

Activism in Exile

How Palestinian youth construct and deploy collective action frames in opposition to the Palestinian leadership's politics of temporariness to mobilise for solutions to their marginalised position in Lebanon without compromising the right of return.

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Abstract

This research aims to explore and understand how Palestinian youth activists in Lebanon mobilise for solutions to their marginalised position in Lebanon, vis-à-vis their own leadership's politics of temporariness, without compromising the right of return. Through fieldwork conducted in Palestinian communities in Lebanon and using a theoretical framework that combines structuration theory with collective action frames, this thesis examines how politics of temporariness have been kept in place for decades, how new initiatives could arise despite the reinforcing character of the existing structure, how activism is articulated in frames, supported by resources and translated into activities, how the youth have impacted the community and how their activism has been challenged by the leadership and competing youth groups. This thesis concludes that the primary way in which the youth mobilise for solutions to their marginalised position is by arguing that better living conditions are required for instead of detrimental to return. This way of framing the situation leaves much room for action on the side of the Palestinians. Finally, this thesis identifies two risks that could hurt the youth activism: 1) becoming too dependent on political actors and 2) falling into clientelistic relationships.

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Map of the camps

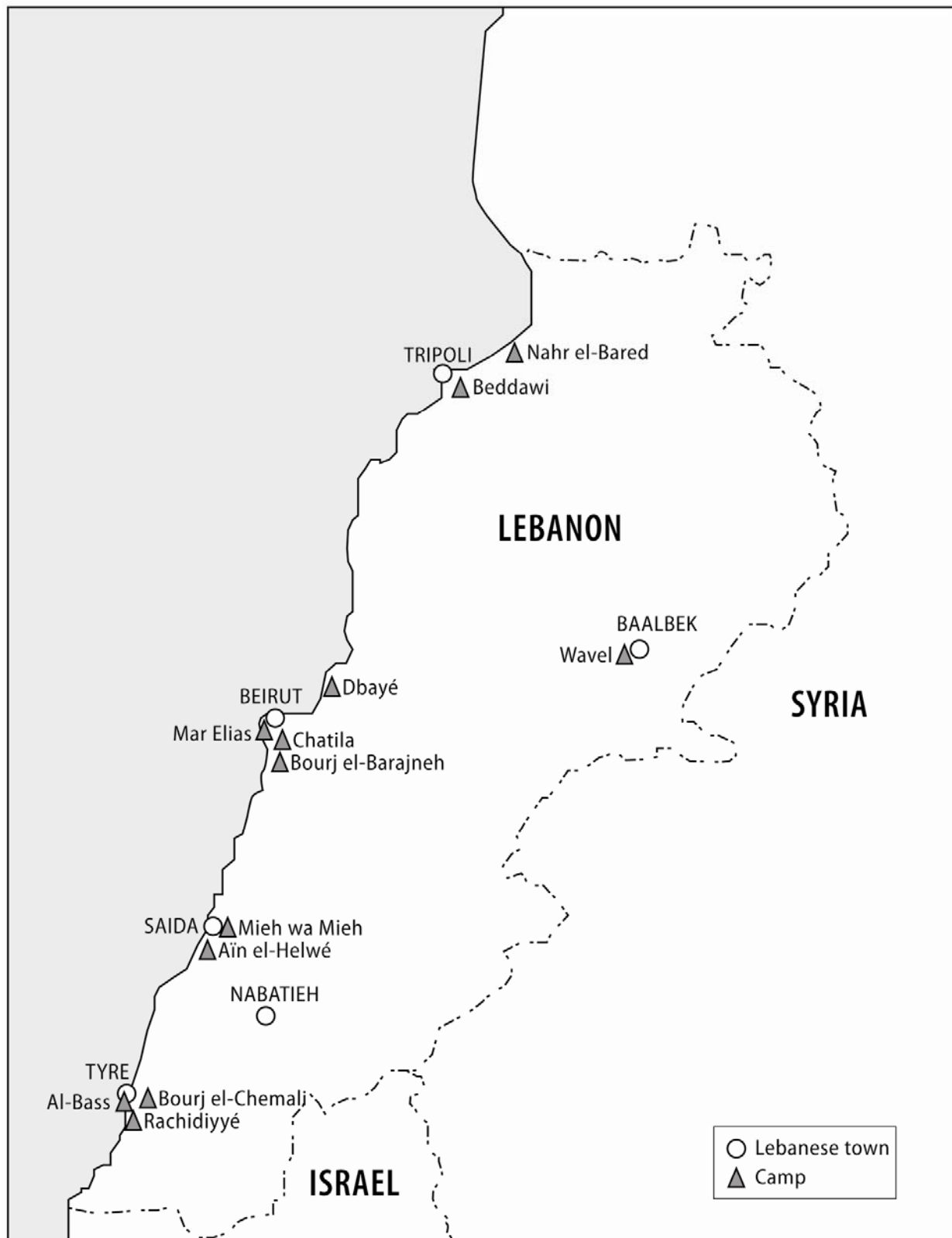


Figure 1: Map of Palestinian camps in Lebanon (ICG 2009, 32)

List of Abbreviations

BDS	Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MASMF	Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCC	Palestinian Cultural Club
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PRS	Protracted Refugee Situation
PYN	Palestinian Youth Network
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USCRI	United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

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Introduction

“Among the younger generation of refugees, though, few would comply with the idea that their meaning in life is to symbolize refugeehood.” (Tuastad 2012)

Context

After their expulsion from their homes by Israeli militias in 1948 – referred to by Palestinians as the *Nakba* meaning ‘catastrophe’ – around 100.000 of the roughly 700.000 people fleeing Palestine sought refuge in Lebanon (Stel 2017, 5). Consequently, the United Nations (UN) issued Resolution 194 which ruled that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbour should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date” (UNGA 1948, 24). Shortly after, in 1949, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was established by the UN to carry out relief and works programmes for Palestinian refugees. UNRWA estimates that in 2014, 449,957 Palestinians were living in Lebanon, of which fifty-three per cent are living in one of the twelve official UNRWA camps (UNRWA 2014; UNHCR 2016).

Governance of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon is characterised by division and rivalry. Competing factions reflect the political division in Palestine. According to an International Crisis Group (ICG) report, the two largest groups of factions are the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), which includes Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and Tahaluf, which includes Hamas and other Syria-aligned factions (2009, 1). In addition, there is a group of more extremist jihadi-leaning Islamist forces that rely on violent tactics more than anything else (ICG 2009, 1). Since 1969, shortly after the Cairo accords were established, the Lebanese army is not allowed to enter the camps and camp governance has been in the hands of the Popular Committees (ICG 2009, 22). These semi-official organisations are appointed by the factions according to their respective influence in the camps, and responsible for providing services such as electricity and water (Roberts 2010, 117, 148).

The right of return has always played a central role in the lives of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. A critical moment was the 1978 Israeli invasion of South Lebanon, which led to the evacuation of the PLO to Tunis in 1982 (Allan 2014, 11-12). The consequential feeling of abandonment among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was amplified by the 1993 Oslo accords between Israel and the PLO, which largely ignored the refugee question (Allan 2014, 12). The right of return was never even mentioned (Allan 2014, 12). The focus on return has been used by Lebanese authorities to justify their policies of non-integration and exclusion, by arguing that naturalisation would symbolise abandoning the Palestinian identity and return to the homeland (Allan 2014, 12). The Palestinian factions also continue to uphold the focus on the return and resist naturalisation, even though this nationalist discourse feeds into the marginalised position of Palestinian refugees in

Lebanon. As a result of this climate, where both their host state and their own political leaders are resisting any form of naturalisation, Palestinians in Lebanon are denied many of their basic human rights. This dichotomy of ‘return’ versus ‘naturalisation’ influences the camps, which are designed as though they are temporary accommodations (Allan 2014, 12). The ‘temporariness’ with which the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon is being governed is clear from a quote from Roberts (2010, 172-173):

Most significant is the state of limbo which Palestinians in Lebanon have experienced. A situation lasting six decades cannot be described as temporary; yet the status of Palestinian camp communities offers little sense of stability or sustainability. The restriction imposed on the Palestinians limit their ability to make provision for the future because their activities are controlled and their situation is determined by the Lebanese state, regional politics and the international community.

Complication

It is in this context that since recent years, Palestinian youth in the diaspora in Lebanon have become increasingly indignant with the Popular Committees that govern the Palestinian camps. According to Allan, recently “refugees are pushing back against identities rooted in a purely nationalist discourse” (2014, 5). Similarly, Tuastad argues that “among the younger generation of refugees [...] few would comply with the idea that their meaning in life is to symbolise refugeehood” (2012, 10). However, this does *not* mean that they are willing to compromise their ‘right of return’. This raises the following complication: *how do Palestinian youth mobilise for solutions to their marginalised position in Lebanon without giving up on the ‘right of return’?* Asking this question means stepping into the middle ground between the focus on return and the taboo on naturalisation.

So far, one has had to rely on blog posts and news articles to find out what this youth mobilisation looks like. Stel, for example, wrote a blog post about the generational divide within Palestinian communities in Lebanon, in which she observed that the youth are increasingly critical of their own leadership in the camps and accuse them of ‘sticking to their chairs’ (Stel 2014; 2015). In another blog post, Sogge observed how “Palestinians were directing their anger against their own political elite in the refugee camps” and advocate for less corruption and more accountability (Sogge 2015). Hanafi and Long noted in an article on camp governance how the youth expressed “anger, outrage, pessimism, and apathy when questioned about the state of governance in their camps” (2010, 140-141).

However, no academic research has been done to analyse if and how these youth manage to create a middle ground between return and naturalisation and what this middle ground looks like. This is what I aim to do in this research: *explore* the ways in which Palestinian youth in Lebanon mobilise against the Palestinian leadership in the camps, and *understand* how they manage to do so. These

research goals indicate an epistemologically understanding and interpretive stance. I will try to understand from within how in this particular case these youth manage to mobilise against the existing structure. I will approach individuals as ‘situated actors’, which indicates an ontological stance that does not consider agency or structure the determining factor, but instead treats both as intertwined and mutually constitutive.

Theory

The phenomenon of Palestinian youth mobilising against the leadership of their own community will be treated in this research as a case of mobilisation of youth for collective action against their own leadership’s politics of temporariness in a situation of protracted liminality. The epistemologically interpretive stance of this research, combined with the ontological stance that considers both structure and agency as mutually constitutive, has led me to select Giddens’ structuration theory, with its emphasis on discourse, as the red theoretical line throughout my research. In applying this abstract theory to a concrete case of mobilisation, I will focus on both the construction and the deployment of Benford and Snow’s collective action frames as my main unit of analysis. Based on this I have formulated the following research puzzle:

What collective active frames do independent Palestinian youth construct and deploy in opposition to the Palestinian leadership’s politics of temporariness to mobilise for solutions to their marginalised position in Lebanon without compromising the right to return, from May 2011 to May 2017?

Relevance

This thesis will contribute to the existing academic debate by demonstrating the usefulness of applying of Giddens’ structuration theory to a case of social mobilisation. In addition, by combining Benford and Snow’s collective action frames with Giddens’ structuration theory, I will conclude that their conceptualisation is missing a few crucial parts, such as the symbolic and material resources that have to support a frame or story in order for it to be successful, and the practices that result from framing processes. As will be explained in more detail in chapter one, they focus on the ‘construction’ of collective action frames, whereas their ‘deployment’ is neglected. In addition, I will argue that Benford and Snow’s core framing tasks should include the elements of identity construction and emotion.

As for the societal relevance, approaching this case as a case of mobilisation against politics of temporariness in a situation of protracted liminality can provide insights into the dangers of ‘temporary protection’ and ‘reception in the region’, two concepts which play a large role in today’s public debate on refugee policy. As argued by Roberts (2010, 32), “the current legal framework for displaced populations was designed for temporary situations and is therefore inadequate to deal with

protracted situations”. While the number of protracted refugee groups is increasing, responses to these situations are still guided by temporariness and short-term solutions (Roberts 2010, 1). If European countries continue to hold onto the idea of ‘reception in the region’ and the international community governs these situations with temporary solutions, the image of Palestinians in Lebanon might just be what the future for today’s refugees looks like who are being kept outside Europe’s borders into their own ‘region’, such as the Syrians in the south of Turkey or the African refugees in Libya after the EU-Libya migrant deal.

According to UNHCR, the Palestinian refugee situation is “the most protracted and largest of all refugee problems in the world” (2006, 112). Diving into this extreme case of politics of temporariness in a situation of protracted liminality, where these policies and modes of governance have been in place since 1948, will provide valuable insights into the dangers and downsides of holding onto the provision of temporary protection ‘in the region’. In the words of Roberts, what is lacking is “effective long-term support that is sustainable and promotes development, returns dignity and self-respect to the refugee groups, and is acceptable to the host community” (2010, 1). Researching how the newest generation of refugees in the case of Palestinians in Lebanon mobilises against the temporary character of the governance of their situation can provide insight into how to provide this.

In addition, tapping into the middle ground between improving living conditions and compromising return is relevant because it can provide arguments that counter the dominant understanding that both are mutually exclusive. Researching the mobilisation of Palestinian youth for alternatives can provide insight into ways to improve their living conditions without giving up on their long-term goals.

Finally, this research gives voice to the Palestinian youth living in exile in Lebanon, who are often forgotten in international politics. By approaching this empirical complication as a case of social mobilisation, this research will help the world to see these youth not as victimised refugees, which is how they are usually portrayed, but rather as any other younger generation, not very different from myself, just wanting a productive life and a dignified future.

Research Design

As mentioned above, Giddens’ structuration theory will form the theoretical red line throughout my thesis. Since Giddens argues that structure becomes manifest in discourses and agency in social practices, it makes sense to focus on both language and action in my research methodology. The specific data collection method that fits with this epistemological and ontological nature of the research puzzle is in-depth interviewing since this is an individualist-oriented method that offers the opportunity for elaboration on motives and processes that contribute to the understanding more than the explaining of the phenomenon.

Operationalisation of the research puzzle

A few of the concepts in my research puzzle are in need of clarification and definition. The main unit of observation is the youth. However, 'youth' is an ambiguous concept. Based on the ages of my respondents and their own understandings of the concept of 'youth', I have decided to define youth as people ranging from the age of eighteen to thirty-five. These people generally belong to the third generation of Palestinians in Lebanon.

I started setting up this research with the assumption that I would be looking at an intergenerational conflict. This assumption turned out to be false. According to the youth, the factions are not against youth per se, but they are against *independent* youth activism.¹ By independent, I mean youth that is not affiliated with any faction. Likewise, the youth do not target the older generation, since some members of the older generation are supporting the youth in their activities, but they target the Palestinian leadership, who belong to the older generation. Therefore, the main relationship studied is between independent Palestinian youth activists and the Palestinian leadership in Lebanon.

For the starting point of my time frame, I chose May 2011, because several youth activists indicated that it was around this time they formed their youth groups and the number of Palestinian youth groups in Lebanon started to rapidly increase. Some indicated the Palestinian national holiday 'Land Day' in May 2011, during which Palestinians in several countries marched to the border with Israel, as a turning point. My time frame ends in May 2017 because I left Lebanon on 2 May 2017.

Sampling

The sampling method used for this research is purposive sampling. Because of the limited time frame and the fact that there is no large population of Palestinian youth activists for me to randomly sample, non-probability sampling was used. I started out with PhD student Nora Stel who conducted her research in Palestinian communities in Lebanon. From there I used the snowball sample technique to get more contacts and judged whether these contacts would be useful to my research based on the initial information I received about them. Eventually, I interviewed 24 persons.

Soon I found out that many of the youths that engage in the kind of activism I aimed to research are connected to or a member of the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN), an attempt to coordinate youth activism on a national level. From this point on, I selected my respondents in relation to this network: they were a member of the PYN, they were connected, they supported it, they were critical or they were not connected at all. Because of the limited existing knowledge on the Palestinian youth activist groups in Lebanon, I did not feel that I had enough knowledge beforehand to choose a specific youth group or a specific camp. By choosing to focus on this network, I could bring focus to my topic while at the same time research activism throughout the country. However,

¹ Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.
Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.
Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

focusing on this specific group means that I will not be able to make generalised claims about all active Palestinian youth. But this is not the goal of my research. Rather, it aims to further the understanding of the processes of meaning making and framing of this specific group of Palestinian youth.

Data collection techniques

This research uses the following qualitative methods of data collection: literature research, in-depth interviewing, content analysis of social media, and non-participant observation.

To start with, I have used both academic literatures, such as journal articles and books, and non-academic literature, such as reports, news articles and blog posts, to gain background information about the context of my topic. I have also used these sources to answer my first sub-question.

For the purpose of this research, I conducted field research in Lebanon from 1 March until 2 May 2017, during which I have conducted 23 in-depth interviews. I have interviewed Palestinian youth activists, other Palestinian youth, funders and supporters of the youth groups, critics of the youth groups and people connected to the youth groups. I resided in Beirut, but have conducted interviews in the cities and surroundings of Beirut, Saida, Sour and Tripoli. I met my respondents in different types of locations, but mostly in either cafes or restaurants or in their youth centres in the camps. Often my respondent spoke English well enough to conduct the interview in English, but in some cases, a translator was required. Either my respondents would bring a translator, or I would bring one myself.

To structure my interviews I used a topic list, which centred on three main themes derived from an analytic frame informed by Gamson's conceptualisation of collective action frames involving the elements of injustice, agency and identity. In addition, it contained questions about the relationship between the youth and the Palestinian factions, the activities they conducted in the camps and their expectations for the future. I adjusted and added to this topic list as I went along. I have recorded 16 of my 23 interviews. Those which I recorded, I have transcribed which made data analysis that much easier. During the interviews where I did not use a recorder, I did not deem it appropriate to pull out my voice recorder for various reasons largely based on intuition. In these cases, I made extensive notes during the interview, which I wrote out directly after the interview.

Third, I have conducted a content analysis of statements, messages, claims, reports and accounts on Facebook and websites in order to triangulate the claims made by my interviewees and to find out more about how they deploy their frames, translate them into forms of collective action and try to mobilise movement adherents.

Finally, I engaged in non-participant observation in the refugee camps and the youth centres, for example by observing infrastructure and drawings on the walls, to support my findings. When I started out my research I doubted whether or not it would be necessary to actually enter the camps. I was hesitant to do so at first because of travel warnings and stigmas surrounding the refugee camps.

However, I quickly noticed that my respondents highly appreciated it if I would visit the camps, because they felt that I would not truly understand their activities and living conditions without paying a visit to the environment in which the activism takes place. Therefore I decided to visit the camps of the youth whenever I deemed it safe enough to do so. Aside from the observations I could do in the youth centres, I also noticed that visiting the camps was beneficial because it helped people to open up and trust me, and it offered me the opportunity to meet more youth activists. In the end, I met ten of my respondents in five different camps. The others I met in cities or town close to the camps or in Beirut, as many of the youth from camps all across Lebanon work in the capital.

Data analysis

To analyse the gathered data I used Nvivo, a software for qualitative analysis of textual information. By coding all of my data I was able to categorise it per sub-question, which enabled me to make comparisons between different chunks of data. By comparing the answers between Palestinian youth in the same communities, between Palestinian youth from different communities and between Palestinian youth and experts/organisations, I was able to find patterns in how Palestinian youth mobilise against their leadership.

Challenges and limitations

I want to acknowledge several limitations to my research. First of all, since I do not speak Arabic well enough to conduct the interviews in Arabic, all of my interviews were conducted in English. Most of my interviewees were university-educated and spoke English very well, but in some cases, I had to make use of a translator. Sometimes my respondents brought a friend or acquaintance that could translate for us, but the disadvantage was that I did not know in advance how well the translator spoke English and what his or her relationship to the respondent was. This may have resulted in wrongful or incomplete translations at times, or to the respondents' answers being influenced by the presence of the translator. In other cases, the respondent claimed to speak English well, but in fact struggled to find words and therefore was not able to elaborate on their answers at times.

The limitation of language also applies to the textual sources I used. To triangulate the data gathered from interviews, I used of Facebook posts, online and printed magazine articles and website content. A part of this content was written in Arabic. Due to temporal and financial constraints, I was unable to have large amounts of texts translated by an official translator. Instead, I made use of Google Translate. This translation programme was sufficient to give me a general impression of what the texts are about; however, it does not enable me to directly quote from these sources. To limit the risk of information getting lost in translation, I have only used in my thesis the general idea of these texts and not precise and detailed information. In cases where certain content was only available in Arabic, I have used an English translation of the source in my bibliography.

Also, more than once my respondent brought a friend to the interview without informing me

about that in advance. Every time this friend was also a youth activist and relevant for me to meet, so I did not want to tell that person to leave nor would it have benefitted my research to do so. Although their presence at the interview also may have influenced the answers my respondents gave slightly, I do not expect this effect to be large, since they were also youth activists themselves and therefore ‘on the same team’.

In addition, the epistemological interpretive stance of this research creates the problem of double hermeneutics, in which hermeneutics, or interpretation, “enters into the social sciences on two levels – the world of the social scientist and the world studied by the social scientist which is made meaningful through the activities of human subjects” (Maggs-Rapport 2001, 379). Simply stated, I will be making interpretations of interpretations, which runs the risk of information getting lost in translation. I have tried to mitigate this risk by conducting as many interviews as possible and triangulate the information with social media accounts, literature and the views of different stakeholders.

Furthermore, I spoke to youth or supporters of the youth, but not to their opponents: the factions. Therefore my claims about the factions’ discourse had to be based on secondary sources or on the interpretation of the youth. As for the section about the counterframing, I had to rely on what the youth told me about the resistance they experienced from the factions. Because many youths gave similar accounts I felt confident enough to at least state that this is how the framings by the factions were interpreted by the youth. But because it did not hear it first-hand from the factions, I cannot claim to know how they frame events and circumstances.

As I conducted my interviews, I noticed that I started to sympathise strongly with the members of the PYN. I never articulated these feelings to my respondents and have tried not to let them influence my interview questions, respondent choice and analysis. I discussed these feelings extensively with Mirte Bosch, my fellow Conflict Studies and Human Rights MA student in Lebanon to stay as aware as possible of the possible effects this bias could have on my research.

Being a young, female student from the Netherlands may also have influenced the process of data generation. Since I mainly interviewed young and progressive individuals, I experienced my age and gender not so much as obstacles but rather as beneficial to the process. However, I can imagine that my nationality, or being ‘Western’ in general, did influence the way my respondents interacted with me. However, this also had positive complications, since many were grateful that a ‘Western’ person showed interest in their cause.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my own bias in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I have spent time in Jordan with Palestinian refugees, which sparked my initial interest in the issue. I have come to sympathise with the Palestinian cause, and I will not claim to be completely objective on this issue. However, I have tried my best not to let my personal opinion influence my writing.

Chapter outline

In chapter one, I will start by outlining my theoretical framework. First I will discuss the academic debate around ‘politics of temporariness’ and mobilisation for collective action. Then I will advocate for applying Giddens’ structuration theory to this case of mobilisation against politics of temporariness, and integrate Barnett and Duvall’s conceptions of ‘productive power’ and ‘compulsory power’ with structuration theory. Then I will make these abstract theories more concretely applicable by bringing in Benford and Snow’s frame analysis. Finally, I will combine all these elements and concepts into one coherent analytic framework that will be used as the backbone of this thesis and formulate seven sub-questions that will be answered throughout the chapters that follow.

In chapter two I will sketch the existing structure of Palestinians in Lebanon and demonstrate how it has been kept in place over the past 70 years with Giddens’ structuration model. Then I will explain how in Giddens’ theory there is also room for agency and new discourses, and discuss the conditions of possibility that allowed for the rise of new initiatives.

In chapter three I will use Benford and Snow’s frame analysis and their core framing tasks to analyse the alternative frames Palestinian youth construct in order to mobilise for collective action. Then I will discuss the material and symbolic resources that supported the mobilisation process.

In chapter four I will discuss the impact and consequences of these new forms of collective action. I will start out by discussing the new forms of activism that have arisen from and reinforce the newly formed discourses, and to what extent the youth succeeded and failed to impact the community and individuals. Finally, I will discuss how these new frames are contested and combated by other groups that inhabit alternative frames through accusations, rumours and stories about the other with Benford and Snow’s concept of counterframing.

I will conclude this thesis by summarising my main findings and discussing the academic and empirical relevance of this thesis.

1 Theory

“Power consists in the ability to make others inhabit your story of their reality.” (Gourevitch 1998: 48)

As mentioned above, I will approach the case of Palestinian youth activism as a case of mobilisation of youth for collective action against their own leadership’s politics of temporariness in a situation of protracted liminality. First I will discuss the state of the art academic debate on politics of temporariness in situations of protracted liminality and the academic debate surrounding mobilisation for collective action. Then I will discuss Giddens’ structuration theory, Barnett and Duvall’s conceptions of power and Benford and Snow’s frame analysis, and combine all three in a coherent analytic framework that will inform seven sub-questions.

1.1 Politics of temporariness

Protracted liminality

The concept ‘liminality’ comes from the Latin word *limen*, which means threshold. As conceptualised by Turner, liminality represents a state where an individual “becomes ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification; he passes through a symbolic domain that has few or none of the attributes of his past or coming state” (Turner 1974, 232). Applied to refugees, it means the time between ‘what was’ and the ‘next’; a place of transition, waiting, and not knowing. The concept of liminality has often been used to describe the state of refugees in situations of protracted exile. Den Boer uses the term ‘liminal space in protracted exile’ when writing about Congolese refugees in Kampala (2015). Hampshire et al. use the term ‘liminal space’ to discuss inter-generational relations among long-term Liberian refugees in Ghana (2008). Camino uses liminality to research collective ethnic identities of young refugees from Latin America in the US (1994, 24-25).

There are different ways to conceptualise these situations of protracted liminality. UNHCR uses the term ‘protracted refugee situations’, which they define as (UNHCR 2006, 106):

[A situation] in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance.

An alternative, preferred by the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), is ‘warehoused refugee populations’, which they define as a “population of 10.000 or more restricted to camps or segregated settlements or otherwise deprived of rights, to freedom or movement of

livelihoods in situations lasting five years or more” (2009, 26). Hyndman (2011, 12) uses Bailey, Wright, Miyares and Mountz’ ‘permanent temporariness’ to describe the situation of Somali refugees in Kenya:

Bailey et al. chronicle the case of Salvadoran asylum seekers in the US who have also remained in legal limbo for decades, calling their uncertainty and precarious legal status ‘permanent temporariness’, an apt term for people with prima facie group designation as refugees but without documentation or individual legal status to resume their lives.

Politics of temporariness

The concept ‘politics of temporariness’ has frequently been used to refer to the exclusionist policies and systems in situations where migrants or refugees are considered to be staying only temporarily, for example in Austria (Horvath 2014), Malaysia (Muniandy 2015) and Canada (Rajkumara et al. 2012; Hari 2014). Upholding the politics of temporariness becomes problematic in refugee situations of protracted liminality, where policies and practices rooted in temporariness have been in place for decades even though there is no prospect of return on the short-term. As argued by Hyndman and Giles, “in a situation of long-term, unresolved displacement, a refugee’s humanitarian ‘right to life’ is maintained, but many of her fundamental human rights – to work, to move, to educate her children and herself – are suspended” (2011, 362). For example, Mountz, Wright, Miyares and Bailey (2002, 349-350) who study Salvadorans in the US from a geography perspective, argue that:

Temporary programmes confine asylum applicants to a limbo of spatial, temporal, economic, social, and political dimensions. This prolonged experience of psychological imprisonment makes closure on the past and passage into the next stages of life difficult. [...] In the day-to-day, this limbo paralyses people with TPS, inhibiting their ability to make basic household decisions.

Similarly, according to Mortland (1987), who writes about the refugee camps in Southeast Asia:

The liminality of refugees is reinforced by refugee camp activities; that in regards to possessions, status, space, time, mobility, and regulations the total social context of the processing center encourages the powerlessness and dependency of refugees both in the camp and in the country of resettlement.

Dunn, who writes about internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Georgia, demonstrates the politics of temporariness on a more personal level (2014, 304):

Stuck at absolute zero, he was frozen in both space and time, unable to return to the past, move forward into the future, or even go anywhere different in the present. He was trapped in a state of permanent temporariness and enduring liminality. [...] Like all the IDPs, he was assigned a stigmatized status in Georgian society, one in which his primary economic, political, and social function was to symbolize the losses of war and to wait.

These politics of temporariness is what the USCRI means by the practice of warehousing refugee populations: “the practice of keeping refugees in protracted situations of restricted mobility, enforced idleness, and dependency—their lives on indefinite hold—in violation of their basic rights under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention” (Smith 2004, 38).

Mobilisation against politics of temporariness

Not much has been written yet on the resistance or mobilisation against such politics of temporariness in a situation of protracted liminality. Most case studies on temporariness and liminality in protracted refugee situations focus on the policy side and largely neglect the agency of refugees in these situations. According to Bakewell (2008, 432), there is a lack of research on the agency of refugees in protracted refugee situations because:

The search for policy relevance has encouraged researchers to take the categories, concepts and priorities of policy makers and practitioners as their initial frame of reference for identifying their areas of study and formulating research questions. This privileges the worldview of the policy makers in constructing the research, constraining the questions asked, the objects of study and the methodologies and analysis adopted. In particular, it leaves large groups of forced migrants invisible in both research and policy.

Only a few do examine how refugees resist politics of temporariness. Brees (2009), for example, examines the agency of long-term Burmese refugees in Thailand through the livelihoods approach, which “looks at where people are, what they have, what their needs and interests are, and it evaluates the strategies they use within the broader political and economic framework to achieve their desired outcomes” (Vlassenroot 2005: 195 in Brees 2009, 8). However, this focus on individual strategies risks neglecting the structure in which they are enacted.

Bailey et al. (2002) discuss the case of Salvadorans in the US who resist their state of permanent temporariness through acts of strategic visibility, which they define as individual, family or group acts through which people make themselves visible to others in carefully selected ways at particular moments (Bailey et al. 2002, 136, 139). Although not acknowledged by Bailey et al., on a higher level they take a structurationist perspective to the mobilisation against temporariness, as they argue that “the production and reproduction of permanent temporariness disorients and divides groups

with potentially common goals and needs. However, the fluid, chameleon-like nature of permanent temporariness also offers opportunities for resistance” (Bailey et al. 2002, 139). The production and reproduction of the existing structure (permanent temporariness) combined with the possibility of agency are in line with Giddens’ structuration theory, as will be discussed below. However, they leave out politics of temporariness become manifest in and are kept in place through discourses, institutions and practices.

The case of Palestinians in Lebanon differs from other cases, such as the Salvadorans in the US, in at least one important way: they do not desire to replace the policies of temporariness with something permanent. As I will discuss later, Palestinians still desire to return. However, they contest the policies that have put their lives on hold for decades. They realise that they will not be returning soon and in the meantime, they want to live a dignified life, which requires something more than policies that only focus on temporariness and return, but less than permanent solutions such as naturalisation.

I will contribute to the existing literature on politics of temporariness in situations of protracted liminality by focusing on the agency of the refugees without neglecting the structure that reproduces and is reproduced by this agency, and by demonstrating that applying structuration theory to such a case provides insight into how such a system is kept in place for a long time and how the conditions of possibility for change can arise. But first, I will go into a discussion on the state of the art academic debate on mobilisation for collective action.

1.2 Mobilisation for collective action

1.2.1 Defining the field

From the 1960s onwards, the debate on how people mobilise for collective action has been dominated by structural approaches and rational choice theory. As for the first, American scholars developed a political process approach, to which the concept of political opportunity structures is central (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2009, 266). According to this theory, collective action is determined by structural factors. Tarrow defines changes in political opportunity structures as “consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national – dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics” (1994: 85). On the other hand, political constraints are “factors – like repression, but also like authorities’ capacity to present a solid front to insurgents – that discourage contention” (Tarrow 1994: 85).

However, the political process approach cannot explain how Palestinian youth manage to mobilise since there have been no significant changes in the political opportunity structures recently. If anything, the politically active and independent youth have been met with repression. This raises the question of when and where repression becomes a source for mobilisation rather than submission. In addition, because this approach places the source of action solely at the level of structure, it denies

agency at the individual level and therefore fails to explain different forms of action under the same political opportunity structures.

Simultaneously with the political process approach, a resource mobilisation approach emerged that looks at individual motivation and strategies of action based on a rational choice approach (Demmers 2017, 91-92). An example is Olsens's collective action theory. However, this approach has been criticised for giving "little attention either to the historical traditions and institutional contexts of episodes of collective action or to the interactions among actors, their opponents, their allies, and significant others" (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2009, 269).

From the 1980s onwards, drawing on the more general 'cultural turn' in social sciences, some scholars' discontent with the explaining value of political process and resource mobilisation models translated into the development of constructivist approaches. Since then, many authors have argued that political opportunity structures is a flawed concept because opportunities must always be perceived and framed in order to constrain or facilitate collective action (Benford & Snow 2000, 631; Gamson & Meyer 1996, 276; Tarrow 1988, 430; Noonan 1995, 84; Kurzman 2008, 10; Abdalla 2016, 46; Leenders 2013, 275). For example, Benford and Snow argue that "the extent to which [political opportunities] constrain or facilitate collective action is partly contingent on how they are framed by movement actors as well as others" (2000, 631). The same goes for resources: whether or not people mobilise for resources, depends on how they interpret and frame the resource shortage. As argued by Kurzman, who argues that processes of meaning making are constitutive for all aspects of social mobilisation, "the understanding constitutes resources as resources" (2008, 10). This epistemological stance, which focuses on interpretation and understanding, is in line with my research goals, as I aim to understand how Palestinian youth mobilise for collective action by creating meaning. This focus on meaning creation brings us to the concepts of discourse and framing. However, before I can get to a discussion on discourse, I will address the critique on structural and individualist approaches from an ontological perspective.

Both structural approaches and individualist approaches have been criticised for placing either agency or structure as ontologically prior entities (Demmers 2017, 126). One of these critics is Jabri, who aims to develop a theoretical framework of violent conflict (1996). Much of the critique on individualist and structuralist approaches is captured in this quote of Demmers (2017, 127), who discusses the work of Jabri:

Jabri rejects the individualist approach to violent conflict as mono-causal, and as too objective regarding human rationality. It fails to examine the origins of people's desires and beliefs and does not explain how structures conditions actors to choose war. On the other hand, structuralist approaches are seen as too static. They leave out a theory of individual action and fail to explain how inherent contradictions eventually transform into actual violence.

Instead, Jabri turns to Giddens' structuration theory to account for violent conflict. In this thesis, I aim to demonstrate that this approach can also be very valuable for studying mobilisation for collective action.

1.2.2 A structurationist approach to collective action

Giddens' structuration theory does not focus on either structure or agency but rather considers both mutually constitutive through discourse, institutions and social practices. According to Giddens, structures are "rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems" (1979, 64 in Demmers 2017, 128), which become manifest in discourses and institutions (Demmers 2017, 128-129). These discourses and institutions influence the way people act and produce certain social practices, which he defines as "relatively stabilised forms of social activity" (Demmers 2017, 129). This notion, that discourse interacts with action, is reflected in Jabri's definition of discourse (1996, 94-95):

Discourses are social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation. [...] The underlying assumption of discourse analysis is that social texts do not merely reflect or mirror objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. Rather, they actively construct a version of those things. They do not describe things, they do things. And being active they have social and political implications.

In turn, these social practices enabled by discourses and institutions reproduce the existing structure. This way, structure determines agency and agency determines structures. The result is a mutually constitutive relationship where "action is only meaningful in terms of its relationship to structure and the latter only exists as such in terms of human behaviour" (Jabri 1996, 78).

In Giddens' theory, there is also room for "the creative aspect of human action: we have agency and hence we have the capacity to modify structures" (Demmers 2017, 128). Therefore, individuals not only have the power to reproduce structures but also to change them. In the words of Jabri (1996, 84):

Contestation of structures of domination is, however, always possible, as is evident in any situation of social conflict. Where strategies of control draw upon structures of domination in seeking compliance and conformity, they also generate in their wake counter-strategies and counter-discourses which challenge the given, established order. Such is what Giddens refers to as the 'dialectic control', which points to the capacity of agents 'to make a difference'.

However, Demmers remarks that structuration theory does not account for the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of change, and does not provide an answer to the question “where the ‘seeds of change’ are located: in the structure of the system or in the agency of the actors” (2017, 130). But this is not what structuration theory sets out to do. Rather, it examines how discourse and framing make possible certain practices that were previously rendered impossible. It does not attempt to locate causal factors, but rather the ‘conditions of possibility’ that allow for the rise of new initiatives. As explained by Demmers, “individuals create through their actions the structures that in turn constrain those actions”. Using the metaphor of the structure of language, she argues: “we cannot speak outside our language”. In other words, individuals cannot take action if such action is not rendered possible by the structure.

According to Giddens, over time, by repeated practice, structures can change (Demmers 2017, 128). And, evidently, if structures change, they make possible new forms of action that were previously rendered impossible. Potter combines the idea of ‘conditions of possibility’ with Giddens’ structuration theory and also uses the example of language to explain this (2000, 219):

Social structure is the condition of possibility for any meaningful social action. Languages change, meanings change; that is, the structures enabling and constraining action, and the linguistic structures enabling and delimiting the production of meaning, change. How? They change over time as a collective result of individual meaningful social actions, and particular utilisations of language. Thus, structure is both the conditions of possibility of social action and its outcome.

In other words, contesting structures is possible when the structure has evolved into containing conditions of possibility that allow for new forms of action and discourse. This brings us to the nexus of discourse and power.

1.2.3 Discourse and power

According to Giddens, power is exercised through discourses. He distinguishes between structures of signification, which give meaning to things, and structures of legitimation, which determine what is considered ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’. These keep in place the existing structures of domination, which determines who has the power to define (Demmers 2017, 128-129). This is what Gourevitch argues in his study of Rwanda: “power consists in the ability to make others inhabit your story of their reality” (1998, 48). This Foucaultian idea of power is in line with what Barnett and Duval call productive power, which concerns discourses, defined as “the social processes and the systems of knowledge through which meaning is produced, fixed, lived, experienced, and transformed” (2005, 55). These “discursive processes and practices produce social identities and capacities as they give meaning to them”, which in turn “make possible, limit, and are drawn on for action” (2005, 56). In

this thesis, I will focus on language (discourse) to research how these youth have the power to define. To take this to a more concrete level, I will use Benford and Snow's frame analysis.

However, language alone might not be enough to "make others inhabit your story of their reality". As Demmers argues: "power is constituted through the use of language (discourse), and is supported by symbolic and material resources". The element of resources is also included in Giddens' theory, as he acknowledges that "some agents can draw on more resources than others in seeking to achieve desired outcomes" (Demmers 2017, 129). Similarly, Jabri argues that "power relates to the resources that agents draw upon in seeking to achieve desired outcomes" (1996, 81). Many others have embarked on attempts to integrate the Foucaultian notion of productive power and a material notion of power rooted in political economy approaches into one coherent framework (Roberts 2014, Dittmer 2014). Barnett and Duvall have captured this second type of material power in the concept of compulsory power: "the direct control of one actor over the conditions of existence and/or the actions of another" where one actor has "material and ideational resources at its disposal" that leads the other to alter its actions (2005, 48-49). They add that "compulsory power is not limited to material resources: it also entails symbolic and normative resources" (Barnett & Duvall 2005, 50). Their conceptualisation allows for an integrated approach to power that combines discourse with resources since they argue that (2005, 44):

Different types [of power] should not be seen as necessarily competing concepts, but rather as different forms in which power works in international politics [...] productive power makes some instances of compulsory power possible and legitimate, and, in turn, compulsory power shapes the terms of meaning that influence how actors see what is possible and desirable.

Therefore, in order to get a complete picture of why some actors have more power to define than others, both discourses and resources will have to be incorporated into the analysis.

So how can we apply this abstract discussion to a concrete case of social mobilisation? This calls for a more fine-grained analytical frame. To this purpose, I will now turn to a discussion of Benford and Snow's frame analysis.

1.3 Frame analysis

1.3.1 Core framing tasks

Building on Goffman's work on 'framing' (1974), Benford and Snow developed the concept of collective action frames, which they define as "action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organisation" (2000, 614). They identify three core framing tasks through which movement adherents negotiate meaning about their reality: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing is about the identification of the problem and the attribution of blame (2000, 615). Prognostic blaming is the

articulation of a proposed solution to the problem and strategies for carrying out the plan (2000, 616). Motivational framing provides a rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action (2000, 617).

Simultaneously with Benford and Snow, Gamson (1992) developed a similar yet different conceptualisation of collective action frames, one with the three components injustice, agency and identity. Both Benford and Snow's 'diagnostic framing' and Gamson's 'injustice component' contain the same two elements: identifying the injustice and attributing blame. The agency component, which focuses on the consciousness that 'we' can do something about the situation, is incorporated in both the prognostic and the motivational framing task. However, the final component of identity is left out of the three core framing tasks of Benford and Snow. Although they do acknowledge the importance of identity construction in framing, as they argue that "identity constructions are an inherent feature of the framing process" (2000, 632), they leave it out of their core framing tasks. Below I will make a case for considering identity construction as a core component of framing processes.

1.3.2 Identity construction

Melucci, one of the first to take a constructivist approach to collective action, defines a social movement as a platform where a collective identity is constructed and negotiated through continued interaction between individuals (1995). Collective identity in this sense is not a product, but rather a process of constructing an action system (Melucci 1995, 44). Poletta and Jasper build on this action-oriented approach to collective identity, as they argue that collective identity is not a necessary prerequisite preceding social movements; rather collective identities are constructed in and through social movements (2001, 290-291). Since mobilisation does not require pre-existing collective identities, the framing process is crucial in order to mobilise people for collective action. Most recently, Holland, Fox and Daro build on Melucci's and Poletta and Jasper's action-oriented approach to collective identity but argue for a dialogic approach to social movements (2008, 97-98). They see social movements "not as relatively unified actors, but, as multiple sources of cultural discourses competing to inform the everyday actions of movement participants" (Holland et al. 2008, 97). They define collective identity as "participants' shared sense of the movement as a collective actor – as a dynamic force for change – that they identify with and are inspired to support in their own actions" (Holland et al. 2008, 97).

Benford and Snow address this aspect of framing while discussing the concepts of boundary framing and adversarial framing, which construct movement protagonists and antagonists, however, only in the context of attributional processes (2000, 616). I argue based on the above discussion of identity construction and social movements that the construction of an identity should be considered a crucial feature of collective action frames on its own.

1.3.3 Emotions

Another element that Gamson incorporates in his approach, but that Benford and Snow leave out completely is the framing of emotion. Gamson argues that the injustice component of collective action is “laden with emotion”, and specifically “the kind of righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul” (Gamson 1992, 32). However, I argue that the element of emotion should not be addressed only in relation to injustice. Anger is not the only relevant emotion when it comes to mobilising people for collective action. As argued by Aminzade and McAdam, who incorporated a chapter about emotions in their book on ‘silences’ in the study of contentious politics, “in and on itself, anger is not likely to produce organised collective action [...] it is only when anger gets joined with hope that the forms of action we normally associate with social movements and revolutions are apt to take place” (2001, 31-32). Following this logic, emotions do not only play a role in identifying the source of indignation (anger), but rather are also vital in creating a sense of agency (hope). Jasper (2012, 291) also argues that combinations of positive and negative emotions, which he calls moral batteries, are crucial to action. Therefore, I argue that both positive and negative emotions have to be incorporated into the analysis in order to get a complete picture of how the youth manage to mobilise movement adherents.

1.3.4 Contested processes

One way of looking at the impact of new frames is through the resistance they spark. The resistance to newly developed frames can be analysed by using Benford and Snow’s concepts of counterframing, reframing and framing contests. Counterframing can be defined as “attempts ‘to rebut, undermine, or neutralise a person’s or group’s myths, versions of reality, or interpretive framework’” (Benford 1987, 75 in Benford & Snow 2000, 626) and reframing as “attempts to ward off, contain, limit, or reverse potential damage to the movement’s previous claims or attributes” (Benford and Hunt 1994 in Benford and Snow 2000, 626). Framing contests are defined as “square-offs between movements and their detractors” (Benford & Snow 2000, 626).

1.4 Analytic framework

Giddens’ structuration theory will provide the overarching theoretical framework for this study, whereas Benford and Snow’s frame analysis will serve as a more concretely applicable analytic lens. The concept ‘politics of temporality’ captures the essence of the Lebanese and Palestinian politics towards the Palestinian community in Lebanon. I will use Giddens’ structuration theory to analyse how these politics of temporality have been kept into place for almost seven decades. Then I will discuss how conditions of possibility allowed for new initiatives to arise despite the reinforcing character of the existing structure. While exploring the content of these new initiatives, I will focus on both the construction and the deployment of discourses. To take the construction of discourse to a more concrete level of analysis, I will use Benford and Snow’s concept of collective action frames

and the three core framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing, and I will add to this the elements of identity construction and emotions. Then I will emphasise how compulsory power and productive power should be integrated into one framework in order to account for how these new discourses are supported by material and symbolic resources and brought into the world. The deployment of discourses will be analysed by looking at the forms of activism that flow from the articulated collective action frames and the extent to which they impacted the community. Finally, I will turn to the counterframes developed in response to these new discourses.

1.5 Sub-questions

From this analytic framework, I have derived the following sub-questions: through which discourses, institutions and social practices has the structure of Palestinians in Lebanon been kept in place over the past 69 years? What conditions of possibility allowed for the rise of new forms of activism despite the reinforcing character of the existing structure? What action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings do Palestinian youth in Lebanon construct in order to inspire and legitimate new forms of collective action? What are the material and symbolic resources that support these new frames? What new forms of collective action result from and reinforce the new frames? In which ways did the youth succeed and fail to impact individuals and the community? How do Palestinian factions and competing youth groups attempt to undermine the interpretive framework of the activist groups that started around 2011 and joined together in the PYN?

2 Contesting the politics of temporariness

“It is something specific to Palestinians in Lebanon in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, where any form of assimilation is taboo, because it is seen as forsaking nationalist aspirations and legitimizing historical dispossession.” (Allan 2014, 3)

2.1 Politics of temporariness

In this section, I will demonstrate how the governance of the Palestinian community in Lebanon is a case of ‘politics of temporariness’ and use structuration theory and its concepts of discourses, institutions and social practices to account for how these politics of temporariness has been kept into place since 1948. Because I did not interview any Lebanese government officials or Palestinian leadership figures, I will base my arguments on secondary literature and illustrate them with claims by the youth I interviewed.

2.1.1 Discourse of the Lebanese authorities

In Jabri’s rewording of Giddens, structures, or the rules of social life, become manifest in discourses: in stories about signification and legitimation. Partly responsible for keeping the marginalised living conditions of the Palestinian community in Lebanon in place is the Lebanese government. As argued in a 2009 International Crisis Group Report: “At the core of Lebanon’s refugee policy is a powerful, widespread and clear-cut opposition to naturalisation (*tawtin*)”.² They legitimise this opposition to naturalisation by linking it to two things: the right of return and the sectarian balance. As for the first, according to Roberts (2010, 89):

To justify their policies to the Palestinians, the Lebanese authorities argue that their restriction on the community, and their public rejection of permanent Palestinian settlement, support the Palestinian right of return; if Palestinians are seen to be living comfortably in Lebanon, enjoying full citizenship and civil rights, the international community is less likely to pursue the implementation of UN resolution 194.

This claim is echoed by Allan, who argues that the focus on the ‘right of return’ has been used by Lebanese authorities to justify their policies of non-integration and exclusion, by claiming that naturalisation would symbolise abandoning the Palestinian identity and return to the homeland (2014, 12). In addition, according to five of the youth activists I interviewed, Lebanese politicians argue that giving Palestinians their rights and letting them live a dignified life in Lebanon will make them forget

² *Tawtin* is the Arabic word for ‘naturalisation’.

about returning to their homeland and settle permanently in Lebanon.³ One of them, Salma, a youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp, explained:

The Lebanese authorities [...] don't want to let the situation of the Palestinian people in Lebanon be better. They don't want. Because they think that if the situation is better, they will stay in Lebanon. And they will not return to Palestine.⁴

Second, the Lebanese authorities connect this opposition to naturalisation to the sectarian balance in the country (Richter-Devroe 2013, 100; Stel 2017, 8; Roberts 2010, 89). There is a widespread fear, specifically from the Christian population, that naturalisation of Palestinian refugees, who are mostly Sunni Muslims, will throw off the precarious sectarian balance in Lebanon (International Crisis Group 2009, 14). Two youth activists, Nazha and Tarek, confirmed this.⁵ The Lebanese authorities legitimise their policies of temporariness through these discourses of return and sectarianism.

2.1.2 Institutions of the Lebanese authorities

In addition to discourse, Jabri argues that the rules of social life become manifest and visible in institutions. In the case of Palestinians in Lebanon, the discourse of temporariness is reflected and institutionalised in the camp structure. They still live in twelve official UNRWA refugee camps scattered across the country, and at least thirty-eight informal gatherings (Chaaban, Salti, Ghattas, Irani, Ismail & Batlouni 2016, 38). Tuastad identifies “the idea that camps are to be temporary and should not have institutions symbolising permanent settlement” as one of the main obstacles to reform in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon (2012, 10). As a result, the camps are still designed as though they are temporary accommodations (Allan 2014, 12).

Although circumstances differ from camp to camp, living conditions fail to fulfil basic human needs everywhere. Because the population of the camps keeps growing, especially in recent years due to the influx of Syrian refugees, and the camps are not allowed to expand in terms of circumference, buildings are growing so high that in some place one is unable to see the sky.⁶ Even though the Lebanese army does not exercise control within the camps, they do operate checkpoints around some of them to monitor who and what enters and leaves the camps, which restricts the freedom of

³ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp respectively.

Author's interview on 30 March 2017 with Jaber, a Palestinian independent researcher, consultant and activist in Lebanon.

⁴ Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁵ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

⁶ Author's field notes: observations in Shatila camp, Mar Elias camp, Beddawi camp, Naher el Bared camp, and Al-Mashook gathering.

movement of the camp inhabitants and damages the camps' economic life (Roberts 2010, 118, ICG 2009, 17).⁷

Invoking the Palestinian's merely temporary presence in Lebanon, laws are enforced that deny many of their basic human rights. Because most Palestinians are unable to obtain citizenship they are considered foreigners, and as such were barred from 72 professions (Roberts 2010, 100; ICG 2009, 17). In 2005 the list has been reduced to 20, containing professions such as pharmacy, medicine, engineering and the law (Roberst 2009, 100; ICG 2009, 17). Furthermore, they are not allowed to own property outside of the camps. A 2001 amendment to the law governing property rights ruled that "any person not a citizen of a recognised state" acquiring real estate "would contradict the constitutional principle relating to the rejection of naturalisation" (Roberts 2010, 101; ICG 2009, 17). Even though not specifically mentioned, it is clear that the law targets Palestinians.

These are merely examples of the discriminatory institutions to which Palestinians in Lebanon are subject. As demonstrated by the example of property rights, Palestinians in Lebanon have no legal status and do not fall within any legal category. One of my respondents illustrated how they do not have the rights of nationals, they do not have the rights of foreigners, they do not have the rights of refugees, and they do not have the rights of stateless people: "We are nothing."⁸ Furthermore, according to Hanafi and Long (2009, 146):

When refugees are not denied their rights de jure, they are denied them in practice, as the Lebanese bureaucracies, which have been tasked with handling refugee affairs, deny Palestinians work permits without explanation and neglect to furnish undocumented refugees with the resources they need to register births, deaths, marriages, and even their own status as refugees.

These restricting laws and practices are legitimised and normalised by the state's discourse as described above. The discourses legitimising these exclusionist policies are what Giddens calls 'structures of legitimation'.

2.1.3 Discourse of the Palestinian leadership

As argued by Allan, "ironically, the discourses of Palestinian nationalism and Lebanese sovereignty have, with respect to the refugee question, increasingly come to resemble one another" (2014, 12). Similarly to the Lebanese authorities, the Palestinian leadership in Lebanon also upholds the focus on the 'right to return' and resists naturalisation, even though this discourse feeds into the marginalised position of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Allan (2014, 3-4) describes this problem as:

⁷ Author's field notes: observations in Naher el-Bared camp and Rashidiyeh camp. For Naher el-Bared camp I needed a permit to pass the army checkpoint when entering the camp, and for Rashidiyeh camp I tried to obtain a permit to visit the camp but failed to get one in time.

⁸ Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Something specific to Palestinians in Lebanon in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, where any form of assimilation is taboo, because it is seen as forsaking nationalist aspirations and legitimising historical dispossession. [...] Upholding the ‘right to return’ and ‘refugee’ status over naturalisation or permanent exile has become a core tenet of the community’s political identity.

Tarek described the Palestinian factions’ rhetoric more clearly:

[The Palestinian leadership] have also their crazy thoughts, which is having the camp in this situation is good because it’s the gate back to get back. To return. So yeah, the people should live in this miserable situation because they don’t need to improve because at the end of the day we are returning.⁹

According to an anonymous youth activist, Palestinian factions believe that ‘if you take your rights you will be in a good life, a good environment, you will forget your land’.¹⁰ These ideas about the discourse of the Palestinian factions are echoed by at least two other youth.¹¹

2.1.4 Institutions of the Palestinian leadership

This discourse of temporariness is reflected in the way the camps are governed. The governance of the camps, which since the Cairo Accords has been in the hands of the Palestinian leadership, is characterised by factionalism and clientelism. As mentioned above, the Popular Committees are appointed – not elected – by the factions according to their respective influence in the camps, and responsible for providing services such as electricity and water (Roberts 2010, 117). According to Hanafi and Long (2009, 143):

Factional politics have lost sight of the nationalist cause and promote through clientelism and similar such practices individual self-interest over collective Palestinian interests. [...] Today, what party or faction one belongs to determines how secure one is in one’s neighbourhood, what jobs one has access to, and what financial aid one receives.

Lemarchand defines political clientelism as “a more personalised, affective and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving beneficial transactions

⁹ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

¹⁰ Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

¹¹ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships” (1972, 51-52). The reciprocal exchange between actors of unequal relations of power generates a relationship of mutual trust and solidarity (Scott 1972, 94; Auyero 2000, 73; Hierman 2010, 251). According to several of my respondents, many people remain loyal to the factions because they are financially dependent on them.¹² In this case, the transaction between actors of unequal resources entails loyalty and support in exchange for money.

However, in the case of the Palestinian leadership in Lebanon, this trust is eroding (Hanafi and Long 2009, 143).¹³ The committees suffer from resource shortage and lack legitimacy. Because they are appointed rather than elected democracy and political representation is absent from the camps, and has been for the past seven decades. In addition, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), established in 1949 by the UN to carry out relief and works programs for Palestinian refugees, is responsible for providing jobs, health care and education to Palestinians in the camps. In line with Giddens’ idea of structures of legitimation and signification, the discourse of temporariness of the Palestinian leadership in Lebanon legitimises the absence of democracy and normalises receiving aid.

2.1.5 Social practices

According to Jabri’s model, from these discourses and institutions flow certain social practices, which in turn reinforce the existing structure. First of all, the discourse of temporariness influenced the way Palestinians set up their lives when they first came to Lebanon in 1948. Tarek illustrated this with an anecdote about his grandfather:

And I remember my grandfather, who left Palestine in ‘48, he came from Akaa. And he never accepted to build a good house, and he died here and was buried here, because he thought we’re returning, why to build a house here? And he lived in a very miserable situation, the whole of his life. His family too, his children too, and my father also born here, and they thought that it’s not worth to improve your life situation because this conditioning that the political leaders have put in the community, the people absorbed it and believed in it. Like, if you improved your living situation, you will not go. And it’s not ..., if you touched the PLO system, you are creating disaster because it’s the only body recognised by the whole world, and this is taboo. So you cannot even improve in it, because this conditioning they put. And

¹² Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp respectively.

¹³ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

this is not true. This is psychologically manipulation of people's minds. [...] my grandfather was one of the people who has been told that you will go out of your house for 13 days and you can get back. And he left everything, the farm he has and the house and his property in Akaa, thinking that in 13 days he will get back. And these 13 days took him 60 years, you know, to die, not to go back. And he put in his zinc ceiling house, a very old one, and it was a temporary shelter for him. And he was not able to convince. And I can see his thoughts. His whole life was there. How he will be convinced that he will not get to his property, to his own land?¹⁴

Nazha, from al Mashook gathering, echoed this sentiment in telling an iconic story about an old woman in her gathering who still has the key to her house in Palestine and who has a heater in her house which she says she wants to bring to her house in Palestine.¹⁵

Second, the camp structure, absence of democracy and service provision by UNRWA affect the attitude of Palestinians towards their responsibility for their own lives. Due to the service provision, Palestinians have become used to always being given aid, and solutions being formulated for them, instead of working on their future themselves. According to Harrell-Bond, this 'asymmetric' power structure between humanitarian workers and the refugees 'disempowers' the refugees (2000, 15-17). Three of my respondents observed that the Palestinian community in Lebanon has adopted a 'culture of receiving'.¹⁶ This can be illustrated with a quote from one of the youth activists Ahmad:

But I think, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon after the 69 years of being refugees, with the presence of UNRWA as service provider, that is supposed to bring free education, free health services, free social services, free house, rehabilitation, and this is the right. [...] And this is the duty of the international community towards us. But this was abused against refugees, because after, like, more than half of a century, we started to turn as receivers of services, not as solution providers. Or at least we participate in saying what we need, or what we want to do. So we started to be like as receivers. And we wait solutions. We wait solutions from UNRWA, we wait solutions from PLO, we wait solutions from NGOs, we wait solutions from religious leaders... until we get to a point to feel weak against making, in front of making any change.¹⁷

¹⁴ Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

¹⁵ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

¹⁶ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 16 March 2017 with Samaa, director of the Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation.

Author's interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

¹⁷ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

As described in the last sentence of this quote: the politics of temporariness and focus on waiting and receiving has a paralysing effect on the people. This is what Roberts refers to as ‘learned helplessness’: “a belief that there is no contingency between acts and outcomes and so no point in trying” (2010, 154). This reinforces the existing structure of temporariness and makes it unlikely that anything will change.

2.2 New initiatives

Going back to the research question, how Palestinian youth mobilise for solutions to their marginalised position in Lebanon without giving up on the ‘right of return’, the previous sections hopefully clarified the complication that inhabits this question. The way the situation is framed by both the Lebanese and Palestinian authorities makes it seem that mobilising for better living conditions in Lebanon is equal to giving up on the right of return. Yet, despite this self-reinforcing cycle of temporariness, new initiatives started arising that aim for better living conditions *without* compromising the right of return. Before discussing the specifics of these new initiatives, I will first go into a discussion on how and why these new forms of activism arose when they did.

From 2011 onwards, new youth groups have been forming in the camps that challenge the discourses of the Palestinian factions and produce an alternative frame. They direct their activism against their own leadership, the Palestinian factions, whom they blame for maintaining the poor living conditions in Lebanon. Over the past few years youth activism has been growing a lot, and now there are youth groups active in all twelve the camps.¹⁸ Since 2013, a large part of these groups has been united in the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN), a first attempt to systemise and coordinate the impact of youth. As argued in the theory chapter, these new initiatives could arise because the structure had evolved in such a way that it contained those conditions of possibility that allowed for the rise of new forms of collective action. I will now discuss how the youth themselves understand and perceive these conditions of possibility.

2.2.1. International developments

Some of the youth I interviewed considered international developments a factor in the recent rise in youth activism; however, none were convinced that these factors had been decisive. For example, they considered that the Arab Spring may have influenced people’s mindsets, but denied to have been inspired by what happened in neighbouring countries personally.¹⁹ One respondent also linked it to

¹⁸ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁹ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

larger international developments regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement, a global campaign attempting to increase economic and political pressure on Israel, and the fact that lately, Israel has been receiving more criticism in international media, of which the withdrawn UN report calling Israel an Apartheid State is an example.

2.2.2 Time factor

Another explanation put forth by my interviewees is that the discourses as brought into existence decades ago simply do not make sense anymore after the passing of a certain amount of time. When Palestinians first came to Lebanon, the discourse of ‘return is tomorrow’ still made sense. This idea of temporariness was alive in the minds of the first generation of Palestinians in Lebanon, and they passed it on to their sons and daughters. Many members of this second generation fought in the Lebanese civil war. They believed that the way to return was through a violent revolution, which does not require improved living conditions in the country of exile. After the civil war ended, the third generation of Palestinians was born and raised in Lebanon. This generation has never known war and only knows about Palestine from the stories of their grandparents. However, this generation had the chance to go to university, where they adopted values such as freedom, justice and equality.²⁰ Some of them travelled and got to know more about the reality of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Many of them realised that return is not tomorrow, and that the way to return is not to have your bags packed and your weapon ready. The narrative that justified living in poor conditions because it was beneficial for return has worn out. As one of my respondents poetically pointed out when discussing this discourse: ‘this shit does not fly’.²¹ The result is a growing mistrust between the youth and their leadership.²²

2.2.3 Resources

Some youth activists I interviewed accredited the recent rise in activism to a number of new resources that became available to them. First of all, social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter provided them with an online platform where they could bring their grievances to the public.²³ Second, there has been an increase of NGOs in the camps that create chances and opportunities for

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

²⁰ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

²¹ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

²² Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

²³ Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

youth to become active.²⁴ Third, their university education can also be seen as a resource, which, combined with the recent increase in media and social media, increased their awareness and knowledge of the ‘outside world’. They learned to think critically and dared to speak up for themselves. Once some of the youth dared to voice different opinions, especially on social media, this created more space and opportunity for others to follow suit. As Ahmad described:

Social media plays a good role, so I mean youth have access to information, they have this... they are expressing their opinions, they can talk and they can form something... and the experience influences or inspires other groups to start.²⁵

Simultaneously, the factions suffer from a growing resource shortage. As argued above, in a system of political clientelism, the exchange of resources (money for loyalty) generates a reciprocal relationship of mutual trust. If one party’s resources are lacking, this leads to the erosion of trust. As Tarek commented: ‘No one trusts the factions.’²⁶ Consequently, community members might have become more susceptible to alternative relationships.

2.2.4 Catalysts

Of course, these processes have been going on for longer than just the recent six years, and therefore do not explain why youth activism started rising in 2011 and not before. As an anonymous activist described: ‘all the youth in the camps were waiting for somebody to start’.²⁷ My respondents have identified several incidents that functioned as catalysts in bringing about the rapid increase in youth activism. Some identified 15 May 2011, during the Palestinian national holiday Land Day, as an important factor. On this day, Palestinians from multiple countries marched to the border with Israel. Over a dozen people died in the erupting clashes with Israeli security forces (BBC 2011). The youth blame the Palestinian factions in Lebanon for calling everyone out to march to the border, but then abandoning them at the scene.²⁸ For some, this was a trigger to start initiating change.

Others argue that there was a different catalyst in every camp that brought about new activism.²⁹ In Rashidiyeh camp, it was the influx of Syrians and the fact that the youth saw many of them sleeping in the streets.³⁰ In Shatila camp, the youth saw children and youth dropping out of

²⁴ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

²⁷ Author’s interview on 21 March 2013 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

²⁸ Author’s interview on 21 March 2013 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

²⁹ Author’s interview on 28 March 2013 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

²⁹ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

³⁰ Ibid.

school and doing drugs.³¹ In Ein al-Helweh camp, it had to do with armed conflicts in the camp.³² In Beddawi camp, it was an accidental death at a wedding, as a result of the random availability of weapons in the camp.³³

However, as one of my respondents observed about the incident in Beddawi camp: ‘But the thing is, it’s not the first one who was killed in the camp. People were killed before. And why before people didn’t act?’³⁴ The discussion above on conditions of possibility can provide an answer to this question: because previously the structure rendered such action impossible. However, as the structure changed over time, the conditions of possibility changed along with it, which allowed for the rise of new initiatives.

In this chapter I used Giddens’ structuration theory to analyse how the politics of temporariness have been kept in place for decades, and discussed how conditions of possibility allowed for the rise of new initiatives despite the reinforcing character of the existing structure. In the next chapter I will turn to these new initiatives in more detail by zooming in on the collective action frames and the resources the youth use to mobilise for change.

³¹ Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

³² Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

³³ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

³⁴ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

3 New discourses

“I can’t think about my right of return if I don’t have electricity in my house. So what we are trying to do is to make our life better to think more of Palestine.”³⁵

3.1 New frames

As discussed in the previous chapter, the narrative that marginalised conditions are beneficial to return has worn out and does not make sense anymore to the third generation. By reframing the relationship between marginalised conditions and return, these youth manage to create space for action. “The connection and alignment of events and experiences so that they hang together in a relatively unified and compelling fashion” is what Benford and Snow call ‘frame articulation’ (Benford and Snow 2000, 623). They add that “what gives the resultant collective action frame its novelty is not so much the originality or newness of its ideational elements, but the manner in which they are spliced together and articulated, such that a new angle of vision, vantage point, and/or interpretation is provided” (Benford & Snow 2000, 623). Below I will elaborate on the frames these youth use to negotiate a new understanding of their reality, which creates opportunities for collective action. I will do so by discussing Benford and Snow’s three core framing tasks of collective action frames: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing, and add to this the elements of identity construction and emotions. I will base my claims on both interviews and online content.

3.1.1 Diagnostic framing: problem identification

Political

One of the major issues that the youth address in their activism is the political situation in the camps. First of all, according to many of my respondents, there is a lot of corruption: within factions and between the Palestinian factions and UNRWA, the Lebanese authorities, and drug dealers.³⁶ One youth activist in Shatila camp, Othman, argued that drug dealers in the camp have the support of the factions and that every faction supports the drug dealers in a different street.³⁷ Another political issue the youth are trying to address is the undemocratic political system that excludes the youth from the decision-making processes. An anonymous youth activist from Beirut described:

³⁵ Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

³⁶ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

³⁷ Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

The youth are actually prevented to participate in the decision-making mechanisms within the camps. From the Palestinian local authorities. They have no role. So for that, they are marginalised and they are not able to get integrated into the decision-making mechanisms and they face a lot of difficulties. So they said like we want to, at least, we don't have a lot of rights in the country, so why you don't have rights in our community?³⁸

Eight youth activists I interviewed identified the issue of youth participation as one of the biggest challenges in their lives.³⁹

Economic

Another often-mentioned issue is the economic situation.⁴⁰ As described above, Lebanese institutions and laws prohibit Palestinians from working in many jobs and obtaining work permits.⁴¹ Often, even when a Palestinian has completed a university degree, he is unable to find work in his major and is forced to work in a low-wage job or remain unemployed.⁴² As Tarek described:

On economic level, that is related to unemployment, but also discrimination, and also the economical situation of the camp, because Lebanon is suffering from different difficult economic situations, that affect the refugees themselves, the camp and it's structure it's affecting, because it's a kind of closed community. [...] And also if you can see the differences between the law and the practice, because even if the Palestinians are allowed to do some job in Lebanon, but they need the work permit. And when they apply for that work permit they didn't get it, just for nothing, just for no reason. It's the reality. And I can give you an example. One of the NGOs I worked for before, I don't want to mention the name, but

³⁸ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

³⁹ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp. Author's meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁴⁰ Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

⁴¹ Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

⁴² Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Muhammad, a Palestinian student at the Lebanese American University.

they applied for 100 Palestinians working with them, for work permit, and they only get one. And the one they get, is because he has some connection.⁴³

This poor economic and financial situation makes people dependent on the factions. According to seven youth activists, being affiliated with a faction means giving your loyalty in exchange for money.⁴⁴ Because of this clientelistic system, the people are dependent on factions even though they did not elect them. As Ahmad described: ‘Unfortunately they are controlling people with money. So people are not... they don’t have the free will, the fully free will to really choose.’⁴⁵ This dependency on the factions makes it very hard for people to be critical.

Social illnesses

Third, according to many respondents, these economic problems cause several social illnesses. They argue that when children and youth witness how people with university degrees are unable to find jobs in their major, it makes them lose their motivation to continue their studies.⁴⁶ Some of them even drop out of elementary school or secondary school.⁴⁷ As one of my respondents, Mohammed, described:

And then that one kid grows up, goes to the university, when he graduates it’s very difficult for him to find a job, especially if he is Palestinian. And he knows a lot of Palestinians who have degrees in engineering and stuff and some of them now work as taxi drivers. He even knows someone who has a master’s degree or something in astrology, but he owns a shop and he sells clothes. So it is very difficult to find jobs. And the younger people, when they see this, when they see how all the people graduate and can’t find a job, they don’t have the motivation anymore to continue their education so they are starting to drop out from the school which is a very big problem nowadays.⁴⁸

⁴³ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

⁴⁴ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁴⁵ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁴⁶ Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Muhammad, a Palestinian student at the Lebanese American University.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁴⁷ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

⁴⁸ Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

So many dropouts join the factions so they can be armed and receive a small amount of money.⁴⁹ Others have nothing to do anymore and hang in the streets, which makes them very susceptible to recruitment by armed groups, or to doing drugs.⁵⁰ According to the youth drugs and weapons are two huge problems in the camps, and the factions do not do anything about them.⁵¹ Out of these situations grows a certain image of the camps, a stereotype of the camps as dangerous no-law zones filled with Palestinian terrorists.⁵²

Services provision

Finally, the youth identify the poor and even dangerous service provision and infrastructure in the camps as a priority. For example, they argue that the camps are overcrowded and the government is not letting construction materials into the camps to build more living space.⁵³ Water and electricity cables are mixed in the streets, which causes several deaths per year (Hamoud 2017).⁵⁴ They argue that the education and health care provided by UNRWA is extremely limited.⁵⁵ All these circumstances create a miserable and hopeless environment that further fuels the political, economic and social challenges described above.

3.1.2 Diagnostic framing: blame attribution

What is new about the recent rise in youth activism is that they place blame and responsibility not in the first place with external actors such as Israel, Lebanon or Western powers, but with the leadership of their own community (Abu al-Watan 2015).⁵⁶ By doing so, these youth create opportunities for self-reflection and action on their own side. The criticism towards their own leadership already became clear from the types of problems they identified, which largely lie with their own community, such as corruption, an undemocratic system and poor service provision. They direct their frustration and their activism largely against the Palestinian factions and identify several flaws in the Palestinian leadership.

⁴⁹ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁵⁰ Author's interview on 30 March 2017 with Jaber, a Palestinian independent researcher, consultant and activist.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

⁵¹ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

⁵² Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

⁵³ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Muhammad, Palestinian student at the Lebanese American University.

⁵⁴ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Muhammad, Palestinian student at the Lebanese American University.

⁵⁵ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

⁵⁶ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

First of all, they argue that due to the lack of a democratic political system, the faction leaders came into power decades ago and are now too old and unqualified for their positions.⁵⁷ Because the committee members are appointed rather than elected, they lack the expertise to properly fulfil their functions.⁵⁸ These politicians allegedly claim their right to power based on their roles in the revolution against Israel, which has not been fought on Lebanese ground since decades ago, and refuse any kind of change or reform by ‘holding on to their chairs’.⁵⁹

Second, the youth feel like they are leaderless.⁶⁰ There are several authorities representing Palestinians in Lebanon: the Palestinian Embassy, the PLO, Tahaluf and UNRWA, and there is a clear lack of coordination between these entities.⁶¹ In addition, they blame the factions for failing to represent all Palestinians; instead they only represent their own factions.⁶² Several respondents described how they resist any type of activism that is not linked to their factions. Othman, for example, argues that ‘Fatah tried anything to make us fail because we don’t relate it to them’⁶³. Similarly, Salma argued:

The situation in the camps is very complicated because there are some people or committees that, they think that they have this camp. And they are the only decision-makers in this camp. And they are the only ones who can go and do any projects or any programs in the camp, and nobody else can take any decision or can do anything without their umbrella. They must be in everything you want to do in the camp.⁶⁴

They also fail to teach the new generation of Palestinians in Lebanon about the history, geography and culture of Palestine; they only teach youth about the factions.⁶⁵

Third, there is a clear lack of strategy and of something the youths refer to as ‘political speech’. They argue that when Palestinians in Lebanon are publicly accused or attacked, the factions do nothing to respond. One youth activist, Mourad, described how when Condoleeza Rice proclaimed that all Palestinians should be resettled to South America, the Palestinian leadership did nothing to

⁵⁷ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

⁵⁸ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

⁵⁹ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

⁶⁰ Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

⁶¹ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

⁶² Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Rasha, a Palestinian girl who in Ziad’s and Fouad’s youth groups.

⁶³ Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

⁶⁴ Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁶⁵ Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Rasha, a Palestinian girl involved in Ziad’s and Fouad’s youth groups.

Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

respond.⁶⁶ Another, Nazha, described how a recently a Christian leader in Lebanon said that the Palestinians are to blame for causing the Lebanese civil war. Again, the leadership did not reply.⁶⁷ In this sense too they fail to represent their communities. According to the youth, they are full of empty slogans but have developed no long-term strategy. One youth activist, Hamada, compared Palestinians to a boat without a captain, just flowing with the waves, and moving in whichever direction the waves move.⁶⁸ As Ahmad explained:

So one of the, also one of the challenges that we are facing is that the political announcements, and speech, have always been without deadlines, like with no time frame. Each political leader goes into the speaker, and tells us, we will return. To prepare our luggage to go back. None of them have told us when and how. So we don't have this long term strategy. We need things like to happen tomorrow. So we don't have this culture of strategic planning. We haven't been raised like this.⁶⁹

3.1.3 Prognostic framing

Solution: A different way of return

As discussed above, as times have changed over the past seven decades, from the revolution against Israel to the Lebanese civil war, to today's relative peace, the ideas of Palestinians about return have changed as well. Return is still the most important goal for these youth and none of the politically active youth I have spoken to have any intention of letting go of this right.⁷⁰ As Tarek firmly stated: 'we have the right of return, it's our right, and no one can take it. And no one should just let it go.'⁷¹

However, they have different ideas about how to achieve this goal. Many of today's generation realise that return is not tomorrow and that the way to return is not to have your bags packed and your weapon ready.⁷² As opposed to the first and the second generation, the current generation does not think that violence is the way to return. As Tarek described: 'I want to live for Palestine. I don't want to die for Palestine. I don't want my son to die for Palestine.'⁷³ Instead they

⁶⁶ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

⁶⁷ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

⁶⁸ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Muhammad, Palestinian student at the Lebanese American University.

⁷¹ Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

⁷² Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁷³ Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

believe that the way to return is through empowerment and education and that they need to organise themselves and exert influence at the international level in order to return (PursueLTD 2014).⁷⁴ As described by Ahmad:

I think, Palestine is not the Palestinians issue. It's... I think it's a global issue. [...] It's a human... humanity, a human rights issue. It's the issue of people who have lost their rights to have identity, to have their homelands, to have... so I think it needs more advocacy at this level. And it needs more friends at the international level, not to change the policies towards Palestine but the international policies. [...] Frankly, I don't see Palestine free with the US at this situation, like if the US stay the US, we can't have free Palestine. So there has to be a change in the international policy level, [...] And I think we need to bring more supporters at this level.⁷⁵

This way of return requires time and resources, which can only be accomplished from social and economic stability. They argue that nobody can mobilise himself or herself for this long-term goal if they have to think about individual survival every minute of every day.⁷⁶ Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp, stated this very simplistically: 'I can't think about my right of return if I don't have electricity in my house. So what we are trying to do is to make our life better to think more of Palestine.'⁷⁷ Therefore, they argue that improving living conditions in the camp is crucial for return. This way, they can have a dignified life until they return, and only when they have a dignified life will they be able to work on their return.⁷⁸

This way of framing the relationship between living conditions and return stands in stark contrast with the discourse of the Lebanese authorities and the Palestinian factions. An explanation for this difference in narratives can be found in their ideas about how to return: through weapons or through empowerment and education. Palestinian youth mobilise for solutions to their living conditions and marginalised position without giving up on return by producing an alternative narrative of the link between marginalised conditions and return: finding solutions to the marginalised

⁷⁴ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

⁷⁵ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁷⁶ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 16 March 2017 with Samaa, director of the Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation.

Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁷⁷ Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

position of Palestinians in Lebanon does not hinder return when the path to return requires good living conditions. Rather, it becomes the key to return.

Legitimising the new narrative

The youth legitimise these claims by making comparisons to Palestinians in other countries. As a response to the Palestinian idea that better conditions would distract people from working towards return, Salma, a Syrian-Palestinian woman who was forced to flee to Lebanon because of the civil war, argued:

People in Syria, because they were very comfortable in their livelihood, in their situation, in jobs and money and living in good houses and anything, they have more time and ability to work to return and to think about political situation and Palestine. [...] It's a very stupid idea because the situation in Syria is very good for Palestinians, but they want to return. There is no relation between these ideas. But, that's what they always say.⁷⁹

Others compared their situation with those of their relatives who had immigrated to Europe. They argue that even though Palestinians in Europe have their human rights, they have a strong sense of their Palestinian identity and are very actively working towards return in their respective communities.⁸⁰

In addition, in the 1990s there was a group of Christian Palestinians who did receive a Lebanese identity in order to maintain the sectarian balance. The youth use this as an example that receiving rights in Lebanon does not mean that one ceases to be committed to the Palestinian cause.⁸¹ Ahmad, for example, argued: 'I have a Lebanese ID. And I have a Palestinian ID. For me, it's the ID is nothing. For me the ID is just a piece of paper, it doesn't give you back for you belonging to a mission.'⁸² In addition, a young man named Mohammed wrote an article in the printed Pencilcamp magazine⁸³ about Palestinians with Lebanese ID's and concluded that they still suffer as much from exclusionist policies as Palestinians without a Lebanese ID, except for being allowed to work in any job (Al-Said 2017, 15).

However, these comparisons with Palestinians in other countries can be used for the other side of the argument as well. A young Palestinian woman I met claimed that Palestinians in Syria

⁷⁹ Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁸⁰ Author's interview on 30 March 2017 with Jaber, a Palestinian independent researcher, consultant and activist.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

⁸¹ Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

⁸² Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁸³ Pencilcamp is a magazine set up by Palestinian youth in Lebanon in which young people write articles about issues and life in the camps. The Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation (MASMF) provided trainings to the youth to help set up this magazine. Many youth who write for this magazine are also connected to the PYN.

integrated into society and lost their identity.⁸⁴ In Lebanon, she argued, Palestinians are isolated from the Lebanese community, which is useful for their identity and therefore for return. From this example becomes once again clear how there is not one truth, rather, it all depends on how things are interpreted and framed.

Strategies

The youth criticise their leadership for being ‘full of empty slogans’ and lacking concrete ways to achieve this return.⁸⁵ In contrast, these youngsters focus on developing concrete strategies in order to reach their goal.⁸⁶ First of all, in order to improve their living conditions, Palestinian youth activists argue that they need their basic human rights. Asking for civil rights would imply becoming a Lebanese citizen, and the Lebanese authorities nor the Palestinian youth activists desire this. In order to receive their rights without having to let go of their Palestinian-ness and their long-term goal of returning to Palestine, and at the same time circumventing the Lebanese argument of the sectarian balance, they advocate for receiving their basic human rights instead of civil rights.⁸⁷

Second, the main goal of today’s youth activism in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon is to create more participation for the youth in the decision-making processes in the camps (PYN n.d.c).⁸⁸ They stress that it is not their goal to take the place of the current leaders (Rashdan 2017).⁸⁹ They claim that it is not about *who* is in power, but *how* people come to power. They argue for a democratic process, which gives every individual equal opportunities of being elected. As Ahmad explained:

But we are always asking for is that we are looking for a healthy process, not a product. We don’t want only to see youth on this, in this platform. We want to see a process allowing

⁸⁴ Author’s field notes: informal conversation with a young politically active Palestinian woman.

⁸⁵ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁸⁶ Author’s interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the ARK company.

⁸⁷ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author’s interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

⁸⁸ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author’s meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

Author’s interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

⁸⁹ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Hatem, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

youth to be there. And not only youth, allowing people to have equal opportunities to be represented and to be representing as well.⁹⁰

Through this democratic process, the youth aim to create a unified leadership of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.⁹¹ In addition, they argue that including youth in the decision-making processes will reduce corruption levels.⁹²

Strategies to achieve more youth participation differ between youth activists. One activist, Ziad, prefers to cooperate and coordinate with the factions.⁹³ He believes that if the youth create change, this will create space for the factions to change as well. He wants to create change by giving them ‘a goodbye hug’: acknowledge what they have done in their time, say goodbye, and create something new. Another, Fouad, attacks nor cooperates with the factions.⁹⁴ Rather, he does not want to involve the current Palestinian leadership in this activism. He wants to create something new, which is completely separate from the existing system.

A more radical way to pave a path towards more youth participation is to actively weaken the position of the factions. As described above, one of the major ways in which the factions hold on to power is through the poor economic situation. Because of high unemployment levels and few opportunities the people are dependent on the factions, who give them small amounts of money. One activist, Hatem, described that his strategy is to target the factions by taking away their support from the community.⁹⁵ He argued that if he gives someone a fund to start a shop in the camp, that person will be loyal to him, not to the factions. He created many initiatives for this reason: a football team, a print shop, a band, a fundraiser for a sick child, and a civil defence team.⁹⁶ However, trying to win the loyalty from the people by making them dependent on him instead of the factions runs the risk of creating new reciprocal relationships that reinforce the clientelistic system in the camps instead of replacing it with something different.

Despite their different strategies, Ziad, Fouad and Hatem live in the same camp and cooperate with each other. In a discussion between these three individuals about their tactics and strategies, they acknowledged that youth movements are not homogeneous. They said that in their society, being different often automatically means being enemies. These youth are trying not to cast these

⁹⁰ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁹¹ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

⁹² Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Hatem, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

⁹³ Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Ziad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

⁹⁴ Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

⁹⁵ Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Hatem, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

⁹⁶ ‘Civil defense team’ is the term these youth use to indicate teams of youth that have been set up to positively influence the environment in the camps. Even though the name might suggest it, these are no militia-like groups who carry weapons and control neighbourhoods. Rather they engage in constructive activities such as putting out fires, countering harassment and beautifying the streets.

differences aside, but to acknowledge them, to work together and to learn from each other. Fouad even quoted Voltaire: ‘I might not agree with what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it’. This mindset attests from the university education many of these youth enjoyed, which gave them new ways of thinking they are trying to incorporate in their activism.

Finally, these youth are trying to create a dialogue between Palestinian and Lebanese youth and break stereotypes. According to some youths, the Palestinian refugee camps are often seen by the Lebanese as dangerous no-law zones filled with terrorist groups.⁹⁷ Allegedly they often think Palestinians are uneducated and still blame them for causing the 1975 Lebanese civil war.⁹⁸ By creating a dialogue, these youth activists are trying to increase mutual understanding.

3.1.4 Motivational framing

As described above, motivational framing provides a rationale for engaging in collective action. Benford and Snow argue that “attending to this framing task essentially entails the development of what Gamson (1992) refers to as the “agency” component of collective action frames” (2000, 617). I find that in his definition of agency, Gamson captures the essence of motivational framing beautifully (1992, 7):

The consciousness that it is possible to alter conditions or policies through collective action. Collective action frames imply some sense of collective efficacy and deny the immutability of some undesirable situation. They empower people by defining them as potential agents of their own history. They suggest not merely that something can be done but that ‘we’ can do something.

Collective efficacy, denying immutability and suggesting that ‘we’ can do something are elements that are very clearly present in the youth’s frames. An example is this quote by Ahmad:

It’s because in our minds, this is the responsibility of those service providers, or we can’t do a change unless there is someone who supported us because we are weak. We can’t do this. And this was one of the reasons that we want to prove that we can do any... we youth *can* do a change. Because this feeling of ‘we *can* do’ is needed. And it’s very powerful and gives you like self-esteem that you can maybe do more, you can, and you really deserve a better living

⁹⁷ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering. Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp. Author’s interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

⁹⁸ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering. Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

conditions. So I think yes, this is one of the ideologies of, we want to turn, or to transmit the community from being a receiver to a real participator in development.⁹⁹

In interviews, online platforms and the Pencilcamp magazine, the youth activists use a language of responsibility, potential, productivity and effectiveness to motivate the youth (Sawa for Change n.d.; PursueLTD 2014; PYN n.d.a; Rashdan 2017).¹⁰⁰ Making youth feel responsible for their own communities and situation implies that they are the ones who can do something about it. Giving them the responsibility, therefore, means giving them the power to make a change and, indeed, denies the immutability of the situation. They aim to make the youth think for themselves and change their mentality.¹⁰¹

Ahmad described how there is another side to increasing youth participation, besides creating a democratic system. To make youth accomplish things on their own means showing them that they have resources to achieve things and that the power to change lies within their community. He argued:

Youth power is an asset. I think our community is losing it. The issue of participation is one thing. It is good to feel included. But it feels better when you see that the community is getting benefit from its own resources, and youth are resources. They have physical resources, they have mental resources and actual resources, so why waste it?¹⁰²

3.1.5 Identity construction

As argued in the theory chapter, identity construction is an inherent feature of the framing process. The factions' discourse also contains the element of identity, but they use it in a negative way. They argue that living in miserable conditions strengthens the identity, which is beneficial for return. The youth I have spoken to, on the other hand, are trying to stress identity factors in a positive and constructive way that enables and inspires activism. There are several ways in which the youth try to strengthen their identity and distinguish themselves from outsiders.

First of all, the youth focus on strengthening the Palestinian national identity. As mentioned above, many Palestinian youth activists in Lebanon today blame the Palestinian factions for failing to teach the youth about Palestine. Instead, they focus on their own factions. As Nazha described:

⁹⁹ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁰⁰ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

¹⁰¹ Author's meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

¹⁰² Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

‘Palestine now is like a commerce with respect to the leadership. In the politics festival, you will see the flag of Hamas, flag of Fatah, not the flag of Palestine. The leadership don’t wear *keffiyeh*, and Hanzalah.’¹⁰³ Therefore many of the youth do not identify with the factions and do not feel represented by them.¹⁰⁴ The gap in teaching about Palestine is amplified by the UNRWA schools in the camps since UNRWA has to follow the host country’s curriculum, which leaves out Palestinian history, culture and geography.¹⁰⁵ As argued by Ziad: ‘if it is not taught, the Palestinian history and cause will be forgotten within 10 years’. To prevent this, the youth are trying to strengthen the Palestinian identity by using symbols of Palestine, such as waving the Palestinian flag, wearing Palestinian *keffiyeh* and drawing the image of ‘Hanzalah’ on the walls (Pencilcamp n.d.; PursueLTD 2014).¹⁰⁶ In addition, they are trying to teach the youth about their Palestinian heritage because UNRWA and the factions fail to do so.

Second, the youth are trying to create an image based on voluntariness¹⁰⁷ and independence¹⁰⁸ (Khotwa n.d.; PYN n.d.b). For example, Ahmad argues that ‘we don’t want to turn into an NGO, and we don’t want to turn into a political party. We want to stay independent and we want to stay... at some point, we need to keep this voluntarily action.’¹⁰⁹ They are constantly trying to stress the fact that they are not affiliated with any political or religious party. To maintain this image of being voluntary and independent, they have to be extremely cautious with accepting funds from anyone. I will come back to this point below.

Third, the youth value diversity and inclusion. As argued above, the youth do not consider differences to be deal breakers in their cooperation, but rather value them and decide to learn from them.¹¹⁰ Many of them stress that different youth groups have different ways of working towards the same goal (PursueLTD 2014).¹¹¹ Some focus on politics, some on education, some on media, and others on leadership.

¹⁰³ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering. The Keffiyeh is a Palestinian scarf and Hanzalah is a symbol drawn by a Palestinian artists that stands for the revolution against Israel.

¹⁰⁴ Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

¹⁰⁵ Author’s interview on 30 March 2017 with Jaber, a Palestinian independent researcher, consultant and activist.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Rasha, a Palestinian girl involved in Ziad’s and Fouad’s youth groups.

¹⁰⁶ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author’s field notes: observation in Nazha’s ‘Noon Cultural Centre’: On a wall in the centre there was a map of Palestine with the original names of all the towns, which they use to teach the children about Palestine and their identity.

¹⁰⁷ Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁰⁸ Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁰⁹ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹¹⁰ Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹¹¹ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Fourth, the youth speak a language of rights and values. In addition to voluntariness, independence, diversity and inclusion, they often mention human rights, pluralism, freedom of thought and expression, equity, equality, participation, transparency, responsibility, accountability and individuality (Initiate n.d.; Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi n.d.; Inspire n.d.; Khotwa n.d.).¹¹² They express this discourse while speaking to me, but mostly on the Facebook and Web pages of their respective youth groups.

Finally, the youth groups actively try to construct a new identity through a discourse of unity and belonging. In a promotional video for the PYN, Ahmad said that through the youth network “we don’t feel anymore that we are twelve camps in Lebanon, we are one camp as youth” (PursueLTD 2014). Mohammed declared that because of the network he feels like the youth groups in other camps are his family.¹¹³ In addition, some youth declare that instead of feeling represented by the Palestinian leadership, they now feel that this youth network represents them (Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi n.d.).¹¹⁴

3.1.6 Emotions

As discussed in the theory chapter, both anger and hope can be powerful emotions when it comes to mobilising people for collective action. However, I argue that in the case of Palestinians in Lebanon anger is not what mobilised people for change. Rather, the anger and frustration have immobilised people for decades. Of course the youth experience emotions of anger, however, I have not witnessed them actively deploying these emotions in order to mobilise movement adherents. Instead, they give the community a new sense of hope with stories about possibilities for the future; by letting them participate themselves in projects and letting them see the direct results of their work; and by placing the responsibility for their misery with their own community and thereby create the possibility for change. For example, Othman argued:

The street that we made, we named it ‘Hope street’. Without hope you can stay at home, with respect to me, when I’m in the field for training football with the children, that is hope for me. When I see the voice of these children, that’s hope for me. When we started the association, about 6/7 years ago, I had a football team. The children were 10-13 years old. Now when I see them, they are taller than me, [...] that’s hope. And another thing, when we started, some students in our centre, now are volunteers with us. They are now 18 years old, or 19, now

Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

Author’s interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

Author’s interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

¹¹² Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

¹¹³ Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

¹¹⁴ Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

they are volunteers for us, that's hope. Our message is received. We get our motivation from the community.¹¹⁵

His brother Sobhi also acknowledged the importance of hope: 'We have this disease that we are full of hope. Even our situation is from bad to baddest. We don't have any other option. So we are choosing hope.'¹¹⁶

3.2 Resources

The importance of resources in making 'others inhabit your story of their reality' has already been shown several times in the previous chapters. An example is the fact that the youth struggle to get the support of the community because the people are financially dependent of the factions. Language alone is therefore not enough to mobilise people for change; instead, the productive power of language can be combined with the compulsory power of material and symbolic resources.

3.2.1 Material resources

In order to obtain financing for specific projects, the youth groups work together with a wide spectrum of organisations, actors and companies. The biggest partner of the youth groups I spoke to is an organisation called Ark, but formerly known under the name Pursue.¹¹⁷ They have a youth-oriented project based on four pillars: economic development, social participation, governance participation and conflict prevention. The political consultant of Ark, Edward Kattura, explained that if the youth want to execute a project that falls under one of these four pillars they are able to receive funding for it from Ark, who in turn received funding from the British Embassy.¹¹⁸ In addition, the youth groups are funded by international organisations such as Save the Children, Caritas, Warchild, Habitat for Humanity, Islamic Relieve, World Vision, and the German Agency for International Cooperation (PYN n.d.d).¹¹⁹ Many of them also work together with local NGOs¹²⁰ and embassies¹²¹, among which are the Dutch, British, and the Norwegian embassy.

Aside from financing short-term projects, a more sustainable way of funding these youth groups is by investing in projects that will eventually enable the youth to sustain themselves. Examples are the cafés in Naher el Bared camp¹²² and in Rashidiyeh camp¹²³, and a printing shop in

¹¹⁵ Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹¹⁶ Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹¹⁷ Author's interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

¹²⁰ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Beddawi camp which employs youth.¹²⁴ The profit they make goes directly to applying services in the camp.

In order for the youth to stick to their ‘voluntary’ and ‘independent’ identity, it is extremely tricky for them to accept resources from organisations with political affiliations. At the same time, improving living circumstances requires services and materials that cost money. Therefore, the youth are constantly torn between not wanting to be affiliated with specific NGOs, foreign countries or parties, and needing resources to make an actual change. Simultaneously, using resources to win people’s loyalty could result in new reciprocal relationships between the youth in the people, which holds the clientelistic system in place.

3.2.2 Symbolic resources

Non-material resources are at least as important in mobilising participants for change. First of all, skills are crucial in recruiting supporters. Due to their university education, many of these youth activists have the skills to write project proposals in order to get funding and are able to evaluate their activities and write reports, which enhances their levels of transparency.¹²⁵

Another important resource is their network. The youth are supported by many progressive members of the older generation who can offer them advice, training and support. For example, the Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation (MASMF) is an organisation that “works towards empowering the youth in Palestinian camps and gatherings in Lebanon through training in journalism; social media, article writing, TV reports, short films and photojournalism” (MASMF n.d.). The president of this organisation, Samaa Abu Sharar, told me that their main goal is to empower youth in the Palestinian camps and gatherings in the media field by giving them the voice and the capacity to be able to present themselves aside from all the stereotypes.¹²⁶ They provide trainings to the youth by researchers and journalists and supported them in setting up a magazine. I attended one of these trainings, where a Palestinian researcher in refugee studies taught the youth about the importance of knowing the difference between civil rights and human rights. Another organisation, Beyond, contains multiplication groups where youth activists train other youth in becoming active in their communities. For example, Nazha was supported in establishing her own youth centre by Tarek, who has his own multiplication group with Beyond.¹²⁷

¹²³ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹²⁴ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

¹²⁵ Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp. Author’s interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

¹²⁶ Author’s interview on 16 March 2017 with Samaa, director of the Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation.

¹²⁷ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp respectively.

By now the short answer to the research question can be formulated. How do Palestinian youth mobilise for solutions to their marginalised position in Lebanon without giving up on the ‘right of return’? – By realising that the contradiction inherent to this complication is rooted in a discourse of temporariness that legitimises maintaining the marginalised position, by placing blame for this reinforcing system at their own leadership, by reframing the link between marginalisation and return in a way that frames better living conditions as beneficial to return, by formulating a narrative that makes the youth feel responsible for their own communities and draws upon identity and emotions and by utilising both material and symbolic resources they have at hand. In the next chapter, I will discuss how these discourses are enacted and impact the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon.

4 Activism and impact

“The bullet that does not hit you disturbs you.”¹²⁸

I will now turn to the new forms of activism that result from and support the collective action frames discussed above and reflect on the extent to which the youth succeeded and failed to impact individuals and the community. Finally, I will discuss the way the youth groups have been criticised and challenged by the Palestinian factions and other youth groups through the concept of counterframing.

4.1 New forms of collective action

Around 2011, new youth groups began to form in several camps. In each camp the youth groups took different shapes; some started as learning support centres, some as animation teams, others opened cafes or coffee shops in the camp to give the youth space to develop.¹²⁹ Two years later seven youth groups from camps near Tripoli, Beirut, Saida and Sour formed the PYN, to cooperate and coordinate their activities. Now, similar activities are taking place all across Lebanon. The activism of these youth focuses on empowering youth, winning the support of the community and weakening the factions. Their activities can be divided into seven categories: capacity building, economic support, camp improvements, events and heritage activities, campaigns, activities with Lebanese youth and media.

4.1.1 Capacity building

One of the key activities that the youth engage in is capacity building, in order to make the youth aware of their potential and empower them. The primary way of doing this is through trainings in subjects and skills like nonviolent communication, negotiation, conflict transformation, media, planning, computers, English language, human development, group dynamics, leadership, psychology, history, social participation, good governance, community mobilisation, self-awareness, psycho-social support and social cohesion (PYN n.d.e).¹³⁰ Many groups give vocational trainings,

¹²⁸ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹²⁹ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.
Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.
Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.
Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.
Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹³⁰ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.
Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.
Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

especially for youth that dropped out of school (Amar 2017; Haidiri 2017).¹³¹ In addition to trainings, they also offer opportunities through sports, such as football, basketball and swimming (PYN n.d.e).¹³²

Another way of building capacity is to let the youth make a change, however small, and to let the realisation of having achieved something empower them further. For example, Nazha in al-Mashook gathering set up a learning centre for children and employed seven other young women as teachers.¹³³ In the Beddawi camp, one youth group set up some sort of civil defence team where youth who used to hang in the streets and make trouble are now made responsible for keeping the streets safe and clean.¹³⁴ In Naher el-Bared camp, the youth helped build a centre for one of a youth group.¹³⁵

4.1.2 Economic support

Another way in which the activist try to empower the youth is by providing economic support. Although these activities are limited and depend on the amount of funding they receive, the youth activists use their skills and influence to improve the economic situation of youth in the camps in several ways. For example, many of the above mentioned capacity-building activities are centred on providing the youth with skills so they can find a job.¹³⁶ At least one youth organisation offers their volunteers a small salary of around 200 dollars per month, which is not much but enough to keep them off the streets and out of trouble.¹³⁷ The jobs that these youth do are working in kindergarten, teaching, or giving workshops for example about the dangers and risks of doing drugs.

Another way of supporting the youth financially is by trying to get funding for income-generating projects. For example, in Rashidiyeh camp and in Nahr el-Bared camp the youth groups opened a café, where some youth can work for a small salary.¹³⁸ Other examples are the printing shop mentioned above, a sewing factory and a project where women slice ingredients for restaurants from their homes.¹³⁹

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Rasha, a Palestinian girl involved in Ziad's and Fouad's youth groups.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

¹³¹ Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹³² Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

¹³³ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

¹³⁴ Author's interview on 16 March 2017 with Samaa, director of the Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation.

¹³⁵ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

¹³⁶ Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹³⁷ Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹³⁸ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹³⁹ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

Finally, the youth are trying to advocate for labour rights of Palestinians in Lebanon. For example, some members of the PYN addressed the Lebanese minister of Labour on a very specific issue regarding the labour rights of Palestinians Ahmad (PYN n.d.f).¹⁴⁰ Ahmad explained that only 10% of the employees in Lebanese companies or organisations are allowed to be foreigners. Whereas previously Palestinians were included in this 10%, recently, with the new Minister of Labour, they are not. However, it seemed that many employers were still rejecting Palestinians based on their nationality. During their visit, the Minister of Labour acknowledged that this is wrong and that he will provide work permits to all Palestinians coming to his office. In turn, the youth decided to collect all individual files of Palestinians who were rejected for a position and present it to the minister.

4.1.3 Direct improvements

One way to leave a visible impression of their work on the camps is through beautifying projects. In at least two camps there have been campaigns to clean the tombs of the martyrs from the civil war (PYN n.d.e; PYN n.d.g). In multiple camps, the youth repaired and painted the walls (PYN n.d.e).¹⁴¹ In Shatila camp, the a group of youth made an ‘ideal’ street with a fund from the British embassy, by organising the web of electricity wires, cleaning up garbage and painting the walls in bright colours.¹⁴² The same youth groups renovated more than 60 houses in the camp with a fund from a Lebanese NGO.¹⁴³ In Beddawi camp, the youth hung up lights in the main streets to counter drug use and sexual abuse and to help the elders to get around at night.¹⁴⁴ According to a report on the PYN website, the youth in Beddawi also tried to negotiate with the factions regarding the electricity provision in the camp (PYN n.d.g). In Ein el-Helweh camp, where army checkpoints cause hold-ups when entering or exiting the camp, the youth have put up shelters before the checkpoints in case it is raining or the weather is too hot.¹⁴⁵

In addition to these material improvements, the youth also directly impacted the community by providing emergency aid. In Shatila camp, the youth set up a Social Assistance Team to provide hundreds of food parcels, clothes and other needs to the poorest families in the camp (PYN n.d.e). During Ramadan, they vaccinated 400 children and adults and provided 100 hot meals a day for the poorest families (PYN n.d.e). In Rashidiyeh camp, the youth responded to the influx of Syrian people by collecting items from the community to help the Syrian refugees. The motto of their campaign

¹⁴⁰ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁴¹ Author’s meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 16 March 2017 with Samaa, director of the Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

¹⁴² Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s field notes: observations in Shatila camp.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Author’s meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author’s field notes: observations in Beddawi camp.

¹⁴⁵ Author’s interview on 16 March 2017 with Samaa, director of the Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation.

was: ‘if you have an extra spoon in your house, there is a family that is missing that spoon’.¹⁴⁶ Another example where the youth acted ad hoc was in Ein el-Helweh when violent clashes broke out inside the camp between two parties. The youth tried to stop the conflict by calling all the people inside the camp to the centre of the conflict to make the warring parties stop firing guns.¹⁴⁷

4.1.4 Events and heritage activities

The focus on reconstructing the Palestinian identity is reflected in the activities of the youth. For example, there are folklore dancing, singing and music groups made up of children and youth to teach them about their Palestinian heritage (PYN n.d.e). In Bourj al-Shemali camp they screened movies about Palestine in the street.¹⁴⁸ One café near Saida, set up by a young Palestinian from Ein el-Helweh camp, is called ‘Darwish Café and Forum’ after the famous poet named Darwish. They organise cultural events and poetry nights every week, sell handmade Palestinian products, and have a small book-exchange library full of books about Palestine.¹⁴⁹

Moreover, the youth organise big events to celebrate Palestinian national holidays and invite people in the camp to join them (PYN n.d.g). Othman illustrated the popularity of these events: ‘We make festivals for national occasions. For example, if any faction makes a festival, you will see a maximum of 200 people. If we make a festival, you will see more than 600. So we have a large impact.’¹⁵⁰ When I attended their celebration of Land Day, this claim was confirmed. They organised an event in a theatre close to the camp that could fit around 600 people. The theatre was almost completely filled with people. Another example is the Palestine Arig Festival for Music and Poetry that took place in Beddawi camp on 9 September 2012 after a series of violent events, which, according to an online report of the festival, was attended by around 600 people on the first day, and around 1500 people on the second day (PYN n.d.g).

In addition, the attention to the Palestinian cause and identity is amplified in the youth’s writings. For example, the Pencilcamp website published an article written on the Palestinian martyr Neshat Melhem (Al-Ahmad n.d.).

4.1.5 Campaigns

The youth organise campaigns regularly to draw attention to certain issues. They use the word ‘campaign’ to describe projects concerning a myriad of topics: governance, rights, drugs, weapons, radicalisation, fundraisers and showing solidarity with Palestine.

¹⁴⁶ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

¹⁴⁷ Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

¹⁴⁸ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁴⁹ Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

¹⁵⁰ Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Governance

One of the first large-scale coordinated projects from the PYN was the ‘Apply your law’ campaign. The members of the PYN whom I interviewed argued that the popular committees’ bylaw states that members have to be elected, not appointed (PYN n.d.c).¹⁵¹ However, this bylaw is not implemented. In this campaign, the youth advocate not for a new system, but merely for the implementation of this already existing bylaw. The youth tried to put pressure on the leadership through social media, demonstrations and advocacy campaigns in all twelve of the camps.

In addition, the youth initiated an attempt to organise elections in Shatila camp. According to Othman, they managed to have an election and one of the youth activists was elected. However, the factions did not do anything with the result of the elections and in the end, nothing had changed.¹⁵² Furthermore, the youth are doing awareness campaigns to introduce the ideas of democracy and good governance to the community and make people think in another way.¹⁵³

Rights

Although the youth are attributing blame for their miserable situation to the Palestinian factions, their activities are not limited to improvements within the camp. Instead, they are also doing activities to improve the general status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. This is done at both the political level and the grassroots level. An example at the political level is the meeting with the Minister of Labor described above. Another example is when Mohammed from Ein al-Helweh camp invited local Lebanese political leaders to the camp to change the negative and stereotypical image of Lebanese people regarding the camps.¹⁵⁴

However, the youth believe that advocating at the political level is not enough. Instead, they believe in bottom-up change and improving their relations with the Lebanese community in the hope that the people will influence their leaders. As Tarek explained to me:

So if you want to advocate, you don’t just need to go to the government and say: hey, change the law. You also need to go to the grassroots of the Lebanese people and let them convince, you need to convince them that those Palestinian people have the rights and they are human and they share with you the basic human needs. Then they could be able to influence their

¹⁵¹ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁵² Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 30 March 2017 with Jaber, a Palestinian independent researcher, consultant and activist.

¹⁵³ Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁵⁴ Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

leaders. This is another way of intervention, it's very new and no one thought about it before, because the only way we intervened before is doing protests, protests, protests and protests, and we're having no results.

To this end, the youth organise many activities and events with Lebanese youth to strengthen ties and create a dialogue between the communities. They organise dialogue discussions, but also cultural events such as screening movies or dancing.¹⁵⁵

Fundraisers

In at least two camps the youth activists organised fundraisers for sick children. In Shatila camp, the youth claimed they collected around 40.000 dollars to cover the medical costs of a child called Ahmad who was suffering from a heart disease (PYN n.d.e).¹⁵⁶ In Beddawi camp, a similar fundraiser took place for a child called Omar, called 'we are all with Omar'. By going to all the houses, they told said that they collected 100.000 dollars for his heart surgery.¹⁵⁷

Solidarity with Palestine

In order to strengthen the Palestinian identity within the refugee community, the youth also engage in several solidarity campaigns whenever tragic events happen in Gaza or the West Bank. For example, during the conflict in Gaza in the summer of 2014, the youth organised marches, sit-ins and strikes to show their sympathy with the Palestinian victims (PYN n.d.e). When Palestinians in Israeli prisoners went on a hunger strike, Nazha announced on Facebook that she too would go on a hunger strike (Al-Roubi 2017). Others organised demonstrations to display their solidarity with the prisoners.¹⁵⁸

Radicalisation and violence

The youth have also conducted campaigns to counter radicalisation and violence in the camps. They do so in different ways. In Rashidiyeh camp, the youth are organising awareness activities and programs for mothers (Initiate, n.d.).¹⁵⁹ They believe that the mother is the centre of the family, and therefore has a lot of influence when it comes to the prevention of radicalisation. In awareness sessions and programs they were trying to build their capacity for positive parenting and teach them how to intervene in the early stages of the radicalisation process of their child. Another way to tackle

¹⁵⁵ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

¹⁵⁶ Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁵⁷ Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

¹⁵⁸ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Muhammad, Palestinian student at the Lebanese American University.

¹⁵⁹ Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

the violence in the camp is by targeting the random availability of weapons in the camps. In Beddawi camp, the youth organised a sit-in against weapons in the camp after a fatal accident at a funeral (PYN n.d.g).¹⁶⁰

Drugs

Finally, the youth have set up campaigns against drugs in the camps. Many camps are considered to be a cheap market for drugs, which has negative effects on the community. The youth told me that some parents even stop their children from attending school to keep them from doing drugs.¹⁶¹ For that reason, the youth organised demonstrations in Shatila camp to increase awareness and combat the widespread availability of drugs.¹⁶² In Burj al-Barajneh camp the youth established an ‘addiction treatment centre’, “to kill addiction before it killed them” (Tanji & Haidiri 2017). In at least two other camps, the youth have set up civil defence teams to give youngsters that were doing drugs a new goal in their life and keep them off the streets by giving them a sense of belonging.¹⁶³

4.1.6 Media

Finally, the youth make use of different types of media to convey their message to the public. First of all, every youth group has its own Facebook page on which they explain their mission and identity and post statements, activities and events.

Second, some youth make small documentary videos, which they upload to the Internet. This project, called ‘Pulsetine’, has a Facebook page and a website. They produce digital content to document the Palestinian cause and history and try to educate and motivate people through these movies (Pulsetine n.d.).¹⁶⁴ One of these youths, Mourad, brought me along to the mass graves near Shatila when he was shooting a movie about the Palestinian martyrs of the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

Third, the youth have set up a magazine called ‘Pencilcamp’. In this magazine, youth in different camps from all over Lebanon are writing about the issues and challenges that young people face in the refugee camps.¹⁶⁵ On their Facebook page, they state that their mission is to strengthen the Palestinian identity and encourage young people to write, participate and find solutions to their problems (Pencilcamp n.d.). To establish this magazine, the youth received training from the

¹⁶⁰ Author’s meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

¹⁶¹ Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁶² Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁶³ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Hatem, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

¹⁶⁴ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

¹⁶⁵ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

MASMF. Through it, they want to make the youth from all the camps ‘speak in one voice’.¹⁶⁶ This indicates that these youth are trying to create ‘a shared sense of the social movement as a collective actor’, and actively engage in identity construction according to Holland et al.’s definition of collective identity.

Finally, the youth make use of their media and writing skills to defend their own community and respond to verbal attacks from external actors when the factions fail to do so. For example, Mourad told me that when, as mentioned above, Condoleeza Rice suggested all Palestinians could be sent to South America as a solution to the conflict, he wrote an article in response.¹⁶⁷ And when a Christian leader in Lebanon said that Palestinians caused the Lebanese civil war, Nazha wrote an article in response titled: ‘I caused the Lebanese civil war’ to highlight how pointless it is to blame the current generation for something that happened 40 years ago.¹⁶⁸

4.2 Impact

As described in the theory chapter, this thesis focuses on language and resources to research whether and how the youth have the power to define or “the ability to make others inhabit your story of their reality” (Gourevitch 1998, 48). The languages and resources have been discussed above. In this section I will discuss to what extent youth succeeded and failed to ‘define’ or impact the lives of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

4.2.1 Impact on the community

The youth have made many small-scale improvements that cumulatively have left an impression on the community. Ahmad beautifully illustrated this with an Arabic common phrase: ‘The bullet that does not hit you disturbs you.’¹⁶⁹ What this means in practice, for example, is that the campaign against drugs did end but rather reduced the drugs in the camp. A youth activist from Shatila camp, Othman, told me that before the campaign, drugs would be sold in the streets and tolerated or even supported by the Palestinian leadership. Afterwards, when people had dared to speak about the topic and the community had become more aware, the drugs were not sold openly in the streets anymore.¹⁷⁰ In addition, because of the ‘civil defence’ teams the youth created in Bourj al-Shemali and Beddawi camp and other opportunities they created for the youth, many of them have stopped doing drugs.¹⁷¹ This effect was summarised nicely on one of the youth groups’ websites (Try to Live n.d.):

¹⁶⁶ Author’s interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

¹⁶⁷ Author’s interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

¹⁶⁸ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

¹⁶⁹ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁷⁰ Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁷¹ Author’s meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Hatem, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

[Participation in youth groups] can help reduce the risk of becoming involved in unsafe activities, such as using drugs and alcohol. Being involved in community activities has been shown to be a protective factor--that is, it helps young people to make healthy choices. That's because by being involved in a youth groups, they can develop a 'safe' identity, and are less likely to participate in unsafe activities [...] to feel they belong.

Similarly, the youth groups have not managed to create a democratic system in the camps; however, they do claim to have reduced corruption. According to some youth, by openly criticising the corruption within the Palestinian leadership, the factions are now aware that are being watched and monitored and have become more careful.¹⁷² In addition, being openly critical has created space for other people to become critical too. Before people would be too afraid to do so, but now that the youth are raising their voice, other people allegedly dare to be critical of the factions too.¹⁷³ One funder described the impact of the youth as accumulative: 'Change is going on on a daily basis. Today plus one per cent, tomorrow minus one per cent, after tomorrow... yes, change is accumulative work, until they will reach a point of making a big difference.'¹⁷⁴ Ahmad argued more or less the same:

So [the factions] are aware about this youth activism and it's increasing. At some point, they would stop, and they would ask themselves: what should we do? Because it grows more and more and more. At some point it will get... at some point there will be a group of youth who will take the lessons learned, and they will form something competitive *yani*, that will be, not in a competition position, but at least in a position that can push for a certain change. And I think that is how it's, it's a construction process, it's a collective process.¹⁷⁵

The downside, however, is that attacks on the factions might also make them more repressive. The repressive ways in which the factions respond to the youth initiatives attest of this tendency. However, from the interviews became clear that the youth think that the increase of repression from the factions does not weigh up against the strength that the community gains from the activities. Nazha, for example, said that it does not matter whether the factions support or repress her work; she will continue anyway.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁷³ Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

¹⁷⁴ Author's interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

¹⁷⁵ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁷⁶ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

4.2.2 Impact on individuals

The youth also claim to have impacted the lives of individual young Palestinians. One of the youth group's websites identified several areas in which youth benefit from the activities: they can develop skills that will be useful in many jobs, gain self-confidence and self-esteem, and develop a strong support network of other young people (Try to Live n.d.). One young woman who participates in two youth groups in Beddawi camp, said that the activities taught her how to describe herself, how to ask questions, how to love herself and how to avoid making generalisations.¹⁷⁷

Because of the work they are doing, many of the youth claim to have gained the trust of the community.¹⁷⁸ According to two youth activists, the youth in the camp are often coming to the youth groups themselves to ask them how they can help.¹⁷⁹ In addition, the people are coming to the youth groups whenever they need help themselves.¹⁸⁰

4.2.3 Lack of support

Even though the youth have impacted both the community and individuals positively in several ways, it would be misleading to suggest that the youth groups have the support of all the community. Two activists confessed to me that the acceptance of the community is the biggest challenge in their work. One of them, Fouad, declared that the community is afraid of change and rejects people with different views. He said that people have been disappointed by false promises for decades, and now have lost all hope that anyone can make a positive change in their lives.¹⁸¹ Another said that many times initiatives from the youth have failed because of a lack of community support. He explained:

The mentality that we have in the camps, like, they don't want to have... the community they are also frustrated so if a group of youth want to become an initiative they don't see the support of the community because the community is frustrated from everything. So if the youth want to say that we are different, they don't believe that. Because we say like 'we are frustrated from everybody. Don't tell us that you will change. Since 1948 we are living here and nothing changed. So organisations came here, UNRWA came here, popular committees, some youth in the past tried to do something and they failed, so we don't want to support any initiative before we see any difference.'¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Rasha, a Palestinian girl involved in Ziad's and Fouad's youth groups.

¹⁷⁸ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

¹⁷⁹ Author's interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁸⁰ Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁸¹ Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

¹⁸² Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

In reality, the level of community support differs from camp to camp and from youth group to youth group.

4.3 Counterframing

In this section, I will discuss the response of the Palestinian factions to the youth and the ways in which they are trying to resist and repress the youth movement. However, the factions are not the only ones who are critical of this new type of youth activism. In fact, there are youth groups that do not belong to the PYN and existed prior to the forming of this network that criticise the new groups. I will use Benford and Snows' concepts of counterframing, reframing and framing contests to describe the discursive aspect of this resistance. I will also argue that framing is not the only way in which the youth movement is being challenged; discourses are accompanied by institutions and practices and are supported by resources.

4.3.1 Palestinian factions

Counterframing

The main way in which the Palestinian factions are engaging in counterframing activity is through accusations and rumours about the youth. According to the youth, the factions accuse them of having external agendas and ties with Western powers, such as the UK or the US, or with Israel (PYN n.d.g).¹⁸³ By making these accusations, they try to give the youth group a bad name with the community.¹⁸⁴

The most recent accusation is that the youth are related to a person called Mohammed Dahlan, a Palestinian politician who used to belong to Fatah but was kicked out because he initiated a reform movement and tried to replace their current president. Dahlan is linked to Edward Kattura, who is a political consultant for the organisation Ark, which funds many youth projects. Based on this, the factions allegedly claim that the independent youth activism is funded by and therefore dependent on Dahlan, who is out to overthrow the PLO.¹⁸⁵ Framing the youth groups as 'puppets' of this politician diminishes their legitimacy and hurts their voluntary and independent image, which lessens their support from the community. As argued by Benford and Snow: "social movement

¹⁸³ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author's interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

¹⁸⁴ Author's meeting on 4 April 2017 with four youth from the Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi youth organisation in Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁸⁵ Author's interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

Author's interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Hatem, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

framing activity and the extent of its resonance are affected by the cultural and political environment, including the framings/counterframings of institutional elites” (Benford and Snow 2000, 626).

Another way of countering the influence of the youth through framing is by going to the parents of youth. According to Mohammed, the factions went to the parents of the volunteers and tried to convince them to keep their children out of the organisation.¹⁸⁶ Especially regarding girls, they framed the youth groups as places with many guys whom their daughters might fall in love with. Because of this pressure, many volunteers actually started to leave. Framing the organisations as a place unsafe and unsuitable for girls also hurts their legitimacy with the community.

Resources

Similar to the youth, the factions rely on material and symbolic resources to support their counterframes. First of all, the factions control the community because people are financially dependent on them. Because of this system of clientelism, a large part of the people will remain loyal to the factions. In addition, the youth claim that the factions own the media in the camp, which means they own platforms on which they can spread their rumours.¹⁸⁷

However, the factions possess limited resources. Therefore, they have to rely on the Lebanese authorities for support. An example is that the factions use their relations with the Lebanese security and intelligence services to put pressure on the youth. Two of my respondents have declared that more than once the factions have reported to the Lebanese security services that they are behind certain armed groups or conflicts in the camps.¹⁸⁸ Consequently, they have been under investigation by the Lebanese authorities several times but were released because the accusations turned out to be false.¹⁸⁹

In addition, according to an anonymous youth activist from Naher el Bared camp, the Palestinian factions have made use of the Lebanese army to stop the work of the youth as well. He described how one time, during the opening of a youth café, the Palestinian factions asked the Lebanese army to send everyone home.¹⁹⁰

Practices

There are several ways in which the factions have taken concrete action against the youth groups. First of all, many youth activists were removed from their factions as soon as they started to affiliate

¹⁸⁶ Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

¹⁸⁷ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁸⁸ Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁸⁹ Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁹⁰ Author’s interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp.

with independent activism. They described how at first they were given the choice to link their activities to the factions but were fired when they did not accept.¹⁹¹ Another told me how he used to work with the Palestinian embassy. When he started his work with the youth and refused to link it to Fatah, he got kicked out of the Fatah and fired from his job at the embassy.¹⁹² According to his brother, ‘nowadays, if any Fatah member, civil or security, man or woman, any member in Fatah... if the leadership sees him with any member in Ahlam Laje2, he will be kicked out.’¹⁹³

Another way in which the factions are trying to fight the influence of the youth activists is by creating their own youth platforms parallel to the independent youth network. The youth have told me about a group created by the Palestinian Embassy, and youth councils established by Fatah and Hamas.¹⁹⁴ One youth activist described this development as ‘healthy’.¹⁹⁵ Another commented that the main difference between those groups and their own is that the groups linked to the embassy or the factions do not have any freedom.¹⁹⁶

Finally, allegedly the factions are trying to make the youth stop their work by threatening them. At least five of my respondents declared to have received threats and death threats from the factions several times.¹⁹⁷

4.3.2 Other youth

It would be foolish to claim that this new type of activism and the PYN represent all politically active Palestinian youth in Lebanon. In fact, there are many other youth groups, some of which existed long before the recent rise in youth activism, that represent a completely different side of the political spectrum. These other youth groups also engage in counterframing tactics to resist the influence of the PYN. Since the line between ‘old’ and ‘new’ is quite ambivalent, I prefer to make the distinction between the PYN and ‘other youth’.

Counterframing

First of all, some of the other youth groups blame the PYN for not being independent.¹⁹⁸ Just like the factions, they argue that the funds from Ark make the network dependent on Dahlan.¹⁹⁹ They add that

¹⁹¹ Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

¹⁹² Author’s interview on 6 April 2017 with Sobhi, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁹³ Author’s interview on 22 March 2017 with Othman, a youth activist from Shatila camp.

¹⁹⁴ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

Author’s interview on 21 April 2017 with Badie, a youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁹⁵ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

¹⁹⁶ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Muhammad, a Palestinian student at the Lebanese American University.

¹⁹⁷ Author’s interview on 28 March 2017 with Salma, a Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 4 April 2017 with Hatem, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 7 April 2017 with Mohammed, a youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp.

their activities have a political colour and are merely directed at Fatah, which suggests that they have ties with Dahlan.²⁰⁰ Therefore, these other youth groups refrain from working with the PYN because they don't want to be affiliated with this accusation.²⁰¹

Another accusation is that the PYN, when it was founded a few years ago, excluded the already existing youth groups in the camps. Some argue that they only represent one side of the political spectrum, but pretend to represent everyone.²⁰² Whenever I told one of these other youth that I had spoken to members of the PYN, they seemed annoyed and very eager to introduce me to youth activists that are not affiliated with the PYN.²⁰³

An example of a youth group that existed long before, since 1996, is the Palestinian Cultural Club (PCC) in Beddawi camp. According to Fouad, who used to be a member, and an online statement of the PCC, they offer completely opposite views on their situation and how to return. They believe that the only way to return is through a revolution (PCC n.d.). They are completely against the two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.²⁰⁴ Fouad said that they do not do any work regarding services, because they don't want people to be thinking about their lives in the camps; they only want them to think about Palestine. Their focus is on teaching the people, mainly children, about Palestine (PCC n.d.).²⁰⁵

Finally, the PYN is accused of not really being a coherent network. Allegedly there is a lot of division and competition within the network, the network consists of many sub-networks and whenever they get together they do not really cooperate but hide their ideas from each other.²⁰⁶

4.3.3 Reframing activity

Countering counterframes

Some of the youth belonging to the PYN engage in reframing activity to counter these accusations and rumours. One way of doing this is by claiming that the Dahlan accusation is a new rumour, recently made up only after the youth groups started forming.²⁰⁷ They argue that Fatah's internal struggle started in 2013, whereas these youth groups exist since 2010 or 2011. In fact, many of the

¹⁹⁸ Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author's interview on 25 March 2017 with Melad, a youth activist connected to the PFLP in Naher el-Bared camp.

¹⁹⁹ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

²⁰⁰ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

²⁰¹ Author's interview on 21 March 2017 with an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.

²⁰² Author's interview on 9 March 2017 with Mourad, a youth activist from Tripoli.

Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

²⁰³ Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

²⁰⁴ Author's field notes: on my visit to the PCC I saw that all the maps of Palestine that hung on their walls show Palestine as one country, without the borders of the West Bank and Gaza.

²⁰⁵ Author's field notes: when I visited the PCC, they were shooting a television show where children from different schools competed against each other in a quiz with questions about Palestine. All their questions were focused on Palestinian history and geography, such as when the Oslo accords were signed and the length of the Jordan river.

²⁰⁶ Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Fouad, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

²⁰⁷ Author's interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

youth mock the factions for having a ‘list of accusations’ they choose from whenever any youth try to make improvements in the camp without linking their work to the factions (Shahrour 2017).²⁰⁸ They also mock them by saying that they do not do anything in the camp, except follow up on the youth and make up accusations.²⁰⁹

Edward Kattura, the political consultant at Ark who forms the link between the youth and Dahlan, argues that funding the youth groups does not make them dependent on Ark. He started to work together with Dahlan because they were both members of the opposition within Fatah and had similar views about the party’s future.²¹⁰ However, he claims not to condition the funding for the youth projects. He has a project consisting of four pillars, and if the youth develop a project that falls within one of these four pillars, they can apply for funding. The proposals then get either rejected or approved.²¹¹

Another way of countering the accusations is by claiming that the other youth groups make up these accusations because they did not have any impact themselves.²¹² According to some, they received funding too but failed to make a significant impact.²¹³ As Edward Kattura says: ‘they talk too much’. He argues: ‘It’s easy to accuse anybody, especially within the Palestinian community. And every one of us has information about the other.’²¹⁴ It’s the change you make on the ground that matters. He argues:

And people who have problems with our youth groups, who hate me because of Dahlan, okay don’t make a relation with us. Very simple. Fight us. Fight us on the ground. What we do, you do better than us. Let’s go to positive competition.²¹⁵

Nazha argued similarly: ‘even if Israel funded me, I would accept, because I would help my society’.²¹⁶

In addition, the youth try to respond to accusations and rumours with transparency and honesty. As described above, they try to document every dollar they spent in reports in order to keep the trust from the community. Edward Kattura went to the people in the camps to tell the people who

²⁰⁸ Author’s interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

²⁰⁹ Author’s interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

²¹⁰ Author’s interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Author’s interview on 14 March 2017 with Nazha, a youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering.

he is, what he does and let them ask any questions they have.²¹⁷ This is another way of countering the accusations and rumours.

Adjusting frames

However, actively countering counterframes is not the only way to respond to the accusations and rumours. There are members of the PYN youth that take the accusations more seriously and are more cautious of accepting funding because they do not want it to influence their reputation with the community. For example, Tarek, who is not part of the PYN but works together with the network, and who is fully aware of the challenges and accusations the youth face when conducting any activity, explained:

There are [challenges], it's sensitive, and it's risky, and you need to be fully aware of what you're doing, and you need to be fully connected to that system and try to do a lot of outreach and induction before doing any single work. So we're trying to mitigate, to know what to do. Otherwise, we would not be able to intervene. Because we have the experience of resistance when we wanted to do the things like enforce, we didn't get the results that we want. So we are trying to improve our way of intervention.²¹⁸

He added: 'I do think that if I will accept funding from Pursue, which I haven't done yet, it will affect my relationship with the factions.'²¹⁹ A member of the PYN, Ahmad, who is also aware of the effects that accepting funds from political affiliated parties have on the reputation with the community, explained:

We hope that one day we have community resources, but it's a long term... at some point, you need to take money from this part or this party, this NGO or this place, to implement an activity, and out of the sudden, you become connected to embassies. We have supporters at the political level because they have their own interests against the other party... [...] What is our identity? Who we are? How can we get access to resources without being connected to political agendas? Can we really be fully independent, can we use political parties to reach a place where we can make a change?²²⁰

²¹⁷ Author's interview on 4 April 2017 with Hatem, a youth activist from Beddawi camp.

Author's interview on 12 April 2017 with Edward, political consultant at the Ark company.

²¹⁸ Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Author's interview on 28 April 2017 with Ahmad and Hamada, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Bourj al-Shemali camp.

Choosing between resources and independence is an often-recurring dilemma for the youth groups. Indeed, one can wonder whether there is such a thing as being completely independent of politics and whether one can ever achieve something without accepting funds from resourceful parties. At least being aware of this risk could be a step in the direction of mitigating it.

4.3.4 Framing contests

The result of these framing, counterframing and reframing square-offs are what Benford and Snow call ‘framing contests’. However, these processes take place in a multi-institutional setting where lines between movement adherents and detractors are blurry. Many of the youngsters that accuse each other’s organisation work together in a different setting. Others claim to be against a certain group but are accused by others of belonging to the group they claim to be against. Therefore, to claim that this is a framing contest between clear-cut opponents would be misleading.

One can wonder to what extent these accusations are true. However, a more interesting question to ask is: if accepting funds from ARK gives the youth such a bad name, why do they continue to do so? Fact is that by taking money from ARK the youth are associated with Dahlan. Why do they choose this? In my research I have found two possible explanations.²²¹ The first one is because they have a similar vision as these politicians, and the second one, related to the first one, is because their vision for the future and returning to Palestine includes improving services in the camps, which requires money.

Still, it would be misleading to claim that the youth groups affiliated with the PYN are the only ones to have political ties. In reality, every youth group or organisation is affiliated to someone. Whether the ties to external actors are a problem depends on the way they are framed by movement opponents and the extent to which these frames resonate with the public.

To conclude, through a wide range of activities, the youth managed to have a positive effect on both the community and individuals. However, in many ways they have also failed to get the support from the community. This lack of support is amplified by the counterframes from both the factions and competing youth groups, who articulate accusations and rumours to undermine the youth groups’ support from the community.

²²¹ Ibid.

Conclusion

The complication with which I started this thesis is: how do Palestinian youth mobilise for solutions to their marginalised position in Lebanon without giving up on the ‘right of return’? I have attempted to answer this question through seven sub-questions, which I addressed throughout the chapters.

In the first analytical chapter, I discussed how the politics of temporariness had been kept into place over the past 69 years. I concluded that this can be explained by the reinforcing interaction between discourses and institutions of the Palestinian and Lebanese authorities and the social practices produced by and reproducing the structure. The discourse that any form of working towards a dignified life in Lebanon is equal to naturalisation and giving up on return to Palestine has been upheld by the Palestinian and Lebanese authorities for decades. The institutions accompanying this discourse strip away the agency of refugees and create a ‘culture of receiving’. Then I discussed the conditions of possibility that allowed for the rise of new initiatives despite the reinforcing nature of the structure. According to the youth, these conditions of possibility changed because of international developments, the passing of time and new resources at the youth’s disposal. Against this backdrop, the discourse of temporariness had worn out and the Palestinian community merely needed catalysts to set the rise of activism in motion, which presented themselves in 2011.

In the next chapter, I focused on *how* these youth mobilised against the existing structure. The short answer to this question is: By reframing the dichotomy of naturalisation and return. The youth counter the discourse that working towards a dignified life in Lebanon is equal to naturalisation and giving up on return, first of all by formulating a different path towards return; not one of violence and revolution but one of education and empowerment. They argue that return is not tomorrow; rather, it is a long-term goal that requires a long-term strategy. In order for people to have the time and energy to organise and mobilise for this way of returning to Palestine, living conditions have to be improved. This framing of the situation leaves much room for action on the side of the Palestinians. While articulating these frames, the youth focus on identifying the main injustices in their lives, attributing blame for causing or not improving these situations, formulating solutions and strategies to realise them, making the youth themselves feel responsible and capable to work towards these goals, constructing an identity of youth to create a sense of belonging, and drawing on emotions such as hope so they feel inspired to support the movement. Then, I argued that the power of language is not enough to mobilise movement adherents, rather, the Foucaultian notion of productive power will have to be combined with material or compulsory power, which required me to incorporate material and symbolic resources into my analysis that supported the articulated collective action frames, among which are funds, skills and a network.

In the final chapter, I analysed the deployment and impact of these frames. I discussed the different types of youth activism that were produced by and reproduce the movements’ discourse,

which could be divided into activities concerning capacity building, economic support, camp improvements, events and heritage activities, campaigns, activities with Lebanese youth and media. Then I discussed in which ways the youth groups succeeded and failed to impact both the community and individuals. Finally, I turned to the counterframes articulated by political factions and competing youth groups, as these too affect the extent to which the youth's collective action frames impact the community. I argued that the youth activists respond to these counterframes through two types of reframing activity: either by actively countering the counterframes or by adjusting their frames and actions.

Two risks: political dependency and clientelism

Clearly, the story told in this thesis is not 'finished'. At the time of writing, the youth activism is still alive, growing, and being challenged on a daily basis. At this point, it is hard to say what direction it will go into: whether they will succeed in making fundamental changes in their society and political system, or slowly fade away. The youth themselves believe that the youth activism will grow into 'something competitive' that is 'in a position that can push for a certain change'. However, there are traps that the activists could fall into that might prevent them from reaching that point. During my research, I noticed two risks that the youth should be wary of.

The most salient one is the dependency of the youth groups on funders. As discussed, in order to keep their legitimacy with the public, the youth try to hold on to their voluntary and independent identity. However, this often provides a dilemma. As argued throughout this chapter, resources are necessary in order to sustain the youth activism. Consequently, they have to choose between staying independent and obtaining resources. Several members of the PYN seem to be very well aware of this risk and consciously attempt to counter it, by making steps towards self-sufficiency or increasing transparency.

A second risk is one of which the youth I have interviewed are less aware. Throughout this thesis, I have reflected on the clientelistic relationships upon which the Palestinian communities in Lebanon are built. The youth referred to these issues several times when talking about how people remain loyal to the factions because they are financially dependent on them. In the frames they articulate, they are trying to counter these dynamics by advocating for principles such as democracy, freedom and human rights. However, it proves to be difficult to hold on to these principles in a political culture where clientelism and relations of dependency and reciprocity are the norm. In the current clientelistic system loyalty and reciprocity go hand in hand: people give their loyalty in exchange for money. As explained by Othman in section 4.3.1, once people cease to be loyal to a certain faction, the reciprocal relationship is ended and they are denied financial aid from their faction.

In an environment where people are kicked out of their factions on which they are financially dependent, for choosing to support your activism, you have to be able to offer them something in return. This is the dilemma Ahmad describes:

So I can have my own, like, income resources, but my friend on the other door is working with UNRWA for example. And you know UNRWA lately they have this neutrality policy, and impartiality and I don't know what. And they are threatening their employees of, either on Facebook statements or comments or being... but at the end of the day, they will tell you like: 'I have to put food on my children's table. What can you do for me if UNRWA fired me? What can you do for me if this political party fired me?'²²²

Similarly, Tarek asked me: 'How you can motivate something that you, at the end of the day you are sure that you are not able to provide a real touchable, tangible support for them?'²²³

However, the risk of providing people with alternative 'touchable, tangible support' if 'this political party fired me' is that people then become dependent on the youth instead, and put their trust in the youth because they provide the people with support. This results in the same kind of reciprocal relationships that keep the clientelistic system in place. This would be yet another example of Giddens' structuration theory, where the discourses are unable to change the structure because of the reinforcing nature of the institutions (clientelism) and social practices (offering money in exchange for loyalty).

This creates a dilemma for the youth: how to hold onto principles such as democracy and human rights in a political culture where clientelism and relations of dependency and reciprocity are the norm? What choices does one make when this proves too difficult? Can one even bring about change without falling into clientelistic relationships? The solution these youth come up with themselves is providing people with their own income resources. However, providing people with funds to set up their own business might still create a relationship of loyalty and reciprocity. Furthermore, in order to be able to give people funds, the youth have to receive funding themselves, which, as described above, often gives them a political colour. If the youth do not want to fall into the patterns of clientelism that have been in place for decades, they will first of all have to be aware of this risk in order to find ways to mitigate it.

Academic relevance

In this thesis, I constructed a framework that integrated Giddens' structuration theory with Benford and Snow's frame analysis and notions of productive power with compulsory power, and applied this

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Author's interview on 27 March 2017 with Tarek and Ziad, youth activists from Rashidiyeh camp and Beddawi camp.

to a case of mobilisation against politics of temporariness in a situation of protracted liminality. I will briefly give an overview of how this framework advances our understanding of different theoretical premises.

First of all, this thesis contributes to the current debate on politics of temporariness in situations of protracted liminality by researching both this system and the mobilisation against it from a structurationist perspective that considers agency and structure mutually constitutive and places the emphasis on discourse. This approach does not neglect the agency of refugees in protracted refugee situations, nor does it ignore the structure in which the agency takes place. In addition, the emphasis on discourse highlights the importance of processes of meaning-making and contributes to our understanding of such processes among refugees in protracted situations from within.

Second, this thesis contributes to academic literature because it applies Giddens' structuration theory to a case of mobilisation for collective action. Like Jabri made a case for applying structuration theory to violent conflict, I demonstrated that it can be equally useful in cases of mobilisation for collective action. The interaction between discourses, institutions, resources and practices offer a suitable framework for analysing how a social movement can change the structure. This interaction has been the red line throughout this thesis. It applies to the politics of temporariness, to the alternative ways of framing by the youth, to the counterframings by the factions and competing youth groups and to the discussion on clientelism.

As Giddens argues and as I have demonstrated in this thesis, structure and agency are mutually constitutive through discourse, institutions and social practices. However, as argued by Demmers (2017, 130), not giving ontological precedence to either one or the other does not offer a solution to the question of 'where the seeds of change are located'. Agency-based theories have been criticised for neglecting structural factors and structure-based theories for neglecting agency, but considering both equally important in bringing about change fails to provide an explanation for 'why now?' To solve this problem of causality I have, based on the work of Potter (2000, 219), combined the concept of 'conditions of possibility' with Giddens' structuration theory by arguing that structures change through the interaction of discourses, institutions and social practices, which bring about new conditions of possibility that allow for the rise of new initiatives.

Applying Giddens' structuration theory to this case of social mobilisation provides insights for expanding Benford and Snow's frame analysis. It shows us that framing processes alone do not keep a system in place: rather it produces and is reproduced by practices. This also complies with Jabri's definition of discourses as given in section 1.2.2: they do things and have social and political implications. Simply looking at framing processes is not enough to understand why certain groups have the power to make other people follow them and why others do not. Therefore, in this thesis, I made a case for incorporating the interaction between language and practice, or the construction and deployment of frames, into the theoretical framework of collective action frames.

I argued that discourse alone cannot mobilise people for change. In addition to language, one

would need resources to do so. Benford and Snow do consider the importance of the strategic process of articulating frames to the end of acquiring resources. However, simply looking at these framing processes is not enough to understand how the social movement is kept alive. Analysing the actual material and symbolic resources that the movement actors have at their disposal is crucial in understanding why and how they managed to succeed. Although this research focuses on processes of meaning making and framing, I argue that in addition material factors play a role in the success of social movements. Combining compulsory with productive power offers a way to incorporate these discursive and material elements into one theoretical framework. I do not claim to be the first to do so, as many collective action theory scholars combine opportunities and organisations with framing processes (Demmers 2017, 93). Giddens himself too considers ‘rules’ and ‘resources’ to be equally important in structures. In this research, I merely aimed to stress the importance of combining resources with frames and clarify this by using conceptions of power.

Finally, I argue that there are two distinct ways of ‘reframing’ when it comes to responses to counterframing activity. Some youth engage in actively countering these accusations and rumours articulated by their opponents. Others, however, take the counterframes more seriously. They fear for the effect these counterframes will have on their resonance with the public and therefore choose to adjust their own frames or tactics.

Societal relevance

There are several ways in which this thesis makes important societal contributions. First of all, I have demonstrated the negative effects of politics of temporariness in a situation of protracted liminality. If this is what ‘reception in the region’ and ‘temporary protection’ can become, then the image of Palestinians in Lebanon might be what a future looks like for the Syrians in Turkey and the Africans in Libya. Researching this extreme case of politics of temporariness in a situation of protracted liminality can provide warnings and insight into the consequences of the current European refugee policy. Policymakers should consider the detrimental effects of stimulating reception in the region and providing temporary protection, especially when ‘temporary’ turns into ‘permanent’ and generations go lost to this focus on temporariness.

Second, it sheds light on and gives voice to this group of intelligent, ambitious, open minded, university educated group of young people who are trying to develop a long-term strategy to improve the protracted situation of Palestinians in Lebanon. Looking at policies through the eyes of the people suffering from them can offer new perspectives on what could be done better. Two generations have already been lost to the politics of temporariness. Listening to what the third generation has to say could be crucial in making sure that the fourth generation to be growing up in the camps will be offered better opportunities. In this thesis I have identified three main areas of importance: securing human rights, creating youth participation and improving Lebanese-Palestinian relations.

Further research

As acknowledged above, this thesis has been largely based on interviews with the youth. Therefore the claims made about the discourses, actions or positions of the Palestinian or Lebanese authorities had to be based on what the youth told me or on secondary sources. Due to the lack of existing literature on the position of the Palestinian and Lebanese authorities regarding the recent rise in youth activism in Lebanon, I could largely only make claims about these actors from the viewpoint of the youth. Conducting research on these developments by talking to different stakeholders could provide insight into the validity of the claims the youth make against the Palestinian leadership.

The same goes for the impact of the youth activism. Most of the claims I made regarding the impact of the activities are based on how the activists view their effect on society. Knowing how the public experiences this impact would require research into the attitudes of the community members themselves.

In addition, this research has an explorative character. Because of the limited amount of available literature on this topic and the limited time I had to conduct my interviews, I interviewed youth and visited camps from all over Lebanon to get an as complete as possible picture of what activism looks like. However, this also means that my research at times lacked depth and the variation among activist groups in different camps meant I was often unable to make generalised claims. More focused in-depth research into these youth groups could contribute a great deal to the start this research has made in understanding the mobilisation of Palestinian youth in Lebanon against their own leadership.

Finally, the discussion on politics of temporariness in situations of protracted liminality calls for more research on cases where refugees resist these policies. As mentioned in chapter one, the focus within research on refugees has been largely on the policies governing them rather than the agency of refugees living under these policies. Researching similar cases will allow for making comparisons, based on which more sustained recommendations can be made that warn about the risks, dangers and disadvantages of maintaining politics of temporariness in situations of protracted liminality.

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Appendix

List of interviews

- Interview 1: 9 March 2017, Mourad Ayyash, youth activist from Tripoli and member of Pulsetine.
- Interview 2: 14 March 2017, Nazha al-Roubi, youth activist from Al-Mashook gathering near Sour, founder of the Cultural Noon Centre and member of the PYN.
- Interview 3: 14 March 2017, Hussein Charari, activist from Rashidiyeh camp near Sour and director of Al-Jalil organisation.
- Interview 4: 16 March 2017, Samaa Abu Sharar, director of the Majed Abu Sharar Media Foundation in Beirut.
- Interview 5: 21 March 2017, an anonymous youth activist from Beirut.
- Interview 6: 21 March 2017, Daad, a Palestinian youth activist from Beirut.
- Interview 7: 21 March 2017, an anonymous youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp near Tripoli.
- Interview 8: 22 March 2017, Othman Afifi, youth activist from Shatila camp in Beirut, founder of youth organisation Ahlam Laje' and member of the PYN.
- Interview 9: 23 March 2017, Ruba Rahmeh, youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp near Saida and founder of youth group Band of Refugees.
- Interview 10: 25 March 2017, Melad Salame, youth activist from Naher el-Bared camp near Tripoli and member of youth organisation affiliated with the PFLP.
- Interview 11: 27 March 2017, Tarek Monaim, youth activist from Rashidiyeh camp near Sour, member of the organisation Beyond, founder of the youth group Initiate and connected to the PYN; and with Ziad Mikdadi, youth activist from Beddawi camp near Tripoli and member of youth organisation Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi.
- Interview 12: 28 March 2017, Salma Rahsdan, Palestinian-Syrian youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp near Sour, founder of youth group Deyarona and member of the PYN.
- Interview 13: 30 March 2017, Jaber Suleiman, a Palestinian independent researcher, consultant and activist in Lebanon and founder of the Aidoun group, an organisation in Mar Elias camp in Beirut.
- Interview 14: 4 April 2017, Rasha, a young Palestinian woman who participates in youth activism in Beddawi camp.

- Interview 15: 4 April 2017, Fouad al-Banna, youth activist from Beddawi camp near Tripoli and founder of the youth group Inspire.
- Interview 16: 4 April 2017, Hatem Mikdadi, youth activist from Beddawi camp near Tripoli, founder of youth organisation Shabaab al-Herak al-Shabi and member of the PYN.
- Interview 17: 6 April 2017, Sobhi Afifi, youth activist from Shatila camp in Beirut, founder of youth organisation Ahlam Laje' and member of the PYN.
- Interview 18: 7 April 2017, Mohammed Musherfi, youth activist from Ein al-Helweh camp near Saida, founder of youth group Khotwa and member of the PYN.
- Interview 19: 12 April 2017, Edward Kattura, a political consultant at the Ark company in Beirut and funder of the PYN.
- Interview 20: 21 April 2017, Badie al-Habet, youth activist from Bourj al-Barajneh camp in Beirut, member of Al-Jalil organisation and member of the PYN.
- Interview 21: 28 April 2017, Muhammad Kassem, a Palestinian student and activist at the Lebanese American University in Beirut.
- Interview 22: 28 April 2017, Ahmad Faour, youth activist from Rashidiyeh camp near Sour, founder of Hanzalah Café and Forum and member of the PYN; and Hamada Joumah, youth activist from Bourj al-Shemali camp near Sour.