Conflict Map: The Gaza Strip and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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Summary: Within the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict lies the contentious issue of the Israeli blockade of the Palestinian Gaza Strip. Israel's strong military presence at the border of Gaza is a response to the region's governing body, Hamas, who does not recognize Israel's right to exist and perpetrates frequent acts of terror targeting Israeli settlements (Bybelezer 2018). The continued persistence of the Israeli imposed blockade, however, severely limits the rights and freedoms of Palestinians in Gaza (Hammond 2010). Without the freedom of movement and the right to return to their homeland, many Gazans have been confined to a life of desperate poverty, in an unprecedented humanitarian crisis of the 21st century (Khan 2018).

The Zionist movement developed at the turn of the 20th century as European Jews fled to Palestine to escape persecution in Europe. In support of re-establishing a Jewish homeland, Zionists enacted a series of military operations to form what is now the Israeli state. The creation of Israel in 1948 displaced thousands of Palestinians into neighboring countries and confining many to life in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem, with an Israeli imposed blockade at the Gaza Strip beginning in 2006. Israel's imposed restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement has instilled resentment among Gazans, leading to support of the Palestinian militant party, Hamas. With Hamas in power, the conflict has evolved from Palestinians and Israelis expressing their ancestral and religious ties to the land, towards a conflict of occupation, with cycles of revenge violence committed on both sides. The communication between Israel and Palestine, as well as between secondary parties including the United States, Palestinian Authority, and Human Rights Organizations, and third parties such as Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, are responsible for further deteriorating the humanitarian situation in Gaza. For Israelis and Palestinians, generations of ingrained hatred and fear have impeded their ability to work together. The road to peace is a difficult process; if Israelis and Palestinians are to find common ground, the parties must recognize and uphold the enjoyment of human

rights by both sides, including the right to security and freedom of movement, and take action to reduce any obstructions to these rights.

History: Most historians identify the establishment of the Zionist movement in the late 1800s as a catalyst for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following a resurgence of pogroms and anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, support for the procurement of a Jewish national homeland in the Holy Land of Israel rapidly gained traction (Middle East Research and Information Project 2016). Over the course of 50 years, the increased influx of Jewish settlers culminated in the expansion of Jewish settlements in Palestine. Eventually, in 1947, The United Nations recommended a partition plan to terminate British control over Palestine and divide the land which had previously been under British control since 1917, into two states (The Learning Network 2011). Fifty-five percent of the territory would be allocated to a Jewish state and forty-five percent to a Palestinian, Arab state (Zahriyeh 2014). Having two independent states, one as the Jewish state of Israel and the other as the state of Palestine would later be referenced in peace negotiations as the 'two-state solution.'

In response to the partitioning of Palestine on November 29, 1947 and the declaration of the Israeli state on May 14, 1948, five Arab states declared war in an effort to defend their fellow Arab Palestinians (The Learning Network 2011). Combat displaced more than 700,000 Palestinians, requiring refugees to seek protection in neighboring countries (Anti-Defamation League 2018). Due to superior military training and funding, Israel emerged triumphant in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, securing control over approximately 78% of historic Palestine, more land than initially allocated by the 1947 partition plan (Than 2017). Palestinians became confined to the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. Gaza remained under Egyptian control until the Six-Day War of 1967, when Israel annexed it (Zahriyeh 2014; Bowen 2017). From that point on, Gaza remained under the occupation of Israel.

Following Israel's acquisition of the formally Palestinian territory in 1967, Israel and Palestinian representatives engaged in multiple attempts to facilitate negotiations regarding the contentious issues of Jerusalem, the fate of Palestinian refugees, borders and security (Aljazeera America, "Oslo" 2013). For example, in the 1993 Oslo Accords, party leaders including Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, attempted to establish peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, with both parties formally recognizing each other for the first time. Oslo facilitated the creation of a Palestinian Authority (PA), tasked with self-governing the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after Israel withdrew (Ynetnews 2009). The peace talks eventually disintegrated due to both parties failing to implement aspects of the Oslo Accords as a result of a limited framework in the agreement to specifically address issues, and because of the 1995 assassination of Rabin by an Israeli extremist who felt Rabin betrayed the Jewish people in agreeing to the Oslo Accords (Aljazeera America "Oslo" 2013; Bybelezer 2018).

In 2005, then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon withdrew from Gaza, removing the Israeli army and settlers from the region, but retained control of borders, airspace and ports. In 2006, the Palestinian Islamist group, Hamas, won PA legislative elections in Gaza, defeating Mahmoud Abbas' dominant Fatah party. This resulted in the dissolution of the unity government and the creation of a defacto division of the Palestinian territories, with Hamas governing Gaza and the PA controlling the West Bank (Beauchamp 2017). While many still consider Gaza an occupied territory, Israel assures that it does not occupy the territory nor does it have any involvement in the day-to-day running of Gaza. Since Hamas' takeover in 2006, Israel tightened its blockade of the region further controlling and monitoring movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza. Israel has also launched three major, sustained assaults on the Hamas governed region, including the Gaza War in 2008, Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012 and Operation

Protective Edge in 2014. In December 27, 2008, during the Gaza War, Israel attacked the Gaza Strip, in response to indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel by Hamas. Claiming that Palestinian civilians support Hamas, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) directly targeted Gazans. This three week violent conflict resulted in 1,417 Palestinian deaths and 13 Israeli deaths. (Roy 2011, 226). These high-tech military operations are justified by the defense of Israel and Israeli citizens, however in the process of targeting Hamas, Israel has devastated Gaza's infrastructure, displaced people from their homes, and killed thousands of Palestinians, including civilians (Aljazeera, "A Guide," 2017).

Conflict Context: The Gaza Strip is a Palestinian territory situated within the confines of Israel and bordered by Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. Israel geographically separates Gaza from the other Palestinian territory, the West Bank. Israel's blockade has imposed a buffer zone on the most fertile land in the northern and eastern parts of Gaza, denying access to 30-40% of all IDF protected agricultural land (Roy 2011, 232). Today, the Gaza Strip, a territory of 140 square miles, is among the most densely populated places in the world, with 1.9 million people living in what has been described as the world's "largest open-air prison" (Aljazeera, "A Guide," 2017).

Israel has rationalized its blockade over Gaza citing the security risks of the Hamas governed territory, as Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist. For example, during the historic Oslo Accords, Hamas carried out suicide bombings to veto the Oslo Accords, potentially influencing Israel to walk away from the peace process (BBC News, "Hamas Palestinian Movement", 2017). When Hamas won 76 of the 132 seats in the Parliamentary Legislative Council in 2006 elections, becoming the governing body of Gaza, the IDF increased its territorial blockade against the region as violence often occurs at the borders (Wilson 2006). Hamas' use of suicide bombings, rockets, construction of tunnels into Israeli territory and what the Jerusalem Post describes as the exploitation of its "'subjects' as a collective human shield" is used as

justification for Israel's need for strong military security and defense at the border (Bybelezer 2018). The use of terrorism and violence against Israelis and Israel security has prompted the IDF to enact many measures to ensure the safety of its citizens, including the creation of the Iron Dome, a missile defense system designed and developed by Israel and funded through the United States in response to threats from rockets and mortar shells fired by terrorists in Gaza (Jewish Virtual Library 2018). Most recently, in April 2018, Palestinians joined along the border to protest the blockade of Gaza, however after warning protesters to keep away from the fence, the IDF reacted with force including the use of tear gas, rubber bullets, and in some cases live fire, resulting in the deaths of around 30 protesters and thousands of injured Palestinians. (Halbfinger, Abuheweila & Kershner 2018).

Israel's blockade has physically isolated Gaza, inhibiting all methods to develop vital sectors of the economy. Between 2006 to 2010, 95% of Gaza's industrial establishments were forced to close or were destroyed (Roy 2011, 234). The importation of raw materials to rebuild the industrial sector has been restricted, destroying an important sector for national revenue and employment (Roy 2011, 231). Without access to the agricultural land, Palestinians are forced to rely on what the international community can transport into the territory. Israel only permits a very limited amount of goods into Gaza, requiring Palestinians to construct tunnels to smuggle goods, as 75% of Gaza's people require humanitarian aid to meet basic food needs. Between September 2009 to January 2010 only 25% of needed supplies were allowed to enter Gaza, and for two weeks in January 2010, it reached a low of 6% (Roy 2011, 233). With Israel's blockade infringing upon the freedom of movement for Gazans, Egypt and Hamas have developed a lucrative industry with the passage of Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt through tunnels. (Bar'el 2017). With Gaza's limited accessibility to resources, people cannot receive adequate medical care and are separated from family that live within the West Bank (Human Rights Watch 2012).

Conflict Parties:

Primary Parties: The primary parties interested in the territory of the Gaza Strip include the State of Israel, Hamas, and those living within the blockaded borders of Gaza. While Israel claims its interest to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza, this goal is "tempered by the imperative of restraining Hamas. Repeatedly, Israel has been the subject of international criticism for its "disproportionate" use of military force against Palestinians in Gaza (Bybelezer 2018). However, Israel continues to deny accusations of genocide against Palestinians, claiming their attacks are motivated by the need for security in the face of Hamas' terror-based initiatives (Bybelezer 2018). Tensions between the PLO, Fatah and Hamas contribute to the lack of a unified PA, complicating the possibility for negotiations of peace in the region and improvement of economic and humanitarian conditions for Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip (Beauchamp 2017). Increasingly, young activists in Gaza are calling for unity among Palestinian leaders in order to bring about change to the region (Chick 2011).

Secondary Parties: The United States government has blamed Hamas for the outbreak of violence in Gaza, despite its continued weaponry support to Israel. US relations with Israel ebb and flow with each administration, some seeking greater involvement in the peace process. For example, the Bush administration facilitated the 2006 popular elections across the West Bank and Gaza for the Palestinian legislature where Hamas won a slight majority in Gaza. Though mainstream American public opinion supports Israel's assault on Gaza as self-defense against Hamas, recent polls show support for Israel is diminishing among younger Americans, who consume news from a greater variety of sources and opinions, primarily from outside the US (McGreal 2014). The PA, which was ousted from Gaza in 2007, has attempted to engage in reconciliation efforts with Hamas, as recently as October 2017, to restore the PA as the governing authority in Gaza. PA President Mahmoud Abbas declared that a new coalition

government between the rival factions would require the recognition of Israel and the disarmament of Hamas. Yet, if Hamas is included within a new administration, the PA risks losing the $400 million a year in funding it receives from the United States, in addition to Israel stating any such coalition as unacceptable (Washington Post Editorial Board 2017). Human rights organizations also serve as secondary parties to the conflict, as they indirectly have a stake in the protection from and remedying of human rights violations in the Gaza territory. Many influential human rights NGOs, however, are considered biased against one side or the other, contributing to the specific language used when reporting on the Gaza territory and influencing policy decisions by primary parties (Steinberg 2011).

Interested Third Parties: Egypt is an interested third party in the conflict, due to its previous occupation of the Gaza Strip and its shared border with the territory. Egyptian leaders, including the President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi have brokered deals between Hamas and the PA, as well as between Israel and the Palestinians (El-Tablawy 2017). The EU and the UN work together as third parties to elevate and promote discussions related to the peace process, Palestinian statehood, and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The European Union is a supporter of Palestinian rights and the rehabilitation of Gaza. The EU works for progress for an intra-Palestinian reconciliation between Gaza and the West Bank under a single, legitimate PA. The EU continues to be the largest donor in the Gaza Strip, in terms of humanitarian and development support, providing €1.5 billion since 2005 (European Union 2017). The UN seeks to manage and contain any escalation of the ongoing conflict and to uphold the rights and basic needs of the vulnerable Palestinians who live in ongoing crisis (Ury 2000). Additionally, the UN identifies the blockade and restrictions of the Palestinians living in Gaza as in violation with humanitarian law, noting the effects of poverty, unemployment, starvation, lack of healthcare, arbitrary punishment and other human rights abuses (OCHA 2018). Following the most recent instances of violence at the

Gaza border in April 2018, the United Nations Security-General Antonio Guterres of the United Nations called for an "independent and transparent investigation" into the incidents, and the statement appealed to "all sides to exercise restraint and prevent a further escalation" (Haaretz 2018). Palestine is recognized as a non-member observer state by the UN which allows them the right to participate in general debate of the UN and cosponsor resolutions (McMahon and Masters 2012)

Key Issues:

Facts based- Editorials and op-eds from both Israeli and U.S sources are overwhelmingly biased in favor of Israel. These editorials ignore the numerous instances of Israeli ceasefire violations, and advance the view that Gaza is no longer occupied, while asserting Israel's right to self-defense (Sedar 2009). This commentary has created a false and misleading public perception of what is occurring on the ground in Gaza (Violes 2009). Yet, regardless of the official Israeli government's rhetoric, a recent report by the OCHA states that 1.0 million Palestinians in Gaza are "locked in," unable to gain access to the outside world. Longstanding access restrictions have limited economic prospects as well as the availability of goods and services, exacerbating unemployment, food insecurity, and aid dependency (OCHA 2016).

Still, Israel's security concerns are legitimate. The core of Hamas's charter calls for the complete destruction of the state of Israel and Hamas has repeatedly resorted to indiscriminate acts of terror. The group refuses to renounce acts of violent resistance against Israel that have killed and injured innocent civilians (NCTC 2014). Therefore, Israel faces a predicament. On the one hand, the siege may solidify Hamas' power base, with the result that the group poses an even larger security threat to Israel (BBC News 2017). On the other, the continued oppression of Gaza's residents will only aggravate Palestinian resentment, fueling the likelihood of violent outbursts and expressions of dissent (Dixon 2017). Consequently, Israel is in gridlock; any action

undertaken to ensure the continued persistence of its future security, could, paradoxically, induce greater violence (BBC News 2017).

Values based- It is important to recognize that atrocities have been committed by both sides. Israeli citizens live in constant fear of an attack by Palestinian radical terrorists angling for the advancement of self-determination and the Palestinian right of return. Yet, this does not mean that the conflict is a war of equals. Within the Israeli government and prominent portions of Israeli society, there remains a systematic and collective disregard for Palestinian lives that has manifested itself in a series of human rights violations and extrajudicial killings by security forces (Sabrien 2016). Thus, today's conflict remains disproportionate with Israelis fighting for national security and Palestinians fighting for their homes and the right to survive.

Interests-based- In the case of Gaza, years of occupation and injustice have intermingled with severe resource scarcities to produce the dismal socioeconomic conditions conducive to the spread of disaffection and violence (Dixon 2017). Under international law, Israel has a responsibility for the protection of welfare in the territories it controls, yet this responsibility has been grossly overlooked (Shupak 2018). Israel continues to undermine basic development in Palestine, placing restrictions and regulations on donor support, foreign investment, and industry expansion, while simultaneously denying Palestinians access to their natural and economic resources (Tahhan 2017). In addition, economic growth in the private sector of Gaza remains almost entirely stagnant (World Bank 2014). Palestinian enterprises operating in Gaza remain hostage to restrictions on movement, access, and trade (World Bank 2014). As a 2017 UNICEF report highlights, "40 percent of Palestinian families in the Gaza Strip live under the poverty line, and 70 percent rely on some form of external aid" (UNICEF 2017). Ultimately, the resulting poverty and instability has aggravated Palestinian resentment, fueling the likelihood of violent outbursts and expressions of dissent (Dixon 2017).

Nonrealistic- Both Israelis and Palestinians have pursued flawed strategies. On the Palestinian side, Hamas' use of terror tactics, including their use of suicide bombings and rocket attacks, has tarnished their legitimacy, undermining their chances at formal international recognition (NCTC 2014). While their use of terror has inflicted relatively little damage on Israel, it has provoked a harsh response by the Israeli military, perpetuating the cycle of violence (Dixon 2017). Additionally, the Israeli government has initiated several policies that run counter to the peace process. When Israel perpetrates attacks against civilians in Gaza, they ignore the rights of Palestinian citizens and limit economic and social progress in Palestinian territories, inviting a Palestinian response of violence and radicalism (Dixon 2017). Thus, the use of extreme tactics on one side only escalates the vehemence and fanaticism of the other.

Dynamics*:*

Triggering events - issue emergence, transformation, and proliferation: Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was initially sparked by a quest for control over the Holy Land, Israel's assault against Gaza in 2008 was a triggering event that transformed the nature of the conflict into a larger conflict about identity, resulting in the proliferation of violence between Jewish Israelis and Arab Palestinians (Global Policy Forum 2005).

Polarization: The psychological and emotional impact of the war in Gaza remains essential to understanding the formation of political polarization. For Israelis and Palestinians, there is historic pain on both sides, in addition to a genuine fear about the prospects of survival for both peoples (Hammond 2010). As Joyce Ajlouny, Palestinian director of the Ramallah Friends School explains, life under the occupation means "living in daily anguish knowing that my people remain refugees after more than 70 years and have lived under siege for decades" (Cohen 2017). On the others side, Dan Meridor, former Likud Israeli Deputy Prime Minister writes, "Until 1967, the Arab goal was to wipe Israel off the map. Given the dramatic asymmetry

between Israel and the Arab states in territory, population and natural resources, the Arabs were not irrational in assuming that in the long run they may succeed" (Cohen 2017). For Israelis and Palestinians, the hurt that is demonstrated in these statements, pervades, resulting in polarization and the formation of a dangerous "us vs them" mentality. (Olczak, Pruitt 2010).

Spiraling: For Israelis and Palestinians, the emotional toll of the conflict has ossified the divisions between both sides (Cohen 2017). As the issue is so intimately connected to ideology, identity, and even morality, neither party is willing to relinquish the moral high ground and admit responsibility for past wrongs. This polarization has resulted in a spiraling effect; both sides are firmly entrenched in their beliefs resulting in the disappearance of more neutral parties who would otherwise urge moderation. When rounds of open warfare break out, such as the fighting in Gaza, pro-Israelis blame Palestinians just as quickly as Pro-Palestinians blame Israel for instigating the hostilities (Zikman 2010).

Stereotyping and mirror imaging: As former US ambassador to Saudi Arabia Chas Freeman contends, "the racist oppression and humiliation of Arabs in the Holy Land is at the root of regional instability" (Zikman 2014). Following the massacre of unarmed civilians living in the resistance free zone of Zitune in Gaza in 2008, survivors returning to their homes were confronted with a reminder of the Israeli incursion (Blumenthal 2013, 24). Members of the Givati Brigade, the group of IDF soldiers responsible for the attacks, had scrawled racist graffiti across Gazan walls, with messages reading, "Arabs need to die" and "1 down – 999,999 to go" (Blumenthal 2013). Yet, religiously and racially motivated violence is not perpetrated solely by the Israeli side; Palestinians are equally liable. In November of 2014, two young Palestinian men attacked a Jerusalem synagogue, leaving four dead Rabbis and an injured Israeli police officer in their wake. An Israeli synagogue was the target of choice, demonstrating that violence in this

conflict is not often a randomized act, but rather a targeted assault against the religious and cultural identity of the other side (Pfeffer 2014).

Alternative Routes to Solutions: Both the PA and Israel, as well as other interested parties, intend to achieve the proposed policy of a two state solution. The Oslo Accords of 1993 was the first face-to-face agreement between Israel and representatives of Palestinians. However, when Oslo failed in light of disagreements during the process, instability and interim agreements became the status-quo and have continued to this day. In 2000 during the Camp David Accords, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat sought to address the issues Oslo had left for negotiation, including where to draw border lines for two states and how Palestinian refugees could claim their right to return to Israel. However, the land Israel was willing to offer was not accepted by Palestinians who wanted a reversion to the border lines of 1967 and recognition of Palestinian refugees' right to return. The failure at Camp David was followed by a renewal of Palestinian intifadas. Another reference point for peace agreement negotiations is a plan known as the 'road map,' drafted by the U.S. State Department outlining a vision of Israeli and Palestinian states living in peace. The plan was endorsed by the US, Russia, the EU, and the UN in 2003 and offered a three phase process designed to move parties in the direction of a two-state solution (BBC News 2013). The first phase seeks to end violence, end Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, strengthen the PA, and ease the harsh conditions created by Israeli security blockade on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Phase two creates a provisional Palestinian state with temporary borders, and phase three involves the negotiation of final agreements to decide decide permanent borders of a Palestinian state, the status of Jerusalem, and international recognition for both Palestine and Israel (Otterman 2005). While not specifying all of the points for a negotiation and issues needed to be discussed to solve the conflict and reach an

agreement between the parties, the road map calls for international monitoring and continued engagement in the Israeli and Palestinian path to peace.

With repeated failures for Israelis and Palestinians to agree on previously suggested solutions regarding contentious issues, new and creative alternatives are necessary. Thus, a process of conflict transformation as a foundation for change in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has potential to reframe the language of resolving the conflict towards the creation of constructive change (Lederach 2003). While working towards a two-state solution would grant Palestine the sovereignty it seeks, the tensions and violence between Israelis and Palestinians would continue to persist. Therefore, implementing a conflict transformation process must address the epicenter of the conflict's relational dynamics (Lederach 2003).

The establishment of forums for open dialogue and communication can help to facilitate greater trust and understanding between the two sides. If Israelis and Palestinians are to find common ground, they will have to let go of their age-old hatred and prejudice. Both parties must be willing to hear the other side and understand what they are going through. By providing a setting in which participants can address the emotional impact of the root causes of crisis, dialogues can foster the improvement of interpersonal relationships. Additionally, schools can act as safe environments in which students can engage in the peace process. Courses and after school programs can encourage dialogue within both Gazan and Israeli schools that lie on the border, in which various histories and current events are explored, discussed and contested. Moreover, students should actively create projects that would further develop communication and amnesty between both sides. Similarly, cultural centers to promote the engagement between Arabs and Israelis in Israeli society can create opportunities for qualitative encounters and dialogue between social groups that live in close proximity to each other but are often separated because of stereotyping and mutual alienation (Ron 2018). The exchange of culture and creation

of performing and visual arts, can be a tool used to enhance cooperation and familiarity between Arabs and Israelis and thus enabling dialogue between the two social groups. Creating and funding cultural centers in Gaza could allow children and adults who have experienced trauma from violence in the region to heal through artistic expression. Finally, Gazans need to be able to develop sustainable economies, infrastructure and industries that are not controlled by Israel. Until Israel upholds Gazans' right to life, liberty, and pursuit of economic endeavors, peace cannot be achieved.

Conflict Regulation Potential:

<u>Internal Limiting Factors-</u> Ultimately, outside forces cannot act as the immediate catalyst for change nor enforce the establishment of long-lasting peace. The movement for change must come from within; Israelis and Palestinians must renew their commitment to the peace process. Both Israel and Gazan communities are affected by the violence inflicted by Hamas and the IDF. Leaders on each side should seek to end tactics that perpetuate the harm imposed upon civilians. Israelis want security from Hamas' terror attacks, while Palestinians seek greater access to resources, the ability to move outside of Gaza, and protection from Israeli rocketfire. Furthermore, Hamas and the Israeli government could reinvest their military spending into rebuilding their community infrastructures, including the education and healthcare systems, while simultaneously creating programs to increase dialogue among all sides.

<u>External limiting factors-</u> There is potential for the international community to become involved. By designing forums to enhance communication, understanding, and trust between the parties, organizations including the UN retain the unique capacity to mediate the dispute, enforce accountability, and increase the tractability and reframing of the conflict (Kaufman 2013). External forces possess the ability to improve the humanitarian conditions of those living in Gaza. As Steen Jorgensen, the World Bank Country Director for the West Bank and Gaza

contends, "an active private sector is much needed to fuel economic and social progress in the Palestinian territories" and to build "investor confidence and developing industry" (World Bank 2014). By investing in Gaza's economy and placing pressure on Israel to restore Palestinian mobility and access to resources, the international community can substantially improve socioeconomic development in Gaza (World Bank 2014).

Interested or Neutral Third Parties- Additional support to mediate the conflict can come from other nations in the Middle East, though it is difficult to identify many third parties who are able to be neutral in this conflict because of the divisiveness and blaming that has occurred for centuries by primary parties and their supporters. However, Egypt is uniquely positioned to take on the role of mediator and facilitate communication between the primary parties because of its identity as a part of the Muslim Brotherhood and better relations with Israel (Farid 2017). Egyptian officials have renewed efforts to push for reconciliation between the Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas, a proposed way to alleviate humanitarian suffering in Gaza as well as broker peace talks with Israel (Times of Israel 2018; Associated Press 2018).

Techniques of conflict management: As both Israelis and Palestinians sides are firmly entrenched in their positions regarding security rights and beliefs, the peace process is continually thwarted by physical expressions of violence and hostility. Accordingly, both sides could benefit from hearing the interests and needs of the other party. The technique of integrative style negotiation, which emphasizes the creation of joint values and the promulgation of mutual gains is the first step to collaborative problem solving, could be used to further transform the Israel-Gaza conflict. The inclusion of a third party mediator to facilitate the dialogue to share the interests and needs of each party can help to develop new and creative solutions to the conflict from the primary parties themselves. While some issues, such as the distribution of scarce

resources and land are inherently zero-sum, combining interests is a way to create a more mutually beneficial agreement.

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