

**17th International Summer School on Social Representations and Communication
of the
European Ph.D. on Social Representations and Communication**

Social Representations of the self and homeland among young Palestinian refugees

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2011**

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“The imagining of a ‘country’ involves the imagining of a bounded totality beyond immediate experience of place”

(Billig,1995:74)



Palestinian refugee camp 1948





Palestinian refugee camp today

Research statement and Question/s:

- Social Identity Complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002)
- A refugee's social identity is not merely being a refugee.



Young Palestinian refugees fall in **5 different social groups** which add to the complexity of their identity. they are:

1. Palestinians as the nation they originate from
2. Palestinian refugees as their current political status
3. Arabs in reference to their ethnicity and culture
4. Youth in reference to the age
5. Refugees like the rest of refugees around the world in an international perspective.



This complexity leads to our **Research Questions:**

- 1. What are the social representations of a homeland for a young Palestinian refugee?**
- 2. What are the emotions young refugees have in relation to each of the 5 social groups they may evoke as salient, when considering their social identity complexity?**
- 3. Do the social representations of homeland among young Palestinian refugees change when the host community changes, whether it was Jordan or Lebanon?**



Study Objective:

to explore the changes of social representations of homeland among young Palestinian refugees, as they are exposed to a **manipulation**.

moreover, we want to detect the differences of their social representations of homeland according to the produced emotions as members of different social groups.



Participants:

- Age: 15-18
- Living in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon.
- attending the UNRWA schools (only for refugee children)
- Born to refugee families in Diaspora
- Never been to their homeland (Palestine)

Sample:

200 young Palestinian refugees, distributed as:

- 50 males in Jordan
- 50 females in Jordan
- 50 males in Lebanon
- 50 females in Lebanon



15/5/2011 march to Palestine



Independent variables:

IV.1) Refugees Location: Jordan and Lebanon.

IV.2) The 5 identification categories:

a. Young person.

b. Refugee like the rest of the refugees from different nationalities.

c. Arab.

d. Palestinian.

e. Palestinian refugee.

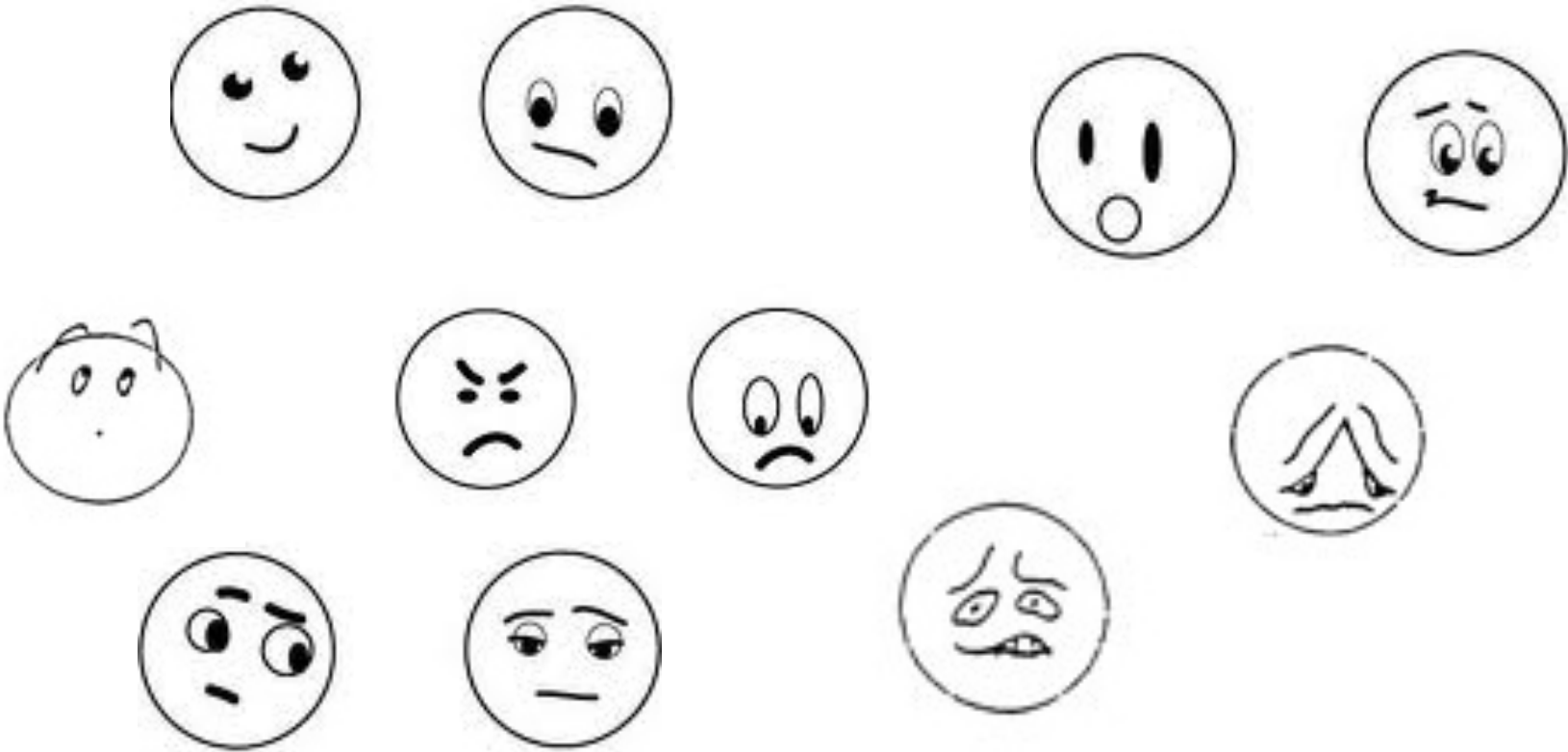


Dependent variables & Instruments: (7 variables)

1) 20 Statement Test



2) Differential emotion scale (as an individual)-
12 items



3) 3 Factor Test:

- In-group Affect
- In-group Ties
- Centrality

(16 items)





4) Differential Emotion Scale (as a member of a group)



5) Tell us about yourself



6) Tell us what you are not

I AM NOT MYSELF.



7) Social Representations of homeland



Hypothesis (assumptions):

1. Young Palestinian refugees will change their emotions and their representation of ties with their groups, when changing the salience of different aspects of social identity complexity.
2. Having a “Palestinian” or a “Palestinian refugee” as a salient characteristic of one’s identity will produce social representations of homeland which are different than having “Arab”, “young person”, and a “refugee like other refugees around the world”.



3. Young Palestinian refugees thinking of themselves as Arabs would mainly have positive emotions as: proud, hope, and respect.

4. Young Palestinian refugees thinking of themselves as Palestinians and Palestinian refugees would have a mixture of positive and negative emotions, such as: anger, unease, fear, proud, and hope.

5. Young Palestinian refugees thinking of themselves as refugees like other refugees from different nationalities and as young people would mainly have positive emotions.



6. It is expected to have differences in the social representations of homeland among young Palestinian refugees who were born and live in Jordan, than those who were born and living in Lebanon.

7. Young refugees' representations of the self when they think of themselves and for themselves as individuals have to be considered, when comparing participants assigned to the different conditions to think of themselves as members of a social group.

In this sense, my research design may be considered as a mixed between and within subjects design.



Further comments and future studies:

Having designed this current study, other areas to be explored arise as possible aims of our future research.

Study 2:

We plan a replica of the study 1 with some differences in the participants and variables.

Main differences will be:

Age: 18- 22 years old, living in refugee camps, and attending universities.

Young adults who are living in the refugee camps, but attending universities which is a more diverse community, with students from different nationalities, and where the refugees themselves are a minority.

Carrying out this study with this particular sample is expected to explore the shifts and reconstructions of their self concepts and social representations, as those young adults before attending the universities were living and studying in the refugee camps encountering mainly refugees of the same community, and attending university is expected to be a shift in their lives.

Study 3:

A Replica of study 1 and 2, considering that some modifications might be done to the tools.

Age: 15-18, young refugees who are born to refugee families, but living outside the camp and attending the public schools.



Thank You

