

THE INFLUENCE OF A GENERATION

By

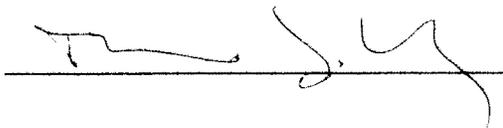
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Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Volgy', is written over a horizontal line.

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Abstract

This thesis explores attitudes of younger generations towards a two state solution for peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict and strives to find the motivation behind these attitudes. A common assumption is younger generations are more peace-minded, but this thesis discovers attitudes are not based solely on one's generation or age, but rather by a combination of other factors. Through research and a survey of youth living in the Middle East, this thesis questions the theory that ideals and attitudes are formed from simply being young. The findings in this thesis could help and inspire further research to discover what truly are the main influential factor in our attitudes and beliefs about the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Introduction

Imagine this scene: A group of Palestinian men and a group of Israeli men. A fight breaks out, hate filled racial and religious jargon is thrown around. The Palestinians encircle the Israelis and kick them to the ground as the Israelis scream in agony. Two small children cower in a corner watching the scene unfold – same problem, day-after-day.

This paper will focus on attitudes of “Generation Y” toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. Generation Y will be defined as those born in the 1980s and 1990s who grew up with increasing electronic technology. It will strive to answer the principle research question of how these attitudes are formed and potentially how they compare to attitudes of older generations toward this same conflict.

This topic is important because it explores the generalization that younger generations tend to be more liberal and peace-minded. This paper only tests whether in this exact moment these individuals are more progressive – it cannot tell if these attitudes will remain the same as they get older. This question will explore if it is possible to overcome societal hatred solely based on the more progressive attitudes of younger generations or if, in fact, a larger social norm shift is needed.

Children are impacted by the environment in which they are raised and students living amidst the violence and turmoil in the Middle East will come out of this violence with

preconceived ideas and stereotypes before they even learn the history and background of the conflict. When President Obama was in Israel in March of 2013, he addressed Israeli citizens in the following way:

“For young Israelis, I know that these issues of security are rooted in an experience that is even more fundamental than the pressing threat of the day. You live in a neighborhood where many of your neighbors have rejected the right of your nation to exist. Your grandparents had to risk their lives and all that they had to make a place for themselves in this world. Your parents lived through war after war to ensure the survival of the Jewish state. Your children grow up knowing that people they’ve never met may hate them because of who they are, in a region that is full of turmoil and changing underneath your feet” (Obama, 2013).

Children in the Middle East are born into a world where turmoil is already prevalent. This would explain why many children are raised with a preset bias against their culture’s enemy. If this paper finds that younger generations are not more peace-minded than their older counterparts, it will be important to explore ways to educate students on how to learn of all sides of a conflict before jumping to conclusions based on parents’ or cultural views. This research explores the potential effects that family life and/or the “nature of the times” in the Middle East have on younger generations (and families at the same time) and if it is possible to break these effects and foster those students into intellectual and well read individuals.

The evidence needed to answer this question is found within a combination of outside research done for the purpose of other studies, as well as a survey I conducted interviewing students who grew up in the Middle East on their beliefs and attitudes towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and their early home life. My sample survey may or may not be a good sample size/representation of the actual population and cannot provide convincing evidence for what I am predicting, but can illustrate my findings.

The paper will be organized in the following way. This paper will briefly outline the Arab-Israeli conflict and then go on to define (for the purposes of understanding the paper) a two state solution, attitudes, and my definition of each generation and the population it encompasses. Defining attitudes and being on the “same page” are important because attitudes can have different meanings depending on the interpretation of the person. The paper will discuss common

generational differences across the world and attempt to recognize a pattern on how different generations tend to act on certain issues or issue areas. If no pattern is recognized then it will be apparent that grouping generations into stereotypical attitudes may not be accurate.

The paper will move on to discuss attitudes of Generation Y towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this section, the findings of the research survey will be categorized and analyzed to recognize any patterns. Because of the small size of the survey, no sweeping statement can be made, but it can begin to hint at a pattern. Next will be the discussion of attitudes of older generations toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. At the conclusion, the paper will highlight the differences and similarities evident in the research in Generation Y's and older generations' views and then attempt to make a conclusion whether this research hypothesis supports generational differences.

Background of Problem

The history of the Arab-Israeli conflict is extremely complex. This brief history is important because it demonstrates how and why these particular attitudes are formed regarding one party's actions towards the other. The Palestine-Yishuv co-existence dates back to "Before Common Era" (BCE) when Arabs as well as Jews began settling in the region. Different empires came and left.

It was not until the 19th century when a group of Zionists (called Yishuv) decided to create a Jewish homeland in the region of Palestine. Although they were an extreme minority within Palestine, a large increase of immigration continued to occur into the then-British mandated Palestine. In the early 20th century, Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany. His fight to remove all Jews from his land combined with limits on Jewish immigrants to America and other European countries caused an increase in immigrants to Palestine. With Britain failing to create a solution, the United Nations (UN) stepped in and partitioned the land, giving away 55% of Palestinian lands to the Jews, who only made up 30% of the population. This partition led to unhappiness of both parties and eventually led to the war of 1947 where the Arab world backed Palestine in fighting the Zionists. The Zionists, with many more arms and war knowledge (because of American training), dominated the Palestinian Arabs and eventually declared the

state of Israel in 1948. With thousands of Palestinian refugees displaced, this would not be the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict with 22% of the land still under Palestinian control.

In 1956, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the second President of Egypt, nationalized the Suez Canal. In response Israel, Britain, and France coordinated simultaneous attacks. The war lasted only a few days and on November 7, 1956, the UN imposed a ceasefire. In 1967, Israel launched a preemptive attack on Egypt, and Syria and Jordan a few days later. Israel defeated their Air Forces and eventually occupied the West Bank, Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Gaza Strip. The occupation of all this territory further displaced Palestinians and put them in Israeli territory.

This conflict continues for numerous reasons. Palestinians, Arabs, and Israelis all have unique agendas and motives that continue to fuel the conflict. The displacement of the Palestinians has become only a small component of the conflict. It also remains a conflict because of the religious differences between Muslims and Jews combined with the heavy Western, and Arab influences in the area. Israel, which represents a large Western influence and power, is placed right in the middle of the Arab world. Because Israel was the first democracy in the area, it has created an anathema of itself. This paired with the influx of a large number of Russian immigrants in the Israeli political system creates a complicated situation in the Middle East. The continued violence of all parties towards each other caused outrage in both communities as well as worldwide.

In 1993, the parties to the Oslo Accords agreed that Gaza would be under Palestinian authority. The two competing parties in Palestine, Hamas and Fatah, and the close proximity to Israeli territory continue to keep Gaza under constant conflict and manipulation. These conflicts are deeply rooted and resistant to change because of their length, depth, and parties strongly backing one side or another.

A two state solution has been proposed and cautiously accepted by both sides at one time and another. The problem is there are always stipulations that one side would prefer to make before agreeing to the negotiation.

In answering the original research question, the survey respondents were asked about a two state solution and prospects of it for the future. The outside research conducted also explores

a two state solution. In the context of this paper, a two state solution will be defined as the establishment of a Palestinian state in what used to be the British Mandate of Palestine, which will be located next to the current State of Israel.

Attitudes

I am going to be exploring attitudes as a central component of the research question. I will preface this part of the paper with a short discussion on how and why attitudes are difficult to measure. This will help create a standard on what to look for in trying to observe measures designed to tap attitudes. Measuring attitudes is difficult because of the potential for change and the potential for elements to affect attitudes quickly and severely. They also are tough to measure because some questions can spark “opinions” rather than deeply held attitudes. According to an article titled Attitude Measurement, “In order to preserve a positive self-image, people’s responses may be affected by social desirability” (McLeod, 2009). This issue became a problem when I began interviewing people for my survey because it is hard to measure if they are censoring their true attitudes in order to fit in socially. I can control this by seeing if their attitudes are similar to their reference groups. If they are, then we can tell that their reference groups may be influencing their true attitudes. However, if this is true then it may not matter because their outlook on the world is most likely influenced by these reference groups as well.

In an article titled “The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process and Its Vicissitudes” (Kelman, 2007) there are four attributes of attitudes highlighted. These attributes can describe both why attitudes are helpful in the Arab -Israeli conflict and how it is possible for stated attitudes to differ from true memories and feelings:

- “Attitudes inextricably combine the affective and cognitive dimensions of our relationships to social objects.”

This would demonstrate the people taking the survey form attitudes that take into consideration many elements of social occurrences around them and they are not superficial in thinking. Yet, it must also be considered that although this is the possibility of attitudes, how those attitudes are voiced may be another thing altogether.

- “Attitudes are shared within a group, organization, or society and constitute properties of both the individual and the collectivity within which these attitudes are shared.”

Surveying students who live or were raised in the Middle East ensures that attitudes from these individuals will most likely be based on a common group norm. The attitudes are shared and may be comprised of personal feelings as well as cultural or social norms shared by the region.

- “Attitudes emerge and constantly evolve and change in a context of action and interaction.”

Although it is possible for certain attitudes to never change, we would expect to see attitudes shift after major life changing events, an increase in education, or a joining of a certain group. This would ensure that although these findings are recent, the attitudes presented here could be outdated soon because of the constant flow of ideas, changing feelings, and large events taking place. This also shows that although these attitudes were shared individually, there could have been an entirely different outcome if the attitudes were shared in a group where they could evolve and build off one another.

- “An attitude represents a range of potential commitment to the object (or a range of relationships to or actions toward the object that the person finds acceptable)-at times extending from approach to avoidance, from support to opposition-rather than a single point on a bipolar scale. It should also be noted that, in speaking of attitude theory, I refer to a family of concepts that includes not only attitudes per se, but also beliefs, images, identities, cognitions, and sentiments.”

Attitudes play a part in this paper because the survey respondents answered the questions based on attitudes of what they feel they learned (or did not learn) and how they perceive interactions or the conflict in general. Understanding that attitudes are very dependent on many influential factors and cannot be measured on an even playing field, it is safe to move forward because the survey attempted to control for responses that did not reflect their actual attitudes. In the survey, several steps were taken to reduce the impact of false attitudes. Many questions were left open ended to allow the respondents to reply with the first thing that came to their mind. I also generally asked about their parent’s attitudes before I asked for theirs. Knowing that attitudes can

be persuaded, we may cautiously look at the survey results while keeping in the back of our minds that the possibility of skewed data is present.

Generational Differences

Differences in generational thoughts and attitudes towards certain events are not a new occurrence. Different generations think differently of events due to how they were raised and what the world was like while they were growing up. According to a study done by Stanford University School of Medicine (Stages for engaging Generation Y, 2012), values, educational views, work views and family views all differ between generations. The traditionalists, born before 1946 value “Respect for authority, Conformers, Discipline” (Stages for engaging Generation Y, 2012). The Boomers, born between 1946-1964 have the values of “Optimism, Involvement” (Stages for engaging Generation Y, 2012). Generation X, born between 1965-1980 has values of “Skepticism, fun, informality” and the Millennial generation (or Generation Y) has values of “realism, confidence, extreme fun, social”. As is evident, different generations value different characteristics because of what was happening in the world while they were growing up. “Each generation has its own distinct set of values that is developed from the social environment in their early years. Different generations have different values and beliefs regarding family, career, the work/life balance, training and development, loyalty, gender roles, the work environment and expectations of leaders” (Jackson, 2013).

A few examples of how generations think differently about important issues can be shown in the United States in an article written by David Leonhardt in the *New York Times* in 2012. It states, “Throughout the 1980s and ’90s, younger and older adults voted in largely similar ways, with a majority of each supporting the winner in every presidential election. Sometime around 2004, though, older voters began moving right, while younger voters shifted left.” (Leonhardt, 2012). This could be due to many different factors but the evidence would show that traditionalists generally favor conservative and traditional values, while the millennial generation is more open to new findings and non-traditional ways.

Another example is a survey done about the Middle East and how different generations react to religious practices. “In Lebanon, for example, Muslims ages 35 and older are 28 percentage points more likely than younger Muslims to pray several times a day, 20 points more

likely to attend mosque at least weekly and 18 points more likely to read the Quran daily. On each of these measures, age gaps of 10 points or more also are found in the Palestinian territories, Morocco and Tunisia. And somewhat smaller but statistically significant differences are observed as well in Jordan and Egypt.” (The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity, 2012). This shows that in the Middle East older generations are more likely to highly revere religion, or are more dedicated to expressing their religious beliefs on a daily basis than younger people.

In France, there is evidence of generational differences in peace and religion. “A survey by pollster CSA for *Le Parisien* newspaper revealed only 54 percent of French thought Islam was no threat to their values, but it revealed a clear generational rift, with younger French being more open to Islam than their elders. Among the under 30s, 68 percent said Islam was compatible with French society, a proportion that shrank with each age category until reaching 36 percent among those over 75” (The Daily Clarity, 2012).

These examples of generational differences across the world show that in many issue areas, generations do have different opinions. Now this paper will explore if these generational differences resonate in the Middle East peace process as well.

Older Generations

Older generations would appear to have more aggressive views of conflict because they are more invested in the violence and the cause of the violence through what they have witnessed and their parents’ possible participation in the violence. In a 2011 public opinion survey of older generations in Israel and Palestine, it was found that 70% of Palestinians would actually agree to the stopping of violence if they could return to the borders of 1967. The change in attitude came after some prying when it was found that 62% of Palestinians surveyed want to continue the violence because “they did not believe that Israel would really agree to the establishment of such a Palestinian state” (Kull, 2002). Because of the uncertainty of how Israel would act, many adults in Palestine would prefer to continue the violence because the outcome is more certain. “However, due to lack of confidence that the Israelis will ever make such concessions there is not a majority of Palestinians ready to take a position in support of renouncing violence” (Kull, 2002). This stems from their experience growing up with violence and betrayal from their enemy. Yet, overall this study found that “More than 7 in 10 Palestinians indicate a willingness

to stop using violence as part of a settlement process that includes the establishment of a Palestinian state based on 1967 borders” (Kull, 2002). This would hint that a majority of Palestinians seek to end the violence, but conditions do apply. Palestinians therefore seem to be motivated by the mistrust they feel towards the Israelis.

From the Israeli stand point this same survey found that “More than 7 in 10 Israelis indicate a willingness to allow a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders if Palestinians commit to stop violence against Israel, and do so for an extended period of time” (Kull, 2002). We could then synthesize from this information that the Israelis also are not violently motivated, but rather would prefer diplomatic solutions. Unfortunately, they too suffer from trust issues. In Obama’s speech to the citizens of Israel in March 2013, he claimed, “So I believe that the Israeli people do want peace, and I also understand why too many Israelis maybe an increasing number ... are skeptical that it can be achieved” (Obama, 2013). As time goes on there is a tendency to become doubtful that peace will ever occur, and this seems to be what is happening in Israel and Palestine. When asked if they thought Palestinians were capable of ever not using violence, “Fifty-one percent of this group ... answered that they took this position because they did not believe the Palestinians would ever truly forgo the use of violence” (Kull, 2002). Because these replies are coming from older people, it is fair to say these ideas most likely come because of experiences they have had with Palestinians growing up and the violence that they exhibited.

In conclusion from this survey, it is not evident that older generations are more violently motivated; it just appears that way because they feel it is their only true defense against the enemy. If both sides were able to meet and diplomatically reach a negotiation, then it is possible the violence would subside.

Younger Generations

Attitudes of younger generations in the Middle East toward conflict appear to be all over the board. There are many groups who claim that young people are the spark towards a more peaceful society. According to the United States Institute of Peace, “As the Arab Spring movement unfolded across the Middle East and North Africa, we saw young people leading non-violent revolutions, using new technologies to mobilize societies to bring about change” (Youth and Peacebuilding, 2012). The youth are taking this opportunity of being in the media spotlight

to inspire change. The institute helps to facilitate youth living in the Middle East to band together and show their support for peace building. Specifically, a group in Iraq started a community of bringing together the youth from all across the country to show their support for coming to peaceful resolutions. Unfortunately, these efforts being done to organize the youth and express their desires for peaceful resolutions are trumped by smaller groups of youth who perpetrate retaliation and violence.

An article in the *New York Times* describes how several Israeli children attempted a “lynching” of Palestinian youth living in their area. Many blame the area where these children were raised. The continuing violence they are forced to witness every day fuels their hatred. “The poisoned political environment around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has affected the moral compass of youths growing up within it” (Kershner, 2012). Many bystanders failed to intervene during the beating and one of the children was hospitalized. One of the attackers said, “For my part he can die, he’s an Arab” (Kershner, 2012). These deep-seated political and religious divergences are causing children to express similar acts of violence as adults would. Another of the perpetrators commented: “If it was up to me, I’d have murdered him,” the 15-year-old suspect told reporters outside court on Monday. “He cursed my mother” (Kershner, 2012). This attack sparked the media to explore why and how children could have so much hatred and evil towards other people. Many pointed the blame at the parents. Other news sources denied that a child would pick this up at home and mentioned, “This comes from an entire culture that has been escalating toward an open and blunt language based on us being the chosen people who are allowed to do whatever we like” (Kershner, 2012). But being the “chosen people” is not always relevant. This same violence is prevalent in gang-ridden neighborhoods across the United States as well.

Children who are witnesses of war have long lasting effects on their mental health. In a study done by the University of Michigan, Rowell Huesmann observes that, “Violence is really like a contagious disease, except in one sense, it’s worse. With contagious diseases, you have to be near the person in order to get it. Violence is contagious even at a distance.” (Rosegrant, 2012) Children who are raised in the Middle East have been encompassed by violence for as long as they can remember. Even though it is hypothesized that younger generations tend to be more peace-minded, it would appear it is more a product of the society in which one is raised.

Dr. Huesmann compares it to how children who watch violent television or who play violent video games tend to express more violent behavior.

As of now it is evident that there are two competing views of how attitudes form. The first one is based solely on age – this being that all younger generations are more peaceful than their predecessors. The second is that while there are generational differences between the generations, whether or not one generation is more peaceful than the other depends on environmental conditions socializing that generation. In this research, I expected that younger generations would be more peaceful overall. I will revisit this in the conclusion on my research.

Survey Analysis

As part of my research, I administered a survey to youth living in, or who grew up in, the Middle East to try to determine factors that influence their attitudes towards a two state solution. In addition, I wanted to find out how many youth indeed thought that a two state solution would bring peace to the Middle East. The survey consisted of 24 questions and was administered over “Obsurvey”. Obsurvey is a website that specializes in organizing survey questions and collecting responses over the internet. My survey represents a small sample of thirty students. These students are between the ages of 17-25 and reside all over the Middle East (Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan) and a few in Turkey and France. In order to determine what factors affect their attitudes towards a two state solution, I compared their answers to a specific question, “Do you think a two state solution will bring peace?” If the respondent answered “no”, then they were asked a follow up question of “If no, why? Who will break it?” This way I could test if there was a correlation between a certain religion, education level, schooling, etc.

Religious Preference

The first question I examined was religious preference. The listed answers were Muslim, Jewish, Christian, or none. 64% of the respondents were Muslim. When asked if they think a two state solution between Israel and Palestine would result in peace, 56.25% of this 64% answered “yes”. 37.5% of this 64% replied “no”, and 6.2% of this 64% said, “I don’t know”. One of the Muslim respondents defended his “no” answer with “Because USA and Israel will keep their cruel policy. In modern(!) world cruelty always wins.” And a different Muslim identifier answered, “i said yes coz i wish. but in the other hands in this lands they are all around

the israel, lots of arabian states in there. and i think the peace will not be stabile all the time.. if you not sure about that check out the history of jarusalem or mescidi aksa.” These results show us that about two-thirds of Muslims believe in peace with the two state solution. No other religious group comes close to this correlation. This could mean that Muslims as a whole either have a positive attitude towards the two state solution creating some sort of peace or want it to be so.

4% of the respondents were Christian and 4% were Jewish. All of the Christian replies were “yes” and all of the Jewish replies were “no”. One of the respondents who identifies himself as Jewish offered this in his reply, “At the present time, my answer is no. The Arabs need to change their whole ideology in order to grant Israel legitimacy and to be able to live side by side israelis. The arabs need to make the lives of their people a priority, instead of the priority of killing as many israelis as possible. This is a huge change and I do not see this happening soon, even though I truly wish that the two parties agreeing on peace was possible.”

28% of respondents claimed to have no religious preference. Of these, 14% answered “yes” to thinking a two state solution between Israel and Palestine would result in peace. 28% answered “I don’t know”, and 57% answered “no”. One of the “no” answers defended, “I think a 2 state solution is ridiculous. Firstly, the Palestinian state would be fragmented. Gaza and the West Bank are not even one. Israeli land lies in between them.”

Since only 4% of the respondents were Jewish, even though 100% of them answered “no”, it is such a small percentage that it is impossible to see a Jewish correlation between religion and attitudes towards a two state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

However, there is an interesting breakdown between Muslims and all other religions. Christians, Jews, and no preference seem to be very different in their beliefs, but it would appear the Muslims overall have a stronger belief in peace in a two state solution than any other religions.

Education Level

The next aspect that the survey queried was education. I broke down the categories into high school or less, college, and graduate school. 25% of respondents have completed high

school or less; 66% have completed college or some college; and 8% are in or have completed graduate school.

When the respondents with high school education or less were asked if they think a two state solution will bring peace, 16.6% said “yes”, 33.3% said “no” and 50% said “I don’t know”. One of the “no” respondents defended, “well Jerusalem is very important for every religion. There is going to be a problem. I dont know who will break it but someone will break it i am sure”. Another said, “Peace in Middle East is quite impossible because this is not a war between two states but a strategical war and display of power among all countries in the region plus the USA, the EU and the UK. That's why, neighbor countries such as Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Iraq will want a solution better for their own benefit and this will break the solution continually.”

When the respondents with some college or a bachelor’s degree were asked if they think a two state solution will bring peace, 37.5% answered “yes”, 37.5% said “no” and 25% said “I don’t know”. Of the “no” answers, one of the respondents blamed it on “Arabs. Their doctrine is anti jew and anti Israel”. Another “no” respondent blamed both “The Palestinians and the Israelis” for potentially breaking the peace. Another “no” respondent agreed “I don't think every Arab countries or Palestinian militia will accept it, neither will the Israel will accept to share the territory they claim to be theirs.” One of the college students who answered “I don’t know” has a positive outlook, “I'll hope so. But before even studying its effect, we have to ask ourselves if the two state resolution is even possible”.

Of the 8% of graduate students, 50% of them answered “yes” and 50% of them answered “no”. This small percentage of graduate students may suggest that those with a higher level of education are more likely to see a two state solution bringing peace than those with a high school education or less.

To support the suggestion that higher educated individuals believe in a two state solution, while only 16.6% of high school educated respondents answered “yes”, 37.5% of college educated and 50% of graduate school students answered “yes”. The “no” answers were relatively similar with 33.3% of high school students and 37.5% of college educated students answering “no”.

In addition to the “yes” and “no” answers, there were also large amounts of “I don’t know”. 50% of high school students, 25% of college students, and 50% of graduate students all replied they did not know whether or not a two state solution would bring peace.

This data suggests that there is a relationship between higher education and believing that the two state solution will bring peace. This also could show that younger generations (who tend to have only some high school or some college) may not be as peace-minded as originally thought. And that education appears to mitigate generational differences.

Parent’s Views

The next question we will be observing is, “What are your parent’s views on the Arab-Israeli conflict?” I then took these answers and compared them to the respondent’s answers to see if they were the same. This question is important because it allows us to see if they have the same views as their parents and this can hint at how the respondent developed their attitudes and opinions. This will also show us if attitudes towards this conflict are generational or if, in fact, they are based on family opinions.

The answers to the question “What are your parent’s views on the Arab-Israeli conflict” are split into five categories. These categories are Pro Israel (12%), Pro Palestine (28%), Indifferent towards the conflict (32%), thinks the conflict is very important (but doesn’t hint to which side they prefer) (16%), and don’t know (12%).

Of the respondents whose parents answered Pro Israel, 100% of the respondents answered “no” to thinking a two state solution would bring peace. In asking what their parent’s believe one student said, “that israel needs to exists no matter what, and if the arabs will agree on things then a two state solution is fine”.

Of the respondents whose parents answered Pro Palestine, 28.5% of them answered “yes” to thinking a two state solution would bring peace, 42.8% of them answered “no” and 28.5% of them answered “I don’t know”. Some of the answers were “We need a one state solution because the Palestinian population in my opinion must have the right to live anywhere in Palestine-Israel. If we do a two state solution Jerusalem will be more divided and we will never reach

peace.” Another said, “They think that USA and Israel are allies and Arabic people don't deserve their situations. Israel and USA keep their unfair policy.”

Of the respondents’ parents who are indifferent about the Arab-Israeli conflict, 50% answered “yes” to thinking a two state solution would bring peace, 25% said “no”, and 25% said “I don’t know”. Many of the replies in this group said things like “observant but rather indifferent” or “They prefer to remain uninvolved. They do not support either side” and “they think both sides are making mistake”.

Of the respondents who are not aware of their parent’s views on the Arab-Israeli conflict, 66.6% answered “yes” to thinking a two state solution would bring peace and 33.3% answered that they “don’t know”.

Of the respondents whose parents recognized the conflict as being very important (but didn’t say which side they supported) 25% answered “no” to thinking a two state solution would bring peace and 75% answered that they “don’t know”. One student said her parents thought “the conflict won't be solved until nations will stop pretending to be trying to find a solution.” This response is interesting because it would appear this is the opposite of what most people think is the only way to find a solution (if both sides recognize the problem).

It is important to highlight that the data of the respondents who did not know their parents’ views, 66.6% of them answered “yes” to believing in peace in a two state solution. This is the largest percentage of “yes” votes. The 33.35% remainder of the votes is in the “I don’t know” category. This would suggest that respondents who are unaware of their parent’s positions toward the issue have a stronger inclination to believe in peace as an outcome in a two-state solution.

Next, I identified whether the respondents have the same beliefs as their parents. This category is broken down into three categories: “yes”, “no” and “cannot tell from the information provided”. 79.1% of respondents have the same attitudes as their parents towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. 4.1% have opposite or drastically different views from their parents and the remaining 16.6% of the respondents could not tell if they have the same opinions and attitudes as their parents.

This data would show a strong correlation between respondents' views towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and parents' views toward the conflict. It is safe to say then that according to this survey, many students share the same views as their parents and therefore generational differences of opinions do not represent the majority of students in the Middle East.

This idea agrees with socialization literature on parental influences. According to Stanford University Professor Dr. Eleanor Maccoby in a book titled Parenting and the Child's World: Influences on Academic, Intellectual and Socioemotional Development, "We now see parenting less in terms of simple parent-to-child influence, and more as a set of interactive processes whereby parents and children react to each other and influence each other from the moment a child is born" (Azar, 2000).

There are multiple possibilities of how parents influence their children's behavior. One being that parents tend to socialize their children around the conflict and another could be that parents along with their children are being socialized by phenomena together.

This section of data shows parents' attitudes and opinions have a strong influence on their children's beliefs and in only 4.1% of the cases students developed an attitude or opinion separate from their parents.

Friend's Views

The next section of my survey asked if the majority of their friends share the same attitudes as they did towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. This could determine if friends' opinions have an influence on their attitudes or it could just show if they are naturally drawn towards individuals who share common interests and opinions.

Of the respondents, 70.8% said they share the same attitudes towards the Arab-Israeli conflict as their friends. 25% said "no" and 4.1% said they "do not know". Of the respondents who answered "yes", here are a few explanations:

"The majority of my friends are also Jewish and feel similarly to me. Some feel more strongly for creating a two state solution and some feel more strongly about not creating a two state solution. I feel that if the arabs, including Hamas and Hezbollah, can acknowledge israel,

grant israel legitimacy, remove the idea that the jews need to be removed from ISrael completely from their doctrine, and true peace can occur then I am for a two stat solution”

“yes. because of im a turkish civilian as my other friends. i dont look at the problem as a muslim coz u know its clear that the real problem is psycological (sendrom of the past issues especially wwii) and strategical and the point is watergates that what cause of this conflict.”

“Yes, generally they have similar opinions. We also oppose the idea of this being a religious-based conflict.”

“Definitely, almost all my friends agree the same ideas. We do not have bad feelings about Israel citizens, but the government seems a murderer for us.”

“Yes, I think they dont much care about this conflict but since Israeli using his power to kill innocent children and women they dont like Israeli.”

“Yes, we share a common indignation. It results from a feeling that the international community is complice of the processus of colonization in Palestine, giving the fact that all the UN sanctions against Israel were vetoed. Furthermore, recent efforts for national dialogue and agreements in the Palestinian side about the Two-State solution were not backed by the United States. At the contrary, each step toward Peace seemed to be tripped by the Israeli side.”

“Most if not all my friends share my views and attitude towards this conflict. We think Israel should withdraw from an important part of the territory and that a palestinian state should be created after the 1948 borders. Israel is today an undeniable fact and the two states solution is the best to my mind. Me and my friends share this pro-peace, pro-palestinian view.”

“Yes, and if not, they're probably Palestinian who share in a more extreme view, rightly so considering how much they've lost and suffered.”

Of the 25% who said “no” to sharing the same views as their friends, here are a few explanations of why they do not share the same attitudes and opinions:

“No. There is a heavy inclination, rightfully or not, to support Arabs in the conflict mostly just because of the shared religion.”

“The majority of my friends care deeply about the conflict- much more than I do. They are emotional about it, and can get easily riled up and defensive when they talk about it. They are extremely anti-Israel, and, reveal sometimes by slip of tongue, just anti-Jew in general, (though they are less enthusiastic to reveal that for fear of being labelled racist.) I used to be highly interested in the conflict, considering Lebanon's role and physical proximity. I have long been disenchanted by it. I find that both sides have acted both foolishly and violently. I see the reasons behind the actions of both sides, though I do not take one. I regret death in general, but I find support of a side or even interest in the conflict ridiculous now.”

“No because most of my friends are at the Arab side because of being Muslim, whereas I don't support Arab side because of their betraying to Turkey in the World War 1st and supporting all terrorist activities in Turkey”

“No, I'm neutral. The majority of my friends are against Israel”

“No, some of my friends (mostly jewish friends) are against the recognition of the Palestinian state.”

Based on the outcome of this survey, it is safe to say that the majority of respondents share the same attitudes towards the Arab-Israeli conflict as their friends. What we cannot tell from this data is whether or not they develop their attitudes on particular subjects because of their friends or if they migrate towards people who already share the same views as them. However, friends tend to fall into peer categories of like-age, which seems to support a generational connection.

Source of News

The next section that we will look at is how the respondent's source of news affects their attitudes towards the two state solution creating peace. The options are broken into three categories – whether they get their news from different sources from around the world, local sources, or nothing. 79.1% said they get their news from sources all around the world, 25% of respondents said their primary source of news was local sources, and 4.1% of respondents said they don't have one.

Of the 79.1% of respondents whose primary news source is from around the world, 36.8% of them believe a two state solution will bring peace, 31.5% of them do not believe a two state solution will bring peace, and 31.5% of them do not know.

Of the 16.6% of respondents whose primary news sources are local, 25% of them believe a two state solution will bring peace, 25% of them do not believe a two state solution will bring peace, and 50% of them do not.

Of the 4.1% who do not have a primary source of news, 100% of them believe that a two state solution will not bring peace. This is too small of a sample size to make any correlation.

In the News section conclusion, we can see that it is split fairly equally between the source of one's news and views toward a two state solution bringing peace. Because of the equality of this section, no conclusions can be drawn from this data.

Educational Learning Material

The next area of exploration is the role of specific education on the impact on attitudes towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. I want to see if a certain type of education or if certain subjects of study impact the way students formulate their ideas of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The first question I asked was, "In school did/do your teachers teach you about the history of Palestine and the Palestinian people and culture?" By answering this question we would know if their school system made them aware of the Palestinian cause. In the replies received, exactly 50% said "yes" and 50% said "no".

I then looked at how many, out of the number of respondents whose teachers had taught them about the history of Palestine and the Palestinian people, thought a two state solution would bring peace. 33.3% of them said "yes", 33.3% of them said "no" and 33.3% of them said "maybe". Of the respondents whose teachers did not teach them about the history of Palestine and the Palestinian people, interestingly, 33.3% of them answered "yes" to believing a two state solution would bring peace, 33.3% of them answered "no" and 33.3% of them answered that they did not know.

Here are some of the arguments as to why their teachers taught them about Palestine or why they did not:

“yes, I went to a jewish day school for nine years and was taught about both sides”

“yes of course. first they are not the same the other arabic people. coz u know jews and palestinians are same races. you can get any informations, just research anthropological and lingual studies.”

“Nothing was taught in my school in Lebanon, because it ties into a controversial political topic. Anyway, Palestinian culture is extremely similar to the Lebanese one. In my school in the US, nothing was taught either. But then again, why would they teach about Palestinian culture exclusively? We were not taught about Israelis, Cambodians, Brazilians, etc. either.”

“Implicitly, since Palestine was the part of our country in history, yes they taught us. But mostly i learnt by myself”

“yes my teacher did even though it was not part of the required curriculum.”

“In high school (french system) we learn the history of Palestine, but in a very objective way, only the facts, what happen, we don't open a discussion on it.”

The second question I asked was if in school their teachers taught them about the history of Israel and the Jewish people. 45.8% of respondents said “yes” and 54.1% of respondents said “no”. Of the 45.8% of people who were taught about Israel in school, 36.3% believe that peace will be the result of the two state solution, 27.2% of respondents do not believe peace will be the result, and 36.3% do not know. Of the 54.1% of respondents who were not taught about Israel in school, 30.7% answered “yes” to a two state solution resulting in peace, 38.4% said “no” and 30.7% said they did not know.

Here are some responses from being asked if they were taught about Israel and the Jewish people in their schools:

“The only thing we were taught about the Jewish people was when discussing World War 2 and the Holocaust. Israel and anything more about them were never mentioned- in my schools in both countries.”

“I learned about the creation of the state of Israel as well as Judaism in a Cultural studies class.”

As is evident from the data, there is not much of any correlation between educational learning materials. All of the responses seemed to be extremely equal on both sides. Because of the outcome of the data, I cannot make a conclusion at this time if education specific to Palestine and Israel plays into attitudes of my generation towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Change Over Time

The next question I asked was whether their attitude of the two state resolution has changed over time. 68% of respondents said “no” and 32% of respondents said “yes”. This is important because it shows whether they developed an opinion on the conflict early on and if they shifted in their beliefs or if their attitudes have been influenced over time by experiences, new people, etc. The results of my survey indicate the majority of respondents have not experienced change over time, or at least, do not believe their positions have changed, which seems to show that the respondents are more often set in their ways and therefore their attitudes may not change as a result of different factors they encounter in their lives.

I asked a follow up question if they answered “yes” to explain how and why. This would help me gauge what types of encounters would change their mind about an issue. Here are their replies:

“Studying abroad in Israel and learning about the situation from the direct source. And then also keeping myself informed about the situation when I returned from abroad.”

“More data, wealthy discussions with Israeli citizens and particularly Israeli citizens from Arab origins”

“Well at the beginning, while seeing the atrocities of the Israeli regime towards the Palestinians, I refused the idea of having a two state resolution. And this was mostly my view

when I lived the Israeli-Lebanese 2006 war. Nowadays, even though I feel that the Israeli government doesn't want peace. I can't blame the people of Israel for all the mess the Israeli government has done so far. Furthermore, Israel's actual generations are people who were born and raised in Israel. Displacing them and trying to take back their land is doing the same mistake all over again (exactly what happened to the Palestinians). And this will lead to an even more complicated crisis. Therefore, the solution is to have a two state resolution.”

“The fact that media tended to show the bias point; in my case pro-Palestinian. They made it seem like a simple injustice that has been applied in a certain part of the world, but through time and knowledge I have understood that a political conflict or any other obviously has two sides to it and not one can be denied the influence in the continuation of a crisis.”

“I at the beginning I was entirely against this solution because I thought that Palestine should retrieve all the territory, but now taking into account other parameters (where to put Israel population? the war between the 2, the political impasse of the situation) I came to think that the best get without creating a new world war is a 2 state resolution.”

“I have adopted more of pragmatism, even though I believe that the Palestinians have 100% a right to their home and shouldn't have to kowtow to the demands of foreign powers, I understand that the Jewish people need a homeland and Israel will exist.”

These results indicate most people – even young people – seem set in their ways, but it is interesting to think how there were 68% of respondents who claimed to have not changed their attitudes towards the two state solution over time. This is surprising because as people learn and grow, it would seem they should become more educated about topics and therefore be able to develop a better sense of what is going on and how to form opinions based on experiences.

According to the report *Aging and Attitude Change* researched by Tom Tyler and Regina Schuller “...older people are as capable of attitude change as younger people. When older people have personal experiences that lead to attitude change, they change their attitudes as much or more in response to those experiences as do younger people” (Tyler, Schuller 1991).

In the changing views part of the survey, the percentage of respondents to the question of “Do you think a two state solution will bring peace?” was distributed in the following manner:

33.3% of respondents believe that a two state solution will bring peace, 33.3% of respondents do not, and 33.3% of respondents do not know. The results for this survey show a very equal distribution of responses and show no true correlation of what the young generation believes about being peace-minded.

Compared to older generations, according to Uri Friedman in *Foreign Policy* magazine “Many surveys show that young Israelis are actually *more* cynical and conservative about the peace process -- and particularly Obama's preferred two-state solution -- than their elders.” (Friedman, 2013) He goes on to say “A Smith Research/*Jerusalem Post* poll in December found that only 42 percent of Israeli Jews aged 18 to 29 supported a two-state solution, compared with 63 percent of those aged 30 to 49 and 69 percent of those aged 50 and over” (Friedman, 2013).

This shows that there may be more than just generational differences in determining attitudes and opinions of people.

Conclusion

The original inspiration for this thesis came to me when I was studying in Menton, France at Sciences-Po living and experiencing life with young people from the Middle East and around the world. Growing up, I had come to observe that my generation appeared more peace-minded (through their involvement with peace rallies, campaigns, petitions, etc.). So while I was studying abroad I figured students there would have similar aspirations. I thought even if they were raised amidst conflict they would still represent and stand for peaceful resolutions. After witnessing many Arab students talking negatively about Israel and Zionists and observing several anti-Israel demonstrations, I started to discover that maybe my generation really is not as peace-minded as I thought. This discovery motivated me to research and find out if generational factors actually play a role in thinking peace is possible. And if generational factors do not play a role, what other factors have the potential to influence people's attitudes towards political, territorial, and religious conflict.

This topic is vital because it tests what influences impact the attitudes and opinions of younger generations. It also tests the supposition that younger generations tend to be more forgiving and desirous of peace.

I originally thought that younger generations were more peace-minded, regardless of other factors. After researching, it has become apparent that another thesis is relevant. That thesis is that there are generational differences between age groups and whether or not one generation is more peaceful than the other depends on environmental conditions socializing that generation. For example, if one generation in Palestine grew up during the Intifada they may be more violent than their predecessors simply because of the conflict with which they grew up. Through the research in this paper it is evident that this thesis holds more weight.

When I set out writing this thesis, I did it to show that younger generations are more peace-minded and tend to look at conflict objectively and seek negotiations before violence. Looking back on the findings it has not been proven that younger generations develop their attitudes because of age or generational differences, but in fact, because of many other factors. Although there are cases of groups of students and other young people who aspire to solve conflict through peaceful means, overall, it cannot be concluded from this study that my generation – Generation Y – as a whole identifies this way, or even substantially differs from the previous generation.

If it were true that younger generations developed their attitudes and ideals from friends or simply from the fact of being surrounded by other young people, then it would be evident in the survey findings. Yet, the most prominent finding was actually that young people, the majority of the time, share the same attitudes and beliefs as their parents. This may show that ideals and values develop because of familial practices and the societal influences surrounding older and younger generations together, not because of generational influences.

If this is in fact true, then the next step for research would be to determine how generations can evolve and potentially have more innovative and different ideas than their parents. If this can never be discovered, then it is entirely possible that the Arab-Israeli conflict, specifically the two state solution, will never come to fruition, simply because this deep-rooted hatred will not disintegrate in new generations, but rather continue in the hearts and minds of those new generations. If younger generations can never look past their parents' and family's history of hate and violence, then it is possible the future will also be comprised of these things.

These findings are also evident in the discussion and research done on older generations. I hypothesized that they would be less willing to approach conflict with peace and diplomacy, but my research found that although they are more prone to violence (perhaps because they are modeling what they have seen), the majority expressed preference for negotiations and an end to violence.

This paper has illustrated that attitudes are not formed from generational influences alone, and because of this further research is necessary in order to educate and influence youth towards more diplomatic and peaceful solutions if conflicts, specifically the Arab-Israeli one, are ever to be solved.

Returning to the scene where two innocent children are bystanders in a fight between the Palestinians and Israelis. These children, from the day they were born, have been surrounded by this same violence; children “who went to bed at night fearful that a rocket would land in their bedroom simply because of who they are and where they live” (Obama, 2013). It is impossible to imagine that this constant violence would not create repercussions, and now it is more apparent that these repercussions are children who grow up harboring hatred towards other ethnicities instead of optimism for peace, negotiations, and diplomacy.

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