

# **Violence and Crime within 1948 Palestinian Society: Social and Political Contexts**

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## **1. Introduction:**

This article attempts to dismantle three complex configurations, each of which forms a main prism through which to understand and explain the recent explosion of violence and crime within the Palestinian society in Israel. Such an attempt seeks to comprehend the background conditions that generate an explosion of the like. The first is a social configuration – one that I call a socioeconomic carrier unique to the Palestinian society. It unrolled such phenomenon and enabled its penetration into society's social fabric. The second is the state systematic configuration and its various public institutions, especially the law and order enforcement establishments. The third would be the configuration related to Palestinian individuals and their relationship with their own self and immediate milieu. I shall base my analysis of these configurations on key theories utilised in criminology and social sciences, while mainly focusing on the last one with all its different divergences, taking into consideration the particularity of this society, its members, and their relationship with the state system.

In this article, we shall rely on a method that comprehends and analyses the continuous overlap and interaction between all three abovementioned configurations and their interpretive theories.

We have become accustomed to trying to understand the phenomenon, each phenomenon, by choosing one reason or specific reasons, trying to grasp it from within these reasons, rather than through their intersectionality and interaction.<sup>1</sup> For instance, one analysis tries to understand such phenomenon while using poverty as a gateway perspective, divorced from other triggers. Such approach perceives the road to depleting violence as through tackling poverty alone. Another inclination consists of adopting one sole theory to explain delinquency and crime, such as the classical theory, or the social structure theory, without trying to fathom all theories and instigators in a more complex way for a comprehensive understanding. The latter would offer a much more solid and pertinent explanation to the conditions of the Palestinian society. As such, this article attempts to understand the phenomenon, then proposes to treat it by adopting a theory of interplay between causes and conditions, as well as an understanding of the phenomenon through interlinking the different theories – that is, by connecting an individual, their upbringing, circumstances, and immediate milieu with the social, political, and economic structures found within the Palestinian society in specific, and the different state structures and institutions in general.<sup>2</sup>

This article attempts to provide an interpretive framework for the phenomenon of violence and crime in their general formation, rather than one specific kind. Such types could be categorised as follows: accidental crime, habitual crime, organised crime, emotional crime or a crime of passion, birth crimes and crimes of insanity, as well as crimes against women and sexual crimes.<sup>3</sup>

## **2. A brief theoretical framework: crime, punishment, and organised crime**

Violence is generally defined as an aggressive behaviour directed at causing harm or injury to others, whether emotional, physical, verbal, consisting of threats, beatings, torture, or otherwise.<sup>4</sup> Crime, then, is a behaviour that breaks the law, which sometimes takes on a violent nature. This behaviour is ranked by gravity and its legal repercussions. The terms most related to crime are violent crime and organised crime. As regards violent crime, it points to crimes that take on a violent nature, including murder, physical abuse, rape, theft, and coerced blackmail. Organised crime, on the other hand, references crimes that take on a character of careful organisation, as organised crime is considered an organised criminal enterprise dependent on people united for the sake of carrying out criminal activities to achieve specific and determined objectives, whether political, economic, or otherwise. This article centres on these two types of crime.

The theories and schools of thought that tried to explain crime and violence are many. I shall briefly mention three of those as a framework of understanding this phenomenon, as well as follow the chronology that extends from childhood until an individual reaches the epitome of engagement in crime, on which I shall elaborate in the chapter about individuals. To explain that, I will attempt to merge these three schools in sociology and criminology: The Classical School, the Positivist School, and the Sociological School.

**The Positivist** School centres the main reasons for delinquency on the individual body, their physical or mental state, and assumes that delinquent behaviour, especially continuous and violent behaviour, is produced from an organic failure, whether inherent or acquired – genetic, physical, or in the psychological or personality formation – for it creates a predisposition for delinquent individual. Such inclination could either be controlled or become liable to causes and conditions that provoke it. Modern approaches to this school emphasise the interaction between these causes and others, and are rarely tackled as a separate cause for crime. This approach mostly perceives the criminal as carrying out their actions without being aware of the causes that affect them or the possibility of overcoming them. This school focuses on psychological or medical treatment of the individual, rather than resorting to punishment and deterrence, which **characterises the Classical School** that perceives individual delinquency a product of the individual's intelligence and their self-awareness as well as having mental capabilities and free will to choose based on a scale of gains and losses. Such would be an individual who “chooses” to carry out a criminal act because they would like to benefit themselves and increase their personal gains. Here, treatment would take on the form of effective intervention in an individual's considerations and minimising the advantages that an individual who commits a criminal act could enjoy. This school has developed into neo-classical approaches that focus on economic analyses in adopting social and institutional reactions to crime, and assumes a policy whose objective is to reduce crime by enforcing and applying the law, and limiting existent opportunities to carry out felonies, that is, deterrence and punishment. As for the **Sociological School**, it centres causes of crime on an individual's immediate circumstances. This approach perceives social interactions, the influence of principal family figures, or a group of close friends in the neighbourhood as main causes for delinquency. Here, emphasis is on the childhood and youth phases as periods of upbringing and socialisation. In this phase, individuals adopt their own values and conception of life, whereby their personality is shaped and, thereby, their behaviour. This school expands its theory to focus on material and environmental milieus that turn into hotbeds of crime. This school focuses on delinquent socialisation and the rehabilitation of an individual's social conditions and milieu.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. The particularity of Palestinian society

In this context, we begin by depicting the gravity of the state of crime and violence in the Palestinian society, followed by outlining the socioeconomic stages and structural changes and their correlation with the increase in violence and crime. The social values that unfold from these social changes are closely connected with the formulation of an individual's values, decisions, and behaviours, and estimation thereof in order to achieve his or her goals. Here, we must distinguish between two cases: in the first, an individual takes advantage of their social conditions that potentiate carrying out a criminal act, while the second has those very same conditions serve as incentives that push an individual to carry out such actions.

The Palestinian minority in Israel is part of its Arab sphere: the challenges that Arab societies are facing in general are one and the same faced by the Palestinian society. As such, the description written by D. Halim Barakat about the Arab world and its challenges suits the Palestinian minority in Israel:

“and it is an immensely diverse society in structure and affiliations, a temporary or transitional society, simultaneously pulled in by the past and future, the east and west, open to the transformations taking over the entire world, and so it looks like it's changing at a baffling pace, and closed off, steady, genuinely fortified around its roots, Salafist and traditional in its worldviews while renewably future-oriented, secular, and reinventing its prospects...”<sup>6</sup>.

This general state of contradictions experienced by the Arab person and Arab societies as a whole take on further particularity and intensity in the Palestinian society, creating constant conditions of pressure and psychological exhaustion, individual and collective, due to the fact that it lives as a national minority that exists in a continuous state of conflict and marginalisation within a state that considers it a foreign entity, or, rather, an enemy.

This particularity has gone through two phases with significant implications on Palestinian society: the first is a painful forced severing of society from its people and stability into the margins of another state and a strong hostile society. That is to say that all transformations upon which I'm about to elaborate here, and which have happened and are currently taking place in Arab societies and others, has already happened to the Palestinian society in the context of the Nakba (1948) and the interruption from the cultural and civil lifeblood of the original community. Such a situation has imposed on society and its members a state of chronic tension and psychological exhaustion. The second phase is the post-Oslo Accords phase, followed by a soft and invisible amputation of awareness of the original cause, creating a profound transformation of society's sense of belonging and cohesion. Until this moment, the common conception of Palestinians in Israel had been cogent to a large extent and tied to a bigger enterprise that encompassed them. Contrarily, this moment is the moment of granting legitimacy to individualism and a search for self-interest, the waning of commitment to what Durkheim termed as social conscience.<sup>7</sup>

The effect of these two events is continuous and cumulative and has profound implications on an individual's sense of belonging to society and their sense of meaning and self-worth. Crime and violence break out in societies with an eroded collective compass and a splintered identity.<sup>8</sup>

### **3.1 General data about the depth of the state of violence and crime in Palestinian society:**

Palestinian society has been internally aching for years under the weight of violence and crime that reap tens of victims annually. Since 2000, 1420 men, women, young and old, were murdered. Add to this enormous number of murdered victims the hundreds of cases of physical injuries and disabilities, alongside thousands of shootings, attacks on public and private property, threats, and material blackmail. A quick glance at the murder cases data in recent years show that we are faced with a situation of steady yearly increase, based on the observation carried out by Aman Center – the Arab Center for a Safe Society.

In 2014, 61 people were killed, of which 53 were male and 8 were female.  
In 2015, 58 people were killed, of which 44 were male and 14 were female.  
In 2016, 64 people were killed, of which 54 were male and 10 were female.  
In 2017, 72 people were killed, of which 62 were male and 10 were female.  
In 2018, 75 people were killed, of which 61 were male and 14 were female.  
In 2019, 92 people were killed, of which 62 were male and 11 were female.

We also notice that the Triangle region and mixed cities are the ones most prone to crime. 42 were killed there in 2019 as opposed to 21 in the northern region, 5 in the southern region, and 5 in the Jerusalem region. This percentage of number of victims in the Triangle region is steadily increasing, for reasons we shall later clarify. Surveys also show that the subject of crime and violence preoccupies the Palestinian society in Israel, as well as a steady decrease in the citizens' sense of safety in both their personal and public spaces.<sup>9</sup>

### **3.2 The social context: the internal socioeconomic carrier of violence and crime**

#### **3.2.1 From a village to hybrid clusters**

Our first perspective to understanding the social and economic carrier of violence and crime is the big shift taken place in a society that used to be a rural one, with a population of 149 thousand people, turned into a society formed out of big clusters, with a population of one million and 700 thousand people (Galilee Association). For example, the city of Taybe, whose population amounted to 4900 people in 1948, is today home to 48,850 people (a ten-fold growth). Similarly, Tira turned from a town of a few thousand people into one with 27 thousand people. These communities did not turn into modern cities capable of providing life needs and necessities in terms of infrastructures, proper housing, services, education, and cultural life that suit the population growth. Moreover, it was accompanied by an increase in of high school and secondary school graduates, along with work opportunities inside the neighbouring Jewish cities, in which all modern assets of a modern city may be found, including infrastructure, and a modern lifestyle with a great sense of individual freedom, based on the European model.<sup>10</sup> These developments have led to:

1. a gap between the increase in individual aspirations and the available opportunities and unavailable opportunities to an individual person in their own society, which leads to distancing among individuals, and, thus, individualist processes multiply at the expense of communicative processes.
2. societal growth, which increases their power, requiring a process of life organisation and guidance. The more a society increases in number and

development, the more complicated its conditions get, whence its controlling social and legal configuration begins to wane.

3. the corrosion of the informal social control configuration due to lack of symbiosis with the collective ethical configuration, paralleled by a feeling of psychological stress and collective pressure on individuals. The increase in all such contradictions generates personal discontentment, which could manifest itself in an expression of violence.
4. coupled by opportunities of mobility for additional job opportunities alongside urbanisation and industrialisation, two contradictory results: first, an increase in legislation that weighs down on individuals, such as taxes and bureaucratic matters that limit their freedom, and, on the other opposing hand, an increase in individual liberties, or, a constant demand and desire for it, in case they were lacking.<sup>11</sup>

### **3.2.2 Changes in extended and nuclear family structures**

This population development comprises ramifications in the process of urbanisation and the city, which has completely changed the structure of Arab towns and the social and familial ties within. It has also changed the economic structure of a traditional agrarian one, dependent on the support of community and family, into an industrial, business, and services-oriented one, dependent on the individual themselves and their ability to compete and use their skills. The clannish structure changed and so changed, in an incredible manner, the roles within society, affecting the social structure as a whole, while the symbiotic structure was dissolved, individualism strengthened, and the protection of the extended family, even the smaller family, could no longer to be depended upon.<sup>12</sup> There used to be a social contract that maintained an equilibrium, which guided individuals, especially since these families often existed in a space of their own. Such structure completely changed due to shifts in population as well as economic conditions. The family that existed within a protected determined space ended up existing in a space spread all over town. Cumulatively, with increased work opportunities outside the family frame, found in neighbouring Jewish towns, the former's function shifted from protecting its members into a political structure that awakens only during local authority elections to the sound of clannish prejudices and for electoral objectives only. All this has led to a change in the previous hierarchic order between families and individuals.

In the past, an attack on a family member used to call for a situation of protection and support offered by the attacked person's family; however, today, such protection and support are to a large extent missing within Palestinian society. Such development would be considered positive when paralleled with the emergence of protective and supportive institutions that arise from society, especially state institutions and law and order enforcement institutions. However, their absence has left society in a tough state of void that lacks deterrence and accountability. An attacker now knows that their attack would be confronted neither socially, as in previous times, nor on a state level with its police and law enforcement institutions. This important part of social deterrence was struck down and, in lieu, a process of empowering individuals over members of their society began, which peaked in recent years.

Another important transformation among these would be the emergence of local councils, elected by Palestinian citizens. This institution could have constructed a cross-affiliation sense of local belonging or to fill some of the gaps left open by the controlling social configuration; however, and I consider this one of the most important causes for our society's regression, instead, it mainly became a source of fragmentation, violence, and

discrimination among citizens, while using clan structures. All this happened under the watchful eye and encouragement of martial law, and continued even a little after the mid 1960s; the latter grew and nurtured it, and still does ever since then – under the supervision of local councils' administration, whose effectiveness and integrity have been left unrestrained and unscrutinised by state officials.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, we stand before a socio-political structure that lacks the characteristics of villages and their ability to defend and support their members, as well as the characteristics of cities, which provide for their residents' needs justly and equitably, through building a sense of belonging to the town, accompanied by a legal affiliative alternative that compensates for the traditional social, economic, and political structures. We stand before a distorted social, economic, and political structure in which violence and crime have found a spring from which to evolve and develop.

Beside this transformation in the traditional structure of villages into semi-distorted cities, as well as the consequential change in social structure, there have been some changes within the nuclear family whose effects split into two directions: the parental authority over individuals weakened as well as the faded nuclear family's (and in some cases, the clan's) ability to maintain a positive supervision and control on its members, and, thus, the consolidation of the possibility of adopting values and behaviours that contradict the socially acceptable. These familial developments are linked to the following issues:

1. Economic independence of family members and dispensation of the family entity as one economic unit to be sought for value judgements and social guidance.
2. Education and work opportunities, especially those available to young women, and the contradiction between familial structures based on traditions, social shame, and society's view of the family, and liberal and individual freedom seeking tendencies. The latter kind of freedom is indeed practised in the closely-knit Jewish society, within which sons and daughters would spend a large amount of their time.
3. Most people involved in acts of violence and crime belong to families that did not provide them with the psychological and practical tools to deal with the changes in traditional family economy and with the contradiction of values inside and outside the household. Often, delinquent individuals are born into families amidst a crisis in their economics and values. The crisis amasses when these families splinter into other families that replicate the same crisis in a vicious cycle of continuous and proliferating aggravation without a social or authoritative hand to break it.
4. Individuals in these conditions find a sense of value and economic meaning in a clear and superficial world in which a clear order of power exists. An individual creates meaning for themselves in these conditions instead of the marginalised ones imposed upon them as a result of their belonging to a family that could not break the leash of its marginality in its fast-changing environment.

An image unravels from the abovementioned, where we find that Palestinian society has reached a degree of complex patterns of producing ties between its members, and between them, their institutions, and the state. This leads to an extreme sense of alienation, weakened social symbiosis, and feeble engines that usually maintain values and standards that control individuals and groups, and reproducing them in order to match the depth of this change and complexity. The Palestinian society is undergoing a state of change and formation whose features are yet unfinished, and it witnesses through this process extremely complex internal conflicts, both visible and invisible. It is a watered-down state

of anomie, which is characterised by a lack of clear values and often happens as a result of economic and social changes that took place at a high pace that does not allow society to catch up with constructing appropriate and alternative values to the new social situation. It is a society that exists in a state of utter tension between two types of social solidarity found in Emile Durkheim's writings: mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity, and both are at a stage of conflict among themselves. Mechanical solidarity is solidarity between individuals that is based on a semi homogenous lifestyle, values, and beliefs. This type of solidarity usually characterises the societies that rely on kinship ties. As regards organic solidarity, it characterises societies with more diverse values and lifestyles. In those societies, the mechanism that maintains solidarity, the base of its existence, is the restructuring and redistribution of roles within them and the maintenance of interdependency. Here, the role of the law and its apparatuses in organising and controlling the web of ties between individuals in order to enable a shared life, despite the conflict of interests between them. The Palestinian society is undergoing a turbulent interim phase between these two types – it lacks the past mechanical solidarity, and does not possess yet the way and values of organic solidarity.<sup>14</sup>

### **3.3 Tears in social and official networks of authorities**

One of the most important gateways to help us comprehensively understand the phenomenon of violence and crime is through changes within the complex network of all types of authorities inside the Palestinian society in Israel. One of the most significant consequences to these changes is the huge damage done to the overall structure of authorities within the social body. Such convulsion did not unravel into another structure of authorities that could accompany and suit the transformations in place. Here, we allude to the overall authority structures that have been spread inside the social body, and not only authority superstructures of the ruling authorities' or state institutions' systems of control. The structure known to authorities has existed in great harmony until the 1990s, and it weathered the social and economic changes. However, it began losing its equilibrium following that period during a continuous process that is not over yet. This network of authorities, which grasped the Palestinian society as a unit, and used to be a social carrier unique to it, started tearing, whereby small holes struck it at the beginning but which quickly grew bigger the more social and economic gaps between society's individuals grew apart, as well as the more the middle-class strata grew and, along with it, class differences and individualism – a direct result of imposed liberalisation due to the intertwinement with the Jewish society and absorbing its media and lifestyle. Living simultaneously in two different worlds of values has produced a hybrid Palestinian, constantly staggering between opposing poles. This fierce tension has shelled the traditional power structure, but left society without an alternative, and, as such, this void exposed society to additional types of authority, at the centre of which lies principles of power and violence.

Perhaps the most significant joint of this change in authorities could be traced in: nuclear families and the shift of parental authority over family members, clans and the shift in their social structure with social authority over their members, schools' and teachers' authority before their pupils and parents, local councils, their leaders, divisions, and authority towards citizens. As we study these joints of authority and compare the degree of their effectiveness in the past with their effectiveness in the present, a perspective unfolds through which we could clearly see the alternative authority that emerged in the shape of individual criminals and clusters of crime, who have started amassing an enormous amount of authority and power at their disposal.

### **3.4 The absence of society's elite and middle class:**

Within this state of social structure transformations and the waning of its joints, which seriously affected its balance and widened its internal gaps, we find the absence of society, its elite and middle class, largely present. Such withdrawal and dissociation from public affairs and the public sphere were paid for by the penetration of individuals and groups within society that seek to force their authority and to control means of power.

The elite and middle class could not benefit from the social transformations and their latent energy in order to organise a cohesive society that turns social transformations and changes in the structure of authority from a state of weakness into a state of power, that is, through self-organising and serious contribution to facing social shifts in due time, and operating as an alternate organisation to traditional social structures, or contribution to building serious alternatives and, therefore, blocking any potential abuse of those gaps by negative entities that have monopolised society in the absence of alternatives. Instead, it withdrew into its own individual bubbles and interests and caused a huge void in the control of the public sphere and public affairs rather than having quality presence within.<sup>15</sup>

Here, we refer to two types only, which are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to signify the important of the behaviour of the political and social elite:

1. The waning of political parties' work and their involvement in local arenas in Arab towns, focusing their attention on national party work instead. In the past, party movements, the involvement of the young men and women therein, and the manifestations of its social presence in the public sphere had their significance and contribution in building a base of founding values and standards of social conscience. The absence thereof, however, has produced a serious gap at the local level and the level of political education and identity consolidation, especially for young people.
2. The clan structure of Arab local councils remains an important source that generates triggers of violence and crime – it is a structure that establishes for many citizens the feeling of discrimination of services and the absence of just treatment of citizens. The political and social elite could not change this reality and build a structure of a local rule based on a sense of belonging to the town as a main and first sense of belonging, rather than a sense of belonging to the clan. In fact, the opposite happened: part of those elite became involved in this structure and channelled it to serve their own political interests, thereby becoming a part of the traditional structure rather than challenging it as an alternative capable of establishing a modern local rule that takes on the town and builds an enterprise of belonging that goes beyond clans. Such an alternative, had it manifested, would have ensured providing Palestinian individuals with solutions to some of the consequences of the states of transformation that took place, rather building a more comprehensive and cohesive framework, as it centralises the legitimate power in its hands, the power of the law and required resources.

## **4. General political context:**

### **1.1 The absence and presence of the state and its institutions:**



As regards our topic, the relationship between the state and the Palestinian society is three dimensional: the first is keeping Palestinian society at the margins of the majority society, which means that the state and its institutions do not prioritise its problems and development. The state, which defines itself as a state for Jews, has maintained the steep chasm between the Jewish society and Palestinian society in all aspects of life, from investing in infrastructure, education, local government and its quality, law enforcement, the consolidation of a cultural identity, matching Arab town areas with population growth, solving the crisis of unemployment and providing work opportunities and economic development within them, poverty, and resolving the underprivileged classes. In this case, Palestinians as individuals developed in the scope of labour sectors allowed for by the state within Jewish societies, as well as the higher education opportunities, especially following the opening of private colleges which, despite their exorbitant fees, have enabled large numbers of Palestinians from receiving an academic education.

The state policy left a gap between the economic development of individuals – at the margin of the Israeli labour market – along with the growth of the middle class and the deterioration of the state of affairs in their towns which resemble housing complexes rather than towns in which a society develops culturally and economically.

Secondly, the state used its powers in the field of law and order enforcement in a selective way, dictated by its interest in keeping the status quo. The state and its institutions have a dual part: on the one hand, it enforces the law when it empowers its sovereignty and understanding of its role, such as in the case of unlicensed building in regards to land dimensions, which is the core of its conflict with the Palestinian minority. On the other hand, the state does not enforce order when it comes to violence and crime, leaving the emergent powers that have started monopolising power, criminals, individuals and groups, to penetrate society unperturbed. Here, the role of the state is limited to watching and controlling, rather than dismantling the new centres of power or, for example, resolving the issue of corruption within local authorities, claiming that both are related to the internal culture of that society. Such a claim is a mere pretext for the administrative system within the state institutions – for they are the ones who apply, enforce, and supervise policies, which are the most important tools a state has in keeping the problems of society unresolved.

Thirdly, the state obstructs, in a direct and indirect way, the construction of alternative authorities that could benefit from the social changes and build upon them authorities that marry individualism and collective belonging. Its institutional mentality boils down to containing the problems of society, rather than resolving them and help its development, observing them to make sure they remain cooking at a medium-low fire, which guarantees that they do not penetrate Jewish towns neighbouring the Arab ones. In this case, we stand before a structural problem connected to the depth of methods the state uses to handle the crises of Arab society, rather than just before some shortcomings in treatment.

## **1.2 The absence and presence of the police and institutions of law and order enforcement**

The Israeli institutions of law and order enforcement work within the abovementioned context. Therefore, a clear gap may be seen between its declarations and actions on the ground. The police force is an institution that apply state policies, the declared ones and the ones hidden within the folds of its institutional steering mentality. It is a tool in a power struggle between the factions of the state, especially towards the Palestinian society.

Historically, the police within the Arab society has two functions: a civil-dimensional function, including services to maintain order and enforce the law, and security-dimensional function of observation and control.<sup>16</sup>

The Palestinian society has felt, and still does, sensitive towards the police, considering it an institution that prioritises its security dimension, particularly since, in its history with them, the police was the state institution found at the frontline against the Palestinians in their political movement, demonstrations and political activities. Palestinians have gotten used to experiencing the clashing face of the police, and has almost never seen its civil service-providing face amidst its towns.

As such, police work is characterised by two aspects:

Excessive police work, which is an unfair treatment of individuals through an inappropriate use of force or through assuming a discriminating policy against them. This dimension is connected to the work of the police and its organisational culture, to the prejudices prevalent within it, and the racism of its members as a reflection of the Jewish majority opinions towards Arabs, which always place them in a corner of threatening the general public, and who should therefore be viewed suspiciously and treated with an iron fist. This treatment often takes place within the Jewish communities or the major axes of Palestinian towns.<sup>17</sup>

Insufficient police work, which neglects handling the problems of Palestinian societies in their own towns. The police thus do not allocate the required resources for that, as the number of police force members and their qualifications do not match the volume of the need for effective police services in Arab towns. This dimension has turned into a conditional policy whose target was to contain problems of violence, crime, and delinquency so that it does not slip into the neighbouring Jewish towns.<sup>18</sup>

This kind of police treatment of the Palestinian society has enabled individuals and groups to monopolise and self-strengthen unchecked, some of them turning into a national-scale octopus that terrorises people and blackmails them with violence. Criminals find themselves safe from the police that do not invest the required effort or resources in order to capture and prevent them from carrying out their actions, or block their economic development by cooperating with the tax administration and other institutions. The police do not invest the required effort when it comes to unlicensed arms, whose enormous accessibility and availability to the Palestinian society is one of the most important reasons behind the increase in violence and crime. The state comptroller report indicated the failure of the state and its apparatuses in dealing with this topic, and determined its responsibilities lack of a systematic plan that allocates resources and effective schemes to counter the issue.<sup>19</sup> The chances of arresting a person who committed a crime in Arab communities are much smaller compared with someone who committed a crime in Jewish communities, or if the victim of the criminal act was a Jewish citizen.<sup>20</sup>

## **5. Individual context:**

We could outline the milestones on the road that an individual involved in violence and crime takes starting in childhood and until the peak of involvement. The width of this road is wide enough to absorb walking in zigzags and different paths, but it is a one-way road. It is also not a dead-end, but rather has many exits and many who take that road are able, by their own strength or with external help, to find one of those exits, and often at an age

group and conditions that I shall mention later. As we draw the features of this road, we shall tackle the incentives that motivate an individual to carry out violent and criminal acts, the personal incentives that they control and those that are imposed upon him; additionally, we shall tackle the social contexts related to one's milieu and their effect on the possibility of slipping into crime. The understanding and comprehension of these contours enables us to derive social and socioeconomic policies that would empower society and the state institution from adopting them in order to fight violence and crime.

## **5.1 Childhood and youth:**

This phase is characterised by isolated milestones or interconnected between the Positivist School and the Sociological School. In this stage, one could pay attention to the pupils who are, due to their psychological makeup, prone to behave violently towards their classmates in school in a way that implies a serious problem of social discipline that could develop into delinquency. During this critical phase of diagnosis and treatment, most schools and educational frameworks approach it by removing the pupil and stigmatising them as exterior to the normative order of the school, rather than offering psychological or medical help if there need be. At the margins of school, groups are formed, made up of pupils that come out of such stratum or pupils spelled out by the educational system – due to their low grades or family situation that did not help with their integration in the school system. These groups form the place where a pupil finds meaning and shelter for themselves from the system that expelled him to the margins of school, finding shelter from an imposed alienation. This process of exclusion and stigmatising continues beyond the confines of school, as the house is most likely unqualified to deal with it, either due to its objective circumstances (economic, social), or due to the nuclear family, or a part of it, is itself found within the cycles of delinquency and violence. Similarly, it extends to the neighbourhood or the physical milieu outside the framework of school.<sup>21</sup>

In this phase, an individual that has, by virtue of their formation, an inclination towards violence and crime would have entered a sphere that serves as a trigger for this propensity rather than control and treat it. The individual who does not have such propensity, though, would also become prone to acquire it through social learning and imitation by way of interpersonal connections with significant others, which has the capacity to affect their behaviour and sculpt their values. At this stage, imitation of significant others develops into adopting their values and conception of life, which give a value-based justification for delinquency and criminal act, overlooking the unfavourable behaviours and appreciating them as positive. In such a state, an individual is more exposed to and intimate with a delinquent lifestyle than their connection with normative life. This phase is characterised by individuals building an intimate and interpersonal network among each other and the significant other, thereby giving meaning to their being and life, as well as a form of psychological and social (the group to which they belong being a constant source of positive feedback to their behaviour), and, later, economic compensation, away from the state of alienation and deprivation of the other frameworks, familial, educational, and the general social.

In such a context, socialisation is key, which enables controlling the impulse to break the law or act in a violent and delinquent way. We have previously noted the importance of informal social control and the social processes that enable the adoption of normative behaviour values, those educational and informal social processes, which do not rely on obeying the laws or official social punishment, but rather on the overall social references an individual receives, directly or indirectly, outright or implied, though an unlimited

number of daily social interactions, which lead them to adopt behaviour in accordance with written and unwritten codes alike. Therefore, the network of interpersonal connections is of extreme importance to an individual, particularly those that provide them with meaning and sense of worth. At this stage, the intersection between the lack, or weakness, of informal control processes and exposure to the world of delinquency, often alluring to youth, will give them passes into the world of delinquency.<sup>22</sup> At this stage, delinquent youth patterns of behaviour are often less rigid than the adults' and therefore, social therapeutic intervention has an immense capacity for deterrence, protection, and social reintegration.

It is worth mentioning here the link that the stigma theory has made between the reaction of law enforcement systems towards law breaking youth alongside societal reaction and the entrenchment of delinquent patterns as it leads to the adoption of a "delinquent identity," further establishing a sense of belonging to the world of crime. The reports observing youth circumstances in our Arab society point to a concerning situation of lack of frameworks of socialisation, especially to the stratum of youth at risk, of whom a large percentage, especially those aged 19-24, are neither involved in the labour market nor in educational frameworks. The majority of them do not follow a normative personal course whereby they commit to a daily life routine, particularly a stable job, giving their lives purpose and value, breaking the state of void and, subsequently, the sense of alienation from society they experience. Rather, they might develop a sense of anger and resentment towards society, one manifestation of which would be vandalising public spaces and property.<sup>23</sup>

Here we revisit what we previously mentioned about institutional and social failure in providing services, be it education, extracurricular education, training for the job market, treating unemployment and the housing crisis – all these constitute socioeconomic carriers for delinquency and crime. Therefore, at this stage, a social and governmental policy must be adopted to tackle two levels of intervention: an intervention in approaches and the delinquent's or individual-at-risk's world of values, alongside a change of their social conditions in their own environment and milieu, which act as sparks for delinquency.<sup>24</sup> The absence of these frameworks in Palestinian society have a direct effect on the processes of informal behavioural control and reduce the possibilities of building a network of normative profound social relations among the young generation, thereby affecting their world, values, and behaviours. It is therefore of utmost importance to create the conditions for a process that integrates an individual's personal internal control and social control.

This stage becomes dangerous when organised criminal groups adopt some of these individuals as soldiers who turn into their long arms of criminal acts.

## **5.2 Youth and adolescence:**

At this stage, a more rational personality crystallises, one that is aware of its delinquent circumstances, having gone through the abovementioned first stages of delinquency, acquiring experience in them, and capable of comprehending the negative and positive aspects of this road (here, I exclude drug addicts as their addiction keeps them inside these worlds, whereby they need immediate intervention to unhook and enable them to choose freely). During this stage, some of those affiliated with delinquent groups find their way outside such life, especially if they had begun walking down a path of normative lifestyles with a commitment to job and creating a family. As regards the rest that continue to exist

in this world, they would be categorised under the Classical School – that is to say that often, being in that world happened either because they enlisted for organised crime organisations or because they have become accustomed to using violence and power for economic gains, such as material blackmail, black markets, trafficking drugs and arms, and so on. At this stage, another kind of delinquency emerges, one that is aware of exploiting its circumstances, and that the price paid socially and personally does not even come close to the amount of gains enjoyed. Here, I revisit the social carrier that enables its abuse in order to spread organisational clout and also acquire social standing blended with cajolery and social fear. The absence of a state and society that peacefully resolve people's problems in an effective and smooth manner has transformed those people into a social force that uses its power, or brandishes it, in order to solve such problems, leaving behind a trail of cringeworthy cases of blackmail and injustice.<sup>25</sup>

An individual will be able, the older they grow, to leave a life of delinquency and crime should they submerge themselves in a normative life, whereby they begin comprehending the price they would pay should they keep at the former, as social privileges enjoyed through the latter become of great value for them. In this stage of delinquency, they are usually separated from social frameworks, their nuclear family has lost control over them, they had not formed a family yet, and are without a steady job – frameworks which ensure creating a feeling of responsibility, building a sense of responsibility towards social values.

## **Conclusion**

Violence and crime are human phenomena that exist in all societies at different degrees and manifestations. They are also necessary to the life of societies, with a social function by which society remodels and reaffirms its conscience and social symbiosis through attitudes that oppose violent and criminal acts in a certain era of its history, rebuilding and reproducing appropriate behavioural values, socially asserting them (Durkheim).

We could, following the portrayal done in this article, conclude that treating violence and crime by pre-emptive preventative action or facing it head-on is the Palestinian society's chance to reaffirm its values and position of social, economic, or political structures, be they internal or related to the state and its structure, and also to produce and determine the map of individual values and norms which maintain personal freedom on the one hand and action, and its results, in society on the other.

We have demonstrated that violence and crime are a social, economic, and political incubator that have an evolutionary course in the life of an individual, starting from childhood all the way to reaching a peak of involvement. This carrier and course are the result of human action and development that could be traced, intervening in their details and joints, thereby reducing them as well as their effects on individuals and society. This would not come about unless through a communal and governmental effort backed by enormous funding as well as a supportive political stance, ready for a years-long confrontation. Any societal or governmental plan should view this phenomenon in its entirety, while any program of intervention, along with all its details, must be strategically linked to such in-depth perspective and envision possible interactions with other details.

## Endnotes

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