring by the PUSWP or MoEHE. If a law was passed, this role would be performed and practiced by PUSWP and the regulatory framework for social work would improve. Inputs from different participants explained this challenge:

“This law does not exist, as mentioned earlier, therefore it hinders the development of this profession in terms of its formal capacity to play a better and effective role in society. Society gives more respect and trust to organised professions” (II-11, L110-13).

For some participants, the absence of regulatory laws on the social work profession (education and practice) has encouraged employers to apply their own perceptions, attitudes and policies even though these may contradict with the basic rights and entitlement of the social workers (who have no choice but to cope with them to keep the job to feed their families). The situation in which they encounter confused conceptions of their roles by their line managers, are common in many institutions. One participant tried to explain this situation, saying:

“I work in the Ministry of Health at health clinics. The role of the social worker is not clear. So, our role is undervalued compared with other specialists (after the psychologist and psychological therapist). They believe that the psychologist

can do the role of social worker. Therefore, they neglect social workers in professional development programmes, workshops and training. More than that, there are no risk allowances for social workers like other professionals” (AGS-09, Par 7, L74-85)

The impact of the Political and Security Environment (GT) on the Employability and Labour Market is not reflected in Chart IV-1 but was expressed strongly by the participants. The issue of job insecurity within the private, not-for-profit market, for example, is a challenge facing the social work graduates in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For them, the main source of the diminished employment opportunities and the temporary nature of many jobs are the donors’ policies in the country and their limited-duration interventions for political and security reasons, as described by some participants:

“There is no job security particularly in the private sector where social workers are hired on temporary contracts of funded programmes and projects. All depends on the temporary international funding, which is subject to political and security conditions” (II-13, L97-100).

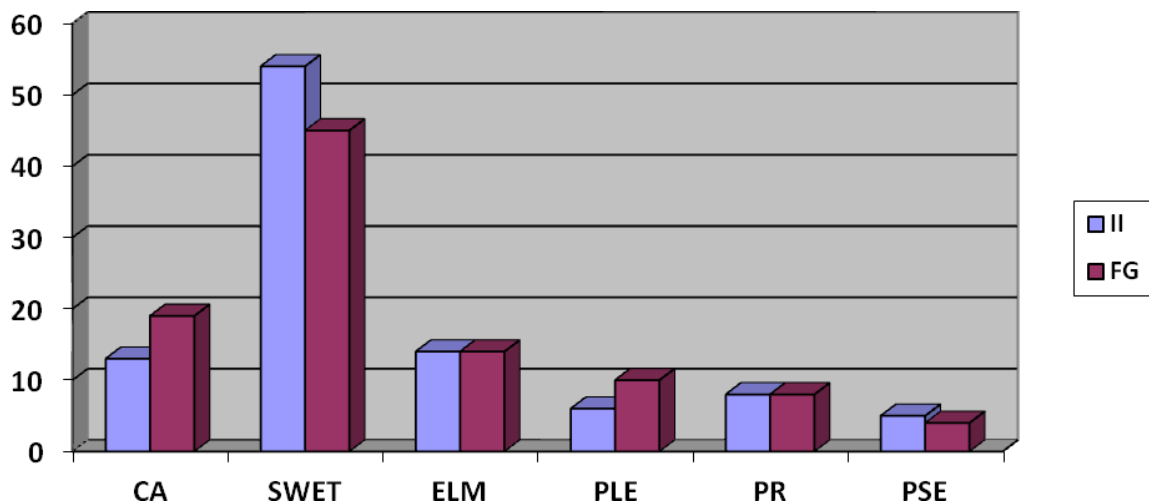
One of the key arguments was about the impact of the political and security conditions on the performance of social workers and the quality of the services they provide. The deteriorating well-being of the Palestinian citizens and local communities due to the daily practices of the colonial occupation (siege, economic suffocation, land confiscation, restrictions on trade ...etc) result in increased demand for social work interventions. On the side of welfare services, the PNA’s and international donors’ neoliberal policies are freezing the levels of new employment opportunities. This was reflected in social workers becoming overloaded and the shift in their roles from integrated psychosocial interventions to the cash-transfer approach imposed by the World Bank. At the social workers end, it is described as a burnout issue and management issue:

“We work in the ministry of social development, because of the intensive work we are not able to provide counselling services or professional intervention based on theories. This is because of the big workload and the thousands of files that we must deal with” (AGS-09-Par6, l68-71)

4.3 Conclusions:

The list of challenges facing the development of the social work profession Palestine encompasses 29-33 challenges that were classified under six General Themes (GTs). The Political and Security theme (GT) was rated at lower level than other themes despite its undoubted effects on all aspects of life for all Palestinians in the WB and GS. Possibly, for the participants in this research it was not considered a unique challenge for social work. The GTs that received the highest rates of attention and perceived as directly influencing the other themes was social work education & training (SWET), followed by community attitudes (CA) and employability and the labour market (ELM) (See Chart IV-4). This, in fact, reflected the challenges that directly influence the participants on daily basis, compared with the other two; the policy and legal environment (PLE) and the professional representation (PR). Among the first group (See Chart IV-4).

Chart IV-2
Responses from Individual Interviews (II) and FGs



The centrality of the SWET and the challenges it is facing invoked the need for exploring it in more depth and presenting it in a separate chapter (Chapter VII). This constituted a major finding that was necessary to consider when drafting any remedy strategy; addressing the challenges facing the development of social work must come across the challenges within the SWET. However, the Community Attitude was mainly shaped by the humanitarian emergency and relief programs that were designed to address the effects of the colonial occupation practices

on the one hand, and controlled by the neoliberal donors' terms and conditions by which the Employability and Labour Market has been shaped as well. The neutralized social work education, the temporary fix of the peoples' emergency needs, and the depoliticized interventions have resulted in a community perception that "these social workers are the servants of their employers more than their people".

Chapter V

The Challenges Facing the Social Work Education and Training in Palestine

5.0 Introduction:

In the previous chapter, an overview was presented about the spectrum of challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, in addition to the frequencies of responses pertinent to each of them. It was concluded by discussing the significant impact of the political and security environment on shaping these challenges and the centrality of the challenges in social work education and training (SWET) compared with the other five general themes. The purpose of this chapter is to present a closer look into the challenges within the SWET area and its status within the surrounding Palestinian context. Accordingly, a brief introduction about education and higher education in the Palestinian context will be presented first. Following that, the findings about the challenges within SWET, and the role of the political contexts in shaping them, will be presented. Finally, the conclusion of this chapter will be presented to lay the ground for the strategies to address the different challenges, which will be the focus of the next chapter (Ch. VI).

5.1 Education and higher education in the Palestinian context:

5.1.1 Education in Palestine: The survival strategy

The review of the historical development of higher education in Palestine demonstrated that, on the one hand, the colonial powers have been using it as a strategy to maintain the colonial Zionist state of occupation, by which it could control the Arab region and exploit its human and natural resources (Nicolai, 2007; Abu Saad, 2006; Abu-Awwad, 2013; Alfoqahaa, 2015; Ali-Elaydi and Hammond, 2013; Al-Qaout, 2013; Ibrahim, 2015; Wolf, 1981; Hashweh and Hashweh, 1999; Sanchez, *et al.*, 2011). On the other hand, the Palestinian people have used it as a strategy for survival and national liberation from the colonial occupation (Koni, Zainal and Ibrahim, 2012; Hallaj, 1980; Fildmann, 2016; Ramahi, 2016; Rowmani, 2009; Meari, 2017; Al-Qarout, 2013; Botta *et al.*, 2012; Moughrabi, 2015; Al-Awar and Hassan, 2013). Therefore, the structure and content of basic education in Palestine has been subject to all forms of oppressive practices by the Israeli colonial authorities prior to 1994 and an area of endless negotiations between PLO and Israel during the different cycles of peace negotiations.

5.1.2. Social work education and training in Palestine:

The development history of the social work profession in general, and SWET, clearly indicate that it has been heavily dependent on borrowing the design and content of education and

practice programmes from the Western countries (mainly USA) and Arab countries (mainly Egypt). The limited capacities and the absence of interests and incentives to conduct research in the field of social work resulted in perpetuating this dependency and the irrelevance of the social work profession, at both education and practice levels, to the socioeconomic and political context of Palestine (Rantisi, 2015; Ibrahim, 2016; Ibrahim, 201; Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2018; Faraj, 2012, unpublished research paper). However, some of the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine (i.e. Westernised and irrelevant) are not unique to Palestine but are common to other Arab countries and with many countries in the global south (Sloan, 2017). The key uniqueness of the Palestinian case lies in the nature and type of the colonial project that was created in 1948 and is still holding the Palestinian land and people in its fist.

According to Sloan (2017) and Munoz-Guzman (2018), all social work programmes in Arab countries and Latin America have been and still are adopting western theories and models which were transplanted to these countries through the academics who studied social work in western countries or / and through international social work academics who are involved in designing social work programmes and teaching some of its courses there (Price *et al.*, 2013). This has led to academic re-colonisation or imperialism, according to Sloan (2017). Despite the existence of the social work profession and its education programmes in Egypt since 1936, for example, it is still considered Westernised (Sloan, 2017). In the Arabian Gulf states, there are 12 undergraduate social work programmes (six in Saudi Arabia, three in the United Arab Emirates, one in Kuwait, one in Qatar, and one in Oman) and two graduate programmes (one in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, one in United Arab Emirates), but all these lack the involvement of Arab citizens with advanced qualifications in social work. The shortage of locally developed social work textbooks, manuals, course description and content in these universities meant that they were imported from the UK and /or USA. Additionally, the challenges of conservative communities and secularisation of the profession and poor research are common challenges in the Arab Gulf countries (Sloan, 2017).

The continuously deteriorating socioeconomic and security conditions in the WB, Jerusalem, and GS after 1967, resulted in the gradual increase in the demand for qualified social work graduates, particularly through the international humanitarian aid programmes prior to the establishment of PNA in 1994. Over the 1980s and early 1990s, the prevalence of emergency food and cash resulted in introducing the social work profession to the public as the profession of

coupon distribution. Few programmes were directed to other types of services, mainly rehabilitation and mental health, such as the YMCA rehabilitation programme for the physically injured youth and the Mother and Child Guidance Center. These provided a different view of the profession by introducing new elements to social work interventions, such as psychosocial counselling, advocacy, awareness raising, research, coordination and referrals, community mobilisation, economic empowerment, and family engagement. Over the years, the social work intervention models (in the emergency and development realms) evolved towards a more relevant framework to the Palestinian context. However, Palestinian social work education and training programmes in the five universities did not pick up these models and never integrated them into its curricula, as confirmed by different participants in this research.

The poor quality of social work education and training in the six universities (after the new programme of Al-Najah University was launched in 2018) can be understood in the context of the impact of the neoliberal ‘peace-building’ project, that came into existence to perpetuate the Israeli colonial occupation rather than liberating Palestine. The neoliberal policies, that PNA adopted and applied, forced Palestinian universities to face the challenge of self-financing, particularly the privatisation of the HEI’s (Hanafi and Tabar, 2003). This resulted in universities’ profitability strategies, as pointed out by participants, which required more liberal admission policies (you pay, you get enrolled), re-ranking the priority between the marketable programmes (i.e. business administration, information technology, engineering, and health professions) compared with less demanded streams such as social sciences and other arts studies (marketisation). The universities, therefore, declined to invest in the development of the social science (including social work) programmes compared with other income-generating programmes. With the exception of QOU⁴³, universities did not allocate any budgets or establish any partnership programmes to upgrade social work academics, research, recruit qualified staff from abroad, or provide incentives to field training supervisors (e.g. paying any financial support to supervisors inside institutions for supervision services).

⁴³ Al-Quds Open University.

The observed oversupply⁴⁴ of social work education and training services, while the employment opportunities for the social work graduates in the local labour market are diminishing (due to declining levels of funding to the Palestinian National Authority and the civil society sector for political reasons mainly⁴⁵) exemplifies the crisis of the non-existing coordination between the two (Merli *et al.*, 2004). This crisis reflects the fact that, after graduation, the universities did not consider themselves to have any responsibility towards social work graduates, who then bore the absolute responsibility for finding jobs. This was confirmed by the head of the largest social work programme in the WB, Jerusalem and GS, who said:

[I]n the university there was an important principle which is people's right to education, the student has the right to choose the major that s/he needs and after that s/he is responsible for finding employment either locally, in Arab countries or internationally. The bottom-line is that the university offers its academic programmes to meet people's needs and preferences in education and after that they alone are responsible for finding work, not the universities (II-12, L127-132)

After 2006, with the end of the second Intifada and the diminishing international funding to humanitarian programmes, profitability more than the demand of the local market encouraged the universities to keep their doors wide open for more social work students. This policy resulted in a continuous increase in the rate of unemployment among social work graduates, increased levels of frustration among social work graduates and their families, and the demoted social status of the profession at the community level, compared with other professions.

Along with those neoliberal policies, the interests of HEIs to improve the quality of social work education and training (through research, partnerships, programs upgrading...etc.) has been maintained at the very minimal level. However, Ibrahim (2018) emphasised the role of social work education in providing the Palestinian society with qualified and competent social work graduates to contribute effectively to its development and to enhance the strategies of resilience

⁴⁴There are no accurate statistics about the number of social work graduates, but the researcher estimates to have 15,000-18,000 as based on data he collected in 2013 for previous research about social work in Palestine (Abu Ras *et al.*, 2013).

⁴⁵Examples of the political conditions influencing the levels of funding include, but are not limited to, the pressures on the authority to impose political conditions by the state and non-state donors hosting the peace process, and the divergence of more funding to support humanitarian aid to other countries facing war conditions like Syria and Iraq.

and coping with the life challenges facing its constituencies (individuals, families, local communities and organizations). In this sense, the continuous rise in the challenges facing Palestinian society resulted in increasing the demands on social work programmes.

5.2 The key findings:

According to Ibrahim (2018) and Faraj *et al.*, (2018), the main challenges facing SWET in Palestine are the relevance of the social work education curricula to the local context in Palestine, the shortage of qualified academics in the social work field and poor teaching methods, poor libraries, limited access to international resources, the weakness of social work research, and the poor coordination with the labour market and its demands. Ibrahim (2018) discussed some of these challenges as part of quantitative research conducted in two Palestinian universities, without any ranking or contextualisation. Also, the findings reflected the views of academics and a limited number of students; the views of employers, graduates and representatives were not covered.

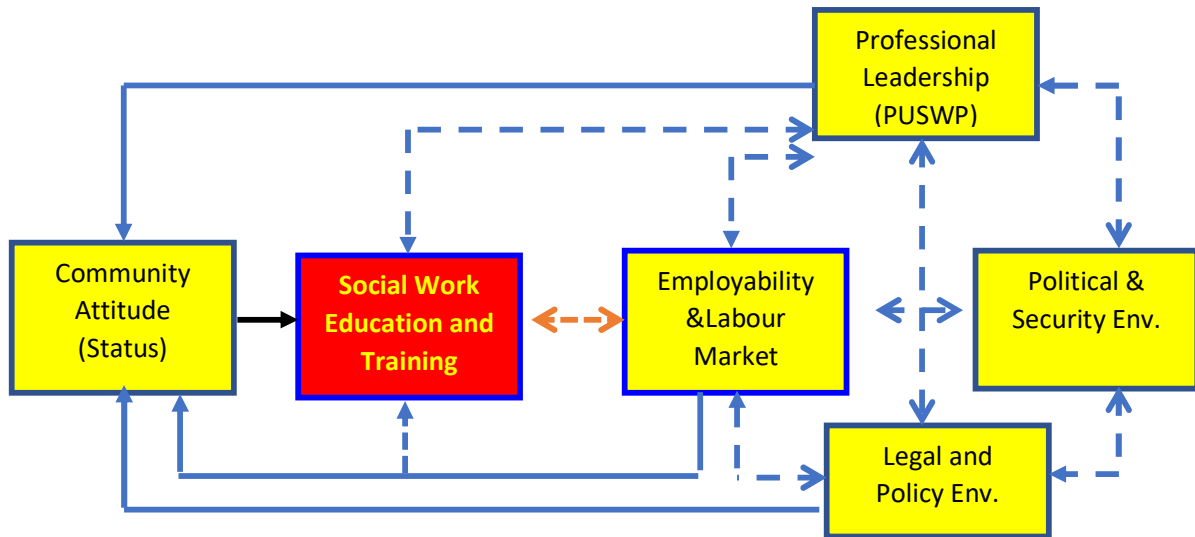
5.2.1 The centrality of the SWET for the development of the social work profession in Palestine:

In chapter IV, it was concluded that social work education and training has occupied a central position among the six General Themes (areas of challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine) (chapter IV / Sec. 4.4). The importance of SWET stems from the high value the Palestinian community attaches to education in general (i.e. basic and higher education), and its economic returns for the graduate, his/ her family, and the community at large. Chart (V-I) illustrates the dynamics between the six GTs where the 29-33 challenges were identified and distributed. Accordingly, as much as the weaknesses and shortcomings within the SWET have been negatively influencing the development of this profession, fixing them would largely contribute to its development. Identifying the challenges facing SWET, and understanding its dynamics, therefore, becomes a prerequisite to improve the functionality of the social work system (education and practice) in Palestine.

The central position of SWET stems from the fact that the SWET system constitutes the only entry point to the profession and without it the profession would not have existed. The extent to which this system prepares qualified graduates to apply the different interventions

offered in the labour market constitutes another area of concern for the status of this profession and its functionality.

Chart (V-1)
Centrality of Social Work Education Domain (SWET)

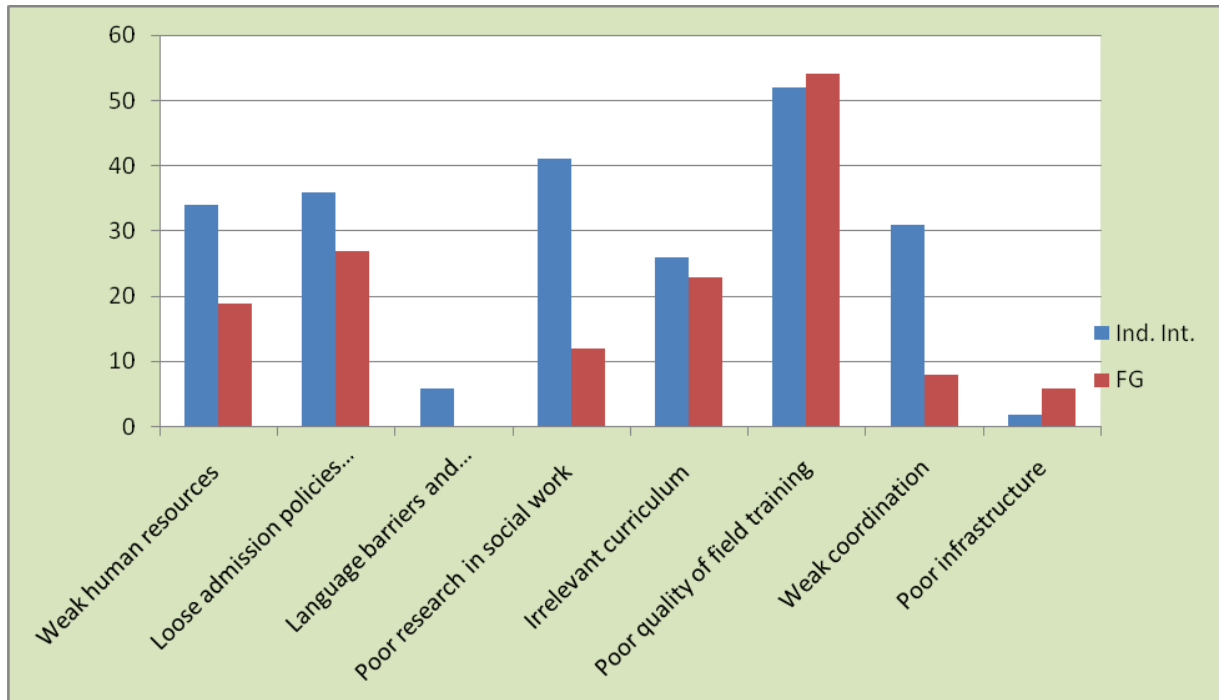


5.2.2 SWET’s development is challenged by internal and external conditions:

Within the domain of SWET, 8⁴⁶ areas of challenges (OTs) from individual interviews and seven areas of challenges from FGs were identified (Chart V-2). From the perspective of the participants in the individual interviews, the language barrier was identified as a challenge but was not considered as such by those in the FGs. As for the other seven challenges (OTs), the challenges in field training received the highest level of attention followed by poor research, loose admission policies, weak human resources, weak coordination, irrelevant curricula, and poor infrastructure. It shows four challenges that received the highest level of attention for both individual interviews and focus groups: field training, admission policies, irrelevant curricula, and human resources. The poor research was considered as a challenge by participants in individual interviews but not as much as it was for the participants in the focus groups. The infrastructure and language barrier received the lowest levels of attention by both.

⁴⁶These reflect a condensed list of the broad categories of challenges identified by the participants in the individual interviews (about 27 collapsed into 8) and the focus groups (about 14 collapsed into 7)..

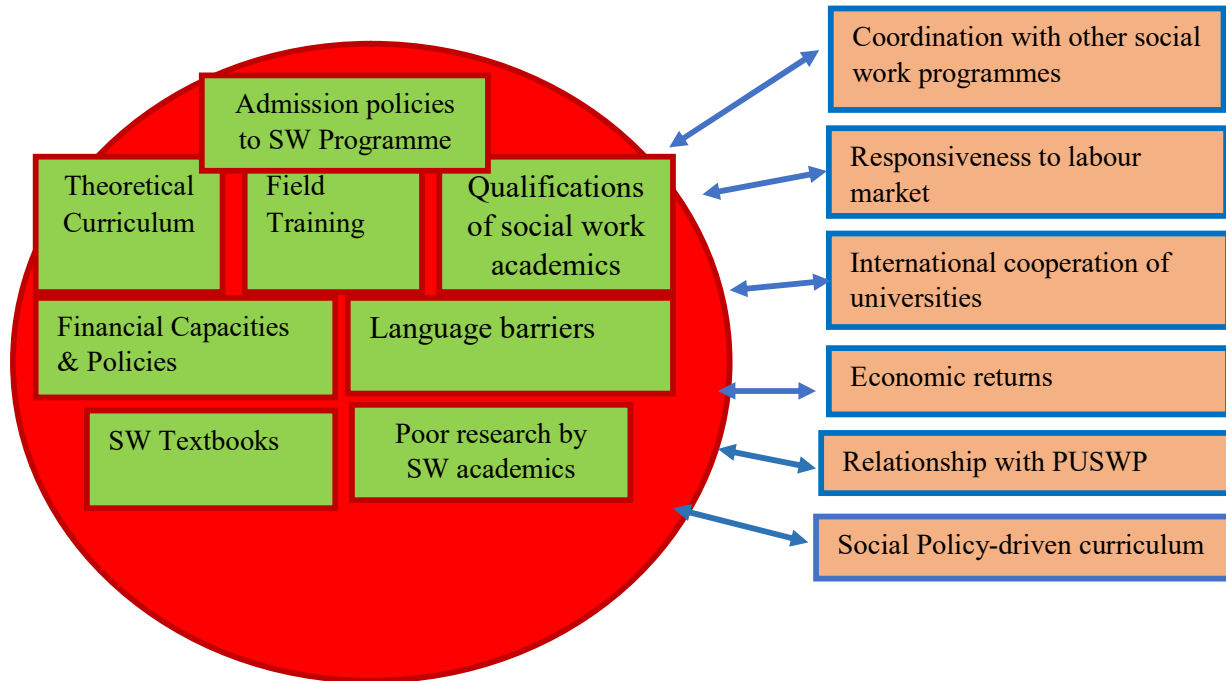
Chart (V-2)
Challenges within SWET System



The interactions between the eight internal and external challenges illustrated in Chart V-3 indicate the high complexity in the realities of social work education and the fact that any attempt to address a specific challenge in isolation from other factors would be ineffective, inefficient, and unsustainable. It is clear, for example, that the best admissions policy at one of the five universities would fail if applied in isolation from the financial capacities of the universities and / or adequate consideration of the economic returns to the families who are investing in their sons and daughters for four years. Applying adequate policies and procedures to ensure the maximum quality of field training outputs is another example that should consider the expectations of the community, the role of the MoEHE, the role of the professional leadership and the expectations of the labour market. Undermining the need for such dynamic relationships would lead to consequences which are counter-productive to the best interest of the university and would be damaging to the future of the students and those who are investing in them.

Chart V-3

Internal and external Challenges to Social Work Education



The loose admission criteria for social work programmes, for example, were applied in order to enrol the highest number of students regardless their potential and interests in the social work field. The increased number of enrolled students is challenged by poor infrastructure (space, technology, requirements for interactive teaching methods, poor libraries, ...etc). The limited number of qualified academics in social work (including the language barriers and teaching methods), outdated books and limited access to international literature, curricula irrelevant to the local context, poor quality of field training, and weakness in coordination with field training institutions and employers all constrain the effectiveness of social work training. Annually, an average of 3,000 students are enrolled in social work programmes only⁴⁷ (as estimated by the heads of departments), the number of qualified lecturers in social work involved in teaching these students is about 50 (Faraj, 2017), and these students are obliged to use the same outdated textbooks and the libraries of the five universities are not providing the needed space or books (Ibrahim, 2018). Annually, about 40,000 graduates finish their academic degrees

⁴⁷The highest number are enrolled in the social work program of Al-Quds Open University because it has well-established branches in the 16 Palestinian governorates in the WB, Jerusalem, and GS. Every branch has its buildings and services around them similar to residential universities.

from all programmes and join the line of the unemployed skilled Palestinian labourers (PCBS, 2018).

Additionally, the social work programmes in the five universities function in isolation from the community, the employers, professional representation, the social policy and legal context, and the security and political realities. Taking into consideration the needs, views, demands, and influences of these external elements (domains of other challenges) is very necessary to provide relevant and effective social work education and interventions to the labour market, service-users, and the community at large. The context within which the social work education and training system functions perpetuates its internal challenges and brings many other challenges to its development. For instance, the absence of a strong, active, and trusted professional leadership, absence of regulatory laws, in addition to the curricula that is irrelevant to community needs (Midgley, 2001) and labour market demands have made the task of bringing all the key actors around one table to develop a concerted social work education and training service in Palestine a crucial challenge.

5.2.3 Social work profession within a collectively traumatised community:

The social work profession in Palestine came into existence as a response to massive and continuously increasing and changing needs. Muslih (1993) described the informal interventions in the social problems of individuals, families and local communities prior to the 1970s as 'popular social work'. The nature of some of those problems over those decades could be directly linked to the colonial British occupation, while other problems were related to conflicts within and between families. The creation of the Israeli state of colonial occupation in 1948 has marked a new era in terms of the nature and the intensity of the problems caused by the political system. Turning about two-thirds of the residents of Mandate Palestine into refugees was the most devastating and intense traumatic event in the history of Palestine. The tens of massacres against the Palestinian villagers during the 1950s and 1960s, the 1967 war and the expansion of the occupation to the rest of Palestine, and the first and the second Intifada, are traumatic conditions affecting the Palestinian citizens and community. Annex (12) provides a list of targets who are victims of collectively traumatising conditions that have resulted in deep psychosocial and other injuries and economic affects upon most of the people. However, none of these are presented to social work students in the five universities in terms of theoretical analysis or in terms of intervention models from a social work perspective.

The history of the social work profession in Palestine is still untold; the challenges to the social work profession in Palestine is still not researched and reflected in the curricula, the experiences of ‘popular social work’, in Palestine is not addressed in the social work classrooms. What is provided is a collection of social work theories and models produced in other contexts in the rest of the world, mainly North America and Europe. During the interviews for this research, the most common response to the question about topics that need to be covered in the social work curricula in the five universities was the prisoners’ issue. However, the issue is that none of the social work programmes formally presented by the university attempt to cover any of these or other topics in the curricula. The lack of will and the capacity of these programmes, particularly researching and theorising, to do that is still the most obvious reason for this weakness. The absent role of SWET in Palestine in equipping social work students with the knowledge and skills to respond to local needs, either caused by the colonial and neoliberal context or not, is a major concern for the social workers, employers, and the community at large, yet universities appear not to be attuned to this need.

While the researcher was writing this argument, for example, he was listening to a local radio programme discussing this particular concern and the conflicts between traditional reforms, the weak realities of rule of law and the possible professional interventions into community problems (Local Radio Station ‘ Mawwal’, FM1.7, 15/03/2019, 09:00-10:00). The universities and academic programs are isolated from these arguments about many public concerns where social work should have a say. Most of the participants in this research expressed their belief that universities should play a key role in introducing the social work profession to the local community and how it can offer assistance to its members in solving their problems.

On the other hand, the participants confirmed that the Palestinian community would have not heard of social work if the university programmes did not offer it in the first place. This highlights the key roles and responsibility for the SWET system in providing the Palestinian community with a relevant education service, qualified social workers, and shaping the awareness of the public about it. One of the heads of a social work department referred to that history and the role of the universities in introducing the profession to the Palestinian society:

“The profession of social work was introduced and refined as a result of its linkage with universities. It was officially when social work education and

training programmes came into existence in Palestine in 1971 and onwards”

(II-08, L53-59).

The roles of these programmes in shaping informal interventions, from charitable societies and grassroots organisations to the professional commitment, were key contributions to the social welfare of the citizens and local communities. One of the participants, who was the head of one of the social work programmes from Jerusalem and experienced in social work practice since the mid-eighties, surmised that:

“Today I feel that there is a development in the social work profession and its status in Palestine, where people valued charitable activities and interventions by voluntary institutions prior to 1994 and then shifted this value to social work interventions that responded to the people’s needs more effectively and efficiently. Accordingly, the social work status was enhanced gradually over time” (II-03, L08-12).

This shift advanced formal and the institutionalised services, but has led to professionalized, irrelevant social work, and further undermined the role and status of the ‘popular / informal social work’ after the years that followed. It distanced social workers from their clients and community at large and resulted in more isolated curricula (i.e. they became more loyal and committed to the priorities and concerns of their employers who paid their salaries than the needs and challenges of their clients). Annex 7 illustrates an example of how effective and efficient the popular social work could be in addressing problems that formal SWET and internationally funded interventions could not address. This example raises key concerns about the functionality of this profession and its identity for the students, graduates, and community at large.

Case Study Outline / Summary (From Annex 7)

The work of six social work students with the Jeb Al-Theeb village, in the eastern side of Bethlehem city, is an example of the popular social work interventions that joins the hands of social workers with their clients in addressing social problems. The social work students, during four months field training course in 2015, succeeded in establishing a community service 'kinder garden' for a local community that has been isolated from all infrastructure and public services because it falls within the C-Zone (according to Oslo interim agreement of 1995). The presence of a very close settlement to this community strengthened the case for the Israeli military headquarters to make the life of people in this community as hard as possible in order to force them to leave the village. Local, national and international NGOs, and PNA in addition to some international diplomatic missions (Belgium) could not intervene and help this community.

The Palestinian community also confuses the identity of the social worker and undervalues his / her function and status (compared with other professions) in the absence of awareness raising activities by the concerned social actors (universities, PUSWP, employers, and others), the absence of any regulatory laws and legal recognition, and the chaotic employment process. The comparison between the status of the profession between the WB and GS with Jerusalem highlighted the significance of such factors for the status of the social work profession. The social workers from Jerusalem, who participated in one of the focus groups, described their status as 'generally positive' compared with others living in the WB and GS. They attributed this difference to the legal and policy context in which they work. This view applies to Palestinian social workers who are employed by the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem that is managing the welfare services there. One of the participants described this status when she said:

“In our experience and work with the municipality of Jerusalem, we think that we have respectable status in the field that we work in, especially as we are dealing with categories of people who have different problems. We intervene in many issues; our intervention and recommendations are accepted especially in Israeli courts, in family conflict issues, children and hospitals”
(GJ-04-Par 01, L06-10).

However, the social workers from Jerusalem pointed to the shift in their work from food and cash services towards resistance work, psychosocial interventions which focus on combating violence against children and women, drugs addiction, youth delinquencies, etc. This community

attitude reflects the limited acceptance of the roles of social workers in the families' personal and social life, which should not be exposed to interventions from an external 'social worker' who does this because they are being paid by an employer, who they may leave for another job at anytime, and thus the community has no confidence that s/he may not share information about them with colleagues or any other people (including officials from the Israeli municipality and Insurance office). In the Jerusalem context (which is managed by the Israeli municipality or the Ministry of Social Welfare), this resistance was gradually broken by packaging psychosocial interventions with material assistance (as described by some participants in the research). This conditionality reflected a coercive strategy that enhanced the negative attitude of the community towards the role of the social workers who were perceived as 'allies of the colonial occupier' that equips the social workers with their authority. These Palestinian social workers, accordingly, had to engage with clients in awareness raising efforts during their roles to resolve the conflicting perceptions. The summary of their discussion about this issue particularly was summarised in the following:

“Until now there is no recognition of the services that we provide in counselling. All people are waiting for and asking for is financial assistance, they think that these two types of services are associated together despite our efforts to separate them. Shifting the focus of services from cash and food to more psychosocial interventions has brought huge challenges with a community that does not accept the new roles of social workers. However, discussing the new roles with service users has contributed, to some extent, to a change in their views of the role of the social worker in Jerusalem” (GJ-04-Par2, L44-47).

In the WB and GS, the task of addressing the community perceptions about the status of social work and explaining the roles of social workers was expected to be performed by the universities, PUSWP and employers through media educational campaigns. None of these institutions contributed to this task. None of them, for example, produced and distributed a flyer, or conducted an awareness campaign about social work in Palestine, the roles of social workers and any other features of it. Therefore, social workers are still perceived as the allies of their Palestinian or international employers (governmental and non-governmental) more than the clients and the community.

5.2.4 Challenges within the SWET in Palestine:

In sections 5.2 & 5.3, the list of challenges facing SWET were identified in terms of the attention that each received from the participants in the individual interviews and FGs, and in terms of their connectedness with external factors. In this section, each of these challenges (OTs) will be presented as perceived by the participants in this research. This includes the quality of field training, loose admission policies, poor research, irrelevant curricula, and limited coordination. At the second level of attention were the challenges in human resources, policies and the availability of qualified academics in social work.

- ***The poor quality of the field training:***

Poor quality in field training received the highest range of attention from both participants in the individual interviews (23%) and focus groups (36%) (See annex 14 and Annex 16). They perceived this element in the SW programmes as the main factor in helping students develop their identity, skills and to prepare them for the labour market, which is also a key role for field training and supervision according to Wiles (2013) and Dong (2018). They considered the quality of field training as a central aspect that shapes and determines the quality of social work education. A closer look within this OT, revealed more specific challenges within field training, to which the academics and heads of programmes need to pay more attention.

One of the key challenges within field training, as highlighted by many of the participants, was in the structure of the field training courses, and their applications. At one level, there is no unified structure with specific standards to guide social work programmes, including field training, in the five universities. Therefore, every university has developed by applying its own instructions, guidelines, or manual. The training objectives, the number of courses, credit hours, the criteria for selecting competent placement institutions, the supervision process, the linkages to the theoretical frameworks, the qualifications of supervisors at the university and inside institutions, and many other elements vary between universities. There are no efforts between them to develop a common understanding or unified frameworks, bilaterally or at national levels. The training course in the field supervision that Bethlehem University applied between May 2018 and April 2019, to develop the technical capacities of the supervisors in the placement institutions, is an example of an individual initiative it launched to address the weaknesses in field training without any coordination with the other three universities in Bethlehem area. A representative of employer from the public sector in the WB and GS described this situation:

“The dilemma is related to the training subject in universities. Unfortunately, the field training courses lack any national vision and unified instructions” (II-06, L75-77).

The issue of the unified framework was highlighted more clearly by one of the focus groups in the WB:

“We need an agreed methodology between all stakeholders on the field training. This should cover the different elements and procedures of the supervision process, including the selection criteria of the qualified institutions, particularly ensuring a proper match between the level of training courses and the programmes offered by the institution, and signing contract agreements with institutions to clarify the required training” (AWB-12-Par3, L208-213).

Also, the theoretical frameworks presented to social work students are not properly linked to field training through academic, individual and group, supervision (at the university). There is a substantial requirement to provide adequate field training in social work. Many participants, both graduates and academics in the WB and GS considered this as a challenge for the quality of SWET programmes in the Palestinian universities:

“The theoretical framework differs from the practical one. When you go to the field, you discover the gap between the two and you don’t receive proper assistance to incorporate them” (GWB-05-Par1, L77-79).

The number of courses and credit hours of the field training component in some universities is not unified and is insufficient (particularly in GS) to provide the needed training, supervision, theoretical reflection, reporting, evaluation ...etc. In fact, the participants expressed the importance of field training in preparing the social work students practice for the labour market:

“The theoretical aspect is good, but the problem is in the practical aspect which is totally different from what we learnt theoretically. In Gaza we have two trainings; the first one is to visit some institutions and collect information about their work, while the second one is to work with cases.

Therefore, within institutions, social workers do not allow us to work with real cases.” (GGS-01, Par 4, L79-85).

These challenges reflect the weaknesses of the social work programme in every specific university at one level, and the challenge of absent standardisation at the national level. The specifications of field training in the three universities in the WB (including Al-Quds University that applies its manual in both the WB and GS) make them of better quality in terms of number of courses, credit hours, supervision, evaluation and so forth. Yet, they are not synchronised or coordinated. An academic supervisor from GS commented on this aspect of the field training structure by saying:

“The number of field work training credit hours is 5% of the whole credit hours, it is just two courses in some universities” (II-17, 1135-136).

Some participants raised the issue of the variations between social work students in terms of their motivations to study social work, what they know about the subject, the range of their expectations, and some other factors that largely shape their attitudes towards the field training experience. In this sense, the extent to which the student takes field training seriously is shaped by his / her attitude towards studying social work or becoming a social worker. These attitudes can be easily identified in a range of behaviours of the students including, but not limited to, commitments to training schedules and reporting requirements, tension with their supervisors, conflicts with other students, and complaining of training burdens. On the other hand, poorly qualified field supervisors are not competent to address these issues, or they have no time for that. Institutions overloaded with large numbers of students, the absence of incentives and loose coordination with the university supervisors often adds to the challenges of dealing with these situations efficiently and effectively. Eventually, the quality of the outcomes of field training is compromised. Accordingly, some participants raised the challenge of ineffective field training courses in qualifying some students to become competent graduates for the social worker job. Addressing these issues earlier enough in the process would help the supervisors and the institutions to avoid lots of difficulties during the course, avoid unsatisfactory quality of outcomes, and avoid frustrations and conflicts that may emerge throughout the training course. One of the participants described this situation by saying:

“Unfortunately, some students and institutions considered the field placement as a procedural and admin requirement for the course and not a substantial one in social work training. It is an important element to develop the students’ skills, and develop their professional identity” (II-17, L140-143)

Another challenge to the quality of social work field training is the absence of any clear criteria for the selection of the placement institutions because many of these institutions are not qualified to host field training students, the inadequate preparation of placement agencies (not aware of the expectations from the training courses), and unqualified supervisors. A group of academics in the WB raised strong concerns about this aspect and agreed that:

“The main problem is in the types of institution we select for the field placement. We don’t ask ourselves why we want to send a student to this institution. Who is the supervisor and whether /or not s/he is he qualified to supervise students? Yet, we refer our students to him, and they barely benefit from the field training course” (AWB-13-Par2, L111-114).

The experiences with the supervision process of participants from Jerusalem, for example, highlighted other challenging aspects of the supervision process. This is the issue of helping students who are expected to work within exceptional contexts to develop strategies they might need to deal with the challenging environments like that in Jerusalem⁴⁸. Additionally, this reflects the alienated content of the theoretical and practical courses in the universities that are divorced from the reality of clients living under hostile colonial occupation. Similar concerns apply to preparing students to work with displaced families in the WB, families of prisoners and martyrs, traumatised school children ... etc. The graduate group from Jerusalem said that they did not receive enough supervision to help them understand the challenges they would be facing and how to address them:

“There was insufficient supervision and follow up during the training period. Real supervision can help in reducing the differences between the theoretical and practical side and to assist us to overcome the problems

⁴⁸The work with victims of home demolitions, arrests, abused children, women, elderly by the Israeli police, the arguments about the roles of social works who work for the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem, the families seeking unification with their members from the WB ...etc.

and difficulties in the field, especially taking into consideration the special circumstances of Jerusalem and the ways of dealing with its problems such as the issue of existence and the formal status of the Palestinian citizens⁴⁹”(GJ-04-Par04, L201-206).

The absence of financial or other types of incentives, to field supervisors and the placement institutions, was considered a factor that compromises the attitude of the supervisor and institution to investing some of their time and resources in the students’ training process. Perhaps, this results in lower attention to the student by the supervisor and the management. Participant II-14 highlighted these aspects when he said that:

“There is a problem in the absence of the financial incentives and moral support from universities to the supervisors; it contributes to the frustration and despair that the social worker in the institution lives” (II-14, L112-118).

The head of a social work department in one of the universities raised this challenge that the programme faced when it was decided to increase the training hours from 120 to 850 and increasing the number of the courses from 2 to 4 courses. He said:

“If the institutions are ready to train the students for this increased number of hours, will the academic supervisors able to provide the needed supervision and follow-up for these hours? Do they have the required supervision skills? Therefore, the field training load on the university and institution is a serious challenge, given the high number of students”. (II-12, L122-124).

The evaluation of students’ performance during the field training course constituted a clear concern for some participants. The weakness of this component, particularly the absence of proper formats, skills, and the biases in the evaluation process (personal or other preferences), in addition to the poorly coordinated evaluation between the university and the placement institutions are challenges to both the structure of the field training process and the

⁴⁹The Israeli government granted the Palestinians living in Jerusalem the status of permanent residency since 1967, which constitutes a continuous threat to their existence in the city. This is a different status to the Palestinians in the cities and towns occupied in 1948, who have the status of citizens.

quality of its outcomes. A leading participant in the public sector, as an employer, reflected this challenge in his response to the question about the challenges in the field training component:

“Sometimes, the evaluation process is neither taken seriously by the placement institution and / or the university, nor do they have the technical capacity and expertise to apply it properly. The universities, sometimes, do not show enough interest in getting professional evaluations.” (II-06-101-103).

The admission policies applied by all universities result in high numbers of social work students in the classes as well as in the field placement institutions. Within the university and the placement institution, the high workload assigned to the academic and field supervisors results in the poor quality of their performance and an unsatisfactory quality of field training outcomes. The participant II-14, who managed the field-training programme in one of the universities in the WB for some years, said:

“I think that academic supervision is weak for several reasons, including that the supervisor is overloaded by the teaching burden and can barely cover the field placement load. He/she is asked to teach, supervise, conduct research, and participate in conferences and community events. All these expected roles come at the expense of focussing on providing the needed supervision” (II-14, L134-139)

This becomes more challenging when more than one university in the same area (i.e. Bethlehem) sends their students to the same institutions. The institutions and their supervisors are asked to manage large number of students using different sets of instructions and different academic supervisors (including some who are not qualified in social work). A group of graduates from the WB described this problematic situation:

“I think the number of students coming from different universities to the same institutions is higher than the manageable load, which is exacerbated by the different sets of instructions and training requirements” (AWB-13-Par1, L104-106).

In 2018/2019, for example, Bethlehem University accepted nearly 80 new students in its social work programme and Al-Quds Open University accepted about another 80 (according to

the heads of the social work programmes). Next year (2019/2020), about 160 students will start their first field training course and will be deployed in 20-30 field placement institutions. Given that most of these institutions cannot accept more than three students (relatively small institutions), most students will be reallocated to the limited number of remaining institutions with an average of 10-12 students, which places a very high load on the field supervisors. This condition constitutes a serious predicament for adequate supervision, the management, and the follow up between the institution and university.

- ***The profitability and loose admission policies:***

The issue of admission policies and profitability has been raised as an aspect of the “neoliberal university”, as stated by Cleary (2018, p. 254). Cleary (2018), Munoz-Guzman (2018) and Gonzalez (2018), highlighted the consequences of neoliberalisation of the HE institutions, particularly transforming them from being providers of public services to providers of education as a commodity following the market standards and requirements for private gains (i.e. generating income and financial sustainability). Towards this end, universities adapt and apply policies that advance their competitiveness in the market of education, including admission policies, fees categories, and financial assistance (i.e. loans and grants). These are aspects of neoliberal education that deals with students as customers (Cleary, 2018; Munoz-Guzman (2018) and Gonzalez (2018)). One of the consequences of these policies, according to Cleary (2018) is that students from a less advantaged background get the poorest deals which are less costly. These policies have increased the number of students; the overloaded and part-time staff and curricula less relevant to the community needs, are part of the symptoms of the neoliberal university (Cleary, 2018).

A difficult concern that participants identified as one of the toughest challenges facing the development of social work profession in Palestine is what they called ‘profitability’, which is in fact the policy that Palestinian universities adopted to enhance their financial sustainability when PLO suspended / decreased its subsidies to them after 1994. Privatization of the higher education institutions, as part of the neoliberal policies it adopted in line with the World Bank instructions to reform the education sector in Palestine, obliged them to apply different revenue generating measures including, but not limited to, raising the tuition fees and applying flexible admission policies to enrol the largest number of new students.

The participant II-17 described these policies in terms of how the universities look at students, and fuelled the race / competition between them to enrol the largest number of students:

“Universities look at students as a source for financial capital only. Therefore, the competition is very high between universities and every university works [competes] to accept the largest number of students without interviews and regardless of their potential to be competent social workers” (II-17, L165-168).

For social work programmes particularly, raising the tuition fees (to almost double) constituted a financial accessibility challenge to students coming from the middle and low-income classes to which most of the applicants for these programmes belong. This policy meant that higher education in Palestine in general, and the social work programmes, would be open only for the most financially privileged families. As a representative of the PUSWP, the participant II-11 confirmed the impact of these policies at this level:

“Today, universities are for those who have money as they became private universities which are after the profits and are only for those who are able to pay” (II-11, L181-183)

The participant II-13, who is an academic, described the way in which one of the universities in GS adopted this policy:

“When we established the social work program at this university in 1998 there were clear and specific criteria for students’ admission, but after two years the other universities established the social work specialisation and they started to accept students without exam or interview and with low level achievers at the general secondary stage. Accordingly, our university administration decided to accept students as the other universities did” (II-13, L130-136).

The other impact is that these programmes accepted those who can pay the tuition fees in preference to those who have the potential and motivations / interests to study social work and willingness to make social work his / her future career. One department head commented on this issue and said:

“If we talk about students who join the social work specialisation, most of them have a low academic performance at high school and do not consider it as a demanding academic field. Few of them join it because they like it” (II-15, L61-64).

Additionally, all universities used to transfer any student, who fails to pass the courses in different academic programmes, to social work programmes that are less demanding on academic performance. The purpose of this policy is to maintain the level of income by keeping these students regardless of their potential and interests but has also shaped the conception of social work programmes as the ‘dumping site’ of the university. Another department head described this policy specifically:

“The university administration asks us to accept students who come from other departments or universities, mainly those who fail to meet the academic requirements of the programmes in which they were enrolled” (II-08, L95-100)

Eventually, social work became stigmatised as a field of study that anyone can enrol in regardless of his / her motivation, interest, and potentials. This in turn has negatively affected the self-perception of the professional identity of the graduates, and the status of the profession at community and institutional levels. This impact was confirmed by many participants such as II-08, who commented:

“... If we look at the community and its perception of social work students, it views the social work student as low status. This contributes to the low self-esteem of the student which they take with them after graduation. Students from other specialisations in the same university also say that the social work major is for low level achievers, but this is very wrong and needs to be changed” (II-08, L95-100)

Munoz-Guzman (2018) and Gonzalez (2018) explained how the loose admission policies for profitability purposes would lead to oversupply in the number of social work graduates and an oversaturated labour market. This may encourage them to accept low wages, poor quality of educational outcomes, and the low social status of the profession at community level. Within a neoliberal environment, the university has become a place for ‘trading’ in students as a

commodity and in the eyes of the community and other professions; this has further decreased the value of social work. Neoliberal reshaping of social work has helped to privatise the profession to increasingly produce mere cash dispensing technocrats with little capacity for effective interventions that relate to the realities of Palestinian lives – a pattern reflected in the global south.

- ***The irrelevant social work curriculum:***

The issue of irrelevance of the social work curricula in Palestine was confirmed by Abu-Ras and Faraj (2007), and Abusada (2011), which is a concern for social work in many other countries as well. Abusada (2011) concluded her argument about the relevance of social work curricula in Palestine, as part of the consequences of conditional international funding, as “it [social work curricula in Palestine] is focused on clinical casework according to Western models, and which do not suit the Palestinian culture and society” (p. 96). However, this is an area where most of the critics from all categories of participants were concentrated. Razack (2009), Niu *et al.* (2018), Abusada (2011) and Sloan *et al.* (2017) argued that teaching international social work theories and models of interventions uncritically and without questioning their relevance and applicability to the local context would turn the social work education process into a colonisation process, or re-colonisation and academic imperialism as called by Sloan *et al.* (2017), and depoliticisation of the profession (Kamat, 2004). Therefore, the content of social work programmes must be reviewed, selected and taught critically (Razack (2009); Sloan *et al.* (2017) and Al-Makhamra *et al.* (2012). According to Razack (2009) and Sloan *et al.* (2017) international social work “is not a neutral field of study and cannot be conducted from a homogenised approach with apolitical analysis” (p.11). Razack (2009) argued that the stains of colonialism and imperialism of social work are inherited from the time in which the profession evolved and was influenced by these dominant ideologies and practices in Europe and North America. For Ahmadi (2003), globalised neoliberalism weakens the international, as well as the national relevance of social work education and practice.

The social work curricula in Palestine were found by many participants as insufficient to prepare the students for their future roles in a challenging socioeconomic and political environment. A head of the social sciences department in one of the universities commented on the issue of the content of the curriculum and what interventions it prepares the graduate for. He said:

“The social work curriculum is not enough to provide students with the ability to contextualise their interventions. For example, the curriculum does not take some of the religious values into consideration (like the Zakat⁵⁰), particularly in the poverty alleviation interventions” (II-15, L146-150).

The participant II-15, provided an example of neglected cultural context (the Zakat) from the SWET curricula, which reflects its Westernised nature (Midgley, 2007). This example demonstrated the negative consequences of copying the secularised profession (education and practice) of the social work profession in the West to an Islamic country like Palestine. The issue of social work secularisation, which was part of the professionalisation process, in Europe and North America could have had its historical legitimacy and rationale in those societies, as Sloan *et al.* (2017). But applying secularised theoretical frames and models, which are borrowed from the Western countries, into Islamic and Arab communities would pose many challenges to the profession at education and practice levels (Sloan, 2017; Al-Krenawi, 2003; and Al-Makhamra *et al.* 2012). This participant ‘II-15, L146-150’ above, in part of his response, referred to the culture of ‘helping others’ that exists in the religions and how the social work curriculum may integrate it in interventions which is a concern that Al-Krenawi (2003) and Sloan, *et al.* (2017) have raised as sources of different challenges to social work profession in the Islamic and Arab communities.

Al-Krenawi (2003) argued that there are many aspects in Islamic traditions that can be incorporated into psychosocial interventions, in particular those that people in Palestine used and still use, such as supporting each other during crisis conditions, and these would be helpful, even without the presence of a qualified social worker. Sloan *et al.* (2017) provided an example of the efforts of the social work institutions in the Arab Gulf countries to make the curricula more sensitive to the Islamic cultural context and the predicament of reliance on international academics in these institutions who are not qualified to perform such a task. The spirituality of Islamic traditions was considered as having a high potential to be applied and utilised in the psychosocial interventions with Islamic communities. The social work curricula in the five universities do not provide a margin for their students to be aware of such potential and how to

⁵⁰According to the Islamic convictions, every Muslim should pay the poorest a percent of his / her income and the value of what s/he owns annually through Zakat committees.

actualize it. This is simply to be aware of the culture and how social work interventions should function in a conservative community like the one in Palestine. Al-Makhamra *et al.* (2012) called for balancing the religious-based and secular aspects of social work interventions.

Many participants considered the content of the social work curriculum as ‘Westernised’⁵¹ because the focus of the text books is on borrowed Western theories that consider the individual and nuclear family as the units of intervention with less or no emphasis on the extended family, tribe and the local community. In Palestine, the focus of social work interventions needs to be on the mezzo and macro levels. Religion and social traditions in the Palestinian community significantly influence the life of individuals and nuclear families which are not sufficiently considered in the taught theories. The case studies presented to students in these textbooks are from western societies that live in entirely different socioeconomic and political contexts. These textbooks are presented by the academics blindly (without any critique) and no alternative contexts from Palestinian, Arab or the global south are provided. This phenomenon is attributed to many factors such as the academics who select these textbooks, the poor research to provide locally produced knowledge, and the limited attention of management of the social work programmes to their counterparts in the other countries in the global south (Sloan *et al.*, 2017).

Razack (2009), Barise (2005), Al-Makhamra *et al.* (2012) and Niu *et al.* (2018) considered that blindly transferring Western social work theories and models would obstruct the chances for a national or localised professional identity of the social work profession to evolve. Wiles (2013) described the role of social work education in shaping the professional identity of social workers. He said that “one aim of social work education is to facilitate the development of professional identity, but what kind of identity is this?” Wiles (2013) stressed that social work education has a key role in encouraging the development of specific features of this identity. Razack (2009), also provided specific analysis of the influence of teaching activities within the social work classrooms in shaping the political nature of the professional identity of students. Razack (2009) calls for turning social work classrooms into arenas for decolonization of curricula by making them more sensitive to the local (country) context and the varying contexts of the students’ local communities. Niu *et al.* (2018), too, explained the crucial role of training, supervision, studying national textbooks and other activities in developing a localised professional identity based on the assumption that the content of these processes is necessarily tuned to and focused on local

⁵¹Dependent on theories and research produced in Western countries.

issues and contexts. Further, Niu *et al.* (2018) explained that these processes should be guided by the national mandate of the profession, which should be provided first to indigenise the profession.

In the Palestinian case, the participants in the research underestimated the impact of the political context on the social work profession (education and practice), which reflected that this environment has not been brought to their conceptions through the formal social work education and service delivery systems. This element was integrated in their identity, mostly, through their individual / personal daily experiences rather than through academic or policy development processes. For example, the contexts of students from Jerusalem and other areas from the WB vary (widely in some respects), and same applies to the contexts of students from the refugee camps, villages and cities. These localities vary in the socioeconomic and political contexts and the types of problems they face. For example, some villages are industrial zones (like Beit Fajjar and Qabatia in the Southern and Northern WB respectively) while others are totally agricultural areas (called as ‘the vegetable basket of the governorate’) (like Irtas and Jenin in the Southern and Northern WB respectively). Some villages experience daily clashes with settlers while others do not, and the refugee camp environments are totally different from the villages and cities. Social work students who belong to these contexts or are expected to work within these contexts need to learn about these variations and how to integrate them in social work assessments and interventions.

In this context, indigenising the Palestinian social work curricula need to be seen beyond making it relevant and more sensitive to the local cultural context (i.e. integrating the role of the religions in shaping or / and solving the social problems) (Guo *et al.*, 2010). It is part of the decolonisation / national resistance and liberation process (Guo *et al.*, 2010). One of the key professionals (Academician and a leader of community advocacy centers in the North WB), described this reality of social work education as a result of the globalisation than anything else. He said:

“Globalisation presented different types of problems and challenges that imposed some types of interventions [i.e. women empowerment and their roles within the family with total ignorance of the views and participation of men and other traditional leaders in the community]. Such kinds of

interventions should have been adjusted within the cultural context of Palestinian society” (II-18, L136-143)

The variations in the Palestinian realities between the WB, GS and Jerusalem, for example, are not taken into consideration in the curriculum as well as in the field training supervision. Social work students need to be aware of these differences and how they contribute to shaping clients’ problems in order to be taken into consideration in the design of social work interventions. The political awareness of the social work students and graduates constitutes part of his / her professional identity that defines his / her position in relation to the structural causes shaping the life challenges for their clients and for themselves as Palestinian citizens too (Abusada, 2011). As one of the graduates from Jerusalem described it:

“From my personal experience, there is a big difference between what we learned in the university compared with what existed in the field. We faced many difficulties, challenges and problems about which we learned nothing in the university, like our problems with the use of the Hebrew language, communication, methods of intervention in the Jerusalem context, and dealing with different applications there” (GJ-04-P4, L188-192).

The poor relevance of the curricula in social work programmes can be attributed to different factors, but the main factor, on which producing relevant knowledge is entirely dependent, is research. Research that is focused on the socioeconomic and political Palestinian context in general, and the issues related to social work theory and practice particularly, is at the heart of the process of producing localised / indigenous social work knowledge, and that is where the collective narratives, knowledge and skills development about roles, and the political position of the social work students can be developed, as argued by Wiles (2013), Milington (2006) and Razack (2009).

- ***The limited research production in social work:***

Accariya (2016), Sloan (2017), Al-Makhamra *et al.* (2012) and Al-Krenawi (2003) confirmed the important role that research can play to develop the decolonised, localised / indigenous social work education and training, particularly, with a particular focus on the Middle East countries including Palestine. Al-Krenawi (2003), for example, looks at the problems incurred in the development of social work in the Arab world and argues that this profession is a

product of “academic colonialism”, “transplanted” (p.76) through academic programmes with cultural assumptions which originated in the global north to colonise the global south. He suggests that many of the Western aspects do not fit with the cultures and social structures of these communities. Barise (2005), for example, argued that the Western models of interventions focus on the individual based on the assumption that s/he is an isolated social unit and should be addressed accordingly, while in Islamic, including Arab communities the family is the basic social unit and the problems of individuals should be assessed and addressed as members of these units. Similarly, Barise (2005) compares the limited impact of the community in which the individual’s family live, on the processes by which his / her problems are created and / or solved. Therefore, Al-Krenawi highlights the significant role that research may play in shifting the focus of analysis and interventions from the individual only to the family, the community and the socioeconomic and political context, which is the crux of the indigenisation and decolonisation processes of this profession. Al-Makhamra *et al.* (2012) confirmed that research in the social work field is the main strategy to produce a relevant knowledge to inform education and practice, and to put an end to the ‘whole sale’ adoption of Western theories and models of practice in the Arab countries.

The value of research in the field of social work in Palestine has been clearly identified and recognised by all participants. They highlighted the absent role of research in indigenising the social work profession in Palestine. Of concern for them was the challenge of the Westernised social work curriculum and its poor relevance to the Palestinian context. Most participants identified that it was not enough to learn the imported international social work literature for a social worker in Palestine to become a qualified graduate to intervene in social problems in the Palestinian context. The research-based knowledge about the impact of the political conflict with the colonial occupation and the internal political divide at the second level on the well-being of the Palestinian citizens and community, and how to intervene with them, is missing from the social work curricula.

The impact of the missing Palestinian cultural context from the social work curricula is a result of the poor research production in the field. The absence of research-based knowledge about these and other issues leaves the learning experience about the local context as a voluntary contribution and highly personalised choice for the social work instructors, which could be biased or not provided at all. All participants acknowledged the gap in the research in the social

work field and identified a variety of reasons behind its existence. One of the experienced social work professionals described this challenging aspect to social work education when he said:

“On the academic side, we do not depend either on research or its results unfortunately, because there is no valuable research. Most of our courses depend on the experiences of the western countries or Egypt, but there are no documented Palestinian experiences in this field, and this is one of the challenges that we face” (II-01, L59-99).

Research in social sciences, in general (Hanafi, 2018) and social work has no priority in the budgets of the five universities in the WB and GS. This reflects the attitude of the decision makers of these universities towards these programs as well as not helping them advance their role in providing the Palestinian society with relevant knowledge and, consequently, qualified graduates. Academic focus groups from both the WB and GS raised this challenge:

“There is no interest in research, and there are no budgets and interest to develop it. The universities usually allocate budgets for researches that will help them promote their reputation, status and financial revenues” (AGS-08-Par3, L138-141).

The motivation of social work academics to conduct research and difficulties in publishing their research findings were highlighted as discouraging factors to plan and conduct social work research. Despite the fact that the issue of under budgeted research in social work is an international phenomenon, including the countries in the global north, it would be more pressing and challenging to those in the global south who strive to decolonise their education systems and indigenise the content of the social work programme. In Palestine, for example, research is conceived as a main strategy to this end, yet it has been receiving very limited attention by all concerned parties. Therefore, research has become dependent on the individual initiative of any academic and moreover self-financed, which is extremely difficult given the concern of low salaries of academics in the Palestinian higher education institutions (Al Subu, 2009). One of the academics in the focus groups explained that:

“The problem is in the results of research, where it goes and who will apply it? There is a problem in publishing research, where we can publish it and

what is the benefit of publishing it? Some researchers conduct their research to get the academic promotion only” (AWB-11, Par1, L14-118)

Another professional in social work (in the WB), raised the concern of the utility of the research findings for the decision-makers in social work programmes, who failed so far to share the responsibility towards this challenging reality and failed to link the need of curriculum development (i.e. indigenous curricula) with the research plans and budgets allocated to them. He said:

“... the use of the findings of the conducted research, which are few, is discouraging since the decision makers in the social work programmes do not take on the results of research to change or modify social work curricula or to the improve the design of their programmes” (II-04, L143-148).

Often, as some key informants described it, the common strategy that universities use to substitute the dearth in social work research in Palestine is looking for research-based literature produced in other countries and different contexts. This strategy brings more challenges to the social work education and training in Palestine than helping them in addressing the existing ones. The challenges of poorly translated materials from other languages into Arabic, the contextual differences, their applicability to the Palestinian context and problems are examples of such challenges. One Deputy Dean of a social work department described the situation of the social work research and the teaching process by saying:

“Unfortunately, we aren’t producing knowledge, we just transfer [teach] it without any effort to accommodate the Palestinian cultural context” (II-19, L146-147)

The overall status of social research in social sciences and social work was not restricted to the limitations of the academic institutions but went beyond them. Few voices from participants highlighted the concern at this level. However, it is very important to highlight those few voices since there are 42 research centers in the WB and GS (Hanafi, 2018), yet none of them produced any research about social work. One participant in the key informants’ interviews, who works for an international research and advocacy center in Palestine said:

“Research in the social work field is very weak and the interest in it is very weak too. Today, give me a research center that focuses on social work and

link it with the Palestinian reality. Unless it is financed by a donor to use for a specific purpose, there is no official interest in research and there is no appreciation of the research that has been conducted and published in specialized journals” (II-11, L131-136)

Another participant highlighted the same concerns from the employer’s point of view. She said:

“Yes, there are no research centers to create a more relevant Palestinian social work curriculum” (II-09, L171-173).

The absence of research in social sciences in general and social work has influenced the quality of social work education in terms of limited contribution to the efforts of indigenising the social work profession. It is not a priority for the academic and non-academic research institutions, which makes it a challenge of high priority.

The interests and the capacities of policy makers at the universities, the heads of social work programs, social work academics and other (non-academic) actors in planning and conducting research projects are central prerequisites for developing the social work curricula and making it more relevant to the local context. If these interests are not provided and the capacities are weak, the process of indigenizing the curricula will remain way below professional and national aspirations.

- ***The shortage in qualified human resources in social work:***

In Palestine, the availability of qualified staff in the field of social work, as much as in many other fields (Nagra, 2013), has always been a challenging factor to the quality of social work education and training in Palestine. Until the year 2008, there were no postgraduate (PG) programmes in social work in Palestine. In 2008, the MSA⁵² was launched at Al-Quds University / Jerusalem. In 2014 the MSW⁵³ was established in the University of Bethlehem. So far, these are the two PG⁵⁴ programmes in the WB in the field of social work.

In the GS, there is no PG programme in social work so far. There are about 40 (rough estimate) social workers who have received a PG degree in social work at the MSW level and 5-

⁵²Master of Social Action

⁵³Master of Social Work

⁵⁴Postgraduate

10 with PhD in social work in the WB and GS (Nagra, 2013). Therefore, most of the academics involved in teaching social work at the five universities have PG degrees in sociology or psychology except for Al-Quds University where a group from Palestinian in the Green line (Inside Israel) are teaching the social work courses. Accordingly, the issue of finding qualified academics in social work to teach at the BSW⁵⁵ and MSW levels is one of the most crucial challenges to the development of the quality of social work education and training in the Palestine.

The participant II-18, who has been involved in teaching social work in different universities and leading a community action center in the WB, confirmed the shortage in the number of PhD holders in social work:

“I am very much involved in teaching social work courses in Al-Najah University and Al-Quds Open University. It is worth noting that the number of the PhD holders in the WB is not more than 10 persons” (II-18, L50-52).

As this shortage in qualified staff in the social work field at the local universities was confirmed by other professionals, as confirmed by the participants II-04:

“... the shortage in the number of qualified academic staff in social work has influenced negatively the quality of the educational outcomes and the effectiveness of interventions applied by the social work graduates when they are employed (i.e. this has led to poor skills and knowledge of graduates” (II-04, L85-88).

This shortage is attributed to different conditions including the shortage in the PG programmes at MSW and PhD levels in Palestine, while studying abroad is very expensive. The salary scale and the other benefits offered to the holders of PhD qualifications in Palestine are not competitive with Arab or international universities, or not sufficient to retain qualified personnel. This is confirmed by the participant II-04 who explained this challenge as follows:

“This is because PG studies are not available in Palestine and studying abroad is very expensive for families of limited income. When families succeed in sending their sons to study abroad and they get the degree, the

⁵⁵Bachelor of Social Work

offered employment benefits in the country are discouraging which leads them to look to other opportunities outside the country. This has resulted in the shortage in qualified and specialised academic staff” (II-04, L92-97).

Participant II-11 provided an example from GS about this shortage, which is a more severe problem than in the WB and Jerusalem. He said that:

In Gaza, the number of those who have postgraduate qualifications (MSW & PhD) until 2008 was just one person. After 2008 there was an opening in social work at Helwan University in Egypt and the number increased to six graduates with MSW. Now a few of them are doing their PhD in social work in Egypt. Yet, many of them don’t work with universities because NGOs offer better salaries higher than universities (II-13, L83-89).

However, universities didn’t develop or apply any strategy to address this challenge except Al-Quds Open University that has sent 25 Palestinians from the WB and GS to do their MSW in Helwan University / Egypt and hired them in its different branches. One of the representatives of the PUSW in the WB described this situation as he said:

“Universities can invest in their staff through scholarships or other ways but they deal with education as business and spending money on this purpose is not a priority since any academics from other social sciences can teach social work, according to them, and there are no objections to that practice by any party. This has negative influences on the profession and its development opportunities, and consequently its status” (II-11, L163-168).

Another weakness that is relevant to human resources and development policies, as participants highlighted in the WB and GS is about the teaching methods. Students learn the helping process as provided in the international social work literature, but they lack the in-class practice and the adequate interactive and reflective teaching methods. One of the academics from GS highlighted this challenge as he faced it while he was a student and it is still unchanged when he returned to teach social work in one of the universities. He said:

“We aren’t properly trained to teach social work and training our students” (AGS-09, Par1, L93-98)

The question of ‘what social work education and training is needed to qualify social work graduates to intervene in the social problems of the Palestinian citizens and communities?’ will need to be answered by all involved in the management and delivery of social work education and practice services. This is attainable only through active, effective and efficient coordination among all concerned actors.

- ***The competitiveness and the poor coordination:***

The function of coordination among members of any group, between groups, within institutions, and between institutions is more than facilitating relationships and administrative roles and responsibilities. Within the context of a profession like social work, it plays an important role in developing the professional identity of all involved members and parties in producing and teaching its knowledge and skills, and those involved in practicing them (Dong, 2018). It is needed to develop common standards and frameworks, promoting the quality of field training and bridging the gaps with the local communities and labour market (Dong, 2018). It is important to enhance the collective action of all social actors / stakeholders in the process of indigenisation of the profession (Yang, *et al.*, 2008). This collective action strategy should apply a bottom-up approach to establish a consensus among all actors about the identified challenges, their priorities, causality relationships, and the most effective and efficient actions to address them (Wendly, 2018)

Coordination among the five universities (including the social work programme), with other key actors (i.e. employers, training institutions, the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists, the line ministries, and others), is an area within which some key challenges were identified by many participants. The race between these universities and competition on the numbers of students is one of the factors that make coordination and cooperation between them very difficult. The other factor is the political divide, particularly between universities in GS and with the universities in the WB. The major impact of this is the quality of HE, including social work education and training.

The participants in this research expressed their high concern and dissatisfaction about the levels and modes of cooperation between the universities in general, and social work programmes particularly. They distinguished between two levels of coordination that are obstructing the development of the social work profession; the internal level which is between the social work programmes, and the external level which is between these programmes and

other parties like the training institutions, employers, the PUSWP, the employers (public and voluntary sectors), and the international organisations and institutions engaged in the social work field such as IFSWⁱ and IASSWⁱⁱ.

At the internal level, the relationships between the social work programs in the five universities exists but sporadically on a case-by-case basis rather than systematically as part of any development plan. The Deputy Dean of the social work programme in one university described communication between the social work programmes in the five universities as “**weak**” (II-19, L152-154), while another head of the social work department believed that coordination between universities does not exist. He said that “**Everyone works by himself / herself; there is no cooperation between universities**” (II-02, L96-97).

One of the areas where participants from different categories have identified as an area that is negatively affected by the external poor coordination is the coordination with employers. For example, some participants highlighted the challenge of lacking coordination with them to enhance the congruence of the competencies required for the employers and the competencies covered by the social work programmes, as a representative of an employer from the voluntary sector described it:

“Most of graduates of the universities’ do not fit with the labour market or cannot perform effective roles in the provided interventions” (II-07, L21-23).

This may reflect the fragmented relations between the education and labour market systems which result in poorly synchronised and disintegrated roles about providing the competent social worker. The Dean of a social sciences department in one of the universities said that universities are totally isolated from the labour market:

“There is a complete isolation of social work education from the labour market” (II-15, L183-185).

A representative of one employer tried to explain the whole situation by one of the examples. He said:

“In Bethlehem, there are about 1500 social workers who apply to the ministry of higher education exam every year to compete for 2-3 vacancies as school counsellors and this is an issue of the demand – supply process first.

Secondly, which is more important, is the extent to which universities qualify social work students to do the school counsellor's job” (II-10, L132-152).

Accepting large numbers of students in social work programmes, teaching them theories and models of interventions, supervising them, and transferring the research skills would need a sufficiently qualified infrastructure. Central elements of this infrastructure are the number of classrooms and their spaces, the IT system, and the libraries only. Failure to provide a conducive learning environment (including qualified infrastructure) would hinder the teaching-learning process and would compromise the quality of the educational outcomes.

- ***The poor Infrastructure:***

Libraries, number of classrooms, IT systems, and a few other issues are classified under the infrastructure theme. Some of the participants perceived these as challenges facing the quality of social work education programme. In fact, there are some considerations related to libraries which are considered as a challenging condition to the learning process, particularly research in social work. The participant II-04, for example, raised some concerns about the existing libraries based on his experiences during his PhD research and other research that he conducted. He thinks that these libraries lack adequate social work literature, have complicated borrowing procedures, and there is limited access to online libraries. He stated that:

“We are challenged by the absence of a library in the Palestinian universities that is related to social work, and the limited online links to libraries in the European universities. Additionally, there are challenges in students’ use of English books, and the complicated procedures of borrowing and returning books. All these conditions discourage the educational process and affect the quality of the library Even the teaching spaces or classrooms are not adequate.” (II-04, L198-205).

- ***The language barriers and borrowed textbooks:***

The limitations in English language skills were considered as obstacles to the quality of social work education and training. Consequently, social work students and their instructors are challenged by poorly translated references and research reports from English to Arabic, while there is a dearth of social work literature that is produced and published originally in Arabic. As such, both students and their instructors must rely on Arabic references that are considered

outdated and not catching-up with the rapidly produced knowledge in international social work literature. Within a local environment that is lacking sufficient production of social work research, the quality of the educational outcomes will likely be significantly low. A former chair of one of the social sciences departments commented on this challenging condition. She said:

“There are lots of challenges. First of them is in the shortage of references and books and most of the available references and books are in the English language. The content of these references and books is far from our reality and is distant from the problems of our community. The second is the weakness in the proficiency of students in the English language, so the teacher is obliged to translate texts for students without any effort from the students. The problem here is that some Arabic language books are poorly translated” (II-01, L128-135).

One of the PhD holders in social work, a researcher and lecturer at different universities, said that this challenge is more on the lecturers' side who should have a minimum level of language proficiency to stay connected with and benefit from international social work literature which is primarily in English. They can help their students if they have no problems in English language proficiency. He said that:

In addition to many challenges in the competencies of faculties, their ability to use technologies and the English language to keep them updated with international social work literature and development is very limited (II-04, L107-111).

5.3 Conclusions:

The challenges identified within SWET can be viewed as conditions hindering the development of indigenous Palestinian social work education, but also can be viewed as symptoms of a much wider challenges for the entire profession (at education and practice levels); the crisis of the absent indigenised professional identity. This is where the guidance to SWET, and the social work practice models, could come from. It would provide the standards for the acceptable and unacceptable, relevant or irrelevant, useful or useless international theories and models of interventions.

The findings of this research confirmed that the challenges facing social work education and training in the five universities in the WB and GS reflected the deep impact of the colonial occupation and neoliberal peace-building project. Despite the fact that some of the challenges that the development of SWET has faced are common across the HE in Palestine (Koni, Zainal and Ibrahim, 2012; EACEA, 2012; RecoNow report (2016); Bruhn, 2006; Madia (2014), Hashweh and Hashweh (1999), Alfoqahaa *et al.* (2015); Al-Qarout (2013); Al-Shobaki, Abu Amuna, and Abu Naser, 2017; Al Subu, 2009), some other challenges are particularly relevant to social work. The Westernised content of social work curricula reflected its poor relevance to the socioeconomic and political Palestinian context, and the limited research work (due to lack of interests and research capacities) constituted a central challenge to the development of the SWET particularly, and the social work profession in Palestine generally.

The impact of neoliberal policies of PNA was more direct than the colonial occupation. Of particular influence was the privatisation and marketisation of HE services that shifted its mission from investment in human capital and contribution to national liberation to profit-making and financial sustainability. The quality of education has become more linked to the needs of the private sector in which the margin for social sciences, including social work, has been shrinking sharply since 1994. The relevance of SWET to the Palestinian local context has become of less interest for the administration of the SWET programmes and the voluntary and statutory service sector, due to the neoliberal policies of the international donors. Those policies have shifted the roles of the social workers from intervening in socioeconomic conditions of the individuals and local communities to limited roles in cash transfer and referrals to the available voluntary services.

The fragmented relations between the five social work education and training programmes at one level, and poor coordination with the employers, the representatives, and voluntary service providers at the other, have enhanced the isolation of these programmes from each other and delinked them from the surrounding institutional and communal contexts. This reality resulted in the absence of a leadership that could develop the profession at the education and practice levels in Palestine. Also, this has perpetuated the incapacity of Palestinian social work education and practice programmes to be engaged with its potential international partners to act collectively on the challenges shaped and perpetuated by globalised neoliberal policies, and resulted in restricting the possibilities for international solidarity with Palestinian social work education and

practice in its fight with the colonial and neoliberal challenging realities. Addressing this complex set of challenges, within the SWET system and at the national level, requires a combatable set of well synchronised strategies to answer the question of ‘what social work we need in Palestine? And how we can get it?’

Chapter VI

Strategies for Addressing the Challenges

6.0 Introduction:

In the previous two chapters (IV & V), the research findings on the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in general and social work education and training in particular were presented. Many of these were created and shaped by the political realities of Palestine; particularly the colonial occupation and the neoliberal policies of the PNA. The purpose of this chapter is to present a range of strategies to address these challenges, based on the participants' suggestions and international experiences in similar contexts, particularly the global south. However, brief definitions of the key concept used in this chapter will be presented first.

6.1 Strategies and goals:

Minzberg (2001, p.12) defined the term 'strategy' from the management sciences point of view as "a unified, comprehensive and integrated plan... designed to ensure that the basic objectives of the enterprise are achieved". Therefore, any strategy should have a clear and specific goal to accomplish in the first place according to Minzberg (2002), Andrews (1997), and Stinikov and George (2014). According to Minzberg (2001), the course of actions of the plan, however, should be consistent, and consciously intended. Andrews (1997) distinguished between two types of strategies; the first is broader and for the whole organisation or system, while the second is more specific to address a specific issue, concern or need within the organisation / system.

In the case of the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, the profession is challenged by the absence of a national framework that is necessary to guide the functioning of social work education and practice, and by a list of conditions in six areas (which are the six general themes as explained in Ch IV). The strategies suggested by the participants in this research can be classified according to the definitions and classifications of Minzberg (2001), Andrews (1997) and Stinikov and George (2014) which will be explained in the following sections of this chapter. The review of the current status of the social work profession in Palestine, as highlighted in the previous chapters, indicates the absence of any indigenous shared vision, goals, standards, values, and organisational entity. Also, it indicates that social work education and training, as a central constituent for the profession in Palestine, is encountering a set of complex challenges that need to be at the centre of any development of a

national strategy. Therefore, at this point, the researcher suggested the following two main goals for these strategies along with the definitions of Minzberg (2002) and Andrews (1997):

- To develop an integrated national and indigenised identity of the social work profession in Palestine by developing a framework that defines its vision, goals, standards, values, and a democratically constructed leadership structure.
- To address the challenges identified by the research participants, particularly the SWET, through a strategic development plan for the profession, which is guided by the national framework, produced and implemented by all concerned social actors.

6.2 Levels and modes of actions:

The responses of all participants confirmed that the challenges facing the development of the social work profession vary widely and are dispersed over different areas (general themes) and different levels (national, institutional and theme-specific). Therefore, the strategies to address them must correspond to this dispersion. Lin (2002) argues that there are three levels of action within the structure of social systems; micro, mezzo, and macro levels. A set of social units, with specific functions and positions, encompasses each level. The resources and the power to control and access them embedded within all these units, the level of the system, and eventually the entire system have a significant impact on determining the functionality of the system (Line, 2002). Bringing all these levels to act towards a specific goal will not be achieved without considering the views, interests, resources and limitations of the different involved actors “mutually beneficial social action” according to Larsen, *et al.* (2004, p.64), which is the position where the outcomes are higher and beyond the reach of any one individual unit or one level. Along those lines, Larsen, *et al.* (2004) argue with the significance of what they called the “social capital” embedded in the expertise and capacities of all individual units that can be invested through forming the needed “bonds” (Larsen, *et al.*, 2004, p 65) that bring all units and levels together to accumulate the required resources for the success of the whole system. Larsen *et al.* (2004) highlighted the need for collective action of all units of any given social system to address the challenges that are influencing the functioning of the system as a whole and all units constituting it. At the micro and mezzo levels, addressing the challenges influencing the functioning of each unit or group of units should be guided by the strategy of addressing the entire system within which these units are functioning.

The existing body of literature about the challenges facing the social work profession in the countries of the global north and south was focused on describing the implications of neoliberalism to the profession more than identifying the strategies to resist and mitigate these implications. The underpinning assumption and rationale of those broad presentations is that the country-specific context in which neoliberal policies are implemented, is a central factor in shaping country-specific strategies.

The call for collective action through collaborative strategies (that bring all actors to work together) was the broadest and most common theme used by scholars who raised the need for actions to resist neoliberalism and its implications on the social work profession (Ferguson, 2009; Hill, and Wayne 2017; Dominelli, 2014; Reisch, 2013; Cleary, 2018; Jones, *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, the context of the colonial occupation in Palestine is extremely unique and there is a dearth in literature about the challenges facing the social work profession in such contexts and how to address them. However, the WB, Jerusalem, and GS, as occupied territories since 1967 and managed by neoliberal PNA policies since 1994, would need a tailored set of strategies that take this political reality into consideration to address the challenges facing the social work profession. The review of experiences of addressing the challenges facing the development of social work profession or other professions in the global south and north countries, such as the GCA, indicated the significance of two main standards that can be applicable to the Palestinian context and consistent with the published literature about strategies to address the functioning of social systems. These are the collective and the bottom-up actions.

The calls of scholars such as Ferguson, Lavalette and Smith (2011); Hill and Wayne (2017); Healy *et al.* (2004) and Herbert, (2016) are focused on the need to address the challenges facing the profession in the 21st century through collective action, and highlight the roles of the different actors at three levels; professional leadership and representation, the specialised institutions (particularly the social work education and training institutions, and the service providers), the social workers on the frontline, and the local community. Adopting and adapting a shared vision and agenda for the desired change at these levels would ensure a concerted performance that brings all concerned actors together and would yield a positive change in the realities of the social work profession in Palestine. Also, the same shared vision and agenda will guide actions of every actor or group of actors to address the challenges facing them in order to

harmonise the change efforts across the entire profession, rather than discrepancies or destructive conflicts between the different actors.

The participants in this research emphasised the need for active engagement of the representative union of social workers, the universities, the employers, the social work graduates, the community actors (leaders, grassroots, and others), the line ministries and legislators. Therefore, in the fragmented relations among the different actors engaged with the social work education and practice in Palestine, which can be considered part of the unique reality of this profession, and their isolation from the needs and characteristics of the Palestinian local communities, the process of developing an indigenised and nationally organised framework for the social work profession and developing strategic development plans is necessary as much as its outcomes.

The other important feature for the Palestinian-specific framework (or model of action) is the political orientation which is held by the different actors in relation to the role of the social work profession, in the national liberation and resistance process and the level of engagement of the community actors (grassroots, CBOs, NGOs, activists and traditional leadership) in the process to ensure the indigenisation and relevance of the framework (outcome). All the participants in this research confirmed the need for a framework that is committed and engaged in national liberation (from the colonial occupation) and resistance to the neoliberal policies of the PNA. However, the extent to which this political orientation can be established among all concerned actors remain a key challenge to the process, particularly within the political divide and neoliberal context.

6.3 Types of strategies:

6.3.1 Lesson to learn:

The impact of the neoliberal policies, as packaged with the colonial peace-building process, was extremely substantial to the way by which the Palestinian political leadership has been managing the civil services in the WB&GS, including the HEIs policies. The published literature about the HE's sector in Palestine between 1967 and 1994 was entirely focused on the evolution of HEIs and the impact of the colonial Israeli occupation on it. Also, it highlighted the role of the PLO in leading this sector towards active engagement in the Palestinian national liberation movement. The key lesson is to draw from that experience and that can be extremely valuable

and helpful in understanding the current challenges facing the social work profession and proposing effective strategies to addressing them. This lesson is that the HEIs had committed themselves to the national cause of liberation which constituted the premise of the ‘common good’ for all Palestinians as well. The neoliberal-colonial peace-building process of 1990, which resulted in establishing the PNA in 1994, has demonstrated the PLO drift in this process, which saw them giving up the role of holding all HEIs under the banner of the ‘common good’. The HEIs, alternatively, were pushed to face their destiny on their own, which resulted in adopting individualised sustainability strategies at the expense of their commitment to the national cause and the quality of educational outcomes. The role of the MoEHE after 1994 materialised the position of the PNA, which minimised its role in leading this sector.

Therefore, bringing these institutions or some of their programmes (i.e. social work programmes) under a unified banner, or revitalised / recreated a ‘common good’ for them would be a prerequisite for the development of collaborative strategy for the national framework. It would be unlikely that there would be no role for the PLO or any political leadership in this process, since all are engaged in the peace-building project. Alternatively, the key players in social work education and practice need to find their own way towards that end, which may be conceived as ‘pushing back’ and rowing against the current. One of the key challenges to this process is how to strike the balance between the interests of the HEIs, employers and others on the one hand, and the recreated ‘common good’. However, the choices are not ranging between either leaving the status quo as it is or fighting against all odds. There might be other choices that can be tailored according to the given circumstances at the time of launching any strategy.

The strategies that the participants have suggested during the individual interviews and focus groups can be classified under two main categories: The solution-oriented strategies, and the collaborative strategies. The first covers the strategies by which specific challenges can be addressed, which is a synonymous with what Andrews (1997) and Bowman and Helfat (2001) called ‘business strategy’, and the second is a synonym of what Andrews (1997), Barton and Gordon (1987), and Bowman and Helfat (2001) called ‘the corporate’ strategy. The two concepts are borrowed from strategic management literature that focuses on collectivism.

A similar classification was presented by Shennan (2018); solution-focused and collective / collaborative action, which Shennan (2018) drew from the radical social work perspective. The ‘business strategy’ concept refers to the course of planned steps and actions that we need to

propose and apply in order to accomplish a specific purpose (change) within a specific part or section of the agency system. Andrews (1997), Barton and Gordon (1987), and Bowman and Helfat (2001) confirmed that having a clear and a specific purpose without considering the context of the entire system (steps and actions) is not enough to bring about the desired change in one of its parts (sub-system). Shennan (2018) argues that the solution-focused intervention pays attention to the need for assessing the context that shaped the challenges facing social systems and not addressing them in isolation from it. However, collaborative action or integrated solution-focused interventions would lead to a political action to bring about the desired social change (Rank and Hutchison, 2000, Dominelli, 2010, and Healy *et al.* 2004).

In the case of the social work profession in Palestine, the two types of strategies are necessary to address the challenges. To this end, the strategies suggested by the participants in this research can be classified under these two types of strategies; the national framework development strategy and the ‘solution-oriented’ strategies. Therefore, an indigenous consolidated model is recommended to address the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine. However, prior to describing this model and how it can be developed, the solution-focused strategies and the national framework development strategy, as described by the participants in this research, will be presented first.

6.3.2 The solution-oriented strategies:

In this section, the participants suggested a variety of strategies to address specific challenges they identified under the one or more of the **six** general themes (community attitude, SWET, employability and labour market, policy and legal environment, professional representation, and security and political environment). However, it is worth mentioning that some strategies would be applicable to address a single challenge under a single general theme, a package of challenges under one general theme, or a package of challenges stretched across more than one general theme. Yet, these should be perceived and applied complementarily with other strategies and challenges, rather than in isolation from each other as argued by Shennan (2018). The following are the key solution-oriented strategies suggested by the participants in this research:

- Regular awareness-raising campaigns:

Media, in the widest sense, plays a significant role in shaping the views, attitudes, and opinions of the public about the social work profession in terms of what it stands for and what it

can do for them (Westwood, 2012). Westwood (2012) argues that the absence of adequate knowledge about the profession from the media productions or the misleading presentations about it may shape the negative attitudes of lay citizens and their expectations of the social workers and their role. Classic media forms (TV and radio news broadcasts, drama series, newspapers) and social media platforms constitute areas where social work regulatory bodies, service providers and social workers at an individual level can act purposely to influence the public with views and attitudes they believe are true and fair. However, the dearth in published literature about the role of all forms of media in promoting the negative / positive public opinion and attitudes about the social work profession and its functions signals an area where this profession needs to pay more attention internationally, regionally, and locally.

In conflict zones, like Palestine, the role of media may need more significant attention. As people are not travelling a lot and are mostly unemployed, they rely heavily on the media to follow the news and keep themselves updated. The communities of the WB & GS are relatively small, yet tens of TV and Radio stations exist, broadcasting for 24 hours a day. However, it is well-observed by the researcher, and clearly highlighted by many participants, that there has been a total absence of the social work profession in the local media. There has been no single educational programme about it, an absence of the roles of the social workers in charitable or development interventions supported by services providers (public or voluntary, national or international), or the absent engagement of social workers in the public activities like strikes to support prisoners' hunger strikes or the protests against the public social insurance plan (that the PNA tried to impose during 2018), and many other instances. This reality has kept social work and social workers hidden and not exposed to the public. The only way for the Palestinian citizen and community to establish an understanding of this profession is the roles of social workers in delivering the services which are mostly humanitarian food, cash, and the distribution of non-food items.

At the community level, among employers, and within the social work graduates (to some extent as highlighted by some participants), there are two main interrelated challenges; the low status of the profession and its confused or unclear identity. Both were attributed to the limited awareness or knowledge about the profession and its boundaries. Most of the participants believed that the absence of continuous and appropriately planned awareness-raising activities has contributed to shaping the limited awareness or confused conceptions of the profession. They

believe that such campaigns would be effective in addressing such challenges. They think that social workers play important roles and contribute significantly to helping people, yet these roles and contributions are not well-recognised by the community at large.

Establishing and promoting a clear definition of the social work profession is about defining the nature of this profession, its functions within the community, and realistic expectations from social workers' roles (Twikirize, 2014; Gray and Coates, 2010). Further, it is about addressing the gap and / or sometimes the tension between professional interventions and the traditional mechanisms shaped by the local community under the influence of the conservative cultural system. For example, the local community is still not recognising the roles that a qualified social worker can play in resolving intergenerational conflicts or couples' disputes within a family. Rather it prefers to revert to traditional and male oriented interventions, even away from the legal systems. Being aware of the social workers' roles may not make the people seek assistance from them necessarily, but it provides the people with a choice, particularly with the growing sense among people that traditional solutions are not always just or fair for the oppressed parties like women and children.

On the other hand, a closer look into the social work curricula at the five universities in the WB & GS revealed that the social work curricula are devoid of the required knowledge and training to qualify social workers to meet the expectations of the local community when it becomes aware of what the social work graduates can do. This gap also contributes to shaping the attitude of the community. If the process of designing the structure and the content of social work curricula had engaged the local community (of all its constituencies), this gap would have been much less challenging to the status of the profession. Such engagement is not only necessary to democratise the curricula-building process and make it more relevant only, but also to promote public awareness of the profession and enhance its status.

Accordingly, the community and the service providers need to be strategic partners / allies in developing the character of this profession, its functions, and the roles of its practitioners. This means that these actors should not be passive recipients of the elitists' definitions (Osei, 1997); they must be active partners in producing them to capture "the indigenous world view" of these partners and the variations in the "social fields" in which this profession functions (Osei, 1997, p.22). Only through this participatory approach, producing a unified identity and clear boundaries will promote the status of the profession at community and

employers' levels, according to Osei (1997). Along those lines, the participant II-19 expressed the challenge and the solution in his own words when he said:

“We have a problem in the community awareness about the social work profession and its importance. More than that, the Palestinian society cannot distinguish the difference between social worker, researcher and counsellor. The universities and media should take responsibility to promote the awareness about social work profession, its role, social worker’s roles and the issues where s/he can intervene” (II-19, 118-23).

The role of the professional leadership (Rank and Hutchison ,2000), which includes the social work programmes in the five universities, the PUSWP, the social work students and graduates, and other actors who should be engaged in organising awareness raising campaigns were clearly identified and highlighted by participants in the individual interviews and focus groups. One professional described this situation when he said:

“I think that this profession is relatively new and it was introduced to the society only through the services it provided during emergency conditions and this has largely affected the understanding of people about the profession and its roles, I do not remember any efforts by professional or academic institutions that provided any awareness raising activities about it to the public” (II-11, L22-26)

Another participant said:

“Yes, indeed but professionals and universities must take their role in explaining the role of social work in institutions and promote community awareness about its roles, which is a great challenge” (II-01, 157-59)

Relevant to the issue of the identity of the profession and how others perceive it, is the permeability of the group boundaries (Brown, 2000; Tajfel, 2010), particularly when the criteria of membership are not clear, broad, or not checked by the group representatives or gate-keeper. This issue is challenging to the social work profession at two levels, one level is the membership of the PUSWP, which is open to different categories; social workers, sociology graduates, psychologists, and education graduates in some cases. The other level is the social work

employment opportunities that are sometimes open for non-social work graduates, which indicates that employers themselves might not have a clear understanding or commitment to the standards about who should do the job, or for reasons of nepotism / political affiliation that are common practices in the country, especially with the absence of the monitoring and advocacy roles of the PUSWP (Asakreh, 2016). In such cases, the participants viewed the role and performance of the PUSWP in establishing, developing, and reinforcing the professional identity as weak or nonexistent (Asakreh, 2016).

Based on the conceptions of Spears, *et al.* (2010) about identity, status, power, and legitimacy we may argue that the commitment of the employed graduate in the position of social worker to the professional standards of practice influences how others view and conceive the profession. If the social work graduates do not present themselves properly to others within and out of the institutions, the non-qualified graduates in social work will certainly not do that. Employers and service-users, for example, represent the others (external actors) whose perceptions about the profession are shaped, partially at least, based on the performance of the social workers and their representatives (i.e. PUSWP). Therefore, in the case of the Palestinian social workers and their representatives, the weaknesses in the internal legitimacy and the low level of acceptance, in addition to the confused identity and other factors, will result in low level of acceptance by external actors, weak legitimacy, and low status. A representative of one employer, for example, said:

“I do not have the number of social workers in Gaza, but in West Bank there are 400 employees whose main courses of study are sociology, social work or psychology and they are called social researchers or social counsellors” (II-20, L213-215).

The absence of professional leadership to monitor the adherence of employers and practitioners to professional standards, values and ethics, also is another factor that contributes to shaping the status of the profession in the Palestinian community. These often compromise the rights and entitlements of the service-users (Lymber, 2001; Brill, 2001). In this case, the proposed strategy is for the professional leadership in Palestine to develop the indigenous vision and values of the profession first and regularly promote them at the public awareness level secondly.

For some participants, the awareness and the attitudes of the community and employers were considered as by-products of the absence / presence of regulatory laws and the weak role of the PUSWP. Getting a regulatory law and applying it would contribute to addressing these and other similar challenges, since this will make the boundaries of the profession clearer and less permeable under the close monitoring of the professional representatives. Bringing this identity and its boundaries to the community and institutions is important to shaping their perceptions and attitudes. The participant II-05 summarised this interrelatedness as follows:

“I know institutions with no specialists and others who employ Arabic language and Shari'a [Islamic studies] graduates as social workers. Here we need the role of the union of social workers in drafting a law to regulate the profession and to explain who the social worker is [who can be hired or practice social work and who cannot]” (II-05, L26-29).

Some participants suggested that it is the role of the MoEHE to introduce the profession to the community through the Palestinian curricula of the pre-tertiary education syllabus, which promoted specific professions like doctors and teachers while neglecting other professions like social workers. The participants suggested this strategy to help the community, particularly the new generations, to be aware of what this profession is about and how to distinguish it from other professions. One of the academics' focus groups in the West Bank suggested that:

“Such a distinction is very important to integrate the pre-secondary with the post-secondary education. The curriculum of the first plays a critical role in establishing the knowledge base for proper conceptions and attitudes about the social work profession at community level, as well as paving the road for informed choices for the graduates of this stage to apply for university programs” (AWB-11, L148-153).

- The regular review and development of curricula:

This strategy was proposed by many participants to address the challenge of poor relevance of the social work curricula (including field training courses) to the Palestinian local context. The theoretical component of the social work curricula in Palestinian universities has been criticised for being Westernised (i.e. focused on teaching theories and models of intervention developed in and for western communities) and very much irrelevant to the WB and GS context. Participants

suggested a regular review and updating of the curricula to make it more relevant. For some participants, this task should engage the local communities and service-users, in addition to academics, students, graduates, professionals, employers and researchers. One of the groups of academics suggested the following:

“While preparing curricula, universities must take into consideration the participation of all sectors in the Palestinian community to make sure that curriculum is relevant to our reality” (AGS-09, L96-98)

The design of social work curricula needs to be managed as a dynamic construct where changing, adding, replacing and modifying are continuous duties for all concerned actors. For example, courses in the fields of advocacy, rehabilitation, leadership, school social work and many others can be developed through expertise from Palestine. Different participants reflected on this strategy such as II-15 and II-10 who said:

“I give you an example, we worked to develop curricula in the field of disability and rehabilitation and we offered it to Bethlehem university as a suggestion emerging from previous meetings, and unfortunately Bethlehem university did not accept it because of its cost, they said that you can produce trainings and workshops but it will not be a part of the curriculum” (II-10, L105-110).

- Building the capacities in teaching methods:

Other strategies were suggested to address the teaching methods of social work courses that need to be taught by more interactive methods that turn the classroom into a space for students' reflections and free expressions of the realities in the wider context. This was suggested by one of the key professionals who is involved in the academic and practice levels:

“All teaching courses need to include a practice component [inside the classroom or in the field] in its design in order to familiarise students with the [Palestinian] reality (i.e. presenting documentary films, guest-speakers from the community and the institutions, field visits ...etc)” (II-17, L84-85)

- Setting quality assurance standards for the field training:

Field training was found to be an area of serious challenges, therefore different strategies were suggested. Some of these strategies were focused on the supervision component, particularly the qualifications of the professional supervisors inside the field placement institutions. In the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem there is no educational / training programme in the field of supervision. Social workers inside the field placement institutions provide supervision to university students during the field training courses without being adequately trained for this role. For many participants, this has negative consequences on the quality of educational outcomes of the field training courses particularly, and the social work education programmes in general. Therefore, many supported the suggestion to have a professional diploma in social work supervision in one or two universities to address this challenge. The participant II-14 summarised this suggestion:

“We suggested that there should be a professional diploma in supervision to prepare more specialists who have skills to supervise university students during their field placements” (II-14, L123-126)

The review of the curricula of the five universities in 2012 (Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013) and the interviews with the heads of social work programmes of the same universities in 2017, confirmed that each university still applies its own field training courses with one main difference. The West Bank and Jerusalem universities try to adopt some regional and international standards (including the Israeli one to get the recognition of the Israeli Association of Social Workers for the Jerusalem students to qualify them for jobs according to Israeli standards). The universities in Gaza Strip provide two courses (4-6 credit hours) but without any reference to external standards (regionally or internationally). Most of the interviewees and graduates from Gaza Strip raised their dissatisfaction about this element of the SWET. They believe that the universities should unify the standards for field training as part of national plan and the universities of Gaza Strip redesign their field training courses accordingly. Participant II-20 summarised this position:

“The problem is in the field training where the student just gets two training sessions [placement opportunities] except at Al-Quds Open University where students get four training courses. Islamic university operates the same way

as Al- Quds Open University where the student can practice social work methods in the field” (AGS-09, L112-116).

A group of academics from the West Bank confirmed the need to unify the field training curricula. They said that:

“We need a unified standard for the field training courses between all stakeholders [universities and placement institutions],that should include field follow up on students in institutions, ensuring that proper institutions are selected for the different levels of training (four training courses) and to sign agreements with institutions to clarify the training requirements ...etc” (AWB-12,L208-213).

- Developing unified admission policies and standards:

The HEIs have adapted their admission policies to cope with the neoliberal privatisation and austerity measures applied by PNA after 1994, after being fully supported by the PLO (prior to 1994). This included mainly a policy of doubling or tripling the tuition fees, introducing less restrictive admissions criteria, less support to socially and economically disadvantaged students, more attention to marketable and income-generation programmes, and lower development and research budgets to the social sciences. All these policies served the purpose of increasing the universities revenues through more students, more spending on marketable programmes, and less spending on Arts programmes (including social sciences). These features of weakness were reported by EACEA (2012), RecoNow(2016), Bruhn (2006), Alfoqahaa *et al.*, (2015), Al-Qarout (2013) and Abu-Awwad (2013). With such policies social work programmes could not apply any proper screening or assessment procedures to ensure enrolling those who are strongly motivated to study social work and willing to make social work as their future career. The head of one of the departments agreed that these policies deeply influence the quality of social work education. She said:

“For us at [XXX] university, there is a conflict with the university administration about the numbers of students. Until this day, despite the high increase in the number of new students, the administration does not want to stick to the manageable load of students / per available academics, which is supposed to be 35 students in each class, because they will need to

hire more staff (for example). Today we have 45 students in the class and if there are more, the administration has no problem. We suggested to the administration that the students be divided into larger number of classes, but the administration refused. You can see how much this affects the quality of the students, the quality of education and how much this increases the financial capital of the university and makes the supervisors highly overworked or overwhelmed” (II-08, L137-145)

In general, many participants suggested that universities need to review their admission policies. At this point, it is assumed that neither the academics nor the students have been consulted by the universities’ administration. Therefore, the participants discussed it from their position as people affected by its results. At a policy level, the MoEHE is not interfering in such situations because it has no authority over ‘privatised’ institutions, except in some bureaucratic procedures in admin areas. The head of one of the social work programmes said:

“Our relationship with the ministry of higher education is only in monitoring and reporting quantitative performance indicators, the approval of new programmes, and authentication of students” (II-08, L137-145).

Unfortunately, as described by a deputy-head of another social work programme in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, universities interests lie in applying these policies (i.e. the increased fees, increased enrolment, and restricted spending on the social sciences ...etc) that turned them into business-like institutions. This situation was described by one of the participants who said:

“The commercial tendency that is characterizing the policies of universities is hindering a better level of cooperation and coordination between them. It is the responsibility of the ministry of higher education. The Palestinian Union of Social Workers must lead lobbying efforts to address this deterioration” (II-19, L174-179).

The participant II-13 suggested establishing a coordination mechanism between the social work programmes in the five universities, in order to address such challenges collectively:

“In all universities there are no specific criteria for admission, this affects the profession and its status. This problem stems from the absence of coordination between universities” (II-13, L127-130)

- Enhanced policies and infrastructure research production in social work:

Research production in social science, including social work, in Palestine is weak as confirmed by different scholars (Hanafi and Arvanitis, 2014); Hanafi (2018), Hamdan (2010), Abu-Awwad (2013), DeVoir and Tartir, (2009), and was confirmed by the participants in this research. In the social work field in Palestine, research projects are under budgeted by the academic institutions and not considered as a priority for international donors to non-academic research centres. The participants confirmed the need for having a culture and policy of research within the academic institutions as the main strategy to develop and update the curriculum of all sciences in Palestine. The quality of social work curricula, for some participants, will not be developed without research, as two of the participants described it:

“Research will make lots of contributions to the curriculum development at universities and the quality of social work practice. We need research at all those levels” (II-03, L167-169).

“All the time we try to link the reality with the curricula, but we are challenged by the shortage in social research inside and outside the boundaries of the academic requirements” (II-13, L156-158).

The limited interests of universities and the MoEHE in planning and conducting research projects is the main reason for this shortage in research production, as stated by some of the participants in the focus groups:

“There is no interest in research, there are no budgets and there is no interest to develop scientific research. Universities only allocate budgets to the research that will help university in term of its reputation, status or in improving its financial condition” (GGS-08, PAR3, L140-143)

“The interests and capabilities of universities are limited in planning and conducting scientific research which needs budgets to be allocated. Neither

the interest, nor the budgets are provided by the universities or the government [MoEHE]” (GWB-10, Par.02, L176-178).

“The ministry of higher education must take its responsibility and allocate budgets for research. You hear that they [the Ministry] spent 20 million dollars on research but, unfortunately, I think that it is spent on operational expenses. The solution is in allocating budgets for research and forming research committees” (II-20, L138-142)

Accordingly, the strategy of establishing research committees within and between all universities, which are specialised in the field of social work, is highly recommend by some participants like II-10:

“There must be a specialised research committee in social work in each of the universities and between them” (II-10, L 211-213),

The concern of other participants expressed concern about the weakness in the dissemination and the implications of research findings in terms of integrating them into the curricula and the development plans. The participant in one of the focus groups said that:

“The problem is not in the research itself but in the adoption of research’s results and recommendations, and who will take the responsibility to implement these results.” (GWB-10, Par.3, L180-182).

For the development of social work education, research projects are important to develop more relevant social work models of interventions. Participants in individual interviews and focus groups highlighted this need for research. They said:

“Research is necessary to develop new ideas and intervention models” (II-05, L288-290)

“It is supposed from the curriculum to suit the Palestinian society values and culture; it should depend on research not only through copy and paste from previous studies” (AGWB-11, Par. 2, L98-100).

As the head of one of the social work departments described the realities of social work research and curricula in Palestine, in the absence of reliable social work research in Palestine, programmes borrow the content of their curricula from western and Arab countries:

“From an academic point of view, we do not depend on research or its results. Unfortunately, there is no valuable research, most of our teaching depends on the experiments of western countries or Egypt, but there are no Palestinian experiences in this field, and this is one of the challenges that we face” (II-15, L95-99.

The deputy of the social work programme in the West Bank and Gaza Strip argued that the contribution of social work research to the curricula in the university as very weak and the alternative is to borrow it from other countries. He said that:

“I consider that social research in Palestine is very weak and doesn’t contribute to the social work curriculum ... Unfortunately, we aren’t producing knowledge, we just borrow it from other countries without any effort to accommodate the Palestinian cultural context” (II-19, 1137-147)

In order to address the challenges in promoting the interests of universities and MoEHE in research and allocating the needed budget, lobbying efforts are needed, as suggested by one of the participants, who said:

“My suggestion is to lobby on decision makers to give research higher priority and allocate sufficient budgets for it.” (AGWB-10, Par.4, L198-201).

For some participants, the limited number of qualified academics in social work is one of the root causes for weak research in this field. This is a human resources management policy in the first place. One of the participants described this aspect when he said that:

“Yes, sure we are in need of a number of specialists and academics to study the reality of social work in order to develop a responsive curriculum to the Palestinian reality” (II-11, 1157-158).

The weakness in research production is a critical challenge hindering the development of the social work. Lacking interest in research on the part of the universities and having qualified staff to produce research-based knowledge are among the main conditions for this weakness. Lobbying for higher priority and budgets for research projects would be one of the effective strategies to address this weakness.

- Human resources development strategy:

The two main challenges that participants raised with regards to the human resources of the five-social work programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were the shortage in the number of qualified academics in social work and the capacities of these programmes to retain or attract qualified academics. The brain-drain challenge and the limited capacities to address it apply to all fields and is a result of the ‘brain-drain’ in all of them (Baramki, 1996, Abu-Saad, 2006; Al-Zaroo, 2003; Al-Qarout, 2013). The first one is more specific to the social work field. The shortage is addressed by hiring academics from other disciplines in social sciences to teach the social work courses and supervise the social work students during the field training courses. To address this shortage, particularly in the number of the PhD holders, partnering with Arab or international universities and possibly some interested donors to fund scholarships in this field for all universities would help to address this problem (Academic figure, informal interview, 2018).

Many participants expressed that everyone in the field is aware of these challenges and many of the graduates wish to resume their postgraduate studies. However, due to financial limitations at the personal level, they cannot pursue postgraduate education abroad. This aspect was described by one of the participants, who said:

“... many students start thinking about resuming their postgraduate studies in this specialisation [social work] but their financial capacities to do that constitute a serious challenge for them” (II-14, L187-190).

Alternatively, some participants thought that this was the responsibility of universities. As long as there are two MSW programmes in the West Bank, the focus should be on the PhD studies in both West Bank and Gaza Strip. One participant described the example of Al-Quds Open University as a strategy that could be followed by other universities. He said:

“After 2008 there was an opening in social work and students went to Helwan University in Egypt and the number increased to 25 graduates with MSW and a few of them are doing their PhD in social work now. Yet, many of them don’t work with universities because NGOs offer better salaries than universities, which is an issue that needs to be addressed seriously, too” (II-13, L84-89).

One of the experienced academics from West Bank highlighted the role of international agencies in addressing such a challenging issue:

“The intervention of the international community in presenting some professional interventions and offering opportunities for some Palestinians to complete their study in the social work field contributed to the development of the profession and the presence of qualified professionals with academic PG degrees in social work” (II-18,L41-45).

The participant II-11 criticised Palestinian universities for not investing in the development of the capacities of social work academics. He said:

“Universities can invest in their staff through scholarships or other ways, but they deal with education as business and spending money to this purpose is not a priority. Any academic in social sciences can teach social work, according to them, and no objections have been raised by any party. This has a negative influence on the profession and its development opportunities, and consequently its status” (II-11, L163-168).

- Effective coordination strategy and mechanisms:

Another challenge for the development of SWET is the absence of any coordination mechanism to develop and apply unified structures and indigenous curricula. Therefore, one participant highlighted the need for this coordination body:

“In my opinion, if there is a social work [curricula] committee for Palestinian universities, the situation will be better, a committee to review and develop curriculum and programmes and to divide social work field between universities [i.e. some universities to focus on clinical social work, others may focus on community work]”(II-01,L305-3011).

The concept of coordination has been present and used by Palestinian professionals to refer to joint efforts by groups or institutions who share the same interest to bring resources and expertise towards specific goals and through time-limited plans. Among social work programmes at the five universities, poor coordination was highlighted as a challenge since participants believed that what is missing are the mechanism for coordination, if the interest is there. However, when there is no objection from any policy / senior management level to

cooperate, the criticism would be more valid. For some participants, the weakness in coordination between the different actors is a central challenge because through coordination many other challenges can be solved or addressed:

“We must identify the gaps and problems through coordination and agreement between the ministry of higher education and the university to apply specific solutions like admission policies or sets of standards to be met in the field of curriculum or research production ...etc” (II-13, 1171-174).

Many participants attributed the weak coordination and collaboration between universities to the profit orientated policies and their financial concerns that jeopardised the willingness and weakened the value of joint work at the expense of their prime purpose of promoting social justice (Wagner *et al.*, 2016) for a community under colonial occupation. The collaborative approach seems to be an effective one to address many of the challenges as suggested in the international social work literature (Dominelli, 2014; Hill and Wayne, 2017, Ferguson, 2017; Bailey and Koney, 1996). Coordination is the main strategy to apply the collaborative approach and addressing many of the identified challenges at the institutional and national levels.

Some participants suggested that the MoEHE and PUWSP should play a leading role to bring all these universities to coordinate their programs towards agreed upon goals and outcomes:

“The commercial tendency that is characterizing the policies of universities is hindering their cooperation and coordination. It is the responsibility of the ministry of higher education and the social workers’ union to find and apply ways to enhance the levels of collaboration between the universities because the universities will not do that if they have the choice” (II-19, L174-179).

Some other participants explained that it is necessary to consider the broader context in which the social work profession functions in order to envision its unique position and status, and towards which all actors engaged in SWET and practice can perform specific roles and responsibilities. One of the participants, for example, said:

“I think that the community of professionals and leaders or decision makers in public and private social work programmes and institutions can lobby and

propose adequate strategies to address these challenges. They can start establishing a specialised committee to lead this effort.” (II-04, L247-250).

The key conclusion from the proposed solution-oriented strategies, explained above, is that any strategies that one actor may develop and apply to address any specific challenge will be ineffective and will add more to the existing gaps, if it is not differentiated from and guided by a national framework for the profession.

6.3.3 The collaborative national framework strategy:

Under this section all overarching strategies suggested by participants are covered. These are presented before the solution-oriented strategies because these are supposed to address the challenges affecting the social work education and practice in Palestine as a whole and based on which the specific challenges and their respective solution-oriented strategies can be positioned and comprehended. Also, every strategy in this framework requires the active engagement of all key social actors in its development and implementation, since the collaborative approach calls for bringing all actors, who share the responsibility to bring about the desired change, together to act collectively as suggested by Brown (2000). Brill’s (2001) presentation on how to improve the status of the profession exemplified the shared responsibility of actors and the need for them to act collectively, when she said that:

“Improving social work’s status as a full-blown profession has absorbed the considerable energy of educational institutions, social work researchers and thinkers, the Council on Social Work Education, and professional organisations such as NASW” (Brill, 2000, p.224).

Under this framework, all strategies must be integrated, designed, and implemented with full agreement and coordination between all actors. However, developing an agenda for collective action by all concerned actors is key task in this type of strategies. Research and media campaigns would be effective ways to this end. The research process may lead to raised awareness about specific challenges, generate collective interest in addressing them, and stimulate different actors to take initiative to organise collective actions to plan and carry out the change efforts. A group of academics and participants, for example, suggested that the significance of this research is in the fact that it is implemented for the first time and the coverage of the views of all actors involved in social work education and practice. For them, this

research would provide a ground for collective action at national level by all interested actors. One of the participants explained this view clearly when he said:

“I think this study may be the first step for us as teachers and for social workers to organize our efforts to get to a modern and advanced social work profession, and we must ask decision makers to adopt the results of this study” (AWB-11,L211-213)

Similarly, one of the Academic groups suggested the use of media campaigns for the same purpose:

“The media has a great role in clarifying the role of the social worker and promoting a national plan to develop the social work profession in Palestine” (GGS-01, L207-209)

Many participants pointed at the significance of developing a national plan for the development of the social work profession in Palestine, using research and conference where all concerned parties are involved and active in developing and implementing its different tasks. From the Jerusalem group of social work graduates, one of the participants summarised the call for collective action by saying that:

“We must set up a national plan through coordination between all the parties (institutions, universities and employers), to develop the profession, and solve its problems” (GJ-04, L264-266).

Any national framework (that too can be called the ‘grand challenges initiative for the social work profession in Palestine’) should be focused on the indigenisation of social work education and practice. Should the national framework be based on the findings of this research, the challenges within the social work education and training system must be set at the centre of its focus but not in isolation from the other challenges. Therefore, the challenges within the areas of employability and labour market and community attitudes would be set at the second level of priority in the design of the framework. At the third level, then, are the challenges in the areas of ‘policy and legal environment’, ‘the professional representation’, and the political and security environment’. However, the entire design of the framework must be guided by a clear definition of the profession in the Palestinian context, its mission statement, guiding values, and the vision

to be accomplished in the years to come (Osei, 1993; Twikirize, 2014). This is the first task to accomplish prior to delving into the process of developing the national framework, because this step will provide the following tasks with the clear direction and what should be accomplished at the end of the process.

At this stage, there is a need for all actors to be aware that the whole process of developing and implementing the national framework strategies is more than a technical process of prioritising the challenges and proposing a list of strategies to address them. Unlike the Grand Challenges Approach (applied in the USA and the UK (Uhara *et al.*, 2015)), in the global south countries, including Palestine and South Africa (Osei, 1993; Osei, 1997 and Gray and Coates, 2010), it is a process of developing social work education and practice that combines elements of the international social work which may fit selectively with the local contexts to varying extents. Accordingly, a distinct identity of the social work profession in Palestine should be crafted according to the requirements of the local context and the international social work experiences, lessons, standards and frameworks that should be critically assessed and selected rather than blindly dumped.

The next step would be establishing 3-5 task forces / teams to develop action plans to address the prioritised challenges, including the timeframes roles and responsibilities, and the needed resources. These plans need to be synchronised with the national plan framework and integrated with each other. To initiate and lead this process, a national council for the development of social work profession should be established first, as long as the SWET system and the challenges it has been facing occupy a central position compared with the other challenges.

6.4 Towards indigenous framework for social work profession in Palestine:

The participants' responses to the research questions confirmed the need for an indigenous framework for the social work profession in Palestine that provides a vision, goals, standards, roles' definitions and values at national / country level, that make its education, training and practice relevant to the Palestinian local context by which life challenges are produced and in which it should be addressed. This framework should be developed through a participatory, inclusive and bottom-up process in which all social actors who are involved in designing and delivering formal and informal, public and voluntary, modes of social work interventions should

be actively and collectively engaged (Lavalette *et al.*, 2018; Ferguson, 2009; Hill and Wayne, 2017; Razack, 2009; Sloan *et al.* 2017; Al-Krenawi, 2003; Merz, 2012; Barise, 2005; Ahmadi, 2003). The existing five (recently became six) social work programmes, the official public and voluntary service providers who are recognised by the PNA line ministries in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip constitute the formal actors. The community grassroots and social networks which are not registered with any of the line ministries of the PNA constitute the informal actors. The first provides mainly professionalised social work interventions, while the latter provides informal / de-professionalised social work interventions. Critically integrating the expertise, knowledge and wisdom of all actors who have been designing and providing these types of interventions in Palestine is a prerequisite to develop this indigenous framework for the social work profession.

An indigenous framework for social work in Palestine must reflect the two main unique interrelated contexts; the colonial-neoliberal context, and the conservative cultural context that is largely influenced and shaped by Islamic traditions. The existing social work education and training programmes do not consider and formally incorporate these two contexts in the structure and content of their curricula. That is for two main reasons. The first is the conservative management of the HEIs that maintains that SWET a secular academic stream, which is an inherited feature from the Western social work models, and the second is the neutral and depoliticised position of the practice (public and voluntary service providers) in compliance with the neoliberal PNA policies and international donor conditions. The application of these policies, over the last 50 decades have resulted in a 'de facto' identity of the social work profession that has depoliticised, neutralised, and Westernised features (Niu, 2018; Gonzalez, 2018; Monoz-Guzman, 2018; Al-Makhamra *et al.*, 2012; Spolander, 2014; Ahmadi, 2003). None of the formal or informal actors and consumers of the SWET services delivery or the users of the social welfare services has been systematically consulted about this identity. In this sense, developing an indigenous framework for the social work profession is about reconsidering the existing identity of the profession and reproducing one relevant to the unique Palestinian political (i.e. neoliberal and colonial) and cultural contexts. For Cleary (2018), Niu (2018) and Osei-Hweidie (1993), this is about developing a national mandate and regulatory framework for the profession.

Along these lines, this framework should provide a direction for the SWET and practice levels and some of the necessary standards to effectively be engaged in the nation-building and

decolonisation of Palestine and ensuring a critically integrated cultural context and locally developed practice models into the profession. Accordingly, the identity of the social work profession in Palestine, to be provided by this framework, would be clearly politicised and culturally relevant.

The central position of the SWET system in the social work profession in Palestine, as highlighted and confirmed by the participants in this research and the relevant literature, points at its potential role to initiate, and maybe lead, the process of developing indigenous framework for the social work profession (Razack, 2009; Al-Krenawi, 2003; Niu (2018) However, for the SWET system to resume these roles, it should go through an indigenisation process itself, which can be considered a key task integrated in and stretched across the process of developing the proposed framework.

The SWET system can be better viewed as the cornerstone within the system of the social work profession. If it is properly structured and set, the other units in the system will likely to reposition themselves accordingly, particularly when the key actors involved in the development process agree to work collaboratively and coordinate their roles and responsibilities. Stark (2018) argued that neoliberal social work education and practice in many countries has turned social workers to “nurses of capitalism” (p. 51), and for Ahmadi (2003) it has weakened the identity of social work as an agent for social justice. These views apply to the social work profession in Palestine (education and practice) to a great extent.

The SWET in Palestine is the main supplier of qualified human resources to the local labour market, is the key player in the process of developing a regulatory framework for the profession (as it was launched a year ago), and expected to perform a leading role in shaping public awareness about the profession. However, indigenizing SWET in Palestine will be challenged by three main conditions; the conservative management of their respective HEIs, the conflicting interests (or competitiveness), and the absent national framework of the profession from which SWET would differentiate / extract its own vision, goals, standards, roles, and strategies. Overcoming these challenging conditions would be possible through addressing the indigenisation of the SWET as part of developing the indigenous framework for the entire profession (Osei-Hweidie, 1993; Cleary, 2018; Barise, 2005). Accordingly, establishing an inclusive coordination body, to facilitate the process of planning and implementing the process of developing the indigenous framework for the social work profession (Osei-Hweidie, 1997),

would be the first step. One of the main taskforces within this body can be the planning and implementing SWET indigenisation process.

At this point in time, suggesting a detailed description of an indigenous SWET framework would be premature. However, the researcher may propose some of the key features that can be considered in the future. The vision of indigenous SWET system should be focused on providing the Palestinian community in general, and the local labour market particularly, with decolonised social work knowledge and skills to contribute to the efforts of national resistance and liberation of people from all sources of life oppressions (Guo *et al.*, 2010; Ioakimidis, 2015). Developing and delivering a comprehensive framework for SWET in terms of its structure and content, would be a central task in this process. The structure should include the design of the graduate and postgraduate programs, their focus on macro level of intervention compared with the mezzo and micro levels, the numbers of courses and credit hours and their distribution over the years. One of the options that can be considered for example is to focus the first two years of the bachelor social work programme on introductory courses, while the remaining two can be focused on one of two options; micro / mezzo or macro (the community). This would be more reasonable and resonates with the social work models of practice in Palestine where social workers are engaged with roles focusing on one of these two focuses more than the other. The existing SWET designs provide generic social work that does not qualify them for social work interventions that are designed on a more specialised role. Therefore, the graduates do not fit easily with the labour market as confirmed by participants.

As for the content, which is another significant area for indigenisation, social work theoretical and practical elements must be focused on the mission of social work in decolonisation and national liberation efforts. The textbooks, classroom space, field practice courses must be designed and applied to achieve this mission (Razack, 2009; Al-Krenawi, 2003; Niu, 2018; Gonzalez, 2009). The example of the messages that field training supervisors conveyed during the analysis of the community organising experience in LAYLAC (one of the grassroots organizations in Bethlehem governorate) would exemplify the indigenised content of social work. The group supervision session with field training students on 26/06/2019, to which the researcher was invited, was focused on how to link the environmental problems facing one of the neighbourhoods in Dhesheh refugee camp with the colonial context and how the intervention should be guided by the decolonisation mission. In defining the purpose of the intervention,

students were discussing the focus of the change in terms of making the pathways of the neighbourhood more clean and healthy, which is very important of course, but the academic and field supervisors were helping the students to conceive the goal of rebuilding the solidarity among residents that was lost as a result of the occupation practices and the neoliberal policies of the PNA. Intergenerational and political analysis and comparisons were used in this learning environment.

In addition to ensuring qualified manpower to deliver this framework, particularly the interactive teaching methods and providing decolonised learning space, the curricula should consider the following areas and topics: the development history of the formal and informal social work in Palestine, political economy theories, social work in conflict zones and emergencies, social change models and strategies, critical review of the traditional case work, group work and community work methods, Research methods with focus on research within conflict zones, radical social work theory and models / levels of intervention.

The extent to which social work graduates can apply the indigenised SWET will necessarily vary between the employers, mainly the public and the voluntary sector; the internationally funded NGOs and the grassroots that are locally funded and according to the ideological affiliation of the employer across these levels. The SWET should provide the indigenised framework, but the extent to which the student is convinced in its content and the extent to which s/he can apply it in practice will remain flexible. The impact of the collective action, particularly the guidance of the national framework, would result in providing a more flexible margin for the indigenous social work education and practice to prevail over the decades to come.

6.5 Conclusions:

The emphasis of the participants' inputs on the ways to address the challenges facing the development of the social work profession, and the relevant literature, is on the need for setting an indigenised framework for the profession as whole, from which an indigenised framework and content for the SWET can be differentiated. The key assumption is that addressing any specific challenge at the institutional or practice level in isolation from other challenges would contribute to the complexity of the challenging realities that exist already. Having a national framework for the profession is necessary to inform all the social actors, that are involved in teaching and practicing social work in Palestine, what to do to address any of the challenges,

where, how, and when. The process of developing and implementing this framework, particularly in postcolonial contexts like Palestine, must be viewed beyond the management and technical requirements of the process. It is about getting a relevant social work education and practice that contribute directly and indirectly to the decolonisation of the people. The applicability of the indigenised SWET should not be conceived as a merely individualised choice within an entirely institutionalised environment of employers. The key function of the indigenised national framework is to gradually shift this environment towards a wider margin for indigenised social work practice. This is when all actors at the education and practice level (i.e. social work academics, graduates, employers, community, and policy makers) acknowledge and accept their individual and collective responsibilities towards creating and maintaining the Palestinian identity of the social work profession.

Accordingly, the strategies which were suggested by the participants in this research, either for the SWET or other challenges, should be reviewed or amalgamated within a nationally designed indigenous framework. The significance of the collectivised solution-focused strategies lies in viewing and addressing every single challenge and its solution as part of a national strategy (big picture). The process of the indigenous frameworks, for the profession in general and the SWET particularly, includes engagement of all concerned actors in negotiating their individual views of the social world to produce a shared one for all of them.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.0 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to bridge the gap in social work knowledge in Palestine in two ways; first, by providing a research-based knowledge about the problems facing social work in Palestine; and secondly, to identify possible solutions and areas for further investigation. The main research question was:

‘What are the main challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, and how can these be addressed?’

This question was answered by drawing upon the views and experiences of a range of participants engaged in or related to social work training and education, including academics, graduates, employers, professional representatives and key professionals living and working in the main Palestinian areas. This research explored the views of a cross-section of actors related to social work education and applied a cross-sectional design to answer its questions, from the perspectives of five main actors in Palestine, to look at their views about the education and training provided, what they perceived to be the problems and the solutions to address them.

The first three chapters of this thesis were devoted to outlining the contextual framework, the theoretical framework and the methodology to answer the research questions. The fourth and the fifth chapters were focused on the spectrum of challenges both as a whole and in social work education and training respectively. The different strategies that the participants proposed to address the different challenges were presented in chapter VI. This chapter will provide a consolidated and contextualised summary of the findings of this research, the main conclusions inferred upon them, their potential implication on the social work profession in Palestine and the main recommendations for future actions.

7.1 The significance of this research:

The significance of this research lies in its expected contributions to the knowledge about the social work profession in Palestine, in general, and the challenges facing its development specifically. It provides, for the first time, a contextualised analysis of these challenges and a detailed account of the challenges facing the development of the SWET particularly. All other studies about the challenges facing social work in Palestine were limited in the area of study (i.e. SWET only) and the scope of participants (students and academics only while this study covered the employers, graduates, key professionals and professional representatives in addition to the

academicians). However, these were focused on SWET because of the researchers positions within the HEIs/social work programmes but not based on any research-based findings about the centrality of SWET compared with other general themes (i.e. community attitude, employability and the labour market ...etc.). Additionally, the other studies applied a quantitative research method (surveys), which provided some statistical indications, but this study applied qualitative methods (individual interviews and focus groups) which enabled the researcher to get to more in-depth exploration of the challenges and the conditions generated them. These studies were more focused on the technocratic aspects of the SWET and paid no attention to Palestine as a conflict zone, which makes this research significant as it contextualised the challenges facing the social work profession in the context of the political conflict that shaped the need for it and its evolution. Also, this study is unique in exploring the views of the participants in the solutions to address these challenges, which was not explored by any other studies.

7.2 The challenges to social work in the conflict zone: Palestine

The challenges facing the development of the social work profession (education and practice) in Palestine have many commonalities with challenges facing the profession in many other countries, particularly those in postcolonial and conflict zones. The significant impact of the socioeconomic and political context on shaping these challenges in Palestine can be adequately conceived and understood only through the realities shaped and maintained by the settler colonial Israeli occupation, and the neoliberal system tailored to serve the proposal and strategies of the international imperialist powers for solving the Palestinian question. For example, about two-thirds of the Palestinians became refugees in 1948 because of the creation of the colonial Israeli state (on 78% of historic Palestine), and not as a result of a war between two states on contended claims about the borders between them. The neoliberal policies assembled for self-rule through the PNA were proposed to maintain the existence of the colonial project in Palestine and not to provide a just and lasting peace.

Within this context, the social work profession is encountering about thirty-three key challenges that were classified under six general domains, where each domain denotes an area or a field of common characters and specifications. The six general themes are: the community attitudes, the social work education and training, the employability and labour market, the policy and legal environment, the professional representation and the political and security environment. The analysis of the interactions among the six general themes revealed two main

conclusions. The first is that the political and security environments have been shaping both the life challenges for Palestinian citizens and the challenges to the social work profession (education and practice). Yet, the latter did not adequately consider the former at the education and practice levels, due to the influences of colonial and neoliberal practices and policies imposed by the colonial capitalist powers, in the region and internationally.

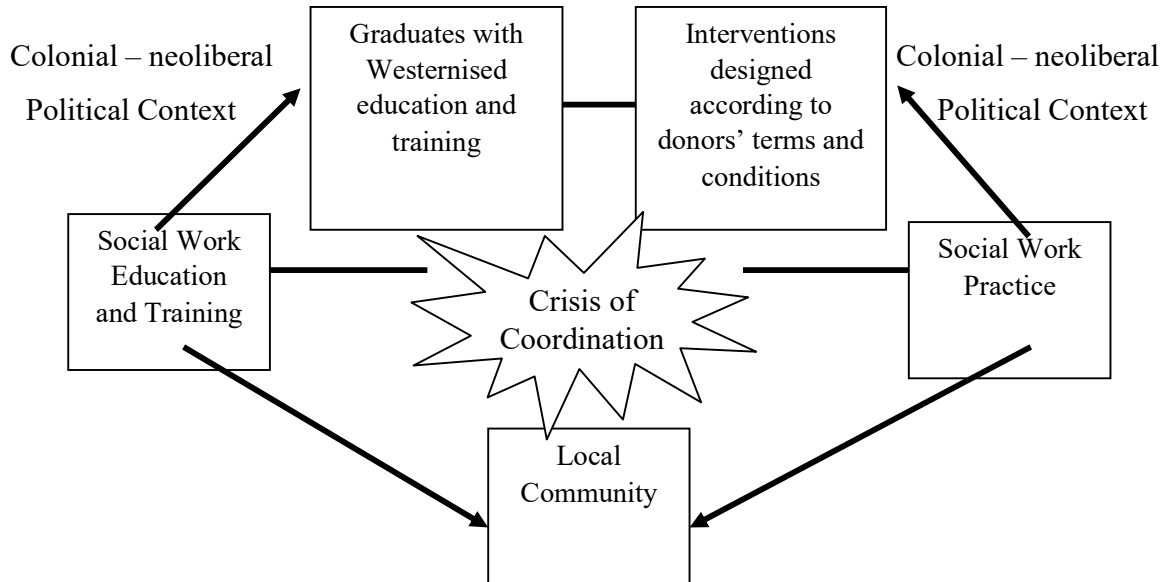
The second main finding was that SWET constitutes the central area of the challenges for most of the participants. However, most of the participants in this research belong to generations that witnessed the developments of social work education and practice over the last 3 to 4 decades. Few of them referred to the earlier time, when the formal social work education and training system emerged (early 1970s). The 'popular/informal social work' existed in Palestine over the years that preceded the 1970s. Yet, it was neglected by the formal SWET when it came to existence after 1970 (Muslih, 1993; Abu-Ras and Faraj, 2013; Faraj, 2017). The analysis of the two main findings highlighted and confirmed the fact that this profession has been getting to a position of more alienation (at education and practice levels) from its socioeconomic and political context, particularly after the steep shift in the agenda of the Palestinian political leadership, from the national liberation struggle to building the neoliberal peace project (Khalidi, 2009; Jad, 2007; Da'na, 2011; Da'na, 2014, Tabar and Salamanca, 2015).

The review of the development history of the social work profession in Palestine, both prior to and after 1971, confirmed the fact that this profession, at the popular level, has existed over the entire 20th century, and so any efforts to develop an indigenised Palestinian social work profession should have taken into account the history and popular strategies by which this community was trying to help its members with the kinds of challenges they face. Yet, the findings of this research revealed that the Palestinian community has been excluded from the process of developing an indigenous social work education and practice, in terms of the local cultural context, the priorities of the local needs, the experiences and the role in designing and delivery of services, as explained by Osei-Hweidie (1997), Twikirize (2014) and Gray and Coates (2010). Until recently, the Palestinian community was still resisting some of the key roles of social workers that they learned at university or were designed by international donors for local NGOs. These roles reflect the Westernised, poorly relevant education curricula and models of intervention and entirely neglect the locally developed and examined methods of social interventions.

Despite the increased demand on social welfare services, particularly the work interventions, during the first Intifada (1987-1993) and onwards, and under the unprecedented escalation in the security measures of the Israeli colonial occupation, neither the levels and types of interventions nor the curricula of social work education and training were adapted to take into account such contextual factors and their influences upon the profession. The first has maintained the focus on emergency and relief interventions, while the second maintained the focus of its theoretical and practice orientation on individual and family victimisation.

Particularly after 1994, the priority of HEI shifted towards the ways by which they could sustain themselves as privatised institutions, rather than developing the responsiveness of their academic programmes to the local cultural and political contexts, needs and national liberation priorities as it had prior to the Oslo project (Abu Subuh, 2009; Brynen, 2000; Haddad, 2011; Faraj *et al.* 2018; Abu-Awwad, 2013). The participants' inputs confirmed that the social work profession in Palestine, at the education and practice levels, has been subject to continuous alienation from the context in which it is functioning. Chart VII-1 illustrates the alienation cycle of the profession under the impact of the Westernised curricula or the 'professional imperialism' according to Ragab's (2016) analysis and the neoliberal agenda of the international donors according to Twikirize (2014), Merz (2012) and Lavalette *et al.* (2018).

Chart VII-1
Social Work Alienation Cycle



The first phase during which students are introduced to the knowledge, skills and values of social work is at university. Over that four years, Western theories and models of practice constitute the content of the social work courses, meaning almost nothing is provided to students regarding social work and the political economy under the colonial occupation in Palestine. The only opportunity for them to get involved at the practice level is via field training courses in the local institutions identified by the university for this purpose. For many participants, the field training courses face many challenges that compromise the quality of its educational outcome. They include, but are not limited to, the absence of unified standards, the poor instructions and supervision, the inadequate institutional management environment, the overloaded and poorly qualified field supervisors and the overloaded academic supervisors. As confirmed by some participants in the research and by Abu Ras and Faraj (2013), the needs of the Palestinian community, its indigenous/local experiences in solving social problems, and its cultural and political context, are not included/covered by the formal design of the social work courses or the funded programmes in which the students are engaged during the field training experiences.

The second phase is when they graduate and start looking for jobs. At this stage, they apply all means to find an employment opportunity, parallel with attending training courses or volunteering in local institutions to enhance their qualifications for possible vacancies. In the

case of getting a job in the public social welfare services or the voluntary sector (particularly the NGOs), they perform the job of a social worker as defined by the donors and according to their neoliberal terms and conditions (Tolbert, 1996; Tartir, 2015; Sarsour, Naser, and Atallah 2011; Hamdan, 2010; Sarsour, Naser, and Atallah, 2011; Abdul-Hadi, 2002; Foqaha, 2012). Since only depoliticised/neutralised interventions are funded by these donors, this also promotes the professionalisation principles and standards (Brynen (2000), Merz (2012) and Abu-Aisheh (2014) that employed and volunteering social work graduates resume their 'professional practice' to their client but at a sufficient distance from the socioeconomic, cultural and political context. The intervention programmes were designed according to donors' priorities; the service delivery technology imposed by the donors and the performance is evaluated according to donors' criteria. The bottom-line is that donors know the best and have the most advanced knowledge. These were part of the "politics of giving" and the "politics of getting" as explained by Brynen, (2000, p.25) which resulted, also (in addition to dependency and compromising future development policies and many other consequences), in restricting or excluding the social sciences, including social work, graduates because they did not receive the necessary training.

The third stage is the search for the professional identity, when the graduate social workers start comparing their status as professionals in this field with others in different fields and countries. Often, their search ends up with the weak presence of the politically affiliated PUSWP, distanced from the needs and the culture of the community and clients with a depoliticised and poorly relevant professional knowledge and expertise given the local context and human needs it generates. They end up with a lost identity. The crisis of coordination between the different actors (between the five universities, between universities and employers, between employers and between all those associated with the PUSWP) has been fuelled by the neoliberal policies that privatised the HE services and preconditioned all international funding (politically and technically) to the public and voluntary/civil society sectors (i.e. NGOisation (Jad 2007; Merz, 2012; Alashqar, 2018; Brynen, 2000).

Parallel to the privatisation and NGOisation process of the HEIs and the civil society sector that started in the 1990s, the grassroots sector was under scrutiny and attack (Merz, 2012). The grassroots sector was systematically abandoned because it resisted the impositions of the donors and preferred to rely on the local resources. This, too, has led to the tension and split between these grassroots and growing NGOs and the conflicts with the PNA (Brynen, 2000); Flanigan,

2014; Hamdan, 2010; Hammami, 1995). The grassroots work experience in Palestinian society has not been studied properly, nor reflected in the social work curricula, despite the fact that the vast majority of the civil society organisations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip fall under this category, that has greater outreach to the poor and other marginalised groups (in cities, camps and remote areas) than the neoliberal NGOs. However, since these grassroots are challenged by their position from conditioned funding and/or incapacity to qualify for donors' requirements, majority of them ended up with a severe shortage in qualified human resources staff, including social workers. When and if the Palestinian grassroots find sufficient resources to hire qualified social workers to manage and deliver their interventions, the unemployment rates among social work graduates will drop significantly. Concurrently, the SWET need to focus more on the popular/informal social work interventions to prepare and qualify their graduates for such duties.

The weaknesses in the research environment in Palestine and the absence of any research-based knowledge about social work in Palestine characterised the period during which the research centres were established (1995-present time). The research centres in the WB and GS were established in response to the donors' demand on this service during which their levels of funding reached its peak (Hanafi, 2018). The supply-demand culture determined the research services during this period. The curricula development of the tertiary education was not on their agenda because neither it was a priority for international donors or the administrations of the Palestinian HEIs (Hallaj, 1980; Haddad, 2011). This reality applied to the social sciences (including social work) and other arts fields compared with the market-oriented fields in the neoliberal era of the Oslo peace project during which the business-like HE services flourished and prevailed. The weakness in the research environment in Palestine resulted in poor research-based knowledge production in all fields in general and almost irrelevant SWET to the local context.

To develop a strategy or set of strategies to address the challenges facing the social work profession within colonial and neoliberal contexts is way beyond being a purely technical and straightforward mission. It is a revolutionary one and may be closer to rowing against the current. It will be challenged by different types of difficulties at different levels. The participants in this research proposed a list of strategies at the solution-focused and the national framework levels. However, the solution-focused strategies came from majority of participants compared with those who focused on the need for national strategy or framework. The researcher noticed

that the majority of the participants tended to think about challenges they have been directly wrestling with within their institutions and within a local level. The main reason for this tendency is the fact that there has not been any platform or means for shared knowledge and experiences at a national level. At the national level, neither the knowledge about the profession nor the means to share it exist. Additionally, the challenges that would be facing the implementation of the suggested strategies have not been raised or considered by the majority of the participants. This subtle finding indicated an issue that should not be underestimated in the analysis of the feasibility of any of the solutions. It is about the challenge of collectivising the actions on any of the strategies.

7.3 The main conclusions:

The main conclusion of this research is about the fact that the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine cannot be assessed comprehensively and addressed collectively without establishing a consensus that acknowledges the existence of the colonial settler occupation and the efforts to legitimise it among the capitalist colonial and neoliberal powers in the region and internationally. Social work is a profession that emerged and developed within a conflict zone and must be viewed, designed and delivered accordingly. This makes the social work profession in Palestine an irrelevant one when its curricula and practice models ignore the political context in which and in response to its consequences it emerged. This makes the profession in Palestine a unique one compared with many countries in the region, which requires a carefully and properly tailored education and practice model. Otherwise, the profession in its current position will resume the function of maintaining the colonial and neoliberal systems rather than challenging them.

The analysis of the findings, presented in chapters IV, V & VI, provided a clear picture about the main challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, a sense of priority between them and the main strategies suggested by all participants (See Table VII-I & VII-2). Accordingly, some conclusions were reached about the current status of the social work profession and its future endeavours. For this research, the main conclusions are about discovering the ranks of challenges, more than the areas/domains in which they exist, regarding the extent to which the participants are aware of the conditions perpetuating these challenges beyond the direct impact of the colonial occupation, and about the complex realities

that may hurdle the process of framing the different types of strategies, rather than producing a list of strategies.

It was an unexpected finding that SWET occupies a central position within the set of challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine. The significance of this finding is that for any effective strategy to address these challenges, it is a pre-requisite to go through the SWET system. It is where the future social workers become prepared for their roles (Osei-Hweidie, 1997; Stark, 2018; Spolander, 2014) and where the feature and foundations of the professional identity should be constructed. It is where the shared views of the social world, by future social work professionals and educators, starts and emerges. However, this system is challenged by two main conditions; the absence of the national vision and identity of the social work by which SWET need to be guided, and the dominant ideology of the depoliticised and neutralised function of the HEI system in the era of globalised, capitalist, neoliberal colonialism. The Palestinian public and voluntary labour market is dominated and steered by the PNA and/or international donors' neoliberal-colonial policies that promote individualism and fragmentation rather than collectivism (Hill and Wayne., 2017; Ferguson and Lavalette, 2013; Smith, 2006; Spolander, 2014; Stark, 2018; Lavalette *et al.*, 2018). The social work graduates and educators approach this market individually and with little or no concern about these neoliberal ideologies and policies compared with the concern of finding an employment opportunity. Challenging these ideologies and policies is not conceived by any of them as his/her individual responsibility. It is merely a collective one.

The dearth in the published literature about the development history of the social work profession in Palestine clearly reflected a limited amount of knowledge of the majority of its participants, but it was not needed for them to realise and acknowledge the depth of the impact of the colonial occupation on its development and current status. What they need more of is a critical knowledge of the linkages between the colonial occupation and the neoliberal system/policies of the PNA that have been structurally influencing and shaping the challenges facing the development of the profession at the education and practice levels. The limited awareness among many of the participants, from all categories, can be attributed to the process by which they were prepared as social workers in the first instance, particularly the social work education and training system. The SWET curricula are void of any systematic educational processes and activities to help social work students shape their understanding of the social

world (Midgley, 2007), particularly the Palestinian context, and the position of the social work profession in this world. After graduation, the efforts to develop/reshape this view of the social world becomes subject to the individual initiative of the graduate and/or the role of the employers and the professional representatives. The absent role of the professional representative, at all levels, the depoliticised NGOs section of the voluntary sector and the disorganised grassroots part of the voluntary sector leave no margin for systematic efforts to help the students, academics, graduates and others establish a collective view of the social world in which this profession exists.

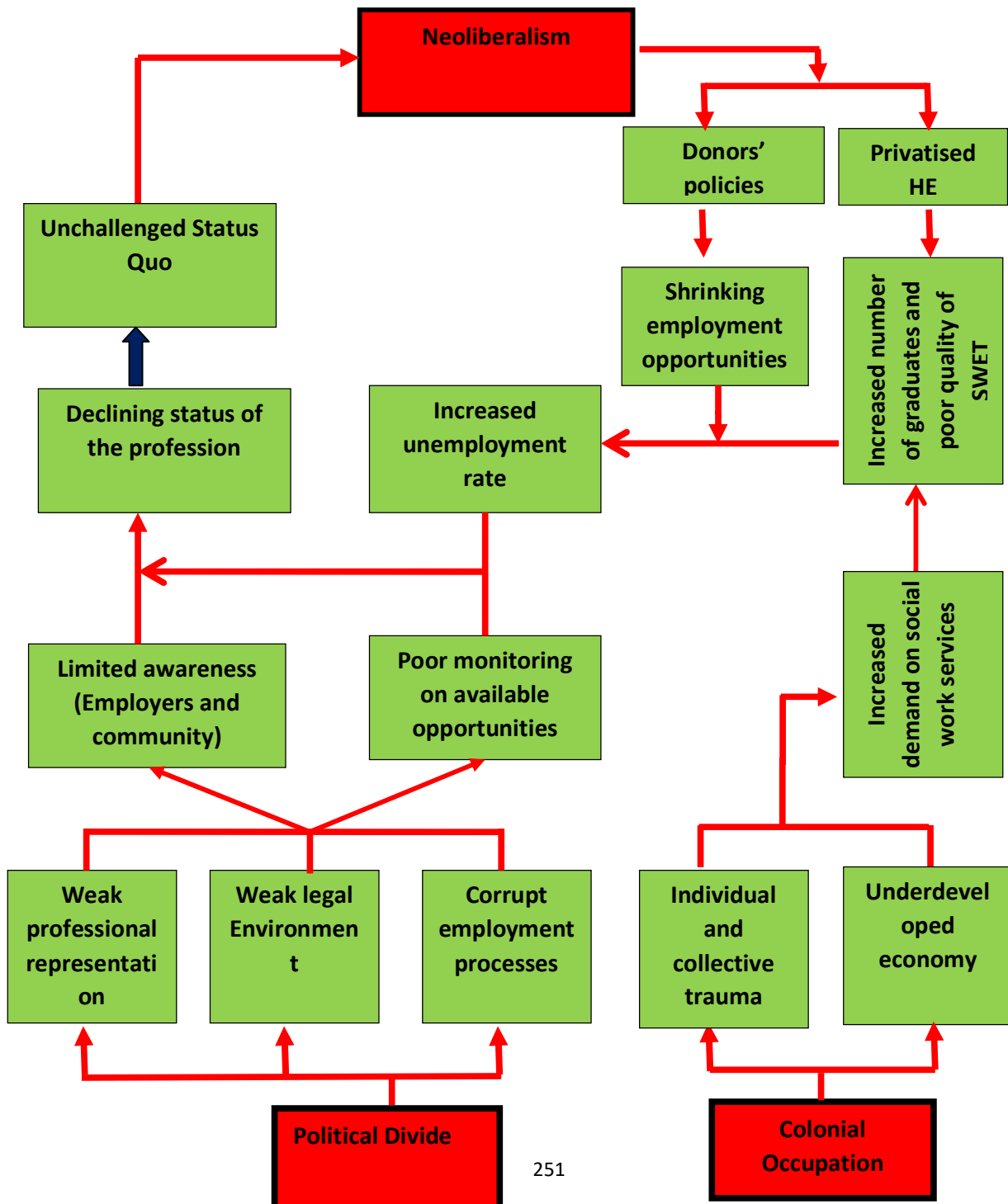
The neoliberal policies that the PNA and international donors have adopted and applied since 1994 (Khalidi and Samour, 2011; Calis, 2013; Brynen, 2000), has resulted in de-politicised and fragmented HEIs, which was considered as a leading system in the national resistance movement (BISAN, 2011; Al-Botmeh, 2015; Abu-Awwad, 2013; Safarini, 2010), including SWET programmes, and civil society sector, including the providers of social welfare services (See Chart VII-1). They all have been struggling with their financial sustainability, in the age of conditioned funding and the globalised western values of neutrality of education and professional knowledge, at the expense of the quality of education and the necessary coordination mechanisms (Midgley, 2001; Midgley, 2007). On one level, this has resulted in irrelevant SWET and practice to cultural context, political context and the needs of the local Palestinian community. On the other level, it has resulted in absent mechanisms and structures that the different actors need for collective actions (Long, 2018). Perpetuating this reality over nearly the last three decades has resulted in the current crisis of coordination and the absent sense of collective identity of the social work profession. Accordingly, the participants in this research could not define challenges at a national level, they could not easily describe the direct impact of the PNA policies on the social work education and practice levels or how the existence of the colonial occupation is linked to it (other than the impact of the security restrictions on the movement of social work students, graduates and employers).

The geopolitical and institutional fragmentation of the Palestinian realities was clearly reflected in the participants' responses. So, it was quite normal to get responses from the GS that could not describe any of the challenges facing the social work profession in the WB and Jerusalem or otherwise. It was normal to get responses from participants who work in or are

graduates of one academic institution, that indicate that they do not know the challenges facing social work education or practice in other institutions.

Chart VII-1

Social Work within the Neoliberal Context in Palestine





The comparison between the realities of the social work profession in Palestine with other countries was also difficult for most of the participants. This may reflect the absence of information/knowledge and/or the absence of the means to share what is available. The weak research efforts to produce knowledge about what is not available and the absent means to provide the existing knowledge in a systematic manner are directly linked to the shortcomings in the SWET system and the professional representation bodies.

The responses of all participants to the questions about the strategies to address the challenges they have identified reflected the missing sense of collective professional identity or the crisis of identity. According to Osei-Hwedie (1997), the missing institutional infrastructure and interests are in coordination and collective action. Therefore, the strategies suggested by the majority of them were solution-focused while few suggested some kind of coordinated action at a national level. The most reasonable first step towards any collective actions in future is to share this big picture and its details with all interested social actors, to uniform the level of understanding among them prior to delving into the process of developing the indigenised frameworks for the profession in general, (SWET particularly) as the researcher proposed in chapter VI. This step was proposed by the researcher in the dissemination plan of this research to raise awareness among audiences from all categories, where the interest in change through collective actions can be generated.

Twikirize (2014), Osei-Hweidie (1993) and Gray and Coates (2010) highlighted the significance of having a national definition of the social work profession, its roles, goals and values to inform the design and content of social work education in any given country. In Palestine, this creates the issue of indigenisation of the social work profession in general, its curricula particularly, directly relevant to the argument about the challenges facing its development and the strategies to address them.

To this end, the Palestinian social work students need to learn theories and be trained on models of interventions that would help them to perform an active role with the victims of the colonial occupation and the violent neoliberal policies. These victims include, but are not limited to, the unemployed Palestinian households and youth, the poor and underpaid workers, the persons with disabilities and those of chronic diseases who cannot afford the treatment or the adaptation of their surrounding environment, the families of martyrs whose list is getting longer

every day, the prisoners and their families, the traumatised school children who cannot access their schools because of the settlers and soldiers blocking their way to and from schools and the displaced households (due to home demolitions and its effects on the mental health of the Palestinian families under threats of home demolition or land confiscations for new and expanded settlements (Jeronen, 2019). The social work profession needs to position itself properly within this challenging context and take all necessary actions to be relevant to it.

The research participants highlighted the challenge of borrowed social work curricula and models of practice from other countries, mainly North America and the UK, and the need to make them more relevant to the Palestinian socioeconomic and political context. Their views reflected the call for ‘indigenisation’ which is defined as a culturally relevant education and practice, as defined by Coats *et al.*, (2016), Price *et al.* (2013) and Yan *et al.*, (2007) and the ‘authentisation’ which goes beyond the cultural relevance as defined by Ragab (2016) and Twikirize (2014), in terms of replacing theories and models by locally developed ones instead of adapting and modifying the Western theories and models to the local context. For them, this is more than addressing the cultural relevance issues. However, the distance to indigenise the profession, at education and practice levels, is vast and cannot be reached without a conducive research environment (human and material resources, policies and interests), which does not exist at the present time and needs to be part of a nationally coordinated strategy in the future.

Osei-Hwedie (1993) and Gray and Coates (2010), like many others, emphasised the critical role of the continuous research in developing relevant social work education and practice in any country. The key function of research in this process is to capture the social change in the local context and reflect it upon the social work curricula, particularly the prevalent social problems and how to address them. The dearth in the research-based knowledge in Palestinian social work resulted in poorly relevant education and practice (Ibrahim, 2017). The content of social work education is still traditional and focusing on the means of fixing clients’ problems and needs to cope with the surrounding environment using the available resources. It also needs to focus on the internationally funded models of practice (Cowley and Howlett, 1982; Midgley, 1981), such as the cash transfer ‘to help the poor to cope with poverty’, rather than addressing its structural origins through critical interventions at individual and collective levels. Social work education still lacks the political orientation of the profession and the debate about how the colonial context affects the Palestinian community. Social work education and practice are isolated from the

context, in terms of the role of social work in Palestine in the decolonisation and the national liberation processes, as argued by Razaq (2009).

The issue is that indigenising the social work profession in Palestine is a call for making sure social work education and practice are rooted in and based on deep and critical considerations of the social, political and economic realities there. The example of the advocacy interventions by the Defence for Children International (DCI) for imprisoned children, or the Independent Commission of Human Rights (ICHR) and the crisis intervention programmes implemented by different Palestinian NGOs since the first Intifada, provide developed or improved models of interventions that can be integrated into the social work curricula. Annexes 7, 9 and 10 provide case studies exemplifying the suffering of thousands of cases in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that are victims of the geopolitical conditions not addressed by any of the public or voluntary social work interventions in the country. Annex (10) also illustrates an example where social workers interventions are needed but not trained to perform such roles that require critical thinking about the political context and its impact on the well-being of people, and the roles of the social worker in similar situations. The model of social work interventions with the Palestinian prisoners and their families is another example that social work students in Palestine need to learn about, research and critically consider as part of their social work curricula. Also, the cultural relevance of the education and practice is a significant dimension to consider. The experiences of the Palestinian community in solving the problems of its members, families and groups, prior and after the existence of the formal/mainstream social work education, must be studied and digested by the social work education and practice in Palestine. The model of the 'social reform committee' (Lejan Al-Islah) and the roles of local grassroots committees in solving the individual and community problems need to be studied and integrated in social work education and practice as well. All these examples and models of interventions, as well as many others are not covered or integrated into the social work curricula in the five universities.

Chart VII-2
Palestinian Social Work Indigenisation Process



Accordingly, along with Yunong *et al.*'s (2008) analysis, the indigenised framework for the social work profession (proposed in Chapter VI) can be developed through four steps as illustrated in Chart VII-2. The first stage will be focused on launching a dialogue process between the key social actors in every Palestinian governorate. This can be organised through workshops to present the findings of this research to participants, their recommendations to address the presented challenges and the need to establish a local committee to coordinate the efforts with other governorates. However, it is necessary to take into consideration the potentials for conflicts of interests between the main actors (i.e. between the SWET, employers, PUSWP and grassroots sector) and within the system of each actor (i.e. between universities, between heads of programmes and academics, between universities and MoEHE). Early on, these conflicts should be anticipated, analysed and addressed properly. This might be a labour-

intensive task at this stage, but it should be considered a routine one over the remaining stages because the positions and interests of actors will be subject to continuous changes along the road.

The second stage will focus on organising a meeting for all local committees in a one-day conference to discuss the agenda for a national plan to develop a national framework for an indigenised social work profession in Palestine. The conference will develop a plan of action and delegate the local committees the responsibility of conducting 2-3 local workshops to propose a definition of social work in the Palestinian context, a vision and mission statement, main function and domains of interventions, objectives, standards and values. Each local committee will need to organise a broad participatory process to engage representatives of interested groups including community activists, grassroots, NGOs, in addition to the academic institutions, employers, PUSWP, graduates, students, etc. The product will be a local proposal for a national conference that will be held in the third stage.

The third stage will focus on presenting all locally produced proposals, discussing them, and reaching an agreement on a national framework for the social work profession in Palestine. This may be accomplished by a 2 to 3-day national conference. Also, during this conference sub-task forces will be established to propose national standards for the social work education and training system, a strategy for social work research development strategy, strategies to integrate the social work education and training with the labour market and enhancing the employability of social work graduates. Possibly, another two task forces will be commissioned; one to follow on the progress of the regulatory law and one to propose national strategy for international solidarity (Midgley, 2007).

The fourth stage will focus on developing operational plans for all the task forces but with full and active participation from all interested social actors at local level (mentioned earlier). These operational plans will be reviewed and finalised through central workshops and will be integrated in the national framework document. At this stage, a consolidated 5 to 7-year national plan to indigenise the social work profession in Palestine will be launched.

The indigenisation plan would require some resources to be available, mainly human and financial resources. The infrastructure (i.e. technical, space) resources can be provided by the universities and other partners interested in the process. Given the fact that the existing staff within the social work programmes is overloaded and may lack the expertise needed to manage and implement the indigenisation plan, outsourcing is highly recommended. This means to hire a

qualified team for this task. In the long run, the indigenisation process may need the establishment of research units or centres under the five-social work programmes or having one national research centre for social work which needs its own human, technical and financial resources. This plan is not expected to be subject to any direct obstructing measures from the Israeli occupation authorities, but the security conditions may negatively affect the implementation plan, particularly when people cannot travel or access their workplace or meeting venues for example.

7.4 Research limitations and implications:

7.4.1 Limitations

Exploring the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine was influenced by several limitations. The research was restricted by the difficult access to the interviews and focus groups, particularly with the large number of participants from three locations (West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip) that are isolated from each other by Israeli colonial security forces. Since the researcher is a resident of the West Bank, he could not get to Jerusalem or the Gaza Strip. Overcoming this challenge in the Gaza Strip was possible only through the assistance of one professional from the Gaza Strip who contacted the participants (according to the research procedures and protocols) and arranged the logistical requirements for interviews such as online access and recording the skype interviews. This support was provided through one of the qualified academics in social work, nominated by the head of the programme at one of the universities on a voluntary basis. In fact, recruiting participants from the Gaza Strip for the researcher directly was extremely difficult because of the problems in getting the confidence needed from him as a 'stranger' from the West Bank, given the fears of recorded interviews and the sensitivity stemming from the political divide. Nevertheless, some nominees declined to participate in the individual interviews and focus groups (12 graduates, 4 academics).

The difficulty of establishing a sampling frame for social work graduates from the universities in the WB, Jerusalem and GS was another condition that challenged the research planning and implementation (explained in chapter III). This was the main reason for using convenience sampling to recruit participants for the focus groups and snowball sampling to recruit participants for the individual interviews. The third type of conditions that challenged this research was related to the history of relationships between the researcher and some participants. Some of them were the author's students at local universities and others were colleagues in the

UNRWA/RSS programme. These previous relationships and experiences came to the surface of discussions through the responses of these participants, particularly when some of them tried to refer to shared experiences assuming that the researcher was not or should not need detailed elaborations to support their views because 'he knows that ...'. In these situations, they were asked to provide these details regardless of documentation purposes.

Being an international student presented another type of challenge to this research, particularly the process of translating the research tools from approved English versions to the Arabic versions, translating the transcribed interviews into English while maintaining all the ethical standards of research. It was a technical challenge and a labour-intensive and time-consuming task. In more practical terms, transcribing and interpreting one interview and translating its content into English needed an average of 3-4 days, which constituted a critical challenge to the timeframe of allocated to the entire field research part.

7.4.2 Implications

The knowledge that this research produced is necessary for two main contributions; the contextualisation of the development process of the social work profession in Palestine and providing a research-based data to propose an agenda for its development at national level. Also, it is helpful for academics, employers and graduates and their unions to develop their own development/reform agenda, even without having a national plan. In every university, an academic, employer, staff member, graduate, or representative in the union can utilise the produced knowledge and initiate a change from his/her position. Additionally, this research will help the social work students, academics, and researchers to identify many areas for further research.

At the collective or national level, this research may provide a substantial contribution to developing a national agenda for the development of the social work profession through the active involvement of the key stakeholders/social actors. To develop this agenda, a three-step process is proposed: establishing a national committee representing all actors to coordinate and facilitate a national workshop to develop a plan to develop this agenda; establishing regional committees to take the responsibility of managing the task of reviewing the findings of this research at a larger scale of participants through 4 to 6 regional workshops (university students, graduates, academics and employers); producing one research paper by every region to present in a three-day national conference, in which a consensus about the priorities of challenges in the six

domains (or GTs) will be produced in one national paper; specialised task forces to develop a national plan of action to address specific set of challenges, including a resource mobilisation plan. The third day of the conference may be held separately to finalise and launch the proposed national plan. The needed human and financial resources for this action can be solicited from national and international partners (professional/academic institutions and donors from the Palestinian private sector).

7.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this research and the main conclusion made upon them, the researcher recommends the following:

- To develop and apply a dissemination plan of the research findings to all actors in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. To maximise the benefits of the dissemination process, it is highly recommended to reach out to the social work students in the all social work programmes (the two-year diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate levels) in the WB, Jerusalem and GS. This can be achieved through workshops in all governorates and printed summaries to be discussed in the social work classes. Recommendations for future actions may be generated, particularly towards establishing local committees for the follow up.
- Promoting and maintaining the historical duality of the function of the social work profession in Palestine (serving the causes of welfare of people and national liberation agenda) is highly recommended to consider as the central denominator for the process of planning for the future. At the heart of this commitment is to keep the freedom of political affiliation for everyone, but this affiliation should be left out of the collective efforts towards improving social work education and practice in the future, so that policies and services can be delivered on the basis of peoples' needs and entitlements regardless of their political affiliation.
- To establish a national council for the social work profession, in which the local committees, the council of social work education, the PUSWP, CBOs and unregistered grassroots networks will be permanent members. This council may elect an executive committee to facilitate the daily and weekly activities, in addition to organising the regular meetings of the council on a quarterly basis.
- To plan and conduct national and local efforts to review, research and document the local Palestinian approach to doing 'social work' in its popular or informal level through the works of grassroots, community-based organisations, charitable societies and traditional leadership

of the Palestinian community prior to and after 1971. The conclusions of such efforts must be analysed and framed as the basis for an indigenous social work model in Palestine that needs to be improved further and mainstreamed into the existing social work education programs and practice models.

- To establish a national council for SWET representing all programmes in the WB, Jerusalem, and GS. The main task for this council is to develop a national framework for indigenous social work education and practice in Palestine. This is the main task for the national council of social work in Palestine. As part of this process, it is highly recommended to develop a national framework for indigenous social work education and training in Palestine that is guided by the national framework and approved by the national council of social work in the country. The two frameworks will need to review the existing models of practice and education programs to define the gaps (compared with the standards set in the national frameworks, then after proposing the needed strategies to bridge it). Of particular attention within the social work education and training, is reviewing the field training designs and contents and developing unified guidelines for them. Capacity building of the concerned staff in the teaching methods, evaluation and professional supervision are indicative examples of issues that need to be addressed to enhance the quality of educational outcomes of the SWET programmes.
- To develop and implement a national strategy to promote and enhance the social work research in Palestine with the focus on areas prioritised for the indigenisation process such as the successful models of interventions, the socioeconomic and political conditions affecting the social work education and practice in Palestine, the social work identity in Palestine, etc. Encouraging all social work programmes to initiate 1 or 2 social work research units in the WB, Jerusalem and GS may be an idea to consider in this area.
- Encourage the research centres and the post-graduate students of social science programs to conduct research projects on social research in the context of conflict, which would be a valuable contribution to this field of knowledge locally, regionally and internationally.
- To plan and conduct national awareness-raising campaigns at all levels, including the existing media and the pre-tertiary education curricula in which the roles of the social workers in the Palestinian community can be presented and the efforts to develop the profession (at education and practice levels) can be covered and promoted.

- To develop a national strategy to encourage all social actors in the education and practice to establish partnerships with international professional and academic counterparts to promote and institutionalise the exchange and international solidarity (Midgley, 2007) with the Palestinian social workers facing the colonial occupation and neoliberal policies.
- To develop interactive web pages for the national council of social work and the national council for SWET. These should be accessible to the public, particularly the constituencies of the social work interventions and education. Updating the public and getting their feedback on daily basis will be a significant function for the two web pages. These can also be used as platforms to publish research-based findings about social work in Palestine.

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Appendices
(1-16)

Annex (1)
Research Protocol

Stage One: Preparation

Protocols:

Data collection Tools:

- Develop the English version of the initial draft of the individual interviews schedule and the focus group discussion guide.
- Develop the English version of the initial draft of the Participant's Information Sheet and the Letter of Consent.
- Develop the English version of the initial draft of invitation letters for the nomination of key informants, the invitation letter for the key informants, the invitation letter for the representatives of public and voluntary employers, the invitation letter for the representatives of the Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists, and the invitation letter for the participants in focus groups.
- Submit all the drafted forms in the previous items to the supervisors for comments and modifications.
- Produce final draft of all documents and submit them with the GRS3 application for the Ethics Committee review and approval.
- Translating all the data collection tools, participant's information sheet, and the letter of consent into Arabic.
- Reviewing all Arabic forms for the last time.
- Preparing the final copy of all forms with the UoB title / slogan.

Protocols of Piloting the tools:

Prior to starting the actual data collection activities, the data collection tools were piloted as follows:

Piloting the individual interview tool:

- The contact details of the heads of social sciences departments in the five universities were collected

- All the heads were called, the research was explained to them and they were asked if they were willing to nominate some professionals for individual interviews as well as if they were willing to be interviewed themselves.
- The request for nominations with the blank table in which the names and contact details of nominees should be inserted was emailed to the five heads of department.
- A list of nominees for individual interviews was compiled and one was randomly selected for piloting purposes.
- The selected nominee was called by phone and asked about her willingness to participate after briefly explaining the research idea and the purpose of the interview.
- The date, the time, and the venue were negotiated and identified.
- Hard copies of the participant information sheet and the consent letter were emailed to the participant via email right after the phone call to provide ample time for review and ask any questions / queries. The opportunity was left open for her to change her mind about the interview after reviewing the information sheet.
- Two days after, the participant was called to get the final decision and confirm the date, time, and the venue.
- One day before the appointment, the hard copy of the individual interview schedule was reviewed and printed. The recording set was fully charged and prepared.
- On the time of the interview, the researcher attended and conducted the interview.
- After welcoming and thanking the participant for the opportunity, the researcher introduced himself and the research background as well as the purpose of the interview. Prior to moving to the discussions, the participant was asked to agree / disagree on recording the interview. The answer was positive and the interview resumed.
- The confidentiality policy of the UoB was explained properly for the participant to ensure that she is aware of what will happen with the data during the research and after the research process is concluded.
- Then the participant was given the time to introduce herself the way she prefers, before the first / introductory question was asked.
- The discussion was held according to the schedule. However, it was noticed that the flow of the discussion should follow the content of the responses of the participant than the way it was proposed in the interview schedule. The timeframe was not controlled properly because

of the high interest of the participant to talk and discuss the issues raised. The first observation about this issue is that there must be a sufficient margin for flexibility in the timeframe of the interview since some participants will probably be very much willing to discuss and talk about the subject because it is the first time people are asked to talk for a scientific research purposes like this one.

- No changes were found necessary on the questions, except adding some probes / sub-items that would be important to remind participants about if they are willing to address them.
- By the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the participant, responded to some queries about the next steps, and collected the consent letter.
- When the recorder was stopped, the researcher asked the participant to nominate 1-2 other professionals for individual interviews and she recommended one name from the Gaza Strip and provided his contact details as well.

Protocols of Piloting the Focus Groups:

- The researcher consulted two social work instructors and field supervisors to suggest an institution where a group of social work graduates could be interviewed or a group of graduates who know colleagues could be invited to participate in the focus group. They came back with the suggestion of conducting the focus group with a group of social work graduates who work / volunteer for a community-based rehabilitation centre in a nearby town. The research followed the suggestion and contacted the head of the centre for approval.
- Based on the approval of the head of the centre, the invitation letter was sent to her by email to fill in the names of the social workers at the centre and send the invitation to them. Also, a copy of the participant's information sheet was sent to her to be distributed with the invitation.
- Two days after, a phone call was made to get the feedback about the willingness of the social workers to participate and agree on the day and time if they inclined. The response was positive, and the appointment was fixed.
- On the day of the interview, several folders for all possible participants were prepared. Every folder included a copy of the consent letter, pen and blank A4 sheets.
- The recording set (recorder and laptop recording application) was prepared.

- The hospitality drinks and cookies were bought and served at the appropriate time of the group discussion.
- The group was convened after making sure that the set up of the space and physical arrangements were convenient to the group and the requirements for adequate recording. The participants were welcomed by the researcher, a brief background about the research was provided, the confidentiality policy explained, and follow up after the meeting was welcomed. All participants accepted that the discussion was recorded with no reservation.
- The discussion was held as planned. It started with broad questions and followed with prompts and probes to cover the different subheadings in the discussion guide. Notes were taken on the discussion and the group was adjourned on time. All participants completed the consent letter and handed it to the researcher, who thanked them all, re-confirmed the issue of confidentiality and welcomed any follow up question or suggestion at any time using the contact details provided in the information sheet.
- The next step was to check the recording and rename the electronic copy, then saving it to the research folder on the laptop, desktop and external drive. All hard copies of the consent letters and notes were kept in the hard folder of the research.
- In fact, no substantial modifications of any kind were found necessary on the discussion guide of the other aspects of the timeframe whatsoever.

Logistical Preparations:

As part of the preparations for the data collection process, a number of logistical arrangements were made:

- Preparing the audio recording hardware and alternative / supportive applications. This included the good quality recorder, audio recording applications on the mobile phone and skype.
- Familiarisation with the implementation of the recording tools and testing their functioning to ensure the best quality recording.
- For every interview and focus group, preparing the space and setting of the furniture, lights, ventilation, isolation, and any other requirements for standard discussion and recording environment was necessary. Where possible, paying an initial check-up visit by the

researcher or instructing any personnel delegated to assist the research in case an initial visit is not possible.

- Preparing sufficient hard copies of the forms that will be used by the participant or the researcher during the interview (i.e. consent letter, interview schedule, discussion guide, blank sheets, folders and pens).

Stage Two: Conducting the individual interviews and focus group

Protocols:

- Establishing a list of nominated participants for individual interviews and adding to it as the data collection process moves on. The initial list was collected through the nominations of the heads of social science departments and from the participants who were asked to nominate others based on the set criteria about the expertise and knowledge of the nominees.
- Contacting the first 5 nominees for individual interviews by phone. After introducing the researcher and the background to the research, the nominee was asked about his / her willingness to participate. In the case of accepting the verbal invitation, the phone call was followed by an email with the participant's information sheet and the formal invitation letter addressed to his/her using the proper title, name and their position.
- Two days after the date of the email, a second phone call was made to get the feedback and final decision from the nominee. In the case of accepting the invitation, a date, time and venue were negotiated and agreed. Some nominees asked to get the consent letter before the interview. The letter was sent and brought to the interview completed and signed. Some others just preferred to sign it on their arrival to the interview or after the interview.
- The same procedures were applied with all interviews with regards to the introductory part, the approval on the recording, the way by which the discussion flow was managed and the closing part of the interview.
- All recording files were checked after the interview and filed on the laptop, the desktop and the external drive. The same applied to the hard copies of the notes and consent letters.
- The participants from the Gaza Strip were identified and approached through the contact details provided by the universities there and the nominations provided by the professional who volunteered to facilitate the process for the researcher. Sometimes the volunteer

provided the names to the researcher to contact them, while in other cases she contacted the nominees to get their initial approval / disapproval. After getting the initial approval, the researcher contacted the nominated persons to explain the research and make the arrangements for the interview on skype.

- The consent letters were completed, scanned and signed by the participants from Gaza Strip and emailed after the interview in 1-2 days.
- The arrangements for the graduates and academics focus groups were slightly different. For the graduates, the first step was to find a partner institution to take responsibility of facilitating the invitations and the arrangements on the venue. The branches of the Palestinian Union of Social Workers in two areas were contacted by telephone to ask them for support. Both agreed and were provided with all invitation letters and the participant's information sheets to distribute to all institutions and graduates. The date, time and venue were also negotiated but finally it was left for them to decide on the most convenient time and place for the focus group.
- Based on the difficulty of convening one of the groups through the branch of the union, a community center at one of the universities was contacted to take the role of facilitating the invitations, which succeeded perfectly.
- In the other areas, the researcher approached two institutions and asked them to facilitate the process of organising the focus group invitations and the venues. The two accepted to participate and facilitated the process. Two focus groups of graduates were held through this procedure.
- A fifth group of graduates, the Jerusalem group, was organised through a professional who was contacted by the researcher and agreed to invite a random group of graduates who were either in the institutions or unemployed and any graduate found who was willing to participate. Due to the difficulty of the researcher entering Jerusalem (as a holder of a West Bank identity card), participants agreed to come to Bethlehem. The University of Bethlehem was formally contacted and asked to provide the venue for the group. It was approved and the group was held on time successfully.
- The researcher arrived at the location before the exact time of the focus group to prepare the setting, including the deployment of the folders, hospitality and preparing the recording setup. When the group of participants was ready, the researcher resumed and followed the

same procedure as the introduction, approved recording, facilitating the discussion through the planned time and closing the session with standardised statements. After every group, the consent letters were collected.

- The recordings were checked after the group finished and transferred to the electronic and hard files.
- The graduate's groups from the Gaza Strip were organised with support and facilitation from the same volunteer. She invited the graduates using the lists of graduates she received from the universities registrar. Since it was not possible to contact all graduates for random sampling, convenience sampling procedures were applied. She contacted the first 20 graduates from the list who initially accepted to participate, while skipping those who declined. She stopped inviting more graduates when she reached twenty acceptances of the invitation. This procedure was agreed by both the researcher and the volunteer. The first contact was preferred to be through the volunteer who is a trusted professional and academic from the Gaza Strip. It was expected that the process will be likely to fail if the research approached the participants who do not know him and would be unlikely to trust his intentions for personal and security reasons.
- As for the groups of academics, one of the universities that had branches in all West Bank governorates was addressed formally by the researcher, through written requests, to invite all its social work instructors and arrange three focus groups in its facilities. The request was approved, and the three focus groups were held on the time and venues identified by the social work department.
- In order to include social work academics from other universities in the southern West Bank, a fourth group was invited through the heads of three departments at three universities. The participant's information sheet and invitation letters were distributed to the academics in these three universities through the heads of the social sciences departments.
- The four academics focus groups were conducted according to the same procedures applied with the social work graduates. All the recordings were saved to the electronic folder and all consent letters and notes kept in the hard copies file.
- In the Gaza Strip, the same volunteer facilitated the deployment of invitations to all social work academics in the two universities after getting the formal approval from the heads of the departments through formal correspondence by the researcher.

- The two focus groups of social work academics at one of the universities in Gaza City were held via skype. Apart from this, the procedures applied to these two groups were the same with the groups in the West Bank, the skype was the medium of communication and all consent letters were completed, scanned, signed and emailed to the research few weeks after the completing the data collection. The IT department in the university that hosted the two groups, facilitated and managed the connectivity of the skype meetings.
- The volunteer was asked to record the discussions of the two focus groups with academics and the two with graduates to make sure that adequate quality of the recording was attained. The researcher later compared his recording and the recordings provided by the volunteer and selected those of the better quality for transcribing verbatim.

Stage Three: Filing

Protocols:

- Arranging all audio recordings in one folder, assigning a name for each file that can be easily identified in terms of the name of the participant or the group.
- Listing the names of the individual interviewees with the dates and time of the interview, contact details and duration of the interviews, and the type (face-to-face or skype), in a separate and safe file before synonymising the transcribed Arabic forms and translated versions. This was necessary since the researcher planned to get the support of two professionals in reviewing the transcribed Arabic texts to ensure that the discussions covered all the research questions and to assist in editing the Arabic texts.
- The Arabic transcripts were then translated into English, and the English versions of the transcripts were given the same identifiers of the Arabic transcripts.
- The folder of all audio recordings, and the Arabic and English transcripts was copied to the laptop, desktop and external drive.

Annex (2)

Research Validity & Reliability:

As far as the validity and reliability are concerned, Trochim, W. (2002), Dudley (2010) & Bryman (2012) presented and discussed the rigour criteria of qualitative and quantitative social research as part of a continuous debate between many scholars of social research methods. They, among others, agreed that the validity and reliability criteria that applies to quantitative researches do not apply automatically to qualitative researches. An alternative set of criteria is proposed for the validity and reliability of qualitative research in terms of the impact of the research on the wider context. These can be summarised under the following two main dimensions:

- **Trustworthiness:**

- **Credibility:** This criterion is parallel to internal validity in the quantitative research (Dudley, 2010). This is about validating the results by research participants (Respondents' validation). Trochim (2002) defined it as the extent to which the results are believable by research participants. For the research on the challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine, the credibility is absolutely ensured since the responses of participants were collected through direct interviews (face-to-face or via skype). As such, there is no need for any extra efforts to get what Trochim (2002) has suggested as; the "Respondents' validation". However, the researcher will invite all participants (academics, graduates, key informants, and representatives of public and voluntary sectors) to dissemination workshops after the completion of the research, where there will be a chance for them to validate, modify and add to the results.
- **Transferability;** which is about producing what Dudley (2010) called "thick description" of the details of a culture or a case to help other researchers make a judgment on the possible transferability of the findings to other contexts. This criterion reflects the generalisability of the research findings to other or wider contexts (Trochim, 2002). The generalisability of the findings of this research will not and cannot be applicable before presenting them to larger segments from which the participants in the research were recruited (in the samples). When these findings are presented to all participants in the dissemination workshops and conferences, the generalisability would become possible based on the modifications that would be suggested and adopted by them. Generalisability for this research is about the

applicability of the findings to the Palestinian context in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and not to any other context.

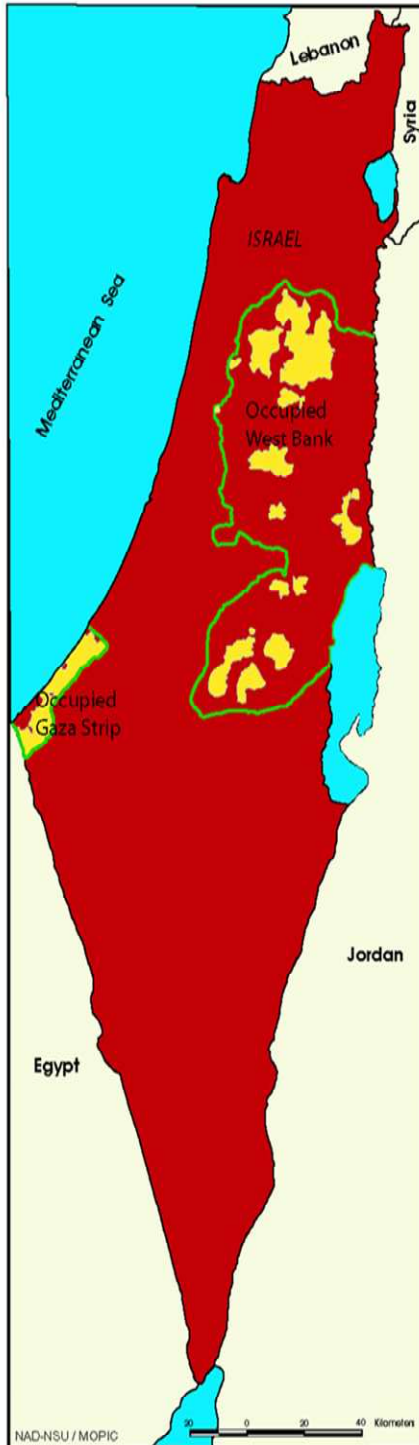
- Dependability; which is to establish the merit of research through an “auditive” approach (Dudley, 2010). This is about keeping complete records of all phases of the research process. This is about replicability of the research findings (Trochim, 2002). The records of this research (audio records, Arabic transcripts, English transcripts, researcher’s notes, invitations, letters of consent, participants information sheets...etc.) will be kept and stored in the UoB and Bethlehem University for any auditive actions in the future. The replicability of the findings of this research is very high since the participants have reflected their many years of experiences in the field and the likelihood of changing their responses will be very low if the conditions of social work education, the labour market, the policy and regulatory laws, the political and security realities, and other key factors remain unchanged.
- Conformability: This reflects a situation where there is no personal value interference by the researcher to sway the conduct of the research and its findings (Dudley, 2010). To Trochim (2002), it reflects the extent to which the findings of the research can be confirmed by others if they use and follow the same procedures of the research. The researcher exerted maximum efforts to adhere to the proposed research plan and methodology except in the case of logistical arrangements that he had to manage under circumstances beyond his control such as the security conditions and the access to participants (i.e. using skype for planed face-to-face interviews in few cases). No major or substantial changes to the proposed methodology were applied.
- **Authenticity:** This includes the following criteria:
 - Fairness, which is about representation of all views and the extent to which the research helped participants arrive at a better understanding of the social world around them (Dudley, 2010).
 - Catalytic authenticity, which is about whether or not the researcher acted as an impetus to participants to engage in action to change their circumstances.
 - Tactical authenticity, which is about the extent to which the research has empowered participants to take the steps necessary for engaging in action.

All interviews were recorded properly according to the research procedures and transcribed in detail. No single view was excluded by the arrangements for any interview, by the management

of discussions during the interview, or during the transcriptions' development process. The researcher did not interfere in the recruitment of any participant directly; the key informants were nominated to him by universities and the nominees themselves, the graduates were invited by institutions (employers, union and heads of academic departments). It was evident, as all audio records proved, that most of the individual interviews and focus groups were spontaneously closed by strong statements about the need for action based on the findings of this research, their willingness to take an active role in future actions and the readiness to allocate resources for actions.

Annex (3)

ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN SECURITY-CONTROLLED AREAS



- Area "A" - Under full Palestinian security control pursuant to 1994 Oslo Accords*
- Israeli Security-Controlled Area
- Green Line (1967 Pre-Occupation Border)

FACTS ON PALESTINIAN SECURITY-CONTROLLED AREAS (AREA "A")

- Palestinian Authority controls only 17.2% of the Occupied West Bank divided into 13 non-contiguous reservations
- Palestinian Authority controls only 80% of the Occupied Gaza Strip
- Palestinian Authority controls only 21.7% of the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- Palestinian Authority controls only 5% of Historical Palestine

* Since 2000, Israel has invaded and otherwise violated the territorial integrity of Area "A". For all practical purposes, Area "A" does not exist.

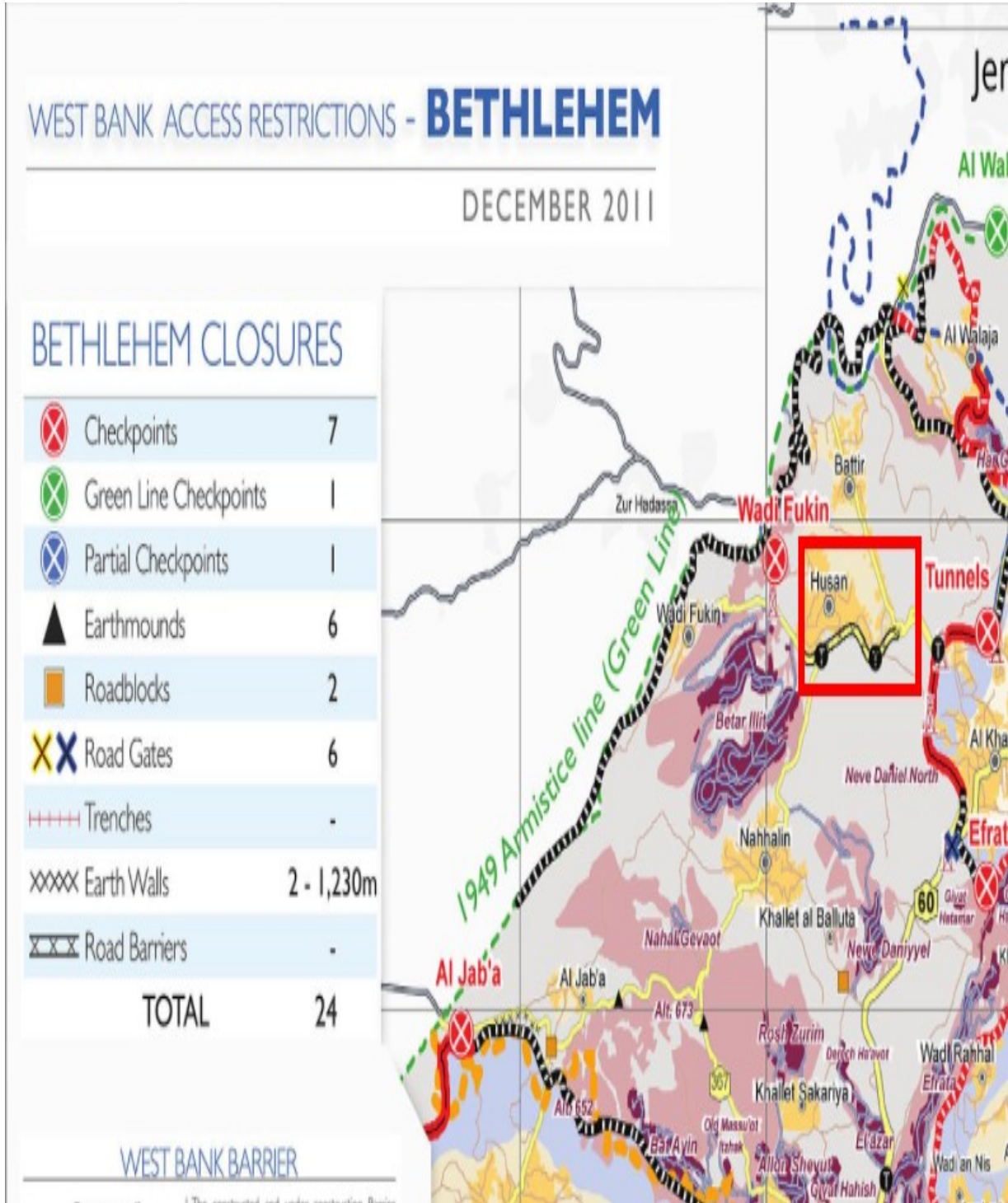
▼ Security Controlled Areas

Annex (4)
Apartheid Wall



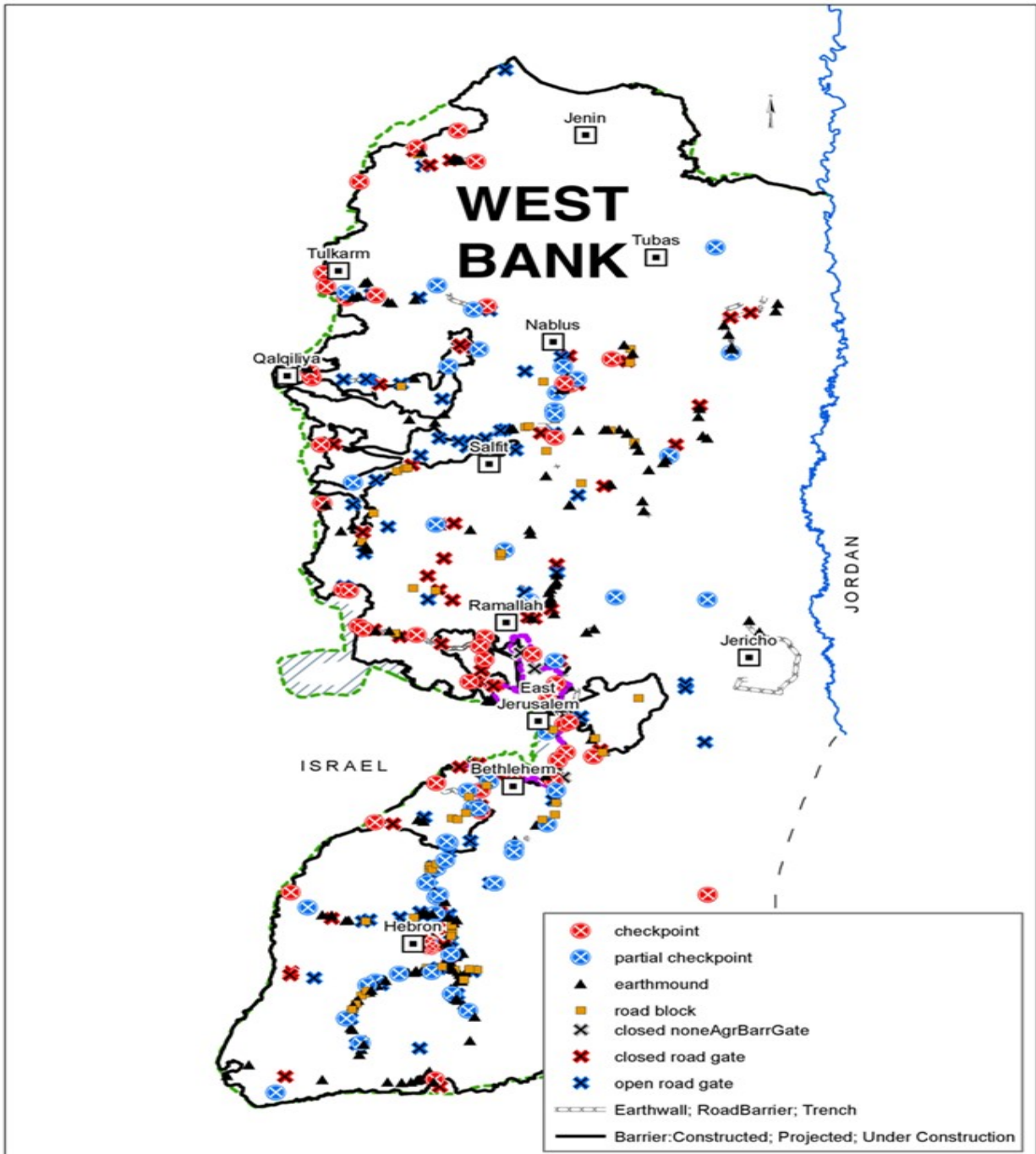
Annex (5)

Security Regime: Example of Bethlehem Governorate



Annex (6)

Check Points within the West Bank



Annex (7)

Case Study: The informal social work

Jeb Al-Deeb is a small Palestinian village in the C-Zone of the Bethlehem area / West Bank. The Israeli military administration has been refusing to connect the village with the electricity, water, communication networks. Also, it is preventing the residents to build any services facility including educational services of any level, health services ...etc. Therefore, the residents have to go to other neighbouring villages to get such services. The children of preschool age have no kindergartens for them, and spend their day between the house and narrow roads until their brothers and sisters came back from their schools in the nearby villages. With the absence of an electricity supply, none of the houses has any media to stay connected with the rest of the world, including TV and internet. The efforts of the PNA ministries and other officials to give any help to this village were refused, and the efforts of the diplomatic missions of some international state-donors to build a school for the village have also been refused.

In 2015, the case of the village was reported to one of the grassroots organisations in Dhesheh camp (LAYLAC), which manages a field training programme for social work students from the Palestinian and international universities. LAYLAC / social work department decided to work on the case through a group of 6 social work students who have been doing their field training in community organisation. Three of the qualified professionals in community organisation supervised the work of the students, in addition to the volunteers from LAYLAC who were engaged in the intervention efforts upon the request of the students. The group assessed the needs of the community of Jeb Al-Deeb and decided to establish 2 classes for a kindergarten for the children of the village.

Towards this goal, a local committee from the women of the village was established and jointly developed a plan of action for the work. The Imam of the Mosque accepted to give the students a space of two empty rooms that needed substantial renovations. The group succeeded in mobilising lots of resources from the Bethlehem community to cover the costs of renovating the two rooms and qualify them with all needed tools, equipment and furniture to be adequate for educational activities. Also, the group succeeded in getting a piece of land (40-meter square) to be a play garden for the kids and rehabilitated the space with all needed floors and games. The electricity problem was the most difficult one that the project faced. However, LAYLAC supported the student's work and helped them address this challenge.

One of the international artists from the USA, during his visit to Palestine, conducted a three day drawing skills workshop for the children of the village. That activity was held in the newly constructed and renovated classrooms of the kindergarten. The social work students facilitated all the activities during the workshop. The artist selected about 30 drawings and took them back with him to New York, framed them, and organised an exhibition for the public. He sold them and collected the money to buy an electricity generator for the kindergarten. He travelled back to Palestine and purchased the generator himself. The inauguration of the two-room kindergarten brought the attention of many other civil society organisations, media agencies, and official attention to the issues of this village. After that date, regular outreach programmes have been serving the community of this village, that the social work students called ‘The Forgotten Village’.

Annex (8)

Case Study:

The Palestinian Union of Social Workers and Psychologists

Ahmad is a Palestinian social worker who established the Palestinian Union of Social Workers in his area in 1997. Abdallah, is a friend of Ahmad, who is another social worker leading a relief programme in one of the international aid agencies serving the Palestine refugees in the West Bank. Abdallah passed through difficult times with his line manager and felt that he was treated unfairly. In 2002, he decided to report his case to Ahmad in the Union to help him resolve this work-related conflict. Ahmad, in his capacity as a chairman of the branch, drafted a short letter about the case in which he notified the line manager about Ahmad's complaint and suggested to the line manager to try to solve the conflict before getting the Union involved. Unexpectedly, the line manager solved the case in a few days and Ahmad's case was resolved entirely.

Three years later, in 2005, Ahmad was offered a senior position in the same agency to lead the relief and emergency programmes in the West Bank. In early 2006, Ahmad presented a proposal to the EU to hire 214 emergency social workers in addition to 47 emergency social workers who were already hired prior to this time. The same proposal included all infrastructure support and an increase in salary from \$520 US to \$680 US. The agency used to hire the emergency social workers with no contracts signed (in the case of the 47 social workers). Also, Ahmad established a professional development and supervision unit for the department with a qualified staff.

In June 2009, the agency hired a new deputy for the director of its operations, who was a former Australian military servant in Iraq. To prove his worthiness, he proposed to close the emergency food and cash aid programme in the West Bank and save the agency a few million dollars. The director of the agency accepted his proposal and asked Ahmad, who was the manager of the emergency food/cash programme, to sign the action order to close the programme and terminate the contracts of about 312 emergency social workers. Ahmad refused to sign the action, but he decided to meet with all emergency social workers to explain the situation and plan of the agency to terminate their contracts without paying them any indemnities. The meeting was held and the director of the agency asked for an explanation from Ahmad about the meeting and its content. Ahmad confirmed that he explained the agency plans

and urged the social workers to get ready to defend their rights, should the agency proceeded with its plans. In August 16th, 2009, the director of the agency handed a letter that terminated Ahmad's contract for "the best interest of the agency". By September 1st, 2009 the agency terminated the contracts of all emergency social workers and paid them about US\$770,000 that it planned to avoid in the initial plan.

In October 2009, Ahmad appealed against the agency decision to the Justice Committee in Jordan and New York. After four years (in 2014), Ahmad won the case and received all his indemnities with a detailed report that condemned the agency decision against Ahmad and all the social workers, but it was too late to reinstate any of them in the positions they occupied at the time. The role of the Palestinian Union of Social Workers with the 312 emergency social workers was not present at any stage. The main reason was that the international agency cannot be sued according to Palestinian laws and it has the full right to terminate the contracts of its staff for any 'good' reason for its best interest.

Annex (9)

Case Study:

The Missing Circle

Amal is a 34-year-old Palestinian woman. She is a resident of the West Bank with a refugee status that she received from her parents. Amal was married to her cousin when she was about 22-year-old. Her cousin is a Palestinian resident who is born in Jordan from refugee parents who fled the war of 1967 and settled in Jordan since then. It took her a few months after marriage to discover that her cousin is sick with chronic epilepsy and he cannot manage a normal life with his family, including not being able to get a job. Amal complained to her family about the situation, but they always pushed her back to accept the situation and deal with it on a de facto basis. After some years, she got into severe distress and started to flee from the house because she could not get any support from her nuclear or extend family.

In 2015, she decided to escape and return to her family in the West Bank with 5 kids (ranging between 2 and 10 years age). There was no place for her to stay except the one room and kitchen of her old and chronically sick mother. Over the first month of her stay in with her mother, she fled the house through some contacts that were planning to abuse her for their own purposes. When she was found, after some days of searching, the psychiatrist decided that she has dissociative identity disorder. She cannot raise any children or take care of herself. Therefore, she was referred to the mental health hospital in Bethlehem, while her five children were institutionalised in one of the shelters in the area through the office of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The social workers in the Ministry of Social Affairs, the mental health hospital and the children's village institutions could not manage to develop a plan for Amal and her children to help them restore a life for a regular family, including the processing of the legal situation with the sick husband in Jordan because of the different laws in the two countries, and the fact that the husband cannot come and reside in the West Bank and a Palestinian who lost his right to return to Palestine.

Annex (10)

Case Study:

Social Work within the Geopolitical Context

In 2010, the World Bank Group (WBG) decided to grant \$5 US to the Higher Council of the Joint Services Councils (HCJSC/HBL) in Southern West Bank to close Yatta landfill (near Hebron city) and construct a new one near Bethlehem. The WBG and HCJSC spent 2-3 months looking for a qualified social worker in community organisation to study the needs of 134 solid waste pickers who used to work on picking and recycling solid wastes on the Yatta landfill, and negotiate with them solutions to their employment when the landfill is closed down and consequently they become jobless. According to WBG practices in other countries in similar situations, lump sum grants are distributed to individuals as a form of compensation and everyone decides how to use it. In the Palestinian context, this approach was expected to fail because of the socioeconomic and political realities shaped by the colonial occupation.

The Yatta landfill is in C-Zone and all Jewish settlements in the Hebron and Bethlehem area have been dumping their solid wastes in it. Therefore, constructing a new landfill in Bethlehem and closing Yatta landfill required permission from the Israeli military Governor who imposed a condition that the new landfill should be open to the settlers. The other aspect of the problem was that the vast majority of the solid waste pickers are ex-prisoners from Israeli jails who were denied access to the Israeli labour market and it was difficult for them to travel in the West Bank due to the strict security measures during the second Intifada. The only choice left for them was to work in collecting and recycling the solid wastes inside Yatta city and the landfill (which is 3-5 km distance from the city). Over time, they made this work as their main source of living for their families.

The community organisation worker assessed the conditions of the solid waste pickers over 3 weeks during which he spent all day with them in the landfill, and conducted individual interviews, focus groups, and home visits with all solid waste pickers. He suggested to the WBG and HCJSCs an intervention based on the sustainable development approach as an alternative to the WBG cash-transfer one. Since the beneficiaries were not be able to travel to Bethlehem area, due to security measures imposed on travelling between the Palestinian areas, and their expertise in the solid waste picking and recycling, he suggested self-help projects for them after

redistributing them into sub-groups according to their preferences and choices. Some of the beneficiaries were university students who decided to stop their studies because they could not afford the costs of university during the second Intifada and the difficulties of travel to the universities in the cities. Others were children who left school to help their parent with solid waste picking. The social worker's proposal included subsidies for the university students to resume their HE and subsidies to the children families while re-integrating the children in their schools. The social worker recommended an agency (NGO) to implement his recommendations. He succeeded in convincing the WBG with his proposal and all his recommendations were implemented over the years 2012-2014. In 2017, the WBG and HCJSCs invited the social worker to an official meeting to inform him that the 2012-project had won the best sustainable development project in the Middle East region and hired him to implement the same intervention in Southern Gaza Strip.

Abdallah and Ahmad are beneficiaries from the above-described social intervention. Now, Abdallah and all his family (sons, sisters and wife) have a home-furniture making business in Yatta town and marketing their business in the entire West Bank. Ahmad returned to his university in Tulkarim (3 hours drive from Yatta town). Ahmad finished his university successfully and found a job in a school in Yatta. Ahmad is married to Amal who graduated from the same university in Tulkarim. Ahmad and Amal knew each other while travelling from Hebron to Tulkarim. They established their family and settled in Yatta town.

After the successful implementation of the same intervention in Gaza Strip, in 2018, the WBG hired the social worker to develop a manual about the intervention to be implemented in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region.

Annex11

Social Workers' Titles and Roles Since 1948

Title	Period	Roles	Sector	Target
Welfare Worker	1950s - 1992	Case work for food, cash and shelter services	Voluntary international NGOs (mainly UNRWA)	Palestine refugees
Social Development Worker	1950s - 1967	Case work for food and cash assistance	Public Jordanian and Egyptian welfare offices in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip	Refugees and non-refugee poor families
Social Welfare Worker	1967 - 1994	Case work for food and cash assistance	Public social welfare offices managed by the Israeli military commanders in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip	Palestinian poor families (regardless of refugee status that was wiped from the technical instruction drafted by Israeli headquarter in Beit Eil /Ramallah
Rehabilitation Worker	1988 - present	Case work, group work, and community work for Psychosocial counseling, awareness raising campaigns, home modifications, referrals to medical rehabilitation services ...etc)	Voluntary sector (National NGOs mainly and few International NGOs)	Injuries from clashes and demonstrations mainly. Drug addicts in few centres.
Social Worker	1992 – present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case and group work for food, cash and shelter programmes - Case and group work for cash and food programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Voluntary sector: UNRWA and many NGOs -PNA 	Abject poor families

School Education Counselor	1996 - present	Case and group counseling	-Public and private schools (including UNRWA schools in the refugees camps)	Schools attendance to elementary, preparatory, and secondary stages (grade 1-12)
Psychosocial Counselor	1996 - present	-Case and group work for psychosocial counseling, vocational training, and economic development support. -Case and group work for psychosocial counseling	Public (PNA) services under the Ministry of Social Development. -Voluntary sector	- Public (Ex-prisoners) -Women and children (elderly in some charitable societies)
Emergency Social Worker	2000 - 2008	Case work for food and cash assistance.	Voluntary sector (mainly UNRWA)	Families affected by the social and economic emergency conditions cause by political conflict.

Annex (12)

Indicative List of Targets for Social Work Education and Practice in Palestine

1	Refugees
2	Internally displaced people by house demolitions Israeli policies
3	Prisoners (including women and children)
4	Ex-Prisoners
5	Injured persons with permanent disability and mental health difficulties
6	Youth denied access to the labour market in Israel or travelling within the West Bank, Jerusalem, GS, and abroad
7	Martyr's families
8	Deportees families
9	School children traumatised due to the daily security practices of Israeli forces on the ways to and out of schools
10	Farmers with restricted access to their land
11	The victims of continuous land confiscation
12	Families and communities isolated behind the apartheid wall
13	Isolated community in the old city of Hebron for free settlers movement
14	The victims of ID revocation policy in Jerusalem
15	The dying local economy due to controlled borders with surrounding countries and the rest of the world
16	The victims of pollution caused by dumping chemical wastes of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank dumping sites
17	The destroyed agricultural sector due to the control of the occupation over the underground water reserve in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
18	The stolen archaeological wealth and the choked tourism sector
19	The victims of daily incursions to local communities by the Israeli military forces

Annex (13)

Individual Interviews / Qoutations							
	Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Initial Themes		Frequenci es	
			Introductory statement	Social work profession is relatively new to the Palestinian community. It was officially introduced to Palestinian society by the Palestinian education system, but that wasn't enough to to get the labour market recognition and the community respect / acceptance untill the second half of the eighties of last centuray. This profession wittnesed stages of developments and improvements on those levels, but still stuggling with lots of challenges too.	"Social work institutions clearly emerged after the first and second intifada and the increased presence of international institutions that started work in social field. This promoted clearer role of the profession and the role of social workers especially after the second intifada combined with shortage in the governmental services to people" II-(18, L36-40)	II-11, II-12, II-15, II-13, II-14, II-10, II-23, II-24, II-16, II-21	10
			Introductory statement	The status of the social work profession in Palestine improved over time.	"Social work institutions clearly emerged after the first and second intifada and the increased presence of international institutions that started work in social field. This promoted clearer role of the profession and the role of social workers especially after the second intifada combined with shortage in the governmental services to people" II-(18, L36-40)	II-01, II-03, II-22	3

			The presence of social work since 1970s	The emergence of the higher education system and teaching social work in early seventies contributed substantially to the promotion of social work and its recognition in Palestine	"Bethlehem University established the in the seventies of last century, at this stage, social work appears and the institutions started to activate these concepts. " (II-04, L18-20)	II-04, II-23, II-24, II-16, II-21	5
					"Today I feel that there is a development in the social work profession and its status in Palestine, where people used to give the value to charitable activities and interventions then shifted this value to social work interventions that responded to the people's needs more effectively and efficiently through institutionalized services. Accordingly, the social work status was enhanced gradually over time" (PII-03, L08-12).		

1	Community Attitude	Community Awareness	confused and roles concepts	Wide category of the community doesn't understand what this profession is about and what the social worker's role / what he can do for them. Besides, over the years, people didn't acknowledge that this professional can make real change in their life. The community culture is still tuned towards other professions like medicine and engineering	"Historically, for example, when I graduated, my mother said that my daughter studied and finished sociology not social work because she didn't know what social work means and why I studied it" (II-08, L6-8)	II-15 , II-19, II-13, II-20, II-18, II-12, II-20, II-09, II-08, II-04, II-24, II-05, II-21	13
		Community Awareness	Stigma on the role of the profession	Many people , mainly in Gaza Strip, still believe that the main function of the social work profession is to provide the tangible assistance (food and cash). Yet, some interviewees think that these functions still very important in addressing basic needs that are priority for people living under extremely hard socioeconomic conditions and insecurity. Some people, on the other hand, expect that social workers can solve all their problems and they are disappointed by the performance of social workers accordingly. This also has influenced negatively the status of this profession at community level.	"To great extent I agree with this point of view. People also look to social worker as someone who presents assistance coupon, and therefore the profession stigmatized as a coupon profession not a profession that could achieve social development" (II-17, L36-39 and L44-46)	II-17, II-13, II-20, II-12, II-11, II-14, II-08, II-02, II-22, II-04, II-23, II-24, II-05, II-16, II-21	15

					"These relief services were provided by social workers and this presents them as services providers only which contribute and strengthen the wrong vision about social workers role and left them away from the role that is related to development, planning and contributions to the society improvement" (II-20, L70-74)		
		Community Awareness	Impact beyond tangible services	The impact of social work, other than tangible interventions, is not proved to the community as of today.	"This may be as a result of the weakness of social workers who didn't explain their roles, couldn't leave tangible effect in the social change and the developments of the community and people didn't see that social workers' role has affected their lives. Besides that social workers didn't take their role in leading roles in the local institutions." (PII-01, L46-50)	II-07, II-01	2

		Community Awareness	Stigma on the role of the profession	In Jerusalem, the stigma related to the type of services (food and cash) is less. There, people appreciate the social workers role in this regard.	"I think that the emergency situation we lived in all over our lives affected the way the community conceives the social work profession; as the people appreciate the workers who deliver direct assistant to them and giving them a social status. The intervention of social worker in emergency situations like demolishing houses and dealing with harm resulted by occupation is highly appreciated from people". (II-11, L55-63)	II-11	1
			Stigma on the role of the profession	Many institutions still providing emergency and relief assistance		II-17	1
				Social work profession gained special attention from the community due to the socioeconomic and political conditions. Under emergencies the demand on social workers increases and vis versa. Yet, the community still doesn't believe that social workers have ethical values and principles to which they are committed similar to other professions.	"Social work profession in Palestine has a wide attention in the Palestinian society as a result of the conditions that Palestinian society lives in and its effects on them. Studying social work only " (II-17, L7-9)	II-17, II-12, II-14, II-08, II-03, II-04	6

					"Bethlehem University established the in the seventies of last century, at this stage, social work appears and the institutions started to activate these concepts. " (PII-4, L20-22)		
		Community Awareness	Confused concepts and roles	Many people mixing the roles of the social worker, researcher, psychologists, social aciticist..etc.	"In the Arab society in general and in Palestine particularly, when you say that I want to study social work they laugh at you and they start asking; what is this major and what do you want to work. This means that until now people don't understand what this profession is , what is the role that it serves, and they say that the role of the social workers is weak and unclear" (PII-01, L41-45)	II-15 , II-19, II-14, II-01, II-23, II-24	6
		Community Awarness	The passivd role of media	The role of local media is not promoting the positive immagine of the social worker		II-19	1

		Conservative cultural	Trust and privacy	As Islamic/Arabic community, people do not accept the role of the social worker to intervene in personal and family matters because they don't want anyone to break the privacy cycle, or they don't trust his / her capacities to solve their problems.	"We face many problems in this area which are related to lack of cooperation of people as our Arabic and Islamic culture don't give the profession its right and role especially if we talk about social problems such as partners problems, juveniles and drugs as you face resistance from parents because they don't know what is social work profession and the nature of services that this profession could present" (II-15, L15-20)	II-15, II-18, II-12, II-14, II-07, II-06	5
		Conservative cultural	Alternative means of solve social problems (effectiveness)	Community believes that it has alternative / organic types of interventions that are more effective than the interventions of the social worker (i.e reform committees).	"Suppose that if a wife faced violence and went to the protection house and if the social worker goes to her parents, they will not accept to let her take part in solving the problem. But if two persons from the social reform committee try to do that they will solve the problem quickly as the society accept traditional reforms more than the social workers. We are very conservative community that refuses to reveal its secrets to social workers and this is a result of the misunderstanding of the real role of the social workers and the extent to which s/he is perceived as confident. " (II-13, L42-46)		1

		Conservative cultural	Alternative of solve problems means social	The community believe that there are more natural and traditional mechanisms to solve personal and spocial problems . Conservative community and culture eaccepts the traditional ways of solving social problems for privacy considerations, compared with a social worker who is perceived as an intruder and paid staff. He will not be committed to confidentiality or any other set of principles that would protect their personal and social parivate issues...	"People say that there are alternatives, one of these alternatives is social reform committees which can work on solving families' disputes and other family problems, and such duty is one of the main parts of social workers duties. Till now people trust societal reform committees more than social workers to assist in solving these problems" (II-17, L68-72)	II-15, II-08, II-24	3
		Comparison	Status comparison with Arab countries	The status of the social work profession in other Arab countires is low, and mostly lower than in Palestine. However, in few Arab countries it is in better status (i.e Egypt)	"Social work status and position in Egypt doesn't differ from Gaza, but they are more developed in the theoretical and academic levels. I met colleges there and they said that there is low and a decrease in the status of social work profession and specialization and that's a mutual thing between us, but at the academic and theoretical levels, they are in a more advanced stage". (II-15, L46-50)	II-15, II-11, II-14, II-01, II-23	4
					"Social work education in Palestinian universities is more advanced than other Arab universities in Jordan, Syria and Iraq. Egypt is considered as the first Arab country in teaching social work" (II-01, L6-11).		

		Comparison	Status comparison with other professions	Community views social work profession at lower status level compared with most of other professions. However, some people believe that it is an important profession like all other professions in social sciences. The increased number of social work graduates, particularly at the postgraduate level (MSW & PhD) has contributed to the recognition of the profession at community and education levels.		II-15, II-17, II-14	3
				The roles of social workers in local relief institutions enhance the social stigma	"In addition to that, there is no implementation of the social work profession or its concepts in institutions and ministries that are responsible for the description of the profession and the roles of social workers" (II-19, L28-31).	II-19	1
		Community Awareness	Self-Presentation of social workers	Some social workers don't understand their role properly which reflects negatively on his image inside and outside the institution	"The weakness of universities leads to the weakness of students who failed to apply what they theoretically learn in the field. Therefore, this affects how the community perceives social work profession, the role of its graduates and positions it at low status" (II-01, L69-72).	II-19, II-01	2

		Economic returns	Impact of employability on the status of the pprofession	Economic returns of studying sical work are very low compared with other professions. Therefore, people prefer to send their children abroad to study other fields that can bring better financial reurns and higher status than social work.	"The cost of studying outside the country is very high . People preferer and accept to send their children aboard to study medicine which could give them social status and also financial benefits , while studying social work will not give them the desired social and financial benefits like medicine. This is the reason, which makes people hesitant to send their children aboard to study social work."(II-18, L94-98)	II-18, II-01, II-03, II-13	4
					"The status of this profession during crisis years was much better than present because the demand on its role was higher and the employment opportunities were higher. At the present time, the high rate of unemployment undermined its status especially under the deteriorating economic conditions where people give higher status to professions with high employability opportunities" (II-13, L12-17).		

		Community Awareness	Status of academic studies and TVET	The Palestinian community values highly the academic studies compared with vocational training and education. The graduates of the secondary class with low grades (who are majority) try to get to local universities that apply loose admission policies. The social work programs are not demanding on the high grades of the secondary education. This ends up with the increased number of students accepted in social work programs regardless their capacities and potentials to be qualified social workers or not.	"That's what we are looking for. I don't know why it doesn't happen. There is a severe shortage in the vocational and technical education for the graduates of secondary education which leads to high demand on academic studies. The graduates of the academic studies have no opportunities to resume PG studies due to the high costs. Students must have academic and professional guidance in the school before they join the university , also students' orientation should be according to the field which they like and have the potentials for, but this doesn't happen because the admission policies in universities are easy and they give everyone an opportunity to study in any field" (II-01, L238-247).	PII-01	1
		Community awareness	Role of Universities with community	Academics / Universities are not doing anything to help the community understand the concept of social work and to distinguish it from other social sciences professions	"indeed, but professionals and universities must take their role in explaining the role of social work in institutions and promote the community awareness about its roles, which is a great challenge" (II-01, L57-59)	II-15, II-19, II-01, II-02, II-21	5

2	Social Work Education and Training	Human resources	Universities policies in professional development of academics	This profession was developed by those who had the chance to study in the Arab countries and European / American universities. The increased demand on social work by the community, by universities and employers at some stages has encouraged some graduates to resume their PG studies abroad including one university (QOU) to send a group of graduates to get their MSW and come back to join staff.	"I am very much involved in teaching social work courses in Najah University and Al-Quds Open University. It is worth noting that the number of the PhD holders is not more than 10 persons" (II-18, L50-52).	II-18, II-14, II-04	4
					"There are very big challenges, the most prominent one is about those who specialize in social work. I see that most of the academics teaching social work aren't specialized in social work. Accordingly, their capacities to plan and conduct social work researches is very limited" (II-14, L179-183).		

					<p>"First, the lack of qualified academic staff who is specialized in social work which has influenced negatively the quality of the educational outcomes at the expense of the effectiveness of the interventions of the social work graduates when they are employed (i.e. This has led to poor skills and knowledge of graduates).</p> <p>"First, the lack of qualified academic staff who is specialized in social work which has influenced negatively the quality of the educational outcomes at the expense of the effectiveness of the interventions of the social work graduates when they are employed (i.e. This has led to poor skills and knowledge of graduates" (II-04, L85-88).</p>		
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		Demand on SW education	Demand on social work education increase under emergency conditions	The demand on social work education increased by the community under emergency conditions that created more jobs for social work graduates. The example of QOU is a strong one to support this linkage.	"We were at the end of the first intifada and there became prisoners, martyrs, many wounded and a large segment of the society have been negatively and seriously affected which created great challenges. One of the programs that was designed at the time was the Ex-Detainees Rehabilitation program at the social, vocational and the psychological levels. So, the university realized the size of the problem and decided to start the social work program in order to qualify specialists to work on these needs and issues which were have affected big numbers in addition to the needs of huge number of organizations that needed the social workers roles.." (II-12, L66-73)	II-12, II-04, II-21	3
		Human resources	Availability of specialised academics in social work	Limited number of academics specialised in the field of social work, which resulted in hiring academics fro other streams in social sciences to teach social work courses	"The academic load and the shortage in the number of PhD in social work and the lack of experiences are some of the challenges that exist" (II-01, L149-150).	II-14, II-01, II-04, II-23, II-05, II-16, II-21	7

					"As for the Al Najah University, all instructors in the department of sociology and social work are sociologists; they have a confusion between sociology and social work concepts and consider both as the same. As we graduate students with two specializations, we don't know how a professor or sociology instructors can teach case study or group work and therefore it reflects on students" (II-05, L48-52).		
		Human resources	Availability of specialised academics in social work	Some academics are teaching social work courses or even leading social work programs without having any experiences in the field.	"For me, I didn't work and I wasn't a professional at that time, I finished studying bachelor degree, master and doctorate and didn't engage in field or institutional work, because of that, I don't have information on that" (II-15, L37-39)	II-15, II-01, II-03, II-04, II-05, II-21	6
				No interest in professional development of academic staff by universities		II-10, II-04	2
		Demand on SW education	Access of Jersalem Students to study social work	Palestinian students living in Jerusalem study at the Palestinian universities in the West Bank because of studying in the Israeli universities is very expensive and because of the discrimination they face if they apply to study there	"The Palestinian students from Jerusalem study social work in the Palestinian universities in the West Bank and very few of them can access the Israeli universities and study there for different reasons including the high costs and discriminatory policies against them" (II-01, L27-29)	II-01	1

		Comparison	Comparison of quality of SW with Arab countries	Compared with other Arab countries, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the social work education is more advanced than in Palestine.	the community view of social work profession is lower than other specializations as it is inferior vision and caused minimize the value of social workers". (II-15, L58-60).	II-15, II-14	2
		Comparison	Comparison of quality of SW education between WB and Gaza	Social work in the West Bank is more advanced and developed than Gaza	"Social work in the west Bank is more developed compared to Gaza. So, the universities of Gaza are still working to develop their curricula" (II-01, II-9-21).	II-01	1
		Admission policies and profitability	Admission policies and stigma	The admission policies of universities allow students of low academic performance at secondary education level to join the program. This is a majority who have no other option. So, they didn't join because they like it or motivated to study it. Few students applied for it because they are motivated and like it.	"If we talk about students who join social work specialization, most of them have low academic performance at the high school and they were obliged to join this specialization, low percent of them join the specialization because they like it" (II-15, L61-64). "Universities look to students as a source for financial capital only. For that, there is high competition between universities and every university work to accept the largest numbers of students without interviews and regardless of their levels of potentials to be a professional social worker" II-17, L165-168	II-15, II-17, II-13, II-20, II-11, II-10, II-09, II-08, II-07, II-06, II-03, II-02, II-04	13

					<p>“As for the universities, there is a problem in admission of students due to high numbers of students who want to register and enter social work specialization, in addition to those who transfer from other majors, the university administration asks us to accept the students who come from other universities but they don’t know that this affects the quality and level of the students....If we look to the community base and its perception of social work student, there is still a problem and in the low status of the social work students, in addition to the self-perception of students and from other specializations to social work specialization, they say that it is easier than their specializations and social work major is for students with low academic achievements, but this is very wrong and it needs change” (II-08, L95-100)</p>		
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				<p>"When we established the specialization of social work at this university in 1998 there were clear and specific conditions and criteria for students admission but after two years the other universities established the social work specialization and it started to accept students without exam or interview and with low academic performance averages at the general secondary stage, after that our university administration decided to accept students as the other universities did". (II-13, L130-136).</p>	
				<p>"Many of tawjihi students and those who joint the specialization were only obliged to, and others joint social work major because their average is low and s/he can't join other specializations, but if we look at developed countries, for example Israel, they give a great value to social work profession. It occupies an advanced level as the third rank between specializations after medicine and law, because it deals with human beings" (II-07, L26-32).</p>	

				The inadequate admission policies established a stigma on the social work programs " that these are for those of low academic performance and it is easy to pass"	"I remember during my university education that students from other specializations said that the social work specialization is for the losers / failures and weak in academic performance, although the situation is exactly the opposite. Universities also contributed to this perception of the people as there is no criteria for acceptance and interview and checking the personal characteristics of student who applied to social work specialization" (II-09, L14-16).	II-10, II-09, II-06	4
		Admission policies and profitability	Profitability of Universities and PA financial support	The high priority of financial gains from the high number of students recruited by each university makes the level of coordination between universities at minimum and the competition at maximum. The search for higher number of students reflects negatively on the quality of field training outcomes. This has become a priority issue for universities when the financial support to universities diminished and they started to look to sustain themselves	"There is competition between universities in attracting more students to earn money for universities accounts. We are far away from the quality of teaching and its relationship with labor market". (II-01, L185-187).	II-15, II-17, II-11, II-14, II-10, II-09, I-07, II-03, II-04, II-23, II-05	11
					"Today, universities are for those who have money as it become private universities which its main goal is the profits and for those who are able to pay, you can see it in education institutions." (II-11, L181-183)		

		Coordination	Poor coordination between universities	The competition between universities in accepting high number of students is not helping in coordination to develop the social work curriculum and the role of the MoEHE and the PUSWP is very weak in imposing standards and policies in this area	"The commercial tendency that is characterizing the policies of universities is hindering better level of cooperation and coordination between them. It is the responsibility of the ministry of higher education because it is aware of this reality. Social workers union should contribute to pressure the ministry to impose this tendency and the specialty in universities, otherwise, the universities will not do that if they have the choice" (II-19, L174-179).	II-19, II-18, II-12, II-10, II-04, II-23, II-24	7
					"Universities are competing on the numbers of applications and students at the expense of the quality of educational content and outcomes" (II-10, L123-124).		
		Admission policies and profitability	Admission policies and profitability	Universities are more concerned in their financial gains and profit than the quality of education outputs, therefore they don't apply strict admission policies since they are competing for largest number of students. The absence of proper admission policies resulted in poorly qualified graduates who reflected poor professional performance when they applied for jobs or when they get jobs. This enhanced the negative attitude and image about this profession.	"the admission policy for engineering used to accept just those who got ninety's averages, today the situation has differed as students who get grades in the 70s can study engineering because the other universities accept students with this average, therefore, the matter is related to the financial aspect of the universities and the capitalism rather than education quality" (II-13, L137-141).	II-17, II-13, II-20, II-14, II-10, II-08, II-07, II-06, II-01, II-04, II-23, II-05	12

				<p>"Some social workers who graduated and work in the field don't prove the worthiness of their roles , this is related to the absence of criteria to admission on academic programs at universities, you find that lots of them either failed in another subjects or the average of the secondary school is low so they went to social work specialization because they think that it is easy to study and this is a wrong idea in my point of view, on the other hand, most of them go through proper field training especially from the skills side, therefore, s/he didn't make use of the institution or the supervision process itself, the main issue here is related to the absence of the criteria to join the social work specialization which contribute to weakness of the profession status and level" (II-14, L67-76).</p>		
			<p>The increased number of students, due to open admission policies, influences negatively the quality of education inside university and the quality of field training outcomes</p>		<p>II-08</p>	<p>1</p>

		Qualifications and availability of social work academics	Teaching methods	Traditional teaching methods, which are not convenient in teaching social work that demands more interactive methods to enhance critical thinking and innovation	"The first challenge in teaching social work is the teaching methods, as teaching depends on memorization and this isn't the core of social work teaching as it is related more to roles, practice, implementation and field work training" (II-11, L18-121).	II-11, II-10, II-03, II-05, II-21	6
					"Universities follow and focus on a typical way teaching their students, which is mainly memorizing info and filling specific report formats but nothing about the critical and analytic skills" (II-10, L96-98).		
					"We can see the difference between past and present. But there is a problem in teaching methods. There are still deficiencies especially in the capacities and qualifications of some academics. If your experience is weak, your information and knowledge are not enough, this will reflect on the student's experience and performance. This is due to the supervisors in the universities, universities administration and the problem of performance monitoring, the students are afraid to complain against the teacher if s/he is weak or has misconduct to the university administration, which significantly reflected on their performance" (II-03, L110-118).		

					<p>“That’s right, the available staff have a mix or confusion of the concepts, they concentrate on specific methods of teaching” (II-05, 57-58).</p>		
					<p>"The teacher must have skills, information and facts that distinguish him from others and should have knowledge in social work methods. Unfortunately, in Gaza social work is taught by traditional styles" (II-21, L50-52)</p>		
		Language barriers and textbooks	Language barriers and textbooks	<p>The limitations in the level of English language proficiency of academics restricts their capacities interact and learn from international social work knowledge and their capacities to transfer it to students, which compromises the quality of knowledge students get. Most of the books are produced in other context or poorly translated</p>	<p>"There are great challenges. First of them is in the shortage in references and books and most of the available references and books are in English language. The content of these references and books is far from our reality and its away from community problems. The second is the weakness of students in English, so the teacher becomes obliged to translate texts for students without any effort from the students. The problem here is that some Arabic translated books are translated in a wrong way. In addition, we choose simple topics to teach to students and these topics are poorly connected to reality" (II-01, L128-135)</p>	II-02, II-04, II-05, II-16	6

					<p>“The books language is too weak and not understood by students as it is translated from other languages. Local students face difficulties in dealing with English books and find it difficult to translate it, so we used to translate some texts or get translated books” (II-05, L72-75).</p>		
					<p>"Faculty members: there is a clear lack of their professional knowledge, there is not enough experience or field experiences with the community and that negatively affects the quality of knowledge and skills students get. In addition to their inability to use technologies and English language to keep them updated of international social work literature and development" (II-04, L107-111).</p>		
				<p>The limitations in the level of English language proficiency of students restrict their learning capacities and the quality of knowledge they get.</p>		II-15	1

		Research	Research production academics by	Weak research production by academics, because the academics lack the sufficient knowledge and skills in planning and conducting research in the first place. Universities, therefore, don't rely on research-based findings and knowledge to transfer to students. The weakness in the research capacities among professionals and academics increases unfortunately	"As an academic side, we don't necessarily depend neither on researches nor its results unfortunately, there is no valuable research, most of our teaching depends on the experiments of western countries or Egypt, but there are no Palestinian experiences in this field and this is one of the challenges that we face" (II-01, L59-99).	II-15, II-17, II-19, II-13, II-20, II-11, II-14, II-23, II-04, II-16, II-21	11
		Research	Specialised research in social work	The limitations in the number of specialised academics in social work bring lots of difficulties in designing and implementing research projects.	"In the term of the required financial support to do research, it is limited to do research just for academic promotion. There is a problem in the area of research cooperation, as there are no research groups, all are individual initiatives" (II-14, L170-173)	II-14, II-04, II-16	3
					"This is an important issue, there are researches but the problem is in decision makers who don't take the results of research in order to change or modify social work curricula. There is a lot of research about teaching quality but the results were not taken into consideration"(II-04, 1143-148)		

					"We are in need for more researches and qualified people who work on research, Also, we need high number of graduates in higher education to present researches that are related to social work. This point could be considered as a challenge" (II-16, L198-201).		
		Research	Borrowed researches	Due poor research production in the field of social work is weak too, programs rely on researches conducted in other countries and different contexts.	"Researches in this field are limited. The research in the Arab countries are copied from the western ones and these researches aren't linked with theories and modalities". (II17, L111-113).	II-17, II-20, II-11, II-04, II-16	5
		Research	Motivation and incentives to conduct research	Research is conducted for academic promotions within university and not for the benefit of society or to inform specific policies.	"Academics shouldn't participate in a conference just to get a promotion; they must look for research that has benefits and results on their society" (II-17, L126-128).	II-17, II-13, II-20, II-11, II-14, II-02, II-04, II-23, II-05	9

					<p>"Research in social work field is very weak and the interest in it is weak also. Today, give me a research center that focuses on social work research and link it with the Palestinian reality unless if it was financed by a party to use the results in limited subjects that serve the donors priorities, there is no official and popular interest in research and there is no appreciation for the researches that have been conducted and published in specialized journals" (II-11, L131-136).</p>		
		Research	Borrowed researches	<p>Because we have no research production to teach to students, universities rely on the knowledge produced in the Western countries or other context than the Palestinian contexts.</p>	<p>"Unfortunately, we aren't producing knowledge, we just transfer it without any effort to accommodate the Palestinian cultural context" (II-19, L146-147).</p>	II-15, II-19, II-13, II-20, II-04	5
		Curriculum relevance	Westernised Curriculum	<p>Also, the shortage in research makes the social work curriculum more Westernised and less indigenised. It is poorly reflecting the Palestinian context and realities of clients and their social problems.</p>	<p>"The social work curricula are not enough to give students the ability for realistic intervention as this issue related also to culture regarding skills of implementation. For example, if we are committed to Zakat imposed on us, you will not find any poor people, but because we are far away from religion, we are still faced poverty problems" (II-15, L146-150).</p>	II-15, II-09	2

					"In addition, the content of the curriculum of social work, which is one of the more developed professions as it is linked to the needs of people and their problems, it dose not consider the problems, developments and changes in [Palestinian] society" (II-09, L32-35) .		
		Research	Allocated budgets for research	Limited budgets allocated to social work research by the Ministry of Higher Education and Universities	"Till now the government don't consider social sector as a priority in respect of allocating budgets and staff, the main priority for the government is for security, education and health, this situation affects the ability of the ministry of social development to do its roles especially after shifting from relief to social development which require additional human and financial resources to improve services." (II-20, L154-159).	II-20, II-14, II-02, II-04, II-16	5
		Research	Non-Academic research centers	No research centres specialised in social work research and knowledge production	"Yes, of course there is no research centres that direct researchers to know the problems and the needs to link them with the Palestinian reality and make use of them to create a more relevant Palestinian social work curriculum" (II-09, L171-173).	II-09	1

		Research	Policy research	There is not policy-driven research in Palestine	"Here, the recommendations that we get after doing the research will help in putting policies and programs that can be taught in universities and they are related to the Palestinian reality that we live in" (PII-02, L85-88).	II-02	1
		Curriculum relevance	Westernised Curriculum	The Westernised curriculum, makes the gap between the educational content to which student are exposed and the social realities of clients and methods of interventions so wide to the extent that social workers don't feel competent and ending up with low self-esteem.	"Unfortunately, there is a shortage and problems in knowledge, the main reason is that education depends on indoctrination. I don't know what to say, student learns theoretically and not what exists in or related to reality" (II-01, L131-133). "The social work curricula are not enough to give students the ability for realistic intervention as this issue related also to culture regarding skills of implementation", II-15 L146-147	II-15 , II-17, II-18, II-09, II-01, II-03, II-02, II-04, II-05, II-21	10
					"The suggested study plans are theoretical ones, it doesn't relate to reality... Most of the present materials are good but there is no linkage with the reality" (II17, L78-79 & 92)		

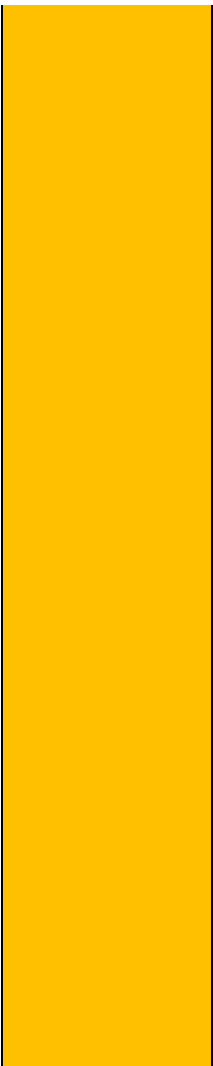
					<p>"Social work profession developed in western countries within a welfare state and welfare policies, for that, you find institutions that are presenting different kinds of interventions related to the needs of their communities. The globalization presented different types of problems and challenges that imposed some forms of interventions which have been integrated in the role of social work and social workers. Such kinds of intervention should adjust with the cultural context of Palestinian society which is not well-considered in the social work curriculum here" (II-18, L136-143)</p>		
					<p>"In addition to the content of the curriculum, we know that social work is one of the more developed professions as it is linked to the needs of people and their problems, but the curriculum does not consider the problems, developments and changes in society " (II-09, L32-36)</p>		
				<p>The is no national vision for the profession to guide the social work curriculum</p>	<p>"Unfortunately, the training courses do not have a national vision about the social work major" (II-07, L75-77).</p>	II-06	1

		Curriculum relevance	Borrowed textbooks from Arab countries	The curricula of some universities was borrowed from other Arab countries, which didn't suit the Palestinian context, besides it is not updated, Poorly translated textbooks from other Arab countries. Poor libraries and access to international online libraries are not provided to students.	"We don't have research that is related to people's problems and books are western and old ones which is not up to date with local developments and development in the world and part of them are poorly translated, that these are not suitable to public issues and interest, therefore social work teachers are working to connect the curriculum with the Palestinian reality, it's the responsibility of universities to get and develop the materials and the educational content in order to suit country's context" (II-09, L 160-166).	II-14, II-09, II-01, II-02, II-04, II-21	6
					"The problem here is that some Arabic translated books are translated in a wrong way . In addition, we choose simple topics to teach to students and these topics are poorly connected to reality" (II-01, L133-135).		
		curriculum relevance	Theory - practice gap	There is a gap between what students learn at universities and what they are requested to implement when they get jobs in the labour market	"The graduate faces the gap between theoretical and ideal materials he studied and the practical applications in the reality, so he will present assistances and coupons which is far away from what he studied. So, s/he will not appreciate or value his role positively" (II-17, L60-63).	II-15, II-09, II-04	3

				Universities are not teaching the roles of social workers during emergencies and crisis, while many institutions still delivering and focusing on such interventions due to deteriorating security and socioeconomic situations.	"The graduate faces the gap between theoretical and ideal materials he studied and the practical applications in the reality, so he will present assistances and coupons which is far away from what he studied. So, s/he will not appreciate or value his role positively" (II-17, L60-62).	II-17	1
				University curriculum is designed to qualify social workers for relief and social interventions but nothing about doing economic development or work in the private for-profit sector	"An initiative should be launched by universities to identify and promote through the media to clarify the role of social work in the private and profitability sector" (II-14, L236-238).	II-14, II-06, II-04	3
		Curriculum relevance	Outdated curricula	Outdated textbooks and poorly translated material by other Arab countries	"Indeed we are working with graduates so much especially those who were accepted in counselling job where they get rehabilitation in different training areas and in many different subjects according to the job requirements. Therefore, the social work curriculum needs revision especially in terms of having a national vision for this profession" (II-07, L69-73).	II-20, II-11, II-09, II-21	4

					"There are noticeable weaknesses in the performance and academic competencies of some teachers in some universities which reflect on students. Some universities teach very old courses and depend on translated material which is far from our reality and have a lot of mistakes" (II-20, L126-129).		
		Coordination	Relations with labour market	Universities are not in proper terms with employers and labour market in general with regards to social work. No coordination, no market research, no consultations on curriculum ...etc	"The profession is recognized, but all the university graduates do not fit with the labour market, many specialists do not work in the field of their specialization which weaken its value " (II-07, L21-23).	II-19, II-10, II-07, II-06, II-03, II-22, II-23, II-08, II-12, II-15, II-11	7
					"Communication and dialog is an important tool to develop the reality of social work profession. Unfortunately, the communication and dialog between universities is still weak" (II-19, L152-154)		

				<p>"There is coordination between us and other universities such as Palestine Ahliya university and Al-Quds university, we present our program to be applied in the Islamic university in Gaza but we don't coordinate with Alquds open university because of its educational system (Distance Learning). We don't have any problem in dealing with other universities and we are ready to generalize our programs" (II-08, L186-191).</p>		
				<p>"There is a complete isolation of the social work education from the labor market and . In Gaza, it will be useful to have a comparative study about this subject" (II-15, L183-185).</p>		

			<p>"In Bethlehem, there is 1500 social workers who apply to ministry of higher education exam every year to compete on 2-3 vacancies of school counsellors and this an issue of the demand – supply process first. Secondly, which more important, is the extent to which universities qualify social work students to do the school counsellor’s job...that’s also related to universities policy and admission criteria. In addition to that, the universities don’t determine or clarify the fields that the graduate can work on them after graduation, as the students register in the specialization but they don’t know what they are going to work in the future and this is the responsibility of the universities. We have a problem in the numbers of students enrolled in the social work specialization, if there is a study to the needs of labor market , have future plans and to link these needs and future plans with universities and specializations, the unemployment of social work graduates will be minimal and the student became more aware where to go and what to do" (II10, L132-152).</p>	
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					<p>"In university there is an important principle which is about the people's right to education. The student has the right to choose the major that s/he needs and after that s/he is responsible for finding an employment either locally, in Arab countries or internationally. The bottom-line is that the university offers its academic programs to meet people's needs and preferences in education and after that they are responsible for finding work not the universities" (II-12, L131-137).</p>		
					<p>"The social worker is able to manage social programs, coordinate between institutions and programs implementation although the social worker didn't take any course at university about coordination, networking and management. The important question is that " did I study social work in order to coordinate programs? " (II-11, L226-239).</p>		
		Quality of Field Training	Absent national standards for field training curriculum	No national standards, policies... for the field training curriculum			

				Due to the shortage in the number of qualified academics in social work at postgraduate level, academics from other social sciences (like sociology and psychology) teach social work courses as well as other from humanities like education and history ..etc			
		Quality of Field Training	Unstructured and ununified field training curriculum	Weak field training; insufficient number of courses and credit hours. No unified and clear outcomes, strategies and procedures to make it effective.	"We find that there is a defect in some aspects, the first is education which is a very important point as we notice that in the academic institutions you find whose specialization is sociology teaches social work or the opposite" (II-01, L201-204).	II-17, II-20, II-18, II-11, II-10, II-22, II-24, II-05, II-16, II-21	11
				Students are not taking the field training seriously; they see it as a superficial requirement rather than a valuable contribution to their professional development	"Unfortunately, there is not enough attention to the field work training among students who deal with training as an entertainment and not necessary to their professional development" (II-17, L140-142).	II-17, II-13, II-18, II-10, II-05	5
					"There is supervision by universities but still not up to required standards . University supervisors concentrate on attendance of student, their strengths and weaknesses without discussions on challenges, obstacles and skills...etc" (II-09, L94-96).		

					“there is no seriousness in evaluation and the universities don’t give enough interest neither the employer is sure about his ability in giving his experience to student and make use of it” (II-06, 101-103)		
		Quality of Field Training	Students attitudes toward training field	There is a variation in the interests and attitudes of students toward the field training. Yet, there are limited systematic efforts to ensure the minimum commitment to the requirements of the field training quality. The universities are doing their duty in this area such as the placement institution.		II-19, II-09, II-04, II-05	4
		Quality of Field Training	Institutional management capacities	The capacities of many institutions to manage field training students are limited due to understaffing matters.	"First, the problem is in the institution that does not have the capacity to accommodate a big number of students and in the ability to supervise them. At the same time there is confusion and misunderstanding within institutions about field training and the specialization of supervisors who should supervise students" (II-05, L98-101)	II-14, II-05	2

		Quality of Field Training	Adequacy of programs for field training	The programs of many institutions are not convenient to train field training students. This includes the type of the interventions that is not well-related to any theoretical frameworks or model, or the staff managing them are not qualified to transfer the skills and knowledge related to the work in such programs. There are no agreements between universities and institutions about the training plans and their outcome, and who is responsible for what...		II-14, II-09, II-04, II-05, II-21	5
		Quality of Field Training	No individualised field training plans	There are no assessments of the capacities of individual student and what to work on during the field training course and how to do that.		II-09	1
		Quality of Field Training	Irregular supervision (by university and inside institution)	Supervision by universities (Gaza mainly) is not provided adequately; no regular follow up, no monitoring. These became more serious problems when the number of students increases.	"There is no attention to students during their training. Supervisors send students to institutions without any kind of follow up or supervision" (II-17, L148-149).	II-17, II-13, II-18, II-12, II-14, II-09, II-02, II-04, II-24	9
		Quality of Field Training	Coordination between universities on field training programs	Poor coordination between universities and field training institutions, specially at the levels of planning and management of the training process, no coordination between universities and field training institutions at national and local levels		II-14, II-10, II-09, II-05	4

		Quality of Field Training	Qualifications in supervision	Field supervisors are not qualified, and there are not professional development programs in the country to improve the competencies of academic and field supervisors. The number of qualified supervisors is very limited	"No, they aren't qualified , there is no attention in field work training from both student and supervisor" (II-17, L145-155).	II-17, II-14, II-10, II-08, II-07, II-05, II-21	7
					"As for the professional supervision in the institutions, there are professional competencies in some institutions, but field supervisors have a high work load which creates serious weaknesses sometimes in the quality of the field placement outcomes" (II-09, L104-107).		
		Quality of Field Training	Attitude of institutions towards field training students	In some institutions, for different reasons, they assign admin duties to social work students instead of training them on interventions (i.e. they don't believe in the capacities of students, they have over load, or any other reason)	"In addition to the problem in the institutional supervision on students which can't follow up the trained students properly because of the workload imposed on them. During the training period, institutions and institution supervisors asks trained students to do some works like sorting files, so the students don't benefit from field work training." (II-13, L58-62).	II-13	1

			Many institutions still don't believe that students should take serious roles to perform during their training, even with supervision	"Yes, there are problems; part of it related to the cultural and social background of students, the other part is related to the institution itself and what is allowed for student to do . This is related to institutional culture, the programs that it may present to student and how many working hours that it can give to students to implement and apply its programs" (II-18, L180-184)	II-18	1	
		Quality of Field Training	Incentives to field supervisors and high work load	No incentives for field supervisors who have high workloads, their overload and poor incentives lead to poor commitment towards delivering satisfactory field training outcomes	"There is a problem that the number of the trained students is huge as it is from all universities and the burden of social worker who is responsible for supervising students is more than management capacities, in addition to the absence of the financial and moral incentives from universities to the supervisors, all of this contributes to the frustration and despair status that the social worker lives in and loss of motivation and continue working within a vicious cycle" (II-14, L112-118).	II-13, II-14, II-09	3

		Quality of Field Training	Fragmented structure of supervision process	Supervision is not applied as a full process with all its elements (education, support, management, evaluation, planning ...etc), with the increased number of students in the field training the quality of the field training outcomes drops significantly.	"I think that the academic supervision is weak for several reasons, including that the supervisor is loaded by the teaching burden and can barely cover the field placement load. His academic load is very high as he does both teaching, supervision, research work and participate in conferences, workshops and community events, This creates pressure on him and leads to the weakness of supervision of students and follow up them in a correct way" (II-14, L134-139)	II-17, II-14, II-10, II-07, II-06, II-05	6
					"The dilemma is related to training subject and universities. Unfortunately, the training courses do not have a national vision about the social work major" (II-06, L75-77).		
				Little attention to the development of the social worker personality	"Even at university you note that the social worker who graduated from the university can't deal with us as teachers. Here the university must teach the student and the graduate in order to know how to deal with people and teach them about the ability to speak. There is a great challenge in our universities in the ability to qualify a specialist in social work who has the ability, skill, the mentality which enable him to deal with society. This is considered as a great challenge" (II-02, L20-26)	II-02, II-06	1

					<p>“The question is whether the universities are able to accept and commit themselves to the ministry requirements. I think that it is difficult because unfortunately our universities became profitable and looking for money more than the education quality and we as a ministry of higher education don’t impose on them taking courses or trainings as we want and according to the needs of the labor market” (II-06, L131-136).</p>		
		Coordination	Coordination between universities	The relationships between universities are very weak, which influences negatively the efforts to improve the social work education at national level	<p>"Communication and dialog is an important tool to develop the reality of social work profession. Unfortunately, the communication and dialog between universities is still weak" (II-19, L151-153).</p>	II-19, II-13, II-08, II-02, II-16, 11-15	5
					<p>"Everyone works by himself, there is no cooperation between universities and there are no relations to develop others’ capacities and roles" (II-02,L96-97).</p>		
					<p>"There is competition between universities in attracting more students to earn money for universities accounts" (II-15, L185-186) .</p>		

					"The relation between universities is not on the required level , we are doing our best to develop this relation with some universities as there is cooperation but not in the required level" (II-16, L205-207).		
		Quality of Field Training	Overloaded field and academic supervisors	Field supervisors and academic supervisors are overloaded and can't apply proper supervision to high number of social work students. At the same time, low incentives provided to field supervisors inside the institutions.	"There was a great challenge, if the institutions are ready to train the student for this high number of hours are the academic supervisors able to follow-up the students along these hours. Do they have the skills in supervision ! So, the field training load on the university and institution is a serious challenge to their ability to manage the high number of student in terms of quality and quantity, challenging to their skills and expertise" (II-12, L122-124)	II-13, II-12,	2
					"The field placement is an opportunity for a student to discover him/herself and to discover the weaknesses, strengths, and problems in his / her capacities, also it assists and helps him/her to find out and discover that through training experience which increases and deepen the experience of both parties (II-09, L85-88)		
		Coordination	Coordination with PUSWP	Weak coordination with the PUSWP at national and local levels		II-11, II-08	2

		Coordination	Relations with labour market	coordination with employers is not there	"I don't know and I don't think that they have any vision about the qualities of the social worker that labor market needs" (II-03, L124-25).	II-10, II-09, II-07, II-06, II-01, II-03, II-16	7
					"I need the student to reach me as an employer with the needed knowledge and skills in the field of disability but the curriculum doesn't provide that for anyone. These skills should be provided by proper curriculum and qualified academic supervisor. In fact, there are many other areas where the university should provide the knowledge and skills to students so they can get jobs in these fields " (II-01, L79-82).		
					"More than that, student's levels became low. This is a result of lack of planning and coordination within the department about the needs and requirements of labor market" (II-09, L61-63).		

		Human resources	Availability of specialised academics in social work	The shortage in the number of qualified academics in the field of social work. Universities are not ready yet to invest some of their budgets in developing the capacities of their academic staff. They prefer to invest it in other streams. No PG programs in Palestine	"In Gaza, the number of those who have postgraduate qualifications (MSW & PhD) till 2008 was just one person. After 2008 there became an opening on social work and students went to Helwan University at Egypt and the number increased to 25 graduates with MSW and few of them are doing their PhD in social work now. Yet, many of them don't work with universities because NGOs offer better salaries than universities, which is an issue to be addressed seriously" (II-13, L83-89).	II-13, II-11, II-04	4
					"Universities can invest in their staff through scholarships or other ways but they deal with education as business and spending money to this purpose is not a priority since any academic in social sciences can teach social work, according to them, and no objections on that practice by any party. This has negative influence on the profession and its development opportunities, and consequently its status" (II-11, L163-168).		
				The wages and other benefits offered by universities in Palestine are not competitive to those offered abroad. Therefore, Palestinian universities cannot attract or maintain qualified academics with PG degrees.		II-08	1

		Human resources	Capacity of retaining qualified academics	The Palestinian universities in general and in the field of social work particularly, cannot retain the academics of PG degrees because they cannot offer them a competitive back of benefits (including salaries) compared with other countries. So, they leave the country for better benefits.	"There is a severe shortage in the PG qualifications because, students who travel to get PhD certificate don't come back to their country . At Bethlehem University, there are two teachers who are PhD holders because it is very expensive to resume PG studies , and when the students get their PhD and return to the country they find that the salaries are too bad [low] so, they choose to travel abroad looking for more rewarding opportunities" (II-01,L157-162)	II-01, II-04,	II-	3
		Infrastructure	Limitations of Infrastructur	Poor infrastructure at most of ht universities, like spaces, and online access to other libraries, classrooms ...etc.	"The quality of the library : the absence of the library in the Palestinian universities that related to social work, and there is a need to have a library for social work colleges and link libraries electronically with the European universities, in addition to the problem that faces students in the use of English books and the complicted procedures of borrowing and returning books. All these conditions discourage the educational process and affects the quality of the library" (II-04, L198-205).	II-04, II-01	II-	2
					"There are great challenges. First of them is in the shortage in references and books and most of the available references and books are in English language" (II-01, L128-130) .			

				The increased rate of unemployed graduates reflected on negative reputation of the profession and its education		II-16	1
		Coordination	Relations with MoEHE	The relationship between universities and MoEHE is very weak and restricted to licensing programs then there is no proper and regular follow up or whatsoever,	"The ministry of higher education didn't develop criteria to develop teaching curriculum, also it doesn't care about the unifying the existing curriculum and the teaching process requirements and methods, therefore, you notice that the courses are different" (II-24, L28-32)	II-23, II-24	2
	Employability & Labor Market	Employers Attitudes	Employers' understanding	Many employers (managers or staff) don't understand / or accept the role of the social worker. So they either ask him / her to do other duties that those s/he was trained to do, or hire someone with different qualifications because anyone can do his/her job. Therefore, the official recognition by some employers still not reached.	"when the school manager asks counselors or social workers to check and registered the attendance of students, this mean that he has no understanding or awareness of the role of social workers and social work profession" (II-15, L21-24)	II-15, II-14, II-08, II-02, II-22, II-23, II-24, II-05, II-16, II-21	10

	Public reforms	sector Inherited public services system from Occupation	PA inherited from the Israeli administration a very weak, corrupt and almost destroyed ministry of social affairs that used to function based on the occupier's priorities and agenda, particularly the public services system	"The Palestinian authority inherited the previous ministries with all of its weaknesses and employees and started the process of institutionalization, this happened at the same time of establishing social workers union. This process was successful but faced lots of difficulties. The authority used several models to describe who is the social worker like the Egyptian and the Jordanian models, but the use of these models created some problems in clarifying the related concepts to distinguish between social workers, researchers or therapists, this create a miss-understanding that those who study social work can work as sociologist or physiologist and vice versa, this lead to a confusion in the employment opportunities and who can do the social work job." (II-20, L19-30)	II-20, II-18, II-23	3
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				<p>The establishment of PA impacted positively the status of the profession after the establishment of the school social work vacancies and reforming the ministry of social development. These reforms enhanced employability but still not supportive to social workers status inside schools system</p>	<p>"The establishment of PA has a positive impact that started from the decision-makers in the ministry of education with the global vision of the educational work, there was a vision from two sides which were the educational and practical sides and it becomes a full conviction to the importance of counsellor at schools and there became a demand from schools' heads to recruit counsellors at schools that don't have this service" (II-7, L51-56).</p>			
				<p>The establishment of PA impacted positively the status of the profession after the establishment of the school social work vacancies and reforming the ministry of social development</p>	<p>"After the arrival of the Palestinian Authority in 1993 there were clear efforts to identify social work profession and formulate its components and improve its status" (II-04, L16-18).</p>	II-04, II-23	2	
		Job descriptions	Borrowed descriptions	Job	<p>The diffinitions of social workers and other professions were borrowed from other Arab countries which has different contexts. This resulted in confused jobs descriptions</p>	<p>"The authority used several models to describe who is the social worker like the Egyptian and the Jordanian models, but the use of these models created some problems in clarifying the related concepts to distinguish between social workers, researchers or therapists, this create a miss-understanding that those who study social work can work as sociologist or physiologist and vice versa, this lead to a confusion in the employment opportunities and who can do the social work job" (II-20, L23-30).</p>	II-20	1

		Unemployment rates	Rates of unemployment	"The unemployment rate among graduates from Jerusalem is very low compared with the West Bank and Gaza. This is one of the reasons behind the low status of this profession in WB & Gaza	"Let me say that the situation varies between the west Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. The demand on the social work profession and for the social work graduates in Jerusalem is much higher than in the West Bank and Gaza. We find that the employment percentage among Jerusalem graduates is the highest, and the social work program at Bethlehem University depends on Jerusalem students because they get jobs shortly after graduation (no unemployment), unlike west Bank which has a high percentage of unemployment and a small percentage of employed graduates. The unemployment rate in Gaza is much higher than the West Bank" (II-01, L90-98).	II-01, II-20, II-18	3
					"Challenges are a lot, one of them is the narrow and limited employment opportunities in labor market, the salaries are low, the employment conditions are below acceptable levels and the competition is high. Social work graduates face and suffer what other graduates face from the narrow of labor market and the increase in unemployment levels" (II-18, L198-202).		

		Recruitment processes	Corrupt recruitment process	Recruitment is challenging when it is based on personal favouritism, political affiliation, or nepotism. This happens in private / non-governmental organisations more than the public because of the absent monitoring and accountability.		II-17, II-13, II-14, II-01, II-21	5
		Recruitment processes	Variations in recruitment processes between public and voluntary sectors	The employment process in the voluntary sector in the West Bank is more transparent and accountable compared with Gaza. Also, it is more challenging in the voluntary sector in the West Bank compared with the public sector.	"There is a big difference in the employment in the two sectors, in the private sector it is a difficult process to get a job, the social worker need to pass an exam, interview and final interview which is different than the exams in the government sector which are too easy to pass and the questions of the exams repeated for many years. Also, the exams depend on memorization; this means that the one who read the previous exams and memorize them he will pass without measuring the cognitive and the field skills of the applicant" (II-01, L227-233).	II-01	1
		Employers Attitudes	Employers' understanding	Some main employers like the ministry of social development mixes the background and qualifications in the recruitment for social work jobs	"I don't have a certain number of social workers in Gaza, but in west bank there are 400 employees whose main courses of study is sociology, social work or psychology and they are called social researchers or social counsellors" (II-20, L213-215).	II-20, II-14, II-07, II-06, II-01, II-03, II-23, II-05	8

					"I think that the demand on social work specialization previously was larger than present time, the demand decreased as a result of the increasing rates of unemployment among social work graduates in Palestine and this is one of the challenges that face social work profession and its development " (II-14, L55-58).		
					"The social worker may suffer more because his profession isn't required in the private sector which doesn't employ this category of specializations. The second employer is the government where the opportunities of social worker are limited also. The work opportunities for social workers is just in institutions which depends on donors' funding that is temporary, few of social workers can get permanent jobs and many of them neglect his specialization and work on other areas in the local market or the construction Israeli market" (II-18, L207-213).		
		Employers Attitudes	Emplyoers' understanding	Some public employers, like the Ministry of Heath, do not believe in the role of the social worker or that they don't need the social work interventions		II-15	1

		Legal environment	Legal recognition and employability	The official and legal recognition of the profession in some other Arab countries, like Egypt, promoted the employability level and therefore the social status to some extent.		II-15	1
		Unemployment rates	Rates of unemployment	The unemployment rate among social work graduates is increasing because of admission policies and many other reasons, and the vacancies are decreasing because of the diminishing funding to PA or NGOs for political considerations.	"Over the last decade or so, the employment opportunities are in steep decrease due to lower levels of funding by donors which was related to politics and compliance to peace negotiations" (II-09, L47-50).	II-15, II-09, II-07, II-06, II-22, II-24	6
		Employers Attitudes	Employers' understanding	Some institutions still do not believe in the role of the social worker in delivering their services to community		II-18	1
		Unemployment rates	Impact of unemployment on students attitudes	The unemployment rates are not motivating SW students to take their studies more seriously. Also, the increased rate of unemployment decreased the number of students applying for social work programs at the universities in the WB and GS	"In the ministry of social affairs, you find that the specializations of workers are not social work , some of them are in accounting, pedagogy and administration, and unfortunately, the wrong person is in the wrong place" (II-15, L161-163).	II-15, II-14	2

					"I think that the demand on social work specialization previously was larger than present time, the demand decreased as a result of the increasing rates of unemployment among social work graduates in Palestine and this is one of the challenges that face social work profession and its development" (II-14, L55-58).		
		Recruitment processes	unqualified graduates	Graduates who are not employed based on competencies prove low quality performance, particularly in the voluntary sector, which enhances negative and generalised perceptions about the profession and its graduates at institutional and community level.	"Other point related to some students who lack skills and efficiency which lead to failure in work interviews" (II-15, L164-165).	II-15, II-14, II-01	3
				Some employers hire non-social work graduates to do social work jobs, which reflects negative attitude or limited understanding of this profession		II-19	1
		Coordination	Employers' coordination with universities	There is limited and unsystematic coordination between universities and labour market. There is no research of the labour market demands and requirements in terms of numbers of jobs, qualifications needed, areas of specialisation ...etc	"There is a complete isolation of the social work education from the labour market and . In Gaza, it will be useful to have a comparative study about this subject" (II-15, L183-185).	II-15, II-13, II-06	3

				<p>The Palestinian universities are tuned and focused on securing sufficient income to sustain themselves, since the PLO / PA financial support is being diminishing, which make them less strict in admission policies in order to attract higher number of students, which in turns increases the number of incompetent graduates.</p>	<p>"There is competition between universities in attracting more students to earn money for universities accounts . We are far away from the quality of teaching and its relation with labor market" (II-15, L185-187)</p>	<p>II-15</p>	<p>1</p>
		Donors' policies	Temporary jobs and donors policies	<p>The demand on social workers increases under emergencies but there is low job security in the private sector due to project-based employment following the levels of funding and its duration. During emergencies and the interventions o international community and donors, the employment rate increases but when there are no emergencies the unemployment arises again</p>	<p>"There is no job security particularly in the private sector where social workers are hired on temporary contracts of funded programs and projects. All depends on the temporary international funding which is subject to political and security consideration" (II-13, L97-100).</p>	<p>II-13, II-18, II-11, II-14, II-10, II-01, II-03, II-04, II-23, II-05</p>	<p>10</p>

					"However, the employability of the social work graduates fluctuated over times. During emergencies, the demand on them was high and during those times the profession become more known and valued. When the employability of the social work graduates dropped due to donors' policies in the country, as one example to mention, people become more reluctant to study social work or they take the risk to join the line of the unemployed graduates. Over these times, the status dropped noticeably" (II-11, L43-53)		
		Unemployment rates	limited / diminshining demand on SW graduates	Limited vacancies in the Public sector and temporary vacancies in the private sector due to dependency on donors temporary funding		II-18	1
		Donors' policies	Donors-driven interventions	Some donors with local institutions apply programs that are not adapted to the local cultural context.		II-14	1
				Private sector (for profit sector) is not opening any jobs for social work. They believe it is only for relief or charitable interventions.		II-14	1
		Coordination	Relations of employers with universities and PUSWP	Most of the employers have no systematic relations with universities to exchange demands, concerns, trends ...etc.		II-14, II-08, II-03, II-02, II-22	5

4	Policy and Legal Environment	Availability and applicability of social policies	Applications of existing social policies	There are lots of good social policies but they are not applied properly or not applied at all	"There are ideal governmental and legislative policies but they aren't applicable on the ground" (II-17, L206-207).	II-17	1
		National Policies for SW education	Absent national vision for social work education	There is no unified standards or policies about the social work curricula in Palestine.	"The bottom-line is that the university offers its academic programs to meet people's needs and preferences in education and after that they are responsible for finding work not the universities" (II-12, L135-137).	II-20, II-12, II-02	3
			Applications of existing social policies	There is no national social policy to guide the higher education in general and social work particularly. There is no national vision for the profession to guide the social work education programs and their structures and standards. This is because of the political instability under the impact and control of the occupation. In any given point in time, the country finds itself in emergency / crisis.	"There is no clear social policy, and the ministries didn't care about the profession and there is no communication with the ministries and there are no plans for it. In addition to that, there are no clear policies about what we need from this profession, and this is one of the problems with the ministry and government" (II-01, L254-258).	II-12, II-10, II-06, II-01, II-03, II-02, II-04	7
					"There is no planning of the higher education in Palestine as result of many things. The most important one is the absence of the political instability" (II-12, L130-131)		

					"There is no policy or vision, we are taking from the outside and we are happy and teaches blindly our students. Ok, where I am going when I have no clue where I am going and where I want to be in the future. There is no policy, no vision and no horizon" (II-02, L110-113).		
		Availability and applicability of social policies	Applications of existing social policies	There are some national policies but they are not implemented	"The last national report says that there are policies but there is no implementation of these policies. The countries don't know its role as they don't consider themselves as a welfare state because of the lack of resources and dependence on grants and assistance" (II-08, L201-204).	II-08	1
				No national plans or intentions to regulate the profession and develop it		II-09, II-23, II-24, II-01, II-05	5
		Coordination	Coordinaton between decision-makers and academic institutions on policy-related issues	The communications between academics and decision makers are in conferences but after the conference no follow up and the recommendations of conferences do not materialise	"There is dialogs and communication through conferences and studies. The recommendations of such conferences are put on shelves in spite of participation of all partners and institutions in such conferences" (II-17, L212-214).	II-17	1

		Legal environment	Absent laws regulatory	There is no regulatory law in the West Bank and Gaza despite the importance for monitoring the practice, employment, status , professional development and protection of social workers' rights. Therefore, it is not considered as officially recognise profession according to the law.	"the absence of law affects the efficiency of monitoring and follow up of social workers to make ensure their commitment to professional behaviors and standards" (II-17, L231-233).	II-17, II-19, II-13, II-20, II-12, II-11, II-14, II-10, II-09, II-08, II-07, II-06, II-01, II-04, II-23 , II-16	16
					"This law doesn't exist, as mentioned earlier, therefore it hinders the development of this profession in terms of its formal capacity to perform better and effective role in society. Society gives more respect and trust to organized profession" (II-11, L110-13).		

		Legal environment	Weak rule of law and the alternative means to solve social problems	The weak legal environment and the weak rule of law in Palestine, for many reasons, created a gap in the welfare of Palestinian citizens. When people face any problems, they usually refrain to informal social networks than the law or professional assistance.		II-18	1
		Availability and applicability of social policies	MoEHE and quality assurance role	The role of the MoEHE is very weak , particularly in monitoring the quality of the educational output, evaluating programs, monitoring the qualifications of staff, evaluating the curriculum...etc	"The authority doesn't interfere in the university educational policy. The university has the right to add any educational course but any course that may increase the credited hours, you must have an approval form from the authority....To organize the educational programs in general, in spite of the fact that there is no equality in dealing with all the universities in the same way. For example, in establishing a new educational program, it facilitates the process to some universities more than other especially to start these programs" (II-01, L277-287).	II-11, II-01, II-03, II-02, II-23	5

Professional Leadership	Weak role	Weakened role of PUSWP by political divide	The role of PUSWP is very weak or it is totally absent (Mainly in Gaza), due to political divide. This causes a decline in the graduates joining. They don't see that it will add anything to them or will contribute to their progress. It should be more than social gathering and registering more numbers for elections. It should lead the development of regulatory laws, monitoring adherence to ethical practice, contribute to curricula development at universities, monitor employment processes ,...etc. The PUSWP leadership in not specialised in social work. Community in general is not aware of the existence of the union, some social work graduates are not aware of what are the roles of the union with them,.... NO representation and protection	"These days there is no union for social workers. In the past there was a union but now it doesn't exist" (II-17, L219-220)	II-17, II-19, II-13, II-20, II-11, II-14, II-10, II-09, II-08, II-07, II-06, II-01, II-03, II-02, II-04, II-23, II-24, II-05, II-16, II-21	20
	PUSWP roles	PUSWP monitoring role with public and voluntary sectors	The role of the Union in monitoring employment process in the public and voluntary sectors is totally absent		II-01	1

					<p>"Since 2005 the law is still not endorsed by the Palestinian Legislative Council which is very necessary to be considered as an organized profession, and this in addition to the weak role of social work unions represents one of the major challenges to social work profession in the West Bank and Gaza" (II-11, L43-46).</p>		
					<p>"Today, the existence of the union is connected to the Palestinian authority as it is always loyal to it and against attitudes of people and its workers. Today, its role is limited by conducting training and workshops; I think that its role should be much more than that. Its role is to orient and promote the institutions, with the universities about specializations and establishing new specializations that meet the needs of labor market and employers" (II-10,L161-166).</p>		
		PUSWP vision for SW profesion	Missing vision of the social work profesion	There is no national vision for this profesion		II-13, II-23, II-24	3

		PUSWP organisational structure	PUSWP internal organisational structure weak	The internal organisation of the union is weak and doesn't help it perform influential duties at national or local levels. At least, it is a union for social workers, sociologists and psychologists. So, its identity is confused. Members or graduates in general cannot express their opinion of the leadership of the union and its political affiliation.	"Other point related to the union is the type of specializations represented inside the union ; you can find social work, sociology, and psychology. The union represents main dilemma which increases the crisis not solving it" II-20, L41-43	II-20, II-23, II-24	3
		Coordination with universities and labor market	PUSWP relations with universities and employers	Very poor / absent coordination with Universities and employers		II-13,	1
		PUSWP constituency	Attitudes of PUSWP constituency	Graduates don't feel or believe in PUSWP's role, the number of the general assembly members is decreasing while the opposite should be happening		II-17, II-23, II-24	3
		Political divide	PUSWP Relations with the authority in Gaza	The authority in Gaza is not encouraging or supporting PUSWP	"There is no motivation and efforts from specialists to have a union that represents social workers. Also, the high authorities don't encourage the existing of union body" (II-17, L224-226)	II-17	1

		PUSWP roles	PUSWP relations with universities and employers	The monitoring role of the PUSWP on the employment processes is not provided	<p>"In general, People and also social workers aren't aware about the role of the union of social workers, unfortunately, there is a mixing between the role of the union and the services that the union could present. Many people think that the union is a service institution for social workers and it must employ social workers and searching for jobs for them. Here, there is a mixing as it is a legal institution to defense social workers in the official and legal bodies, but unfortunately social workers forget this" (II-23, L161-167).</p>	<p>II-19, II-23, II-11</p>	<p>2</p>
					<p>"On the other hand, the union is responsible for developing social workers, train them and care about them. Social workers need a real representative which needs to have official authority and decision especially in the interviews that institutions and official entities do when they interview social workers and accepting them. The union needs the license and a law that organize work because this helps it in development" (II-23, L168-173).</p>		

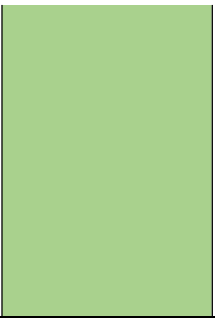
					"Since 2005 the law is still not endorsed by the Palestinian Legislative Council which is very necessary to be considered as an organized profession, and this in addition to the weak role of social work unions represents one of the major challenges to social work profession in the West Bank and Gaza, and this lead to absence of law till now" (II-11, L43-46).		
		PUSWP roles	Weak PUSWP role with the community / public	The role of the PUSWP in informing the community about the this profession is not provided	"The Union was independent before the political divide. The existed political divide shouldn't prevent the existence of strong union that cares about social workers and their problems. Unfortunately, it did" (II-19, L11-19).	II-19	1
	Security and Political Environment	Poitical divide	Weakened role of PUSWP by political divides	The political divid influenced negatively the role of the PUSWP. The union has become part of the political affiliation battle as part of the political divide. It hindered the issuance of the regulatory law since 2007, and enhanced the transparent recruitment process and decisions	"The Union was independent before the political divide. The existed political divide shouldn't prevent the existence of strong union that cares about social workers and their problems. Unfortunately, it did" (II-19, L59-62).	II-19, II-14, II-08, II-01, II-23, II-24, II-16, II-21	8
					"Professions like social work are important professions and have a high value among people as it deals with humanistic needs resulted from the circumstances we live in" (II-19, L 08-10)		

					"I think that it affected so much and created a gap; it affected setting the professional practice law and contributed to hinder the development and progress of the profession" (II-23, L177-179).		
					"The political parties contributed to the development of social work profession since these parties have led the national resistance to occupation over those years. Those events resulted in hardships and injuries, imprisonment and houses demolitions that needed humanitarian international assistance where the role of the social worker was needed" (II-14, L38-40)		
					"The practices and policies of the occupation have created a need for social work profession at the education and services delivery levels. In the other hand, many problems caused by occupation" (II-23, L64-67)		
					"The political divide that happened between Fatah and Hamas and the divide between the West Bank and Gaza by the Israeli Occupation have affected the development and progress of social work between the West Bank and Gaza" (II-01, L17-19).		

6		Security regime	Access (between Gaza and West Bank	The separation between West Bank and Gaza restricts the opportunities in exchange of expertise and knowledge.... Etc		II-17, II-20	2
		Security regime	The impact of occupation on socioeconomic life and well-being of Palestinian citizens	The political situation / being under occupation is considered by most of the Palestinians as the main source of the socioeconomic problems people are suffering from.	"the occupation has created the need for social workers and as a concept of social work, it is clear that there is a big gap that exists and the social work comes to fill this gap and this need. There are the martyrs, the wounded and the prisoners, all of this has led to the intervention of social work and social worker to meet people's needs, solve their problems and this has led to refine our role as social workers in a clear way" (II-08, L47-52).	II-18, II-08	2

		Seige	Impact of seige on human development opprotunities	The siege / blockade on Gaza deprives many academics from travelling abroad to participate in conference, resume education or exchange with the rest of the world	"It has a great effect because of the occupation and the existed political separation in Palestine. Many professionals, specialists and academics at both formal and academic levels got invitations to participate in international scientific conferences but the occupation policy and the blockade prevents them from participation and making use of these conferences. Also, the existed political division between West Bank and Gaza affects the availability and efficiency of coordination between West Bank and Gaza" (II-17, L238-244)	II-17	1
				The siege / blockade on Gaza deprives many graduates from travelling abroad to participate in conference, resume education or exchange with the rest of the world		II-17	1
		Security regime	No development interventions under the occupation	The role of the social worker will remain within the boundaries of relief and emergencies until political stability prevails. The occupation has put the people in crisis and emergency all the time, therefore the role of the social workers have always been connect to humanitarian assistance rather than development which perpetuated the stigma on the role of the			2

				social worker and the profession as a whole.			
		Donors' policies	Post-colonial ideologies and donors' policies in Palestine	The political solutions are based on Balfour declaration concept	"The authority still unable to determine its fate and is not capable of being independent, they are trying to establish a system but it is difficult and this is controlled by international procedures, till now they are dealing with us by Balfour mentality, establishment of a homeland for the Jews while preserving civil and life matters for the PNA. The financing of the authority is still related to this mentality, this affects people's lives and the services which presented to them through the profession and others" (II-03, L146-152).	II-03	1

	Donors' policies	Donors-driven interventions	The connections between donors' policies and the type of humanitarian programs implemented in the country	"Today, the country is open to the global investments "you get as much as you have". There are conditions for development goals and there is a trend toward the participation of civil society's institutions in designing the social policies" (II-02, L47-49)	II-02	1
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Annex (14)

Individual Interviews – Themes

	Global Themes		Organizing Themes		Basic Themes	
1	Community Attitude	1	Community Awareness	1	confused concepts and roles	
			Community Awareness	2	Stigma on the role of the profession	
			Community Awareness	3	Impact beyond tangible services	
			Community Awareness	4	The passive role of media	
			Community Awareness	5	Self-Presentation of social workers	
			Community awareness	6	Role of Universities with community	
			2	Conservative culture	7	Trust and privacy
				Conservative culture	8	Alternative means of solve social problems (effectiveness)
		3	Economic returns	9	Impact of employability on the status of the pprofession	
2	Social Education Work and Training	4	Human resources	10	Universities policies in profesional development of academics	
			Availability of Qualified Academics in SW	11	Availability of specialised academics in social work	
			Human resources	12	Capacity of retaining qualified academics	
			Human resources		Availability of specialised academics in social work	
			5	Demand on SW education	13	Demand on social work education increase under emergency conditions
				Demand on SW education	14	Access of Jerusalem Students to study social work
			6	Admission policies and profitability	15	Admission policies and stigma
				Admission policies and profitability	16	Admission policies and profitability

		7	Aavailability of qualified Academics in Social Work		Availability of specialised academics in social work
		8	Language barriers and textbooks	17	Language barriers and textbooks
		9	Research	18	Research production by academics
			Research		Research production by academics
			Research		Research production by academics
			Research		Research production by academics
			Research		Research production by academics
			Research	19	Non-Academic research centers
			Research	20	Policy research
		10	Curriculum relevance	21	Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books
			Curriculum relevance		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books
			curriculum relevance		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books
			Curriculum relevance		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books
		11	Quality of Field Training	22	Absence of field training policies
			Quality of Field Training	23	Students attitudes toward field training
			Quality of Field Training	24	Institutional management capacities
			Quality of Field Training		Absence of field training policies
			Quality of Field Training		Absence of field training policies
			Quality of Field Training		Absence of field training policies
			Quality of Field Training		Absence of field training policies
			Quality of Field Training	25	Qualifications in supervision
			Quality of Field Training	26	Attitude of institutions towards field training students
			Quality of Field Training	27	Incentives to field supervisors and high work load
			Quality of Field Training	28	Absence of field training policies
			Quality of Field Training	29	Absence of field training policies

		12	Coordination	30	International cooperation
			Coordination	31	Relations with labour market
			Coordination	32	Coordination between social work programs
			Coordination	33	Coordination with PUSWP
			Coordination	34	Relations with labour market
			Coordination	35	Relations with MoEHE
		13	Infrastructure	36	Limitations of Infrastructur
	Employability & Labor Market	14	Employers Attitudes	37	Employers' understanding
		15	Public sector reforms	38	Inherited public services system from Occupation
		16	Job descriptions	39	Borrowed Job descriptions
rate		17	Unemployment rate	41	Rates of unemployment
			Unemployment rate	42	diminishing demand on SW graduates
			Unemployment rate	43	Impact of unemployment on students attitudes
		18	Recruitment processes	44	Corrupt recruitment process
			Recruitment processes	45	Variations in recruitment processes between public and voluntary sectors
			Recruitment processes	46	unqualified graduates
		19	Donors' policies	47	Temporary jobs and donors policies
			Donors' policies	48	Donors-driven interventions
		20	Coordination	49	Employers' coordination with universities
			Coordination	50	Inconsistent jobs descriptions
		21	Legal environment	51	Legal recognition and employability
4	Policy and Legal Environment	22	Availability and applicability of social policies, including policies for social work education	52	Applications of existing social policies
			Availability and applicability of social policies	53	MoEHE and quality assurance role

				54	Absent national vision for social work education
		23	Coordination	55	Coordination between decision-makers and academic institutions on policy-related issues
		24	Legal environment	56	Absent regulatory laws
			Legal environment	57	Weak rule of law and the alternative means to solve social problems
	Professional Leadership	25	PUSWP roles	58	Weakened role of PUSWP by political divide
			PUSWP roles	59	PUSWP Relations with the authority in Gaza
			PUSWP Roles	60	PUSWP monitoring role with public and voluntary sectors
		26	PUSWP vision of the profession	61	Missing vision of the social work profession
		27	PUSWP organizational structure	62	PUSWP weak internal organisational structure
		28	PUSWP Constituency	63	Attitudes of PUSWP constituency
			PUSWP Roles	64	Weak PUSWP role with the community / public
		29	Coordination with universities and labor market	65	PUSWP relations with universities and employers
	Security and Political Environment	30	Political divide	66	Weakness role of PUSWP by political divide
		31	Security regime	67	No development interventions under the occupation
6			Security regime	68	Access (between Gaza and West Bank
			Security regime	69	The impact of occupation on socioeconomic life and well-being of Palestinian citizens
		32	Siege	70	Impact of siege on human development opportunities
		33	Donors' policies	71	Post-colonial ideologies and donors' policies in Palestine
				72	Donors-driven interventions

Annex (15)

Focus Groups / Quotations						
Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Initial Themes	Quotations	PAR.	
Community Attitude	Progress on the status	The status of the profession in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has improved	Graduates and academics from the West Bank and Gaza Strip believe that the status of the social work profession has improved gradually , and now it is much better than some decades ago. More recognised and present in many field of interventions	"To me, the status of social work profession started to develop and progress, it started to reflect on all fields of life" AGS-01, Par2, L13-14	GGs-01, Par2, GWB-03-Par2, GWB-05-Par3, GWB-06-Par2, AWB-10-Par1, AWB-10-Par2, AWB-12-Par1, AWB-13-Par2	8
	Community awareness	The positive impact of legal and policy context on the status of the profession in Jerusalem	Status of Social workers in Jerusalem is much better due to the different legal and policy context	"In the case of our experience and work with municipality of Jerusalem, we think that we have respectful status in the field that we work in specially that we are dealing with categories of people who have different problems. We intervene in many issues; our intervention and recommendations are accepted especially in Israeli courts, in conflict issues, children and hospitals" (GJ-04-Par01, L06-10).	GJ-04-Par1, GJ-04-Par2	2

				<p>"Change has slowly started among people, till now there is no recognition of the services that we present in counselling, all people are waiting and asking for financial assistances, they think that these two types of services are associated together in spite of our efforts to separate them" (GJ-04-Par2, L44-47).</p>		
	Community awareness	Introducing more services diluted the stigma on the role of social workers, but the community still confusing the roles and concepts	In Jerusalem Services moved from cash and food to a wider spectrum of services which influenced the status very positively but not to the level social workers aspire. Palestinian community in Jerusalem still confusing the roles and concepts, and some people still resisting the new roles.	<p>"In the last few years, social work moved from presenting financial assistances to provide other types of social or environmental services and helping people to solve their problems, therefore, social work profession improved but not in the level we aspire for" (GJ-04-Par1, L15-18).</p>	GJ-04-Par1, GWB-03-Par1, GJ-04-Par2,	3

				<p>"When we talk about practice, today we say that social work profession exists in all private and governmental institutions in Palestine, and we can see that there is improvement, development and collaboration from people as there is clear development compared with previous years, also people consult social workers in the pedagogical, psychological services" (GWB-03, Par1, L12-16)</p>		
	Community awareness	Openness to people's requests, beyond social workers' role adds more confusion in the roles of the social worker within the local community.	The role of assisting citizens to communicate their problems in Hebrew was perceived as part of the social workers role in Jerusalem which is not true. This has become another stigma to them there.		GJ-04-Par1	1

	Community awareness	Stigma on the roles & the impact of the shift in types of services from cash/food to psychosocial support	Shifting the focus of services from cash and food to more psychosocial interventions brought huge challenge with community acceptance of the new roles of the social workers. However, this has contributed to the change in the community views of the role of the social worker in Jerusalem		GJ-04-P4	1
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	Community awareness	The status of the profession compared with other professions is very low	It has a weak status compared with other profession in Palestine; it has no respect in the community. The community has little info about the profession, its definition and roles. The community doesn't recognise it as an important profession for them beyond the food and cash assistance	"The status of social work is bad and the social work specialization is marginalized compared with other specializations" (AGS-02-Par1, L07-08)	GGs-01-Par 1, GGS-01-Par4, GGS-02-Par1, GWB-03-Par2, GWB-07-Par1, GWB-07-Par6, GWB-06-Par3, AGS-09-Par1, AGS-09-Par4, AGS-09-Par5, AGS-09-Par7, AGS-08-Par4, AWB-11-Par1, AWB-10-Par1, AWB-10-Par2, AWB-13-Par1	16
				"People's undermine the social work profession compared with other professions, this is because of the circumstances that we live in, there is no respect for the profession in the Palestinian society" (GWBS-05-Par2, L09-12)		
	Comparison	The compared status of social work profession in Palestine	Compared with other Arab countries as a result of the conditions we live in, we are in better position than many		GGs-01-Par 2, GWB-03-Par1,	2

		with other Arab countries	other countries except Egypt			
	Community awareness	Confused concepts and roles	People don't understand the role of the social work profession, and its importance for them like other professions. Also, they are mixing it with other professions like psychologist and researcher.	"When I joined social work specialization, people were shocked and asked what about your future and what you are going to work? In school counselling or what??" (GWB-03-Par2, L100-102)	GWB-03-Par2, AGS-09-Par2, AGS-08-Par1, AGS-08-Par3, AWB-11-Par1, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-11-Par4, AWB-10-Par3, AWB-12-Par1, AWB-13-Par1	10
				"People have misunderstanding of the role of social worker, they think that social worker is a researcher who presents assistance and coupon only" (AGS-09-Par2, L40-42)		

	Community awareness	Stigma on the roles	Stigma , it is associated with coupons' distribution	"Social worker's job is associated with coupons or presenting tangible or financial assistances, this reflects on people's view of his role which becomes worse and his role became almost not recognized for many reasons "AGS -01, Par 1, L49-51	GGs-01-Par1, GWB-07-Par7, GWB-06-Par1, AGS-09-Par1, AGS-09-Par4, AGS-09-Par5, AGS-09-Par7, AGS-08-Par1, AGS-08-Par2, AGS-08-Par4, AGS-08-Par3, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-10-Par3, AWB-13-Par1, GGS-02-Par3,	15
				"The society looks at the profession as a secondary work with no importance, as people think that the role of the profession and social workers is only to provide cash assistance and food coupon" (AGS-09-Par1, L12-14).		
				"The coupon and assistance is the most important concern of people. This contributes to form people's perceptions about social work profession" (AGS-02-Par3. L38-39)		

	Community awareness	Stigma on the roles	Stigma is associated to social worker when food and cash are of concern including Israel. So regardless the legal status of the social worker, his job will be stigmatized if associated to these services	"I worked at the Israeli social welfare, I found that the people's vision to social worker role is still the same as he presents financial assistance, all the time people asking about the financial assistance not about any other type of intervention like psychosocial intervention, this creates and promotes the stigma on this profession and the role of social worker" (GJ-04-Par2, L30-34).	AWB-10-Par1, AWB-13-Par3, GJ-04-Par2	2
	Conservative culture	Social work intervention perceived as breaching the privacy of people	Society is conservative and doesn't accept to share private problems with social workers because social and religious traditions do not allow social workers to interfere in private social problems	"The perception of the society of the profession which says that it is a shame to show our secrets, problems and our privacy to social workers because customs and traditions don't allow that"(AGS-01-Par2, L63-65)	GGs-01-Par2, GWB-06-Par1, AGS-08-Par3, AWB-12-Par3,	4
				"The social work at Gaza strip is related to religious associations which related to some parties, they think that anyone can do social worker role, this affects the appreciation and the status of the profession" (AGS-08-Par3, L20-22)		

	Community awareness	Role of MoEHE in introducing the profession to the wider community	Social profession is not introduced to society through elementary, preparatory and secondary education	"Scientific research is very weak. We depend on frequent and traditional theories which are far away from the Palestinian reality; there are no studies on social work that study phenomena's in the Palestinian society where we can link it with the reality" (GWB-05-Par2,L176-179).	GWB-05-Par3, GWB-05-Par2, AWB-11-Par1, AWB-11-Par1, AWB-12-Par4,	5
	Conservative culture	Community conservative attitudes	The conservative culture of society perpetuates the resistance to social work interventions (religious and tribal traditions)	~Other important point is that people refuse to allow us to intervene on their private issues" AGS-09-Par6, L71-72).	GWB-07-Par3, AGS-09-Par6, AGS-08-Par2, AWB-10-Par3, AWB-10-Par2, AWB-12-Par1,	6
Social Work Education and Training	Relevance of curricula	Irrelevant curricula and outdated textbooks	Some course and textbooks are irrelevant to social work		GGs-01-Par4, AGS-01-Par1, GWB-03,Par4, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-12-Par3,	5

	Relevance of curricula		Irrelevant and outdated curricula to reality (Indeginisation)	"Educational content is far away from the Palestinian reality and there is no relation, not associated with it and different from what is applying on the ground" (AGS-02-Par2, L56-58).	GGs-02-Par2, GWB-03-Par5, AGS-09-Par1, AGS-09-Par5, AGS-08-Par2, AGS-08-Par4, AWB-11-Par3, AWB-10-Par4, AWB-12-Par5	9
				"Teaching social work in universities is far away from the reality and from our work in the field. In addition to this, the courses don't add anything new to the student as all of the materials are old information and there are no courses that increase and feed the student in a scientific way" (AGS-08, Par.2, L65-68)		
	coordination	Coordination with MoEHE	Lack of coordination with MoEHE about education policies and planning with labor market demands		GWB-07-Par3	1

				<p>"There is a wide gap between Social work teaching in universities and the practice in the field, moreover, our work is away from what we learned at universities. Universities are supposed, when teaching social work, to consider the reality and its problems to include it in books and courses because there are many problems and fields of work that we must work with but we can't because we aren't trained well to do it" (AGS-09-Par1, L91-96)</p>		
	Relevance of curricula	Irrelevant curricula and outdated textbooks	The curricula didn't reflect issues related to work in areas like Jerusalem and the strategies social workers can apply their	<p>"As a personal experience, there is a big difference between what we learned in the university compared with what existed in the field. We faced many difficulties, challenges and problems which are different from what we learnt theoretically in university like our problems in Hebrew language, communication, using methods of intervention and dealing with different forms used in our work" (GJ-04-P4, L188-192).</p>	GJ-04-Par4, GJ-04-Par2, GJ-04-Par3, GJ-04-Par1,	4

	Research	Limited research production and contributions to social work curricula	Research in social work in Palestine is very poor and it is not feeding into the curricula and practice	"It is supposed from the curriculum to suit the Palestinian society values and culture; it should depend on researches not only through copy and paste from previous studies. The problem isn't in research itself, the problem is in the use of the research results and recommendations whether it took into consideration or neglected. There is a need for decision makers to take these results and apply it to benefit from our researches" (AWB-11-Par2, L97-107).	GGs-02-Par2, AGS-08-Par2, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-13-Par2	4
	Research	Research publications	Research publication and the use of the research results are quite challenging issues	"the problem is in the results of researches, where they go and who will apply them? There is a problem in publishing research, where we can publish it and what is the benefit of publishing it? Some researchers do researches for the purposes of academic development and promotion" (AWB-11,Par1, L14-118).	AWB-11-Par2, AWB-11,Par1,	2

	Research	Research budget	Budget for research at local universities are low (if provided in the first place) because it doesn't feedback into their reputation and financial benefits	"There is no interest in research, there are no budgets and there is no interest to develop scientific research. Universities only allocate budgets to the researches that will help university in term of its reputation, status or in improving its financial condition" (AGS-08-Par3, L138-141)	AGS-08-Par3, AWB-10-Par2,	2
				"The possibilities and capabilities of universities are limited in term of scientific research which needs financial budgets to be allocated for research, this also associated with the government policy and support presented to scientific research" (AWB-10, Par2, L175-179).		
	Research	Qualifications in research	Technical capacities in research of social work academics in designing and applying research are quite limited and poor			
	Research	Motivation and incentives to conduct research	Low motivation or incentives to apply policy-research to develop public policies or develop a program in the universities or labor market			

	Curriculum	Irrelevant curricula and outdated textbooks	No capacities of motivation at universities to evaluate and develop the curriculum	"We cannot say that the universities aren't good, but unfortunately, there is no development or capacity to evaluate books , curricula and developing them, there is no ability or motivation to do that" (AGS-01, Par02, L71-73)	GGs-01-Par02,	1
	Quality of field training	Gap between theory and field training	What was learned in theoretical courses (Curricula) is different from what the social workers are supposed to apply during the field training course in the institutions	"The theoretical base differs from the practical one, when you go to the field you can see many challenges that you didn't see in the theoretical materials, for that we must give more priority and importance to the practical [field training] side [to experience the relevance between theory and practice]" (GWB-05-Par1, L77-79).	GGs-01-Par04, GWB-05-Par1, GWB-07-Par6, AWB-12-Par3,	5
	Quality of field training	Insufficient number field training courses	The number of field training courses is not sufficient, not unified, and not designed properly to meet its the goals of the training (2)(in some universities in Gaza only). Graduates get the actual experience after graduation through voluntary or paid jobs	"The theoretical materials are enough but the practical side [referring to field training] isn't enough to prepare social workers to enter the labor market in a professional way" (GWB-06-Par1, L38-40).	GGs-01-Par4, GWB-06-Par1, AGS-09-Par2, GWB-03-Par3, AWB-12-Par3, AWB-13-Par4,	6

				<p>"There is a wide gap between Social work teaching in universities and the practice in the field, moreover, our work is away from what we learned at universities. Universities are supposed, when teaching social work, to consider the reality and its problems to include it in books and courses because there are many problems and fields of work that we must work with but we can't because we aren't trained well to do it" (AGS-09, Par1, L93-98).</p>		
				<p>"The theoretical aspect is good but the problem is in the practical aspect which is totally different from what we learnt theoretically. In Gaza we have two trainings; the first one is to collect data and information about institutions, while the second one is to work with cases. Unfortunately, the problem is that social workers in institutions don't let us work with actual cases, therefore, we don't know anything until we graduate and volunteer to start acquire some practical experience" (GGS-01, Par 4, L79-85).</p>		

				<p>"We need an agreed upon methodology between all stakeholders on the field training, this should cover the different elements and procedure of the supervision process including the selection criteria of the qualified institutions, particularly the for the proper match between the level of training course and the programs offered by the institution, and signing contract agreements with institutions to clarify the requested requirements of training" (AWB-12-Par3, L208-213).</p>		
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	Human Resources	Availability of specialised academics in social work	Limited number of qualified academics in social work field. some of them are specialised and competent but others are not. Many of them have never practiced social work in the field	"For that, you find few of PHD holders and many of sociologists who teach social work, this reflects negatively on the quality of graduates' competencies in the field" (AGS-09-Par3, L102-105).	GWB-07-Par5, GWB-07-Par4, GWB-07-Par7, GWB-07-Par1, AGS-09-Par3, AGS-08-Par4, GGS-01-Par4, AGS-08-Par4, AWB-12-Par4, AWB-12-Par3, AWB-13-Par4,	11
				"There is a deep weakness related to the availability of academics, their number is low and their experience is weak, part of them don't practice the profession on the ground, doesn't know the real problems in the ground and most of them studied sociology or counselling" (AGS-08-Par4,L83-86).		

	Human Resources	Retaining qualified academics	Also, the benefits' package offered by universities is not competitive to offers from universities abroad. Therefore, you find many social work lecturers are qualified in other fields like sociology, psychology or education.	"In addition to that, the academics who teach students aren't specialized or Practitioners of social work which reflects negatively on students" (AGS-08-Par2, L14-16).	AGS-08-Par2,	1
	Quality of field training	Absence of field training policies	There is no formal policy to oblige institutions to provide the proper training during the field training courses	"Unfortunately, the problem is that social workers in institutions don't give us cases, therefore, we don't know anything until we graduating and volunteer to start acquire some practical experience. Institutions are mainly responsible on that because there is no law that allow us take cases and work with them" (GGS-01-Par 3, L82-85 & 91-92)	GGS-01-Par3,	1
	Quality of field training	Absence of sufficient supervision	There is no supervision , what is there is follow up by academic supervisors (Gaza Specific). Supervision on field training students is provided properly by some institutions but	"Supervision is very weak whether in the institutions or by the university supervisors. Students are not allowed to work with cases; they just do some office and clerical works inside institutions like arranging files" (AGS-09-Par2, L116-118).	GGS-01-Par2, AGS-09-Par2, GWB-07-Par6, AGS-01-Par2	3

			not all of them. What shapes the professional characters of the student is the proper supervision and not just spending hours in the institutions.			
				"There is a variation between institutions in the level of supervision and follow up on trained students, this means that there are institutions that see social worker has great support and able to work, while there are other institutions that don't present any support and don't help students to develop but it frustrates them"(AGS-01-Par2-L104-108)		
	Quality of field training	Absence of sufficient supervision	Supervision provided to social worker students from Jerusalem was not sufficient in their context	"There was insufficient supervision and follow up during the training period, the real supervision can help in reducing the difference between the theoretical and practical side and to assist us to overcome the problems and difficulties in the field work especially taking into consideration the special circumstances of Jerusalem and the ways of dealing with its problems such as the issue of existence and identity for the Palestinian citizens" (GJ-04-Par04, L201-206	GJ-04-Par2, GJ-04-Par4	2

	Quality of field training	Overloaded field supervisors	Supervision is a burden on field supervisors and academic supervisors, they sign the evaluation and signin sheets without carelessly, especially with the absence of incentives for them. Supervising students inside institutions is an extra burden for field supervisors, and there must be solutions to free-up these supervisors to provide sufficient attention to students	"It is worth noting that supervisors are overloaded and therefore, it is better to have coordinator or free supervisor for field work training" (GWB-06-Par2, L85-86)	GWB-07-Par4, GWB-07-Par3, GWB-07-Par2, GWB-06-Par2, GWB-03-Par1, GWB-03-Par2, AWB-10-Par1,	7
				"There are many students inside institutions and there is an extra burden on social workers in institutions because of the size of work which they are responsible for" (GWB-03-Par2, L163-165).		

	Quality of field training	Attitudes of institutions towards field training	Supervision by some universities and institutions are not taken seriously as it should be (the full process)	"Other point related to field work training and the way of evaluation of trained students, in some cases the evaluation depends on personal relations between supervisors and trained students which represent a big problem for us" (AWB-12-Par1, L201-203).	GWB-05-Par3, GWB-07-Par3, GWB-06-Par3, AWB-12-Par1,	4
	Quality of field training	qualifications of field supervisors	The qualifications of field supervisor and university supervisor are very poor or limited in the field of supervision	"Sometimes the supervisor is a new graduate who has no enough experience in supervising students. These challenges and problems affect the students and their skills" (AGS-09, Par2, L118-121).	AGGS-09-Par4, AWB-12-Par4, AWB-10-Par2,	3
	Quality of field training	Underdeveloped training manuals for field training in Gaza Strip	Training manuals are not developed according to realities in Gaza, these are collected from brochures	"In addition to the problems that we face in training, as the training manuals are collected from brochures, summaries reports or research but there is no original manuals of the universities to teach it to student" (AGS-08-Par2,L68-71)	AGS-08-Par2,	1
	Quality of field training	poor monitoring and evaluation of field training	No proper monitoring and evaluation of students training, neither by universities nor institutions			
	Infrastructure	Poor libraries	Outdated references and it doesn't help us produce quality	"Other point related to references and books used in teaching students , these references and books are old and not associated with reality"(AGS-08-	GGG-01-Par1, AGS-08-Par2,	2

			research for our courses	Par2,L16-18).		
		Irrelevant curricula and outdated textbooks	Textbooks of the social work courses are outdated and poorly translated by writers in other Arab countries	"There is no new text books and references. This is a reason for weakness of social work specialization" (AGS-01-Par1, L51-52)	GGs-01-Par1, AGS-08-Par2, AGS-08-Par5, AWB-11-Par1, AWB-13-Par2, AWB-13-Par4	6
	Quality of field training	Absence of field training policies	Students do not get the chance to be trained in the social work programs inside institutions. They are asked to other duties Sometime student are not allowed to dwork with real cases or join the social work during his / her work with cases.	"Some institutions have cases that are suitable for training but they prevent us dealing with these cases as they deal with us as strangers and we mustn't intervene in their way of work or cases. They don't let us follow or accompany social workers in their sessions and interviews with cases" (GGs-02-Par2, L55-58)	GGs-02-Par3, GGS-02-Par2, GGS-02-Par4,	3
	Quality of field training	Qualifications of field supervisors	Some supervisors inside institutions are not from the field of social work and they cannot help students develop their capacities during the training course	"The number of field work training credit hours is low and student can't complete what is required from him in the deadline time" (AGS-08-Par5,L98-99)	GGs-02-Par4, AGS-08-Par5, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-10-Par3, AWB-10-Par4,	5

	Quality of field training	Students attitudes towards field training	Dealing with field training as an admin requirement for graduation (by students), it is a matter of number of hours to be spent in the institutions and not more		GWB-03-Par5,	1
	Quality of field training	Institutional management capacities	The increased number of SW students doing their field training is challenging the management capacities of field placements institutions		AWB-10-Par2,	1
	Quality of field training	Absent of field training policies	There is a weakness in the level of coordination between universities and training institutions about the field training course and all its requirements and procedures	“There is a problem in the poor coordination in follow up between universities and institutions because the universities are the base in forming social workers, so it needs to improve its relations with institutions and to avoid giving extra burden on field supervisor , this burden must be reduced to develop social workers skills and knowledge” (GWB-03, Par1, L160-164).	GWB-03-Par1,	2

			Most of the universities leave it for the student to identify and select the institution where s/he wants to do the training	"It is supposed from universities to choose professional institutions that related to training purposes to train students in, but un fortunately, student went to un specialized institution just to finish his training regardless to its quality" (AWB-13, Par4, L100-103).		
	Quality of field training	Absent of field training policies	Supervison from universities and institutions is still weak in the West Bank and very weak in the Gaza Strip	"In addition to that, there is a weakness in supervision and in preparing social workers" (GWB-03-Par3, L123-124).	GWB-03-Par3,	1
	Quality of field training	Absentce offield training policies	Some universities have no critieria and standards to select the qualified isticutions for field training	"The main problem is in institution's type, we don't ask ourselves why we want to send student to this institution. Who is the supervisor on student and is he able to supervise or not? However, we send him and the student doesn't make use of field work training" (AWB-13-Par2, L111-114).	AWB-11-Par4, AWB-13-Par4, AWB-13-Par1, AWB-13-Par2,	4
				"We have criteria and there became protocol for us that we signed with some institutions to receipt students within clear methodology in that" (AWB-13, Par1, L119-120)		
	Quality of field training	Absence of field training policies	Limited number of institutions that are qualified for field training reuirements	"There are no specialized institutions for training" (AWB-13-Par1, L32)	AWB-10-Par3,	1

	Quality of field training	Absence of field training policies	Institutions are receiving students from different universities with different field training instructions; this causes a challenging situation to the theme and the quality of the training outcomes.	"I think there is a problem in the number of students coming from different universities to the same institutions but with different sets of instructions and training requirements which represents a challenge to capacity of the institution and the field supervisor to focus and provide proper supervision" (AWB-13-Par1, L104-106).	AWB-13-Par1,	1
	Relevance of curricula	Curricula and professional identity development	The generic social work curricula in the Palestinian universities is not helping social work students and graduates develop clear professional identity, nor helping them integrated in the labour market	"Also available curricula don't work on student's personality and skills that should be acquired through training" (GWB-05-Par5, L64-66).	GWB-03-Par3, GWB-06-Par1, AWB-11-Par2, GWB-05-Par5, AWB-13-Par2,	5

				<p>""There is a severe shortage in the PG qualifications because, students who travel to get PhD certificate don't come back to their country . At Bethlehem University, there are two teachers who are PhD holders because it is very expensive to resume PG studies , and when the students get their PhD and return to the country they find that the salaries are too bad [low] so, they choose to travel abroad looking for more rewarding opportunities" (II-01,L157-162)</p>		
				<p>"There are many reasons: - We don't have suitable books in Arabic language that could assist to educate students in a scientific and professional way, books are available in English language but also we have problem in using such materials due to the weakness of both teachers and students in English. Students used to translate the materials using Google translator or by sending it to someone to translate without any efforts from students. - Universities did not follow up what's new published in social work to update its libraries with the new published books. - In addition to that, teachers didn't publish any books or researches which related to our reality for different reasons such as non-availability of budget or no time for that" (AWB,Par2, L67-78).</p>		

	Quality of field training	Absence of field training policies	The field visits conducted by academic supervisors are not enough (one visit during the course)(Gaza-Specific)		AGS-08-Par6,	1
	Coordination	coordination with labor market	The number of graduates is increasing the vacancies are decreasing or limited	"Here we need knowledge and skills in different sides and on all levels especially the number of graduates is huge and the demand is low" (GWB-03,Pr 2, L105-106).	GWB-03-Par2,	1
	Admission policies and profitability	ineffective admission policies in screening applicants' potentials	The admission policies are not sufficient to identify or accept the students who have the adequate potentials for social work profession (Stigma on studying social work). This effects the quality of education even inside the classroom	"The problem is that we see students with low educational averages [3rd Secondary class grade] who join social work specialization. Here, universities should check if the student is able to complete studying social work and know his emotions and psychological attitudes" (GWB-05-Par1, L09-12).	GWB-03-Par2, GWB-05-Par1, GWB-05-Par3, GJ-04-Par4, GWB-06-Par1, GWB-06-Par2, AGS-09-Par5, AWB-11-Par1, AWB-10-Par1, AWB-10-Par2, AWB-12-Par3, AWB-12-Par2, AWB-13-Par3, AWB-13-Par1,	14

				<p>"The main interest of university is to polarize students to increase its profits regardless to student characteristics. So, universities don't conduct interviews because if they do that they will close social work department, therefore, we see that universities accept students regardless of student's characteristics, personality or even tendency" (AWB-11-Par1,L124-129).</p>		
				<p>"I want to return back to the question that related to the admissions policies, if we want to conduct interviews to choose the students we will close collage of social work, and I think this applied to all universities and in all specializations because that is associated with the financial policy of the university, and the competitive situation between universities" (AWB-10-Par2, L94-98).</p>		

				<p>"It isn't existed because if we set conditions we will not find any one in the specialization. Few years ago, our college set some conditions on some courses that its average must be above 70 and we notice that the demand on the specialization and the number of students reduced, so we stopped this condition. The admission criteria are associated with university policy, but in general all universities can't do that because it affects its financial situation especially in the condition of great competition between universities to accept and admit students" (AWB-12-Par2, L2018-226).</p>		
	Admission policies and profitability	Profitability agenda for admission policies	<p>Profitability of universities at the expense of the quality of educational outcomes, this increases the competition and makes the possibilities for cooperation at minimal levels.</p>	<p>"Today the policies of admission in university's becomes financial one more than educational one, and if the number of students doesn't increase they will close, therefore the program will close in all universities and unfortunately the universities just graduate students and don't know that these great numbers will not find work" (GWB-03-P5, L145-149).</p>	<p>GWB-03-Par5, GWB-05-Par1, GJ-04-Par3, GJ-04-Par4, GWB-07-Par1, GWB-06-Par1, AGS-09-Par5, AGS-08-Par2, AWB-11-Par1, AWB-13-Par3, AWB-13-Par1, AWB-13-Par3,</p>	12

				"The competition between universities encourages them to accept students with low averages and without any interview or evaluation of the quality and ability of students. This situation affects negatively the quality of outputs of the educational process and graduate weak, insufficiently skilled and unable to compete in the labor market" (AGS-09-Par5,L138-142)		
	Admission policies and profitability	Profitability agenda for admission policies	The number of graduates is increasing due open admission policies for profitability purposes, regardless the demand in the labor market.	"There is overcrowding in the number of graduates, and this is the responsibility of decision makers in employing and finding solutions for this aggravating problem" (GWBS-05-Par4,L25-27).	GWBS-05-Par4,	1
	Human Resources	staff development	There is no professional / staff development for academic staff to enhance the quality of their educational inputs	"The policy of universities doesn't motivate you to complete your study and this is related to frustrating universities' policy in this side and on all sides" (AWB-13, Par1, L84-85).	AWB-13-Par1, AWB-13-Par3, AGS-08-Par2, AWB-10-Par2,	5
	Human Resources	Recruitment	Conventional teaching methods, Some social work teachers have no experience in the field (no practice experiences)	"This related to the ability to polarize competent graduates with postgraduate degrees, but university doesn't look to the scientific competencies when employing, it depends unfortunately on nepotism, they don't put the suitable person on the suitable place" (GWB-07, Par3, L146-149).	GWB-07-Par3,	2

	Coordinatio n	relations to labour market	Coordination beteen universities and labor market	"I think this related to the lack of coordination between universities and the government ministries to know the number of graduates. Both they should coordinate about the number of vacancies in these ministries and institutions. Universities don't care if they find jobs or not, although there is a unit in all universities assigned the responsibility of follow up on graduates employment and it is supposed to help them in getting jobs" (GWB-07, Par. 3, L37-42).	GWB-05-Par4, GWB-07-Par7, GWB-06-Par1, GWB-06-Par2, AWB-11-Par4, AWB-10-Par4, GWB-07, Par. 3, GGS-09, Par. 1,	8
				"There is overcrowding in the number of graduates, and this is the responsibility of decision makers in employing and finding solutions for this aggravating problem" (GWB-05,Par.4, L25-27).		
				"Labour market isn't able to absorb the high number of graduates and it doesn't believe in the importance of existence social workers in its different sectors" (AWB-11, Par.2, L179-180).		
				"There is a wide gap between Social work teaching in universities and the practice in the field, moreover, our work is away from what we learned at universities. Universities are supposed, when teaching social work, to consider the reality and its problems to include it in books and courses because there are many problems and fields of work that we must work with		

				but we can't because we aren't trained well to do it. While preparing curriculum, Universities must take into consideration the participation of all community's sectors to make sure that curriculum is relevant to our reality" (GGS-09, Par. 1, L93-100).		
	Relations with graduates	follow up on graduates	Universities are not exerting efforts to follow on the situations of their graduates		AGS-08-Par3,	1
Employability and Labor Market	Recruitment	Employment requirements	To get a job, graduates need higher certificate than BSW		GGS-01-Par2,	1
	Employers' awareness and attitude	employers' understanding	Employers mixing the roles and don't understand the differences, so they ask him/her to perform duties that are not part of his/her job description or not trained to for. They consider the role of social worker as an easy task that anyone can do it!. Social workers are asked to perform duties not part of	"Institutions accept and employ graduates of social science in spite of the fact that the courses are different between specializations of social science. There is a difference between social work, sociology and psychology" GWB-03-Par1. L196-198)	GGS-01-Par1, AGS-01-Par4, GWB-03-Par1, GWB-05-Par2, GWB-07-Par1, GWB-06-Par1, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-11-Par4, AWB-12-Par1, AWB-13-Par2, AWB-10-Par4, GGS-02-Par1, AGS-08-Par4, AGS-08-Par3,	14

			<p>their job descriptions because the employers don't understand the boundaries of this profession and its particular identity. Employers undermine the status of this profession</p>		
				<p>"In institutions and society perceptions undervalue the social workers status, people let the status of the profession reaches this level" (AGS-02-Par1, L15-16).</p>	

	Awareness and attitudes of other professionals	Attitudes of other professionals	Other professionals and educated people don't understand what is our specialisation and what is our role	"I am working in the Ministry of health at health clinics, the role of the social worker is virtually non-existent and has no value, our role is ranked at the end of specialist list (after the psychologist and psychological therapist), they believe that the psychologist can do the role of social worker in the time that social worker couldn't do the role of psychologist. Even they neglect social workers in professional development programs, workshops and training. More than that, there are no risk allowances for social workers similar to other professionals. The position of social work in the Gaza Strip is oppressed and marginalized, and it is not fair to social workers. This refers to institutions behaviours and to the role that it assigns to the social worker, in addition to the community perception which is formed as a result of the type of services that the social worker provides" (AGS-09, Par 7, L74-85)	AGS-09-Par7, AWB-10-Par1,	4
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				<p>"For example, if we see hospitals in Western countries, we notice the presence of a social worker accompanied by a psychologist works together as a team and have a clear roles, this gives social work profession its identity and fully respect of others, while our social worker do everything in our institutions which will affect negatively the status of social work profession and create miss understanding of its nature. It is important to mention that institutions have created and reinforced this vision" (AWB-10,Par1, L43-49).</p>		
	language barriers in Jerusalem	Language barriers to employment	Learning the Hebrew language was a barrier to many social workers from Jerusalem to get jobs in the Israeli welfare system		GJ-04-Par3,	1
	Recruitment	Corrupt recruitment processes	Corrupt recruitment process (favorism, nepotism and political affiliation)	"I would like to say that labor market has many problems and what existed is not competition or competence-based but nepotism and corruption" (GWB-03-Par5, L200-201)	GWB-03-Par5, GWB-05-Par3, GWB-07-Par1, GWB-06-Par2, GWB-06-Par1, AGS-08-Par2, AGS-08-Par2, AWB-12-Par2	8

	Unemployment	Diminishing demands on social work graduates	The number of vacancies is decreasing and the number of graduates increasing. In some fields, jobs are not open for social workers (i.e. health and private sector).	"There is an increasing gap between the number of graduates and the number of vacancies in labor market" (AGS-09-Par5, L129-131)	GGs-01-Par1, GGS-02-Par5, AGS-09-Par2, AGS-09-Par5, AGS-08-Par3, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-12-Par1, AWB-12-Par2, AGS-09-Par2,	9
	Donors' policies	Temporary jobs and donors policies	Many of the jobs are temporary according to levels of funding and types of projects provided by donors	"There are no work opportunities for graduates, all the available jobs are temporary (just for two or three months), this affects negatively people's perceptions of the profession and its status accordingly" (AGS-09-Par2, L38-40)	GGs-01-Par1, AGS-09-Par2, AGS-08-Par5, AWB-12-Par2,	4
	Low wages	Low wages	Low wages compared with other professions, no psychological support or promotions	"Even the salaries of social workers is very low, this means that you worked ten years without promotion or psychological rehabilitation especially in the times of crises like intifada, this means that social worker doesn't get their rights" (GWB-03-Par3, L203-205).	GGs-01-Par1,	1
	Institutional management capacities	Qualifications of managers and supervisors	The qualifications of social work supervisors or managers inside institutions are not qualified in the same field, in some institutions.		GGs-02-Par1,	1

	On-the- Job Professional development	On-the-Job supervision	Lacking supervision during work	"The quality of supervision is poor. It is not systematic supervision and we as social workers present great and important services which affect people's lives" (GWB-03-Pat2, L131-132), "There is no professional supervision presented in institutions to the advantage of social workers" (GWB-03-Pat2, L207-208)	GWB-03-Par2	1
	Employers' awareness and attitude	Emergencies increase stigma on the roles	The demand on social workers raises during emergencies and decreases during calm situations	"During wars and crises, the demand of social workers increases because they need someone who can reach the borders and distribute assistances and coupons, but in normal conditions institutions don't bother about us when they have permanent vacancies although we volunteered, attended training courses"(AGS-02-Par2, L21-25).	GGs-02-Par2, GGS-02-Par5,	2
	Unemployment	Employment in private sector	No role of the private sector in addressing the employment of social work graduates. Private sector believes that social work profession is for charity and helping the needy		GWB-05-Par1,	1

	Fields of interventions in Gaza	Limited types of interventions in Gaza	The methods of interventions in Gaza are limited to community work and the emergency interventions. No applications of the case work, group work or research ...etc.	"We are working in the ministry of social development because of the intensive work we are not able to provide counselling services or professional intervention based on theories, this is because of the big work size and thousands of files that we must deal with" (AGS-09-Par6, l68-71)	AGS-09-Par2, AGS-09-Par6,	2
Policy and Legal Environment	Legal environment	Absent regulatory laws	There is no regulatory law or policies to govern the practice in the social work field, which influenced the status of this profession at all levels. There is no clear definition of the profession and who is the social worker. The identity of social workers is not clear in terms of the definitions of social work and the roles and boundaries of the social workers interventions. No national policy about these matters.	"The reason for degrading status, I think, is the absence of policies, plans and purposeful programs" (GWB-05-Par4, L42-43)	GWB-03, Par1, GWB-05-Par4, GWB-06-Par1, AWB-11-Par4, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-12-Par1, AWB-12-Par2, AWB-13-Par3, AWB-13-Par2, AWB-13-Par1, AWB-13-Par4, AWB-11-Par1, GWB-03-Par2, GWB-05-Par3	15

			<p>"I think there must be a law that organizes the profession. I think that universities have relations with licensed institutions and universities don't care whether the institution is qualified to train students or not, and to make sure that they getting high benefit from the training" (GWB-06, Par 01, L74-77).</p>		
			<p>"About laws, till now there is no real implementation of professional legislation and there are no elements of professional practice of the profession till now. There are efforts that being made in this side but unfortunately these efforts aren't applied and this related to political conflicts and to the disruption of the Legislative Council. Many workshops conducted in this side and the political situation may be the most important reason that leads to this failure" (GWB-03, Par 01, L23-28)</p>		
			<p>"Till now, I am as practical social worker doesn't know my boundaries , where I want to reach or where are we from other professions. There is no clarity about our identity as social workers and this affected social worker personality as you accept to work in everything according as you are requested to do by your manager" (GWB-03-Par2, L50-54).</p>		

		Absent accreditation policy	There is no accreditation process to define who is qualified to practice social work and get a job			
	National vision and policies for the profession (including social work education)	Coordination between universities and institutions on policy issues	Lack of coordination between universities and social work programs		GWB-07-Par3, GWB-05-Par5, GWB-05-Par4, GWB-05-Par3, GWB-07-Par2, AWB-13-Par3, GWB-05-Par2, AWB-12-Par1, AWB-12-Par2,	9
		Decentralised admission policies	MoEHE is not taking any role in the admission policies to control the number of graduates that match the demands of labour market	"I think no, the ministry doesn't provide any support in this regard, and its role is related to employment only (GWB-05-Par2, L58-59).		
		Role of MoEHE in developing the social work profession	The role of the MoEHE is very passive and doesn't help this profession to develop or improve its status			

Professional Leadership	PUSWP roles	PUSWP Representation	The union is weak and has no role in representing the social workers and defending their rights	"Unfortunately, union doesn't do this role, therefore, there is no legal body that represents social worker to protect them and ask for their rights" (GWB-07-Par2, L20-22).	GGs-01-Par4, AGS-01-Par1, GWB-07-Par2, AGS-08-Par3, AGS-08-Par3, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-11-Par4, AWB-12-Par5, AWB-13-Par3, AWB-13-Par4, GWB-O7, Par 6,	11
				"I think there is a social workers union but its role isn't clear or strong enough, also it isn't able to do anything to the advantage of social workers" (AWB-13, Par3, L172-173).		
				"Union's role must be more active and effective. It must be a union for social work to discuss and solve all the problems, monitoring and following up graduates" (GWB-O7, Par6, L193-195)		
	PUSWP roles	PUSWP role in professional development	The union is not playing a role in the capacity development graduates (Gaza). In the West Bank, there is limited professional development	"I think that the profession is oppressed because all professions have unions except social work, this reduced from its status"(AGS-08-Par1,L6-8)	GGs-01-Par4, GWB-05-Par3, AGS-08-Par1,GWB-03-Par3,	4

			activities for the social workers after graduation to help them be updated in the field.			
	PUSWP roles	PUSWP role in community awareness	The union is not taking its role in clarifying the role of the social work profession and promoting it at community level	"In ninety's, social work didn't occupy the same status as today. It needs more specifications by the union and law sides; unfortunately our union is associated with persons not in a clear and specific methodology that serve social workers" (GWB-03,Par 4, L69-71)	GGs-01-Par4, GWB-03-Par2, GWB-06-Par2, AWB-11-Par1, GWB-07-Par3,	6
	PUSWP roles	PUSWP role in monitoring field training practices	The Union is not doing any intervention to improve the field training policies or procedures with universities or with institutions		GGs-02-Par4, GWB-03-Par1,	2
	PUSWP Management style	PUSWP individualised management practices / inconsistency	The union in at national level and at local levels (branches) is performing its activities and interventions based on the individuals leading it . There are no national policies to be followed by anyone leading it	"There is existed union which is a frame not anymore; there must be an assessment of the union's duties, and to know the size of its progress in serving the graduates. We need an active union not just services and travelling and we must develop and train social workers professionally on the professional skills" (GWB-03, Par 1, L34-38)	GWB-03-Par4, GWB-03, Par1,	1

			and by all of its members			
				"About the third aspect, the union of social workers which supposed to unify and protects social workers, I say that the union duty is to develop social workers and social work profession, also to work on skills and solve social workers problems" (GWB--03, Par 1, L30-33).		
	PUSWP organisational structure	Organisational structure of PUSWP	Structural challenges of the union (democratic elections, mixing social work and other social sciences, political affiliations, professional capacities of its leaders , financial resources, ...etc)	"Other point that related to absent role of the union of social workers in organizing the profession, the union also includes psychologists which makes us unable to classify ourselves where are we" (AWB-11,Par2, L29-31"	AWB-11-Par1, AWB-11-Par2, AWB-11-Par4,	3
Security and Political Environment	Political divide	Political divide creating unemployment challenges	The political divide and the blockade imposed on Gaza increase the unemployment rates among social work graduates because of the biased criteria of employment (political affiliation) or the denied access to get out of Gaza to	"The political situation, political divide and the blockade imposed on Gaza strip are the reasons affected our ability to get jobs, raising unemployment rate and increasing the number of graduates compared to the low work opportunities" (GGS-01-Par2, L130-133)	GGS-01-Par2,	1

			find a job abroad or resume your PG studies			
	Security regime	Moving between and within Gaza, WB and Jerusalem	Professionals and students cannot move freely out of Gaza, between Gaza and West Bank, between West Bank and Jerusalem, sometimes within West Bank.			1
	Seige	Seige on Gaza Strip	Blockade and financial challenges imposed on Gaza prevented many from resuming their PG education abroad	"As academics, we are aware and believe that there is a lot of graduates who study social work but few of them complete their postgraduate studies for several reasons like the closure of Gaza strip and the high financial cost" (AGS-09-Par3, L100-102)	AGS-09-Par3, AGS-09-Par5	2
				"There are many factors mainly the political situation, closure of Gaza strip, low work opportunities and people's tendency to get assistances from institutions and associations through social workers, this helps in forming this stigma" (AGS-09, Par4, L52-54)		

	Political divide	Political divide hindering the issuance of regulatory law	The political divide hindered the development / issuance of a regulatory law for the profession since 2006	"About laws, till now there is no real implementation of professional legislation and there are no elements of professional practice of the profession till now. There are efforts that being made in this side but unfortunately these efforts aren't applied and this related to political conflicts and to the disruption of the Legislative Council . Many workshops conducted in this side and the political situation may be the most important reason that leads to this failure" (GWB-03-Par1, L23-28).	GWB-03-Par1,	1
				"Gaza is suffering from political divide; the political parties employ their affiliates and others don't have anyone to help in getting job" (GGS-01, Par2, L139-140).		
	Political context in Jerusalem	Employment by Israeli authority in Jerusalem	Political parties in Jerusalem are fighting the Palestinian social workers employed by the Jerusalem municipality as it represents the Occupation authorities in the city		GJ-04-Par4,	1

	Political context in Jerusalem	Community confidence in social workers in Jerusalem	Social workers in Jerusalem are not trusted by the community when they are employed by the Israeli municipality in Jerusalem	"People who come to us think that we are associated with Israeli institutions such as national insurance, ministry of interior and the police, there is no trust between people and social workers because people think that we are spies and cooperate with Israelis, they think that we can book a turn for them in the ministry of interior or issuance of identities." (GJ-04-Par3, L53-57)	GJ-04-Par3,	1
	Political context in Jerusalem	Services shaping the community conceptions in Jerusalem	The type of services presented to Palestinian community in Jerusalem brings different conceptions about the role of the social worker. Working in community centres where no cash/food assistance and only cultural activities invokes people resistance to social workers roles and accuse them of collaborators with the municipality of Occupation and its agenda in the city.		GJ-04-Par3, GJ-04-Par2, GJ-04-Par4	3

	Political context in Jerusalem	challenges to professional identity in Jerusalem	The contradicting identity of social workers in Jerusalem,	"We have a history of struggle with the institutions of occupation; this situation is beneficial to our society in Jerusalem in the term of the assistances that we provide. The employees working with the municipality facing difficulties as they don't trust the municipality which provides assistance in one hand and demolished the housed or imposing high taxes on the citizens in the second hand. I am as a citizen afraid of the municipality because the occupation municipality aims to displace people and demolish their houses during the night time and provides assistance for them during the day; this creates a complex situation and its putting us in problems with ourselves first and with people second. " (GJ-04-Par1, L55-60).	GJ-04-Par1, GJ-04-Par2, GJ-04-Par4	3
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Annex (16)

Focus Groups – Themes					
	Global Themes		Organizing Themes		Basic Themes
1	Community Attitude	1	Community awareness	1	Impact of legal and policy context on community attitude
			Community awareness	2	Confused concepts and roles
			Community awareness	3	Openness to people's requests, beyonde social workers' role, would be missleading messege about the roles of the socil worker.
			Community awareness	4	Stigma on the roles & the impact of the shift in types of services from cash/food to psychosocial support
			Community awareness	5	Community view of the social work profission compared with other professions
			Community awareness	6	Stigma on the roles
			Community awareness	7	Social work in pre-tertiary education curriculum
		2	Conservative culture	8	Community doesn't accept the social workers intervening family's issues for religious and costums considerations.
2	Social Education Work and Training	3	Irrelavant curricula and outdated text books	9	Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books

		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books
		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books
		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books
	4	Coordination	10	Coordination with MoEHE
		Coordination	11	coordination with labor market
	5	Research	12	Limited research production
		Research	13	Research publication at regional and international levels
		Research	14	Budget allocated to research projects is not a priority for universities
	6	Quality of Field Training	15	Gap beteen theoretical curricula and field training
		Quality of Field Training	16	Absence of field training policies and poor commitments to best practices
		Quality of Field Training		Absence of field training policies and poor commitments to best practices

		Quality of Field Training	17	Instituional challenges	
		Quality of Field Training	18	Students attitudes towards field training	
	7	Admission policies and profitability	19	ineffective admission policies in screening applicants' potentials (including the increase in demand on social work education due emergencies)	
		Admission policies and profitability		ineffective admission policies in screening applicants' potentials	
	8	qualifications and avaiability of specialised academics in social worj	20	Availability and qualifications of specialised academics in social work	
		Human Resources	21	Staff development	
	9	Infrastructure		Irrelevant curricula and outdated text books	
	10	Relations with graduates	22	follow up on graduates	
3	Employment and Labor Market	11	Recruitment	23	Employment requirements
			Recruitment	24	Corrupt recruitment processes
		12	Employers' awareness and attitude	25	employers' understanding

		Employers' awareness and attitude, including private sector	26	Emergencies increase stigma on the roles
		Awareness and attitudes of other professionals	13	27 Attitudes of other professional
		language barriers in Jerusalem	14	28 Language barriers to employment
		Unemployment rate	15	29 Deminishing demands on social work graduates
				30 Employment in private sector
		Donors' policies	16	31 Temporary jobs and donors policies
		Low wages	17	32 Low wages
		Institutional management capacities	18	33 Qualifications of managers and supervisors
		On-the- Job Professional development	19	3 On-the-Job supervision
		Fields of interventions in Gaza	20	35 Limited types of interventions in Gaza
4	Policy and Legal Environment	Availability and applicability of social policies, including laws and policies for the profession	21	36 Absent regualtory laws

					Absent regulatory laws
		22	Coordination	37	Coordination between universities and institutions on policy issues
				38	Role of MoEHE in developing the social work profession
				39	Decentralised admission policies
5	Professional Leadership	23	PUSWP roles	40	PUSWP Representation
				41	PUSWP role in professional development
				42	PUSWP role in community awareness
				43	PUSWP role in monitoring field training practices
		24	PUSWP style of leadership	44	PUSWP individualised management practices
		25	PUSWP structure	45	Organisational structure of PUSWP
6	Security and Political Environment	26	Political divide	46	Political divide creating unemployability challenges
			Political divide	47	Political divide hindering the issuance of regulatory law

		27	Security regime	48	Restrictions on people's movement between WB, GS and Jerusalem
		28	Siege	49	Seige on Gaza Strip
		29	Political context in Jerusalem	50	Employment requirements identified by Israeli authorities in Jerusalem
			Political context in Jerusalem	51	Community confidence in social workers in Jerusalem
			Political context in Jerusalem	52	Services shaping the community conceptions in Jerusalem
			Political context in Jerusalem	53	challenges to professional identity in Jerusalem

Annex (17)



**UNIVERSITY
BIRMINGHAM**

**“The Social of Social Work Profession in Palestine: Challenges and Strategies for
Future Development”**

Individual Interview Schedule

By:

PhD Student, Mohammed (Ziad) Faraj

2017

Section One: Introduction

- The Researcher: [name and degree]
- The Research: [title, university, purpose and significance]
- The Interviewee: [professional identity and engagement in the social work field]
- Ethical Considerations: [confidentiality, consent letter and participant info sheet]

Section Two: Overview

- Status of the profession in general: Topics to be covered:
 - Historical background
 - Current status compared with previous times
 - Compared with other professions
 - Compared with other countries of similar context

Section Three: Challenges

- Areas of challenges to be covered (what, how, why and effects)
 - **Community** (stigma, awareness, attitudes, political context, employment opportunities, regulatory laws and accreditation, roles and humanitarian aid interventions ...etc)
 - **Education system** (curriculum, field placement, western localized theoretical frames, cadre, employment of staff, management / admin, coordination within university, with other universities inside and outside Palestine, privatization of education as part of the political context, legal environment)
 - **Employment** (raise/drop in employment rates, employment policies and practices, accountability and transparency, professionalism, supervision, capacity development, political context and donors policies, public vs voluntary sectors, coordination between employers, coordination with universities, social welfare policies in the country, privatization of welfare services,
 - **Representation** (democratic representation, professionalism v.s political polarity, legal environment, infrastructure of PUSWP, PUSWP and universities, PUSWP and employers, PUSWP and international cooperation / relations)
 - **Welfare Policies** (Is there any national welfare policy?, Roles of PNA in developing social work education, roles of PNA in developing quality assurance standards and policies of social work education and services, roles of PNA in monitoring employers practices / voluntary sector
 - **Inter-organizational coordination** (relations between universities, universities with PUSWP and Employers, Universities with PNA, International relations and development of social work profession)

- The ways by which the current situation of this profession generated and shaped
- Why these challenges existed? By which factors?
- Priorities and root causes & effects analysis
- Key actors / stakeholders and their roles

Section Three: Strategies

- Overarching strategy / national agenda
- Strategies at policy level, institutional level and community level
- Regional and international levels
- Challenges to these strategies? Why?

Section Four: Future Directions

- Areas for improvement; **current interventions** [what, why, how]
- Areas for improvement; **new interventions** [what, why, how]
- The **roles of education** and **services systems** in developing and implementing interventions? How?

Section Five: Conclusion

- Thank you
- Confidentiality note.
- Follow up and queries

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Annex (18)



**UNIVERSITY
BIRMINGHAM**

**“The Social of Social Work Profession in Palestine: Challenges and Strategies
for Future Development”**

Focus Groups Schedule

By:

PhD Student, Mohammed (Ziad) Faraj

2017

Section One: Introduction (15 min)

- Researcher & participants
- Research Background, purpose and significance
- Ethical considerations: Consent, confidentiality and part. Info sheet
- Follow up and queries

Section Two: Challenges (45 min)

- 2.1 Brainstorming about areas of challenges
- 2.2 What Are They? Education System Level, Labor Market Level, Professional Leadership & Identity Level, Socioeconomic, Political, and Security Level, legal Environment Level, Community Level
- 2.3 Priorities and processes (How?)
- 2.4 Root Causes and Effects Analysis (Why?)

Section Three: Strategies (20 min)

- Overarching strategy
- National Policies level strategies
- Institutional level strategies
- Community level strategies

Section Four: Contemporary Social Issues for Future Interventions (30 min)

- Current interventions and areas for improvement
- New interventions and areas for development
- Roles of education and services systems in developing and implementing interventions

Section Five: Concluding Notes (10 min)

- Thank You
- Confidentiality
- Follow up and queries

Annex (19)



UNIVERSITY
BIRMINGHAM

**Institute of Applied Social Studies (IASS)
School of Social Policy and Social Work**

PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION SHEET

1) Title of the research:-

“The challenges facing the development of the social work profession in Palestine and strategies to overcome them”

2) Who is carrying out the study?

Mohammed (Ziad) Yousef Faraj

Email: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

3) What the study is about: -

Social work profession in Palestine emerged and evolved over the last 45 years as a response to the needs of the Palestinian society which has been under drastic socioeconomic and political conditions including the Israeli colonial occupation. Since 1971, when the first two-year diploma of social work was established in East Jerusalem, this profession passed through an institutionalization process within the education and social services systems during the period in which the Israeli occupation was in full control of civil administration of the Palestinian society, and after 1994 when the Palestinian National Authority was established and took over this responsibility in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Despite the fact that 5-6 Palestinian universities are offering the first degree in social work, two of them offer the MSW, in addition to two-year diploma still offered in the West Bank (UNRWA institute), there has been no research conducted on the challenges in its

development as a profession that supposedly has to respond effectively and efficiently to the changing needs of the Palestinian population. Wide spectrum of stakeholders are supposed to act collectively on developing the social work education system and its applications through the public services and civil society, yet limited (if any at all) efforts are exerted to bring them around one table to discuss and analyse the current situation and envision the future of this profession. This research aims at initiating a process of investigations and analysis of the current status of the social work profession in Palestine, the challenges facing its development and the possible strategies to address them.

4) Research Questions:

This research will try to answer the following questions

4.1 What are the main challenges facing the development of social work profession in Palestine, the causes and processes that shaped them? How these challenges can be addressed?

Sub-Questions:

- What are the major challenges faced by the social work profession and social work education and training?
- What are the main factors that shaped these challenges? How? And why?
- How these challenges are prioritised by the different actors? Why?
- What are the effects of these challenges on the employability of social work graduates, the quality of social services, and the status of the profession at community level?
- What are the most effective and efficient ways to address these challenges?

4.2 What future areas of intervention that social work profession should consider? How will these interventions be integrated in the social work education programs, and social services interventions?

Sub-Questions:

- What are the contemporary issues influencing the quality of life of the Palestinian community and citizens?
- How social work education and interventions, provided by different sectors, would contribute to the efforts of addressing these issues?
- What policy changes are needed to facilitate and promote these interventions at mezzo and macro levels?

5) Methodology:

The researcher will try to answer the questions of this research using the qualitative research methods to explore and analyse the current status of the social work profession, the challenges in its development, the different functional and dysfunctional processes and

interactions between the different actors and with existing socioeconomic and political systems, and the strategies they would propose to address them. Individual interviews and focus groups will be the main research methods the researcher will apply to answer the above mentioned questions. Responses to these questions will be solicited from the perspectives of leading professionals at national level, heads of social work programs at national universities, social work academics, representatives of governmental and non-governmental employers, and social work graduates. With the consent of participants, interviews will be recorded where possible. This research will apply to the face-to-face communications with participants from the West Bank, skype with individual interviews /video conferencing with focus groups with participants from the Gaza Strip due to the accessibility challenges.

6) What will I have to do?

All participants are requested to reflect on their own individual perspectives and experiences as well as the representation of the positions they assume within the system of this profession in Palestine, while answering the different questions. Participation in this research is absolutely voluntary and withdrawal is also possible for a period after the interview. All participants are asked for their informed consent and to sign a consent form that the researcher will present to them prior to commencement of interviews or focus group.

7) What are the benefits of participating in the study?

This research is an opportunity for the key professionals, leaders of social work programs, social work teachers, graduates and employers to provide their inputs and voice their views, issues and concerns about the current status of this profession and its future endeavours. Furthermore, it is an attempt to pave the road for interested people and actors to start considering the need and demand for collective actions for the best interest of the Palestinian society through an empowered profession and professionals.

8) Is there any risk for me if I agree to participate?

All participation is absolutely voluntary; the research is conducted on an independent basis and your participation will not affect your position or services that you may receive in any way. All the information will be treated as confidential. Data from individual interviews will be recorded under a fictitious name. Whilst the participants for the focus groups may be known to each other and the information gleaned from these will be shared within the group as it is discussed, participants will be requested to keep the discussion confidential within the group. Any subsequent accounts that draw upon the content of the discussions (as with the interviews) will be reported only under fictitious names of participants.

9) Will the study cost anything?

Participants will bear no costs for their participation. The researcher will make sure that the costs of affording suitable venue and services (during the interviews and focus groups meeting) are fully covered.

10) What if I do not want to participate?

Your participation is fully voluntary and your withdrawal will be an easy and costless option for you to take. You will be able to withdraw at any stage before the interview or for a stated period after the interview has taken place.

11) What happens to the information?

The hard and electronic copies of the data collected will be kept stored securely and confidentially on an encrypted and bespoke University of Birmingham drive and preserved for a maximum of 10 years. It will only be accessible to the researcher and his supervisors.

All findings will be reported to University of Birmingham for the final submission of the doctorate.

12) What if I have any questions or do not understand something?

For any queries and clarifications you can contact the researcher using the contact details he provided:

- **Researcher's Contact Details:**

Email: [redacted] or [redacted]

Tel.: [redacted] [redacted]

- **The Local Advisor Contact Details:**

Dr. Belal A. Salamah

Email: [redacted] Tel: [redacted] Mobile: [redacted]

Add SG and JG here too

13) Participants' withdrawal:

You will be able to withdraw at any stage before the interview or before a specified period after the interview. After this time it will not be possible to withdraw as it will affect the data collection and the period for analysis.

14) How I can get a copy of the findings of this research?

The summary report on the findings of this research will be produced and distributed to all participants using the contact details they provided during their participation. Therefore, you need to make sure that you provide clear and working email address for this purpose if you would like a summary of the final report.

Annex (20)



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Institute of Applied Social Studies (IASS)

School of Social Policy and Social Work

Consent Form

1) Researcher

Name:	Mohammed (Ziad) Faraj
Research Title:	PhD Student at University of Birmingham
Contact Details	Email: [REDACTED] Mobile: [REDACTED]

2) Individual Interviews Participant:

Name (Optional):	
Title & Position:	
Institutions (Optional):	
Contact Details:	
Telephone:	
Mobile:	
Email:	
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face <input type="checkbox"/> Skype / video conferencing

3) Consent Form

Dear Participant:

Please tick (✓) the relevant boxes below to indicate your consent to taking part in this research. If you have any queries, please contact the researcher by email or telephone (details listed above).

Statement	Agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me by the researcher. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the research will involve individual interview for 60 minutes 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that I may withdraw from this study up to a specified time and without having to give an explanation or bearing any negative consequences or compensations. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the hard and electronic copies of the data collected will be kept stored securely and confidentially on an encrypted and bespoke University of Birmingham drive and preserved for a maximum of 10 years. It will only be accessible to the researcher and his supervisors. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the researcher will be discussing the progress of the research with his supervisors and others who are formally engaged in the management of this research at the University of Birmingham and the University of Bethlehem. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

I freely give my consent to participate in this research based on the above mentioned statements.

Signature: <hr/>	Date: ____ / ____ / _____
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Annex (21)



UNIVERSITY
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Institute of Applied Social Studies (IASS)

School of Social Policy and Social Work

Consent Form

4) Researcher

Name:	Mohammed (Ziad) Faraj
Research Title:	PhD Student at University of Birmingham
Contact Details	Email: [REDACTED] Mobile: [REDACTED]

5) Focus Group Participant:

Name (Optional):	
Title & Position:	
Institutions (Optional):	
Contact Details:	
Telephone:	
Mobile:	
Email:	
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face <input type="checkbox"/> Skype / video conferencing

6) Consent Form

Dear Participant:

Please tick (✓) the relevant boxes below to indicate your consent to taking part in this research. If you have any queries, please contact the researcher by email or telephone (details listed above).

Statement	Agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me by the researcher. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the research will involve focus group interview for 75 minutes 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that I may withdraw from this study up to a specified time and without having to give an explanation or bearing any negative consequences or compensations. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I have taken part in the focus groups, I understand that it will not be possible to withdraw from this research after the focus group discussion has taken place. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the details of this focus group discussion and of the participants' details should be treated with the utmost confidentiality and not be shared outside of this group. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the hard and electronic copies of the data collected will be kept stored securely and confidentially on an encrypted and bespoke University of Birmingham drive and preserved for a maximum of 10 years. It will only be accessible to the researcher and his supervisors. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the researcher will only be discussing the progress of the research with his supervisors and others who are formally engaged in the management of this research at the University of Birmingham and the University of Bethlehem. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

I freely give my consent to participate in this research based on the above-mentioned statements.

Signature: <hr/>	Date: ___ / ___ / _____
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