

**“THE FRACTIONALIZATION, FRAGILITY, AND POLARIZATION OF THE
PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PARTIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE
CHAOS THEORY”**

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ABSTRACT:

This current research paper aims to examine the state of fractionalization, fragility, and polarization witnessed by the Palestinian political parties. The study also aims to elaborate the Palestinian political landscape within the context of the Chaos Theory in order to reveal the political ramifications and repercussions of such political on the current political status in Palestine. It is worth mentioning that the present study adopted the semi-systematic review approach as a research method through which a less systematic collection and synthesis of the relevant previous research findings were carried out and further combined with relevant themes and theoretical perspectives related to the subject matter of the present study to provide some evidence of effect on a metalevel, evaluate the collective evidence in this research area to assess whether the arguments for the judgments made were reasonable, and uncover areas in which more research is needed. The findings of the in-depth qualitative analysis of the semi-systematic review of the relevant literature concluded that in the Palestinian cause's framework, the Palestinian political parties and movements have suffered, for decades, from weakness, erosion, change, death, and reappearance. In fact, they have witnessed major transformations, including many manifestations of political division such as fractionalization, fragility, and polarization. Accordingly, they could not achieve their ultimate goal of liberation and the outcomes of their political work were less satisfactory, with lower political expectations, modest demands, and falling slogans. The findings also concluded that, according to the Chaos Theory, the political landscape, is seen as a chaotic state due to the influence of fractionalization, fragility, and polarization.

Keywords: Fractionalization, Fragility, Polarization, Palestinian political parties, Political landscape, the Chaos Theory, Political ramifications, Political status.

INTRODUCTION:

Originating in political philosophy (also referred to as the 'political theory'), the discipline of political science, which is defined as the study of politics through the analysis and interpretation of power relations, governance systems, constitutions, political behaviour, political thought, governments, etc., is also associated with other scientific fields, especially the field of history, through which political-related research methods and techniques are drawn upon various historical events through examining, analyzing and investigating these past events in order to reveal their patterns of cause and effect (Bevir, 2022; Smith, 1886).

The Palestinian cause represents a complex political and social phenomenon. This due to the strong overlap between local, regional, cultural, political, national and international influential factors that turned this phenomenon into a rich field for study and reflection.

Particularly, since the emergence of the Palestinian cause, political parties and liberation movements have played since the beginning of the last century as a tool of struggle and a social facade for political representation and for intellectual and national framing. Therefore, the Palestinians were among the first Arab peoples to see in the political party the most appropriate tool for leading the people's movement to achieve rights, negotiation management, mobilizing opinions, and controlling trends.

Since the emergence of the Palestinian cause, the Palestinian political parties and liberation movements played an influential role in the course of this cause and in the overall

Palestinian's political landscape. However, The Palestinian parties have been affected by the weakness, erosion, change, change, death, and reappearance of every social phenomenon. The Palestinian peculiarity that we can refer to in this regard is that these parties were not established for social demands in the first place, as much as they were a result of the Israeli occupation (Awadh, 2016).

In fact, the Palestinian arena has witnessed a great plurality and division in the political parties and movements. As a result, many of these parties and movements did not maintain their ideology or even their declared goals, as their foundations, programs, goals, behavior and alliances were changed or modified, and this sometimes reached the point that some of these parties and movements suffered from internal division, integrated into other movements and parties, or disappeared completely from the political scene with nothing left but their names. The birth or disappearance of these parties and movements were linked to certain situations, agendas, or interventions from outside the Palestinian political scene. For example, some of these movements and parties are usually affected by an Arab or regional agenda. Besides, many Palestinian parties and movements do not have a broad mass base sufficient for survival or renewal, for reasons related to the founders, the elitism of the political proposition, disorder or confusion in behavior, the method of arranging goals, and the nature of their alliances.

This wide view of the Palestinian political life entices researchers in the political field to search about the nature of the political reality of the Palestinian political parties and movements. Especially as the paths of the Palestinian parties and liberation movements in their struggle with the Israeli occupation have varied, ranging from armed resistance to peaceful resistance, and from limited or broad negotiation to armed clashes (ibid).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict which was preceded by several events, mainly declarations of claims which started with the ‘Sykes–Picot Agreement’ in (1916) held between the United Kingdom and France and led to dividing the Ottoman empire’s provinces outside the Arabian Peninsula into areas of British and French control and influence, the British Mandate for Palestine during which the ‘Balfour Declaration’ was issued by the

British government in (1917) to announce their support and obligation to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, followed by Jewish immigration to Palestine and the Israeli occupation of Palestine in (1948), which eventually led to the emergence of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (namely the ‘West Bank’, including East Jerusalem and the ‘Gaza Strip’), and the emergence of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict that has been taking place until present days (Adelson, 1995; Allawi, 2014; Antonius, 1938; Fromkin, 1989; Renton, 2016).

In addition to the Arab-Israeli war of (1948) that was also referred to as the ‘Nakba War’ as it ended with the defeat of the Arabs, other four major Arab-Israeli wars took place since the emergence of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, namely the 1956 war (also known as ‘The Second Arab–Israeli war’, the ‘Suez War’, and ‘The Triple Aggression’), the 1967 war

(also known as the ‘an-Naksah’ and the ‘Six-Day War’), the 1973 war (also known as ‘The Sixth of October War’ and ‘The Tenth of Ramadan War’), and the 1982 war (also known as ‘The Lebanon War’ and ‘The invasion of Lebanon’) (Aljazeera, 2004).

Further, The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has also witnessed major events such as the first intifada (English: ‘uprising’) which took place in 1987 and the second intifada (also known as ‘Al-Aqsa intifada’) which took place in 2000. Actually, the two previously mentioned popular uprisings were executed by the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as part of their struggle to end the Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories (the Gaza Strip and West Bank), create an independent Palestinian state, and fulfill the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

The course of the Arab-Israeli conflict was not limited to ‘the armed conflicts’, but rather included other patterns of interactions, ranging from military operations of strategic dimensions, armed paramilitary clashes, and organized armed violence. For example, the ongoing street clashes in the occupied Palestinian territories, Hamas operations against Israel in (1996) and (2001), etc. In addition, the failure of the Camp David Summit, which took place in (2000) as an effort to end the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and to reach final agreement on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process but yet ended without any agreement

(Drakulich, 2005; Reinhart, 2006), the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, which took place (2005) as an effort to end the four-year second Intifada (Tucker, 2019), and the Annapolis Conference, which was held in (2007) and witnessed intensive negotiations, the Israelis and the Palestinians did not reach an agreement and hence the negotiations ended in (2008) without result, especially after the major assault carried out by Israel on Gaza (2008), the overall outcomes of these events led to a complete collapse of the peace process, which in total constituted the state of war between the Arabs and the Israelis (Aljazeera, 2004).

On the other hand, the first intifada in particular, which was ended with the signing of the first Oslo Accords in September 1993 as a peace treaty between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), alongside with the signing of the second Oslo Accord in (1995), have provided a framework for peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Overall, the Oslo I and Oslo II Accords resulted in the recognition by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of the State of Israel and the recognition by Israel of the (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner in permanent-status negotiations. Further, the two accords resulted in creating a Palestinian Authority tasked with limited self-governance of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip

On contrary, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict’s course has led to the formation of many liberation movements and political parties that aim to struggle against the Israeli occupation. However, throughout the history of the Palestinian cause, these movements and parties had different visions and programs at the demographic, political and national levels in their struggle

paths against the Israeli occupier. This led to a sharp discrepancy that arose in the political programs and the reading of the scene of the Palestinian national project and further a division between these parties and movements (Sweilem, 2007).

When the first Palestinian intifada started and within the escalation of political and military action, the Palestinian arena has witnessed the emergence of Islamist' Palestinian movements operating outside the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

As a result, the Palestinian liberation process at that time has started to be led by the prominent faction in the Palestine Liberation Organization, which was represented by the

Fatah movement (formerly known as the 'Palestinian National Liberation Movement', which is the largest faction of the confederated multi-party Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and second-largest party in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) (Al-Zaytouna Center for studies & consultations, 2011), and the Islamic faction known as the Hamas movement (also known as 'the Islamic Resistance Movement'), which was launched in (1987) as the second-largest party in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and which held a liberation project that stemmed from the Islamic conception, especially with regards to their own analysis of the Palestinian cause and the nature of the relationship with the Israeli occupation.

And as the competition started to intensify between the two dominant factions after the signing of the Oslo Accords as well as after Hamas won the 2006 Palestinian legislative election and became the de facto governing authority of the Gaza Strip, each party set out to determine its agendas, priorities, and position on the Palestinian arena which finally led to an armed clash in (2007) (known as the 'Battle of Gaza') between the two factions which ended with Hamas taking control of the Gaza Strip and hence a complete division of the Palestinian entity into two independent geographical regions, i.e., the West Bank and Gaza

Strip, that are ruled by two divided authorities, i.e., PLO and Hamas (Kear, 2018; BaniOdeh, 2017; Litvak, 2008; Al-Jabour, 2019; Mukhimer, 2012).

Overall, due to above mentioned events that took place in the Palestinian cause's framework, the Palestinian political parties and movements have suffered, for decades, from weakness, erosion, change, death, and reappearance. In fact, they have witnessed major transformations, including many manifestations of political division such as fractionalization, fragility, and polarization. Accordingly, they could not achieve their ultimate goal of liberation and the outcomes of their political work were less satisfactory, with lower political expectations, modest demands, and falling slogans.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Palestinian cause represents a complex political and social phenomenon. This is due to the fact that such a phenomenon in a Third World country suffers from a great overlap in the political work of the Palestinian parties and liberation movements which is caused by many influential local, regional, cultural, political and national factors that transformed this phenomenon into a rich field for many researchers to conduct studies to highlight this overlap that affected the Palestinian political scene and all of its transformations.

In addition to the foregoing, in the Palestinian case, the political parties and liberation movements, which did not arise in response to social demands, but rather arose as a result of the Israeli occupation, have played since the beginning of the last century a liberating role and a social facade for political representation of the Palestinian people and for intellectual and national framing of the Palestinian cause.

Therefore, it can be said that the Palestinian people were among the first Arab peoples to see the political parties and liberation movements as the most appropriate tool for leading the Palestinian people to obtain their rights, managing the negotiation process with the Israelis, mobilizing opinions, and controlling political trends and positions. Besides, these parties and movements still play an important role in the Palestinian scene.

On the other hand, despite their large number, however these parties and movements have suffered, for decades, from weakness, erosion, change, death, and reappearance. In fact, they have witnessed major transformations, including many manifestations of political division such as fractionalization, fragility, and polarization.

Accordingly, they could not achieve their ultimate goal of liberation and the outcomes of their political work were less satisfactory, with lower political expectations, modest demands, and falling slogans.

THE TIME LINE OF FRACTIONALIZATION, FRAGILITY, AND POLARIZATION STATE

Firstly, from March 2006 to December 2006: rise of tensions: Following the elections, Hamas announced the formation of its own security service, the Executive Force, appointing Jamal abu Samhadana, a prominent militant, at its head. Abbas had denounced the move as unconstitutional, saying that only the Palestinian president could command armed forces.

The period from March to December 2006 was marked by tensions when Palestinian Authority commanders affiliated to Fatah refused to take orders from the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority government. Tensions further grew between the two Palestinian factions after they failed to reach a deal to share government power.

Secondly, from December 2006 to January 2007: Facing international sanctions, the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority depended on the import of large amounts of cash to pay its debts. On 14 December 2006, Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, carrying tens of millions in donations, was denied by Israel entry into Gaza via the Rafah Border Crossing. Angry Hamas militants stormed the post, which was manned by European monitors and Abbas' Presidential Guard, responsible for security there. After guards had fired at the Hamas militants, they took over the hall, firing shots into the air. A Hamas official tried to get the militants to disperse. Haniyeh had already cut short his trip due to mounting tensions between Hamas and rival faction Fatah, after three sons of a Fatah security chief were killed days earlier.

The same day, Haniyeh was allowed to return to Gaza without the money, but while crossing the border, gunmen attacked his car, killing one bodyguard. One of Haniyeh's sons was moderately wounded and his political adviser Ahmed Youssef was lightly wounded. At the time, Fatah PLC member and former Fatah security chief Mohammed Dahlan was blamed for this apparent assassination attempt. Peace activist Ellen Rosser also believes that it was Dahlan's men who tried to assassinate Haniyeh. Fighting broke out in the West Bank after Palestinian National Security Forces fired on a Hamas rally in Ramallah. Security units loyal to Mahmoud Abbas and dressed in riot gear, used clubs and rifles to beat back the demonstrators before the shooting broke out. At least 20 people were wounded in the clashes, which came shortly after the attempt to assassinate Ismail Haniya.

On 16 December, Abbas called for new parliamentary and presidential elections, but his advisor Saeb Erekat said that "elections cannot be held before the middle of next year for legal and technical reasons". A senior Hamas lawmaker called it "a real coup against the democratically elected government. Hamas challenged the legality of holding an early election, maintaining its right to hold the full term of its elected offices. Hamas characterized it as an attempted Fatah coup by Abbas, using undemocratic means to overthrow the results of a democratically elected government.

Fatah leaders called for the dismissal of the Hamas-led government and the establishment of an emergency cabinet. One Fatah operative said that Abbas had been threatening to call early elections for the past five months and that "more threats are not going to work". The announcement of elections provoked high tensions and gun battles between Hamas and Fatah supporters. Abbas strongly denied allegations that members of Fatah and the Force 17 "Presidential Guard" were behind the assassination attempt on Ismail Haniyeh, and he criticized the kidnapping of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit.

On 17 December, pro-Fatah gunmen attacked Hamas' Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar. Pro-Hamas militiamen retaliated with shots at the home of President Abbas, wounding five guards. A member of Fatah's Force 17 was killed, together with a passing woman. At the end of the day, Fatah and Hamas agreed on a ceasefire, though gunfire continued outside Mohammed Dahlan's house.

Intense factional fighting continued throughout December 2006 and January 2007 in the Gaza Strip. After a month of fighting, which left 33 people dead, President Mahmoud Abbas attempted to incorporate the Hamas-led Executive Force into the security apparatus loyal to the president. Hamas rejected Abbas' order, and instead announced plans to double the size of its force. On 6 January 2007, Abbas outlawed the Executive Force and ordered its disbandment. Fighting continued until a ceasefire was implemented on 30 January. The dueling announcements raised the prospect of an intensified armed standoff. Abbas's only means of enforcing the order appeared to be coercive action by police and security units under his command, which were relatively weak in the Gaza Strip, Hamas's stronghold.

Thirdly, from February to April 2007: Fierce fighting took place after Hamas killed 6 people on 1 February in an ambush on a Gaza convoy which delivered equipment for Abbas' Palestinian Presidential Guard, according to diplomats, meant to counter smuggling of more powerful weapons into Gaza by Hamas for its fast-growing "Executive Force". According to Hamas, the deliveries to the Presidential Guard were intended to instigate sedition (against Hamas), while withholding money and assistance from the Palestinian people.

On 8 February 2007, the Saudi-brokered Fatah–Hamas Mecca Agreement produced an agreement on a Palestinian national unity government signed by Fatah and Hamas leaders. The agreement included measures to end the internecine violence. The

unity government was formed on 17 March. However, it struggled to resolve the two most pressing issues: an economic crisis and a collapse of security in Gaza. Violent incidents continued through March and April 2007. More than 90 people were killed in this period.

Fourthly, in mid-May 2007: clashes erupted once again in the streets of Gaza. In less than 18 days, more than 50 Palestinians were killed. Leaders of both parties tried to stop the fighting by calling dozens of truces, but none of them held for longer than a few days.

Fifthly, in June 2007: split of government: Throughout 10 and 15 June of fighting Hamas took control of the main north-south road and the coastal road, and removed Fatah officials. The ICRC estimated that at least 118 people were killed and more than 550 wounded during the fighting in the week up to June 15. Human Rights Watch accused both sides with violations of international humanitarian law. Including the targeting and killing of civilians, public executions of political opponents and captives, throwing prisoners off high-rise apartment buildings, fighting in hospitals, and shooting from a jeep marked with "TV" insignias. The International Committee of the Red Cross has denounced attacks in and around two hospitals in the northern part of the Gaza strip. The Israeli government closed all check-points on the borders of Gaza in response to the violence.

On 14 June, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas announced the dissolution of the current unity government and the declaration of a state of emergency. Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya was dismissed, and Abbas began to rule Gaza and the West Bank by presidential decree. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri responded by declaring that President Abbas's decision was "in practical terms ... worthless," asserting that Haniya "remains the head of the government even if it was dissolved by the president".

Nathan Brown of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace commented that under the 2003 Palestinian Constitution Abbas clearly had the right to declare a state of emergency and dismiss the prime minister but the state of emergency could continue only for 30 days. After that it would need to be approved by the (Hamas-dominated) Legislative Council. Neither Hamas nor Fatah had enough votes to form a new government under the constitution. The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights condemned Hamas' "decision to resolve the conflict militarily" but argued that "steps taken by President Mahmoud Abbas in response to these events violate the Basic Law and undermine the Basic Law in a manner that is no less dangerous."

On 15 June, the international community smoothly recognized the government. Within days, the US recognized Abbas' emergency government and ended a 15-month economic and political boycott of the Palestinian Authority in a bid to bolster President Abbas and the new Fatah-led government. The European Union similarly announced plans to resume direct aid to the Palestinians, while Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel said it would release to Abbas Palestinian tax revenues that Israel had withheld since Hamas took control of the Palestinian Parliament.

Sixthly, West Bank clashes: The attacks of Hamas gunmen against Fatah security forces in the Gaza Strip resulted in a reaction of Fatah gunmen against Hamas institutions in the West Bank. Although Hamas's numbers were greater in the Gaza Strip, Fatah forces were greater in the West Bank.

The West Bank had its first casualty when the bullet-riddled body of a Hamas militant was found in Nablus, sparking the fear that Fatah would use its advantage in the West Bank for retaliation against its members' deaths in the Gaza Strip. On the same day, Hamas also declared that it was in full control of Gaza, a claim denied by Abbas.

On 16 June, a Fatah-linked militant group, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, stormed the Hamas-controlled parliament based in Ramallah in the West Bank. This act, including the ransack of the ministry of education, was seen as a reaction to similar looting occurring following Hamas' military success in Gaz.

On 20 June, Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar declared that if Fatah continued to try to uproot Hamas in the West Bank, it could lead to Fatah's downfall there as well. He would not deny when asked that Hamas resistance against Fatah would take the form of attacks and suicide bombings similar to those that Hamas has used against Israel in the past.

Seventhly, from October 2007 to January 2008: renewed clashes: On 17 October, clashes erupted in eastern Gaza between Hamas security forces and members of the powerful Heles clan (Fatah-affiliated), leaving up to two dead on both sides. Fatah and Hamas officials gave conflicting accounts of what caused the fighting but the dispute seems to have originated when Hamas officials demanded that the clan return a governmental car. Another gun battle on October 20 killed one member of the clan and a 13-year-old boy. During the same day, in Rafah, one woman was killed and eight people were injured when Hamas security members traded fire with Islamic Jihad activists. Two days later, 7 more Palestinians were killed in the internal fighting, including some Hamas militants and a Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant.

On 12 November, a large demonstration dedicated to the memory of late Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat was organized by Fatah in Gaza City. With over 200,000 participants, this was the largest Fatah demonstration in the Gaza Strip since the Hamas takeover. The demonstration was forcibly dispersed by Hamas gunmen, who fired into the crowd. At least six civilians were killed and over 80 people were injured, some from being trampled in the resulting stampede. The smaller militant group Islamic Jihad, whose members have clashed with Hamas several times, condemned the shootings. On 1 January 2008, at least eight people died in factional fighting in the Gaza Strip.

Eighthly, 2008 Sana'a declaration: On 23 March 2008, Hamas and Fatah signed an agreement in Sana'a, Yemen that amounted to a reconciliation deal. It called for a return of the Gaza Strip to the pre-June 2007 situation, though this has not happened. On 8 November 2008, Palestinian reconciliation talks due to be held in Cairo were called off after Hamas announced a boycott in protest at the detention of hundreds of its members by president Mahmoud Abbas's security forces.

Ninthly, 2009 political violence: The 2009 Hamas political violence took place in the Gaza Strip during and after the 2008–2009 Israel–Gaza conflict. A series of violent acts, ranging from physical assaults, torture, and executions of Palestinians, suspected of collaboration with the Israel Defense Forces, as well as members of the Fatah political party, occurred. According to Human Rights Watch, at least 32 people were killed by these attacks: 18 during the conflict and 14 afterward, and several dozens more were maimed, many by shots to the legs. In addition, on 31 May 2009, six people were killed as Palestinian Authority and Hamas forces clashed in Qalqilya.

Finally, from 2010 to present: tensions and reconciliation attempts: During the Arab Spring, Following the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 and the deposal of Egyptian president Morsi in July 2013, tensions between Fatah and Hamas reached a new high. According to Barakat al-Farra, the PLO ambassador in Cairo, the Egyptian US-backed el-Sisi regime, which annually receives some \$1.5 billion military aid from the US, will keep the Rafah border crossing closed, until forces loyal to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas have regained control. A Hamas official accused the PA leadership of playing a major role in enforcing the blockade of the Gaza Strip.

In the midst of negotiations to resolve the 2014 Israel–Gaza conflict, the Shin Bet revealed an alleged plot by Hamas to depose Fatah in the West Bank. This would be achieved by deploying Hamas cells around the West Bank to incite a third intifada and overwhelm Palestinian Authority forces. More than 90 people were arrested. President Abbas said the plot was "a grave threat to the unity of the Palestinian people and its future."

Moreover, the 2021 elections failure: the 2021 Palestinian legislative election for the Palestinian Legislative Council, originally scheduled for 22 May 2021, according to a decree by President Mahmoud Abbas on 15 January 2021, was indefinitely postponed on 29 April 2021. Announcing the postponement on Palestinian TV, Abbas said "Facing this difficult situation, we decided to postpone the date of holding legislative elections until the participation of Jerusalem and its people is guaranteed." Hamas has rejected the idea of postponing elections and refused to attend the meeting amid speculation that Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah Party will seek to delay or cancel them. Hamas said voting in East Jerusalem does not need Israeli permission. Hamas boycotted the 2021–2022 Palestinian local elections.

CHAOS THEORY

The current study employs the Chaos Theory as its theoretical framework through which the findings of the study will be analyzed.

Chaos theory (also referred to as 'Creative Chaos theory' and 'Constructive Chaos theory') is a political theory that was initially developed in the social sciences, then moved to the political science to help in understanding the dynamics of unstable political systems that are developed in a non-linear manner.

The concept of 'chaos is a nebulous concept. However, it is considered as a politicaldoctrinal term that is associated with the temporal evolution of political systems. Particularly, it refers to a political situation that takes place after a stage of deliberate chaos caused by certain people without revealing their identity, with the aim of adjusting matters in their favour, or to be a comfortable human condition after a stage of deliberate chaos by known people in order to help others.

In other words, chaos is a political condition that is expected happen after a phase of deliberate chaos. The supporters of chaos theory believe that creating a state of chaos and instability will inevitably lead to building of a new political system that stabled and hence have the capabilities to provides security, prosperity and freedom to its people. However, it usually has other goals that are in the interest of those who create the state of chaos.

The term ‘chaos’ was found in the literature in more than one reference in which it is mentioned that political order is created from chaos, hence chaos is considered as a requirement and an important step to achieve evolution process in societies. For example, in early 2005, the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, in an interview with the Washington Post newspaper, talked about the US intention to spread democracy in the Arab world and begin to form what is known as ‘The New Middle East’, all by spreading ‘creative chaos’.

It is noteworthy that the notion of ‘chaos’ differs from ‘randomness’, as the random system’s behaviour is unpredictable, as a result everything can happen, so specific scenarios can be developed about what will happen, but they are not endless. And in a state of chaos, there is an infinite extent to which the future can be predicted. And a set of alternatives can be developed that can fit with it, because chaos is not a latent system. Chaos theory aims to model each system by looking at the overall models, rather than isolating cause-and-effect relationships for specific parts of the system. The path of the system's evolution under the chaos theory is linked to an attraction that determines the path of evolution.

The researcher believes that the Chaos theory is relevant to the subject matter of the current study. In light of the Chaos theory’s components (concepts and principles), the political state of the Palestinian landscape is seen chaotic due to the fractionalization, fragility, and polarization witnessed by the Palestinian political parties.

In relevance to the theory, the study of the conflict among Palestinian political entities and elites corresponds with a growing tradition of scholarly work that assumes a causal relationship between the structures of the “ruling class”, political stability and regime types. Recent scholarly explorations of the relationship between elites and regime types have demonstrated that regime type is a dependent variable of elite (dis)unity and differentiation, especially in situations of transition and state building.

In this context, Burton, Gunther, and Higgedly considered elites to be “persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially.” According to this definition, elites are the principal decision makers in the largest or most resource rich political, governmental, economic, military, professional, communicative, and cultural organizations and movements in society. Notwithstanding this understanding, I do not consider elites to be limited to those people holding official positions. Elites should not be identified with governing persons. People who wield power and influence based on their active control of a disproportionate share of society’s resources are part of the elite, even though they may not have an official position or not even be visible. Not all influential people are visible and directly involved in decision-making. Some have intermittent influence--indirect and limited to specific issues pertaining to the organization and movements in which they are located.

Mosca called these people “the second stratum,” and Dogan and Higley speak about “shadow elites.”

The broader understanding of elites utilized in this paper reflects the notion that power is not concentrated in a limited group of people, emptying most of society from any influence.⁸ We must differentiate between the power elite-- as a general term that includes all those who have influence on public life as a result of special merits, material resources, or other sources of power-- and the “governing elite” or “ruling minority”. The concept of the “power elite” follows Pareto’s distinction between the governing elite (comprising those who directly or indirectly take part in government), the non-governing elite (comprising all others with power but who are not part of the governing apparatus), and the majority of people, who have little if any, access to power, especially in non-democratic systems. Since the sources of power are diverse, groups of people utilize various resources in different circumstances in order to promote their interests. This makes society a dynamic entity structured by power (Mattei Dogan and John Higley, 1998; Vilfredo Pareto, 1935); Yezid Sayigh, 2002; Gaetano Mosca, 1939); Eva Etzioni-Halevy, 1993).

Palestinian society is no exception. The existence of different types of elites is a major source of struggle for power and the ascendance of one elite marks, at least partially, the decline of another. The struggle for power among elites in Palestinian society has taken different forms. The exact form that this struggle has taken was dependent on many factors, mainly the measure of unity among these elites and the extent to which they were differentiated socio-economically.

A basic notion that stems from Chaos Theory and the extensive literature on political elites’ conflicts is that they are rarely homogeneous. But the extent of unity and disunity as well as differentiation is crucial in determining the modes of political conduct of elites. Elite theorists have demonstrated the relationship between the socio-economic composition of elites and modes of domination and control. Furthermore, Pareto, Mosca, Mills and others have demonstrated a causal relationship

between elite structures and the rise and fall of different forms of political power. Domhoff, Marger, Etzioni-Halevy, Putnam, and others have demonstrated the centrality of elite structures for the consolidation of state power in democratic states.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the structure of the elite is especially important in situations of crisis and political transformation.¹³ In most societies, elites compete continually for advantage, never uniting fully. Nevertheless, the cohesiveness of the elites is crucial. The more disunited the elite are, the more we witness competition and rivalry among its factions. Therefore, unity or disunity has substantial influence on the ability of elites to promote grand projects, such as national independence and state formation (ibid).

METHODOLOGY

Due to the fact the current research study is not classified as an empirical research, i.e., it does not seek to create hypotheses, observe, and measure the experimental probability of the research variables to confirm or refute these hypotheses, through employing quantitative and qualitative data collection methods such as questionnaire, interview, observation, etc., in order to collect empirical data that is backed by evidence (also referred to as ‘evidence-based data’ and ‘data gathered through evidence’) and hence arrive at valid outcomes, instead the current research study is considered as a non-empirical research which seeks to collect non-empirical data (theoretical data) that rely on the assumptions and beliefs available in the literature of the research subject (Formplus Blog, 2022).

Additionally, there are different types of literature review methods, including systematic, semi-systematic and integrative approaches. Furthermore, the nature of the research and the specific purpose/purposes of review determine what is most appropriate review approach to be employed to ensure the appropriate literature is accurately covered (Torraco, 2005).

Webster & Watson (2002) stated that despite the selected type of review, an effective and well-conducted review of any of the previously three types, through which the relevant findings, perspectives, and preconceived notions resulted from the analysis of raw data conducted by other authors about a particular research topic are cited and integrated, can create a firm foundation for advancing knowledge and hence enabling the researcher to build their research. In fact, the outcomes of employing literature review approaches play an important role as a foundation for all types of research. They can serve as a basis for knowledge development, create guidelines for policy and practice, provide evidence of an effect, and, if well conducted, have the capacity to engender new ideas and directions for a particular field. As such, they serve as the grounds for future research.

The present study adopted the semi-systematic review approach as a research method (for data collection and data analysis). In fact, literature review, as a non-empirical research approach, through which the relevant previous research findings about a research subject are collected, synthesized, and analyzed collected by the researcher to theorize logical assumptions and show evidence, has become more relevant than ever (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

Indeed, since knowledge production within the Palestinian cause domain is complex and accelerating at a tremendous speed, however huge amount of its related literature is remaining fragmented and interdisciplinary. Accordingly, it is essential to adopt an appropriate method of literature review and combine it with relevant themes and theoretical perspectives related to the Palestinian cause to provide some evidence on a meta-level of effect, assess the collective evidence in this research area and thereby advancing the knowledge in the field as well as uncovering areas in which more research is needed (identifying knowledge gaps within the topic’s literature).

The semi-systematic review approach (also referred to as the narrative review approach) is designed for topics that have been conceptualized differently and studied by various groups of researchers within diverse disciplines and that hinder a full systematic review process.

That is, to review every single article that could be relevant to the topic is simply not possible, so a different strategy must be developed (Wong, et al., 2013).

Similarly, Snyder (2019) stated that a semi-systematic review approach can help to synthesize the relevant literature of a research topic. A number of methods can be used to analyze and synthesize findings from a semi-systematic review. These methods often have similarities to approaches used in qualitative research in general, i.e., a qualitative analysis. So, rather than focusing on quantitative data, this review approach identifies themes, theoretical perspectives, and other qualitative information related to the topic (ibid).

Finally, semi-systematic review approach provides an understanding of complex areas. However, while covering broad topics and different types of studies, this approach holds that the research process should be transparent and should have a developed research strategy that enables readers to assess whether the arguments for the judgments made were reasonable. Finally, the analysis of the collected data can be useful for detecting themes, theoretical perspectives, or common issues within a specific research discipline for identifying components of a theoretical concept. A potential contribution could be, for example, the ability to map a field of research, synthesize the state of knowledge, and create an agenda for further research or the ability to provide an historical overview or timeline of a specific topic (Ward, House, & Hamer, 2009).

CONCLUSION

In light of the Convergence between the two previously mentioned scientific discipline, the current study aimed to highlight three aspects of the successive crises seen in the Palestinian political arena, particularly the fractionalization, fragility, and polarization among the components of the Palestinian political system of governance; consisted of the two main Palestinian rival political parties in the Palestinian territories, i.e., a Fatah (formerly referred to as 'the Palestinian National Liberation Movement', the factioncontrolled government body and the largest faction of the confederated multiparty Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and second-largest party in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC).

And Due to early mentioned events that took place in the Palestinian cause's framework, the Palestinian political parties and movements have suffered, for decades, from weakness, erosion, change, death, and reappearance. In fact, they have witnessed major transformations, including many manifestations of political division such as fractionalization, fragility, and polarization. Accordingly, they could not achieve their ultimate goal of liberation and the outcomes of their political work were less satisfactory, with lower political expectations, modest demands, and falling slogans.

The ongoing political and strategic conflict between Fatah and Hamas conflict which led to the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, resulted in fighting from January 2006 to May 2007 as part of the conflict, besides the removed all Fatah officials. As a result, President Abbas declared a state of emergency, and dismissed Haniyeh's national unity government and appointed an emergency government and suspended articles of the Basic Law, to circumvent the needed PNC approval. In fact, tensions between the two movements began and rose between the years 2004, which witnessed the death of the late Palestinian ex-president Yasser Arafat, and 2005. Moreover, the legislative election carried out in 2006, resulted in a Hamas victory, the relations between the two movements were marked by fractionalization, fragility, and polarization. The political situation became more intense after the two parties repeatedly failed to reach a deal to share government power, escalating in 2007 and eventually resulted in Hamas' takeover of Gaza.

since the takeover of Gaza Strip by Hamas, which has been the de facto governing authority of the Strip, since then, it has fought several wars with Israel, the Palestinian Authority has been split into two polities, each seeing itself as the true representative of the Palestinian people – the Fatah-ruled Palestinian National Authority and the Hamas Government in Gaza.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniya formed a new Prime Minister government on 29 March 2006 comprising mostly Hamas members, after Fatah and other factions refused to join, especially as Hamas refused to accept the Quartet's conditions, such as recognition of Israel and earlier agreements, leading to a substantial part of the international community, especially Israel, the United States and European Union countries, refusing to deal with the Hamas government and imposing sanctions. Following the abduction by Hamas militants of Gilad Shalit on 25 June 2006 in a cross-border raid via a tunnel out of Gaza, Israel detained nearly a quarter of PLC members and ministers on the West Bank during August 2006 and intensified the boycott of Gaza and took other punitive measures.

And despite the reconciliation process that took place, however the unification of Hamas and Fatah administrations have not been finalized and the political situation is deemed a frozen conflict. Calls for the implementation of the Cairo Declaration, including the formation of a unity government and the cessation of violence between Fatah and Hamas were made in the Fatah–Hamas Mecca Agreement of 8 February 2007. Furthermore, tensions between Fatah and Hamas intensified after Hamas won the elections of 2006 and the international community increased the pressure on the Palestinian Authority. As a result of the Hamas led government's refusal to commit to nonviolence, recognition of the state of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements, Israel, the Middle East Quartet (United States, Russia, United Nations, and European Union), several Western states, and the Arab states imposed sanctions suspending all foreign aid.

Finally, the researcher concluded that, according to the Chaos Theory, the political landscape, is seen as a chaotic state due to the influence of fractionalization, fragility, and polarization.

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